

**City Form and Design**

**C A S E S T U D Y**

**AMBRICO PLACE**

Ambrico Place is located close to the heart of New Lynn, within 500 metres of the train station. By road it is accessed via Rankin Ave, and is bounded on the other sides by Mangan Ave, Manawa Wetlands and the rail line. Originally a part of the thriving New Lynn pottery industry (an original kiln is still on site) it was for many years vacant industrial land. It was identified as a suitable location for medium density housing in the New Lynn community design process in 1995. There has been a rapid market uptake of the area, and is seen as a pioneer housing development in Waitakere City.



As part of regional research on medium density housing (Auckland Regional Council 2000), which included surveys of 5 developments across Auckland as well as an investigation into the Body Corporate role, the Ambrico site was the subject of an in-depth study to complement the regional work with more detailed research. The research was undertaken by Auckland and Massey University researchers. (Ambrico Place Research, Stage Two, 2001). Waitakere City also undertook a design review, and consultation with the children living in the area. It is envisaged that the research would be revisited in 5 years time.

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As Council seeks to develop a city that is compact, connected and provides its citizens with choices, we will look at Ambrico Place from each perspective. The material below is drawn from all the above sources.

1. Compact – This xx hectare area now has xx number of units (overall 250), and has a density per hectare xx?. The design incorporates local parks and playgrounds, as well as access to the larger Manawa Wetland, which is still in development. The average size of units and number of bedrooms is ????. Most units have parking and garage space. The research indicated that most people were happy with the level of open space provision, and enjoyed the sense of community in their development.

Perceptions of safety were reasonably high, with between 86 and 94% feeling safe in their unit/development or Ambrico Place during the day. This drops to 55% at night outside. Children live in 35% of households, and consultation with this group revealed that most of them considered that they had enough space to play and had more local friends than in their previous residences.

2. Connected – the location provides easy road and walking access to rail, road, bus, leisure, shops, schools and local services. The interior road network, while not fully connected, provides for residential access as well as servicing truck access to the building depot in the centre of the development. There are well-connected pedestrian walkways to the various reserves and the town centre. While well located to access a wide number of facilities, pedestrian access to these was considered difficult over main roads eg: New Lynn Community Centre and Library. The community and children were very involved in the development of the two local parks Ambrico Place and Manawa Wetlands. A public process was followed to assess design options, and the incorporation of tiles in Manawa Wetland using shards found in the area and local children with local artists has been very popular.

3. Choices – 10% of residents work from home. The most common reasons for moving into Ambrico Place included location to facilities and good design features. Most people had not changed their transport methods much, although some reduction in car use was reported. 61% had previously lived in the typical stand-alone NZ house. 63% of residents were born overseas. Tenure was mixed – 47% rented, 45% owned, and 8% following the rent-to-own option.

The research was focused on finding out about the actual experience of living and/or working in a medium density housing environment. The key findings of the research are:

- o Main reasons for choosing medium density housing – security, safety, low maintenance
- o All respondents had some kind of positive contact with their neighbours, around half spent some time with neighbours
- o Main issues are around noise (very or quite noisy 37%), storage space (not enough said two thirds), parking (46% not satisfied)
- o Best factor was convenience – location to New Lynn, transport, shops and leisure activities rated consistently highly
- o Average income levels above national and city average
- o Most people happy with level of privacy of their unit – 82%
- o When asked, residents gave a wide range of opinions as to which household types were suited to living in medium density housing eg from those with young children, to professional couples to older adults.