

# Architect's Design Statement

## Summerset Boulcott Village

06 November 2017

### Site Context

The site is located between an established residential area, school and the recently realigned stop bank, formerly part of the Boulcott's Farm Heritage Golf Club. Access to the site is from Boulcott Street (to the west) and Military Road (to the east).

### Neighborhood Character

An important consideration in the design of the proposed village is for it to respond positively to its constraints, which include the smaller-scaled residential and school buildings around the southern and eastern boundaries, as well as its opportunities, which include high-quality, north-facing views to the north where building height has much less potential to conflict with established neighbourhood character qualities. The following assessment of the wider neighborhood area informed design decisions at the Masterplanning and Preliminary Design stages.

The local neighborhood is made up of a mixture of architectural styles, aesthetics and materials, with buildings of a variety of ages and lifecycle stages.

Materials – cladding finishes in the area are typically of a painted weatherboard and plaster finish, with red brick cladding being a less common alternative. Roofs are predominantly concrete tile with teracotta tile, pressed metal tile, with some flat roof typologies being seen sporadically throughout the area.

Size – housing types in the area are typically stand-alone dwellings with a mixture of single and two stories.

Style – the most common housing style is the Bungalow of various ages and levels of detail, from 1940's to 1960's with pitched roof dwellings most commonly seen. Art Deco style dwellings are found in low numbers.

Landscape – established gardens and large mature trees predominate in this area increasing the visual quality, recreational and amenity value.

### Design Brief

The design brief was to design a village that has a warm, welcoming and vibrant community meeting Summerset's high standard of life care.

This proposal called for facilities that allow Summerset to provide continuum of care with in-home memory care, rest home and hospital-level care provided.

Accommodation types specified in the brief included apartments, serviced apartments, care rooms, memory care apartments and villas. Along with the accommodation blocks, a main building is proposed which contains community amenities including cafe, lounge, library, gym, salon and pool facilities. In addition, provision for back of house facilities such as a commercial kitchen, laundry, administration office and staff room are provided.

The village was to knit to achieve a compatible integration at the site's boundaries where existing development has occurred by using compatible-scaled building forms.

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Level 1  
318 Lambton Quay  
Wellington 6011  
New Zealand

PO Box 39 345  
Wellington Mail Centre 5045  
New Zealand

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PH. +64-4-920 0032  
EMAIL. wn@  
designgroupstapletonelliott.co.nz

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designgroupstapletonelliott.co.nz



## Design Solution

Our vision for the Boulcott Village is to create a cohesive community aesthetic which celebrates its unique location within an established neighborhood and community - standing alongside and overlooking the Boulcott's Farm Heritage Golf Course and Hutt River with surrounding 'park-like' environments and the backdrop of the Western Hills to the north and Eastern Hills to the east.

The whole master plan design began by recognizing and respecting the sensitive southern and eastern edges, and that this in turn led to a preference to locate private courtyards and open space as a buffer, with smaller and domestically-scaled buildings of 1-2 storeys lining the boundary. This offers a "like with like" response to the majority of that existing boundary, and this is the most sympathetic and compatible response.

In turn, those units needed a 'front' and access on their 'far' side from the boundary, and this became the structuring logic for the access link through the site. The desirability of a logical and efficient, but low-speed connection linking the Boulcott street and Military Road access points led to the alignment of a gently curvilinear spine link through the site.

To make this link have as many characteristics of a comfortable lane / shared space / whatever as possible, it was desirable to 'front' the far side of that access road with development as well, and this led to the placement of buildings that are typically 3-4 storeys tall. This decision was made on the basis of maintaining a compatible internal street cross section while also acknowledging that gently stepping height upwards would allow lower height buildings near the site's exterior to screen most or even all of the taller buildings within the site.

The 'shared space' concept is used to minimise the segregation of pedestrians and vehicles by removing kerbs, road surface markings and traffic signs and to reduce the dominance of vehicles and improve safety for all road users. This 'shared space' concept originated in the Netherlands and was known as a woonerf - 'a living street'.

Key features of shared space in the proposal include:

- prioritising space for people
- defined gateways through hard and soft landscape treatment
- reduced speeds
- delineation of surfaces
- parking adjacent to houses

Each building on the site has been given its own identity through use of varied forms and materials while maintaining a common thread of re-occurring materials. These are used in a variety of locations to create a village that is viewed as a whole and embodies a clear identity and sense of place.

Landscaping and positive spaces between buildings reinforce the idea of building in a park and help knit the village into the surrounding neighborhood.

A restrained palette and repetition of forms gives the proposed village a strong design coherence. The building also references its context with materials such as concrete and timber being present on neighbouring buildings.

## Site Layout

The site layout is based around creating a central green spine through the site which links the entire development including the eastern arm, which connects to the central shared space (main building /recreation facilities). Along the northern boundary apartments are located to connect to the "shared facilities". In the centre of the site behind the shared facilities, the care wing is located which forms a second edge to the green space. Around the residential edge and school edge, houses are located to continue the urban pattern. The main circulation route through the site has a meandering road/path which adds to the village character that is developed. This has been developed as a 'shared space' road for resident safety and amenity.

Other key design features of the site layout that were established during the master planning process include establishing visual permeability through the site. Buildings grade in height from the low residential at the school and residential boundaries, to minimize the impact on neighbours and the higher apartments located centrally on the northern (stop bank) boundary far away from the current residential units. This allows a variety of views into, across and over the site to be achieved.

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Wellington 6011  
New Zealand

PO Box 39 345  
Wellington Mail Centre 5045  
New Zealand

---

PH. +64-4-**920 0032**  
EMAIL. [wn@designgroupstapletonelliott.co.nz](mailto:wn@designgroupstapletonelliott.co.nz)

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[designgroupstapletonelliott.co.nz](http://designgroupstapletonelliott.co.nz)





Fig 1. Above – Visual connection above buildings

The choices of form and materiality reflect a retirement village that is warm and friendly with a strong sense of 'community'. This started in the masterplan and now continues through to the preliminary design with the development of buildings, forms, materials and site planning.



Fig 2. Above – View from School

A materials palette has been selected with the attributes of quality, longevity and sufficient contrast in mind, to emphasise the buildings forms and break down larger masses into smaller 'residential' scaled parts. The materials proposed include multiple colours of brick and architectural concrete block veneer, which together are accented by plaster cladding finishes. These materials are also not uncommon within the neighborhood's existing and varied palette.



Fig 3. Above – View from Hathaway Ave

There is a strong reference to residential features on the surrounding housing types; with varied gables and roof lines tying back to the mixed architectural styles identified in the local vicinity. The development introduces a mixture of roof forms, each suited and appropriate to the scale of their respective blocks. The varied roof-scapes and articulation/prominence of some roof slopes/forms over others create a skyline that is sympathetic and reflective of the undulating hills which form the village's backdrop. These roof typologies also break down the scale and block forms, both horizontality and verticality, of the developed forms. They also provide a higher level of variety and personalisation to the separate units – within a cohesive and unified development.

Level 1  
318 Lambton Quay  
Wellington 6011  
New Zealand

PO Box 39 345  
Wellington Mail Centre 5045  
New Zealand

PH. +64-4-920 0032  
EMAIL. wn@  
designgroupstapletonelliott.co.nz

designgroupstapletonelliott.co.nz

## Precincts

The village can be broken down into several key precincts which have defining and unique characteristics, as seen below in Fig. 4.



Fig. 4. Above – Site Precincts.

"The Avenue" - provides the entry to the village with a tree lined driveway leading into one and two-level villas before reaching the 3-level apartment block (A). This precinct is characterised by trees and landscaped open space with the 'low rise' residential environment providing a graduated threshold from the surrounding residential environment.

"The Forecourt" - the driveway opens to a drop-off area, porte cochere and paved forecourt leading to the main public and communal block (E). This space is defined by the semi-enclosed courtyard, drop-off, planting features and extended canopy which direct visitors and residents into the adjoining entry and foyer of Block E. The space is overlooked from the adjacent Juliet balconies on the four-level serviced apartment block (C). This larger building balances with the smaller residential-scaled villas to the south and creates a well-defined but open forecourt space.

"The Crescent" - the driveway opens after a pinch point revealing a 'green' suburban 'corridor' where the road splits into two (with a central car parking island and planting surrounded by a mixture of one and two-level villas). The northern face of this 'corridor' is bordered with a three-level block (D). Under-croft parking at ground level of this block provides openness and reduces its vertical scale.

"The Village Green" – this is the 'heart' of the village and is overlooked by balconies on three sides (Blocks B, D and E). The core function of this space is to provide a 'central hub' and a key focal point for the village. It is a space designed for social interaction, communal activity and leisure. At the core is a bowling green, landscaped with surrounding sitting areas and a café, with terraced balconies and apartments overlooking the shared facilities. The green provides a central focus with activity (bowls), overlook, visual amenity along with a generous sense of space. Ground floor units surrounding the green are given front 'yards' (landscaped with terraces), which look out and engage all residents in activity, and activate the edge of the space.

The graduated heights of the surrounding blocks form a 'c' shape (with the eastern end open) around the space and provide the necessary levels of 'communal core'.

"The Lane Way" – this is the northern most precinct and has a combination of one level villas (along the southern boundary) and two and three-level apartments (along the northern boundary) overlooking the golf course. The road passes by the apartments with the open under-croft car parking providing visual relief to the space and giving an increased sense of openness. Front gardens along the southern villas provide soft landscaping in this area.

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## Block A

Fig. 5. Below. This block contains independent 1 and 2-bedroom apartments spread over 3 levels and oriented to overlook the golf course (to the north) and the Eastern Hills to the east.

This 3-level block has an under-croft car park along its southern side which provides visual openness to the shared street and reduces visual bulk of the building. The structure is split centrally by a vertical break providing the entry and vertical circulation routes for the building clearly emphasizing the building's entrance. On the northern and southern sides balconies project outwards providing form articulation and visual interest. Gable roofs provide a strong roofline, varied roof-scape, and articulation to the projected structures.

With consideration for CPTED (crime prevention through environmental design), the under-croft car parking is overlooked by the living spaces of the villas opposite, with the structural solution being selected to maximise openness. The upper level apartment living spaces overlook the shared street and ensure passive surveillance. Though it is not desirable to have an undercroft parking and it does not improve the visual quality of the development, we believe it is better than some alternatives. Landscaping has been introduced between parking bays to soften the appearance of the parking.



Fig. 5. Above – Block A elevation.

## Block B

Block B is the combination of three building height types which step/terrace downwards. The largest is the 5-level apartment block (west) (Fig. 6. below) which steps down to a 3-level block. The building is again reduced to a 2-level block at the building's eastern end. This graded shape helps reduce the visual mass of the building when viewed from the residential properties east of the site.

The form is broken down into several component parts. These include the living module, bedroom module and balconies. These component parts are separately articulated to help break-down the larger form into smaller residential sized elements.

Ground floor units open onto terraces and front yards overlooking the bowling green and provide an active edge to this central public space. On the building's northern face, these ground level spaces provide a residential edge to the golf course when viewed from the stop bank.

One, two and three-bedroom apartments are incorporated/orientated into the layout to overlook the golf course to the north of the site, and the village green and Eastern Hills to the east of the site. Access to sunlight to apartments is optimised.

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Wellington 6011  
New Zealand

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New Zealand

PH. +64-4-920 0032  
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A central circulation spine allows the form to be evenly broken into two parts (between the three and five-story typologies), and a physical/visual break between differing building heights. Beneath the block is a basement parking level which provides the necessary covered car parking.



Fig. 6. Above – Block B elevation.

Level 1  
318 Lambton Quay  
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EMAIL. wn@  
designgroupstapletonelliott.co.nz

## Block C

The four level Block C houses the Memory Care facility at ground level with three levels of serviced apartments above. These serviced apartments will enjoy views of the golf course and Western Hills to the north, and central Lower Hutt and the Eastern Hills to the east.

The Memory Care unit has been planned to allow for secure access, with a central lounge overlooked by the nurse's station and service spaces close at hand. The secure Memory Care courtyard has been located to the north with direct access from the lounge.

The form of the building is articulated by varying unit sizes with larger units projecting forward with balconies and gable roof forms. This strong articulation of residential unit widths breaks down the overall horizontal and vertical mass.

Entry to this block is through the main building (Block E) with the stair and lift accommodating circulation for Block E also.

From a CPTED stand point, all upper level units have either Juliet balconies or full balconies off the living spaces, providing overlook and façade activation to the adjacent public spaces.



Fig. 7. Above – Block C elevation.

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## Block D

Fig. 8. Below. Block D contains serviced apartments on the ground and second floors, with care beds on the first-floor level. On the southern side of the ground floor, under-croft parking minimises vehicle dominance and provides the necessary covered parking for residents.

The northern ground floor serviced apartments open onto terraces and front yards overlooking the bowling green, and provide an active edge to this central public space.

A combination of small balconies on premium care rooms and Juliet balconies on serviced apartments provide levels of amenity to all residents and a high level of passive surveillance.

The form is articulated into four component parts through use of materials and a combination of premium and standard service apartments (which in plan allow the building to step). The form is articulated by alternating materials tied to the roof forms to visually break the building down into residentially scaled bays. The under-croft carparking to the south also visually reduces mass on the southern side and gives an increased sense of space to the shared space street.

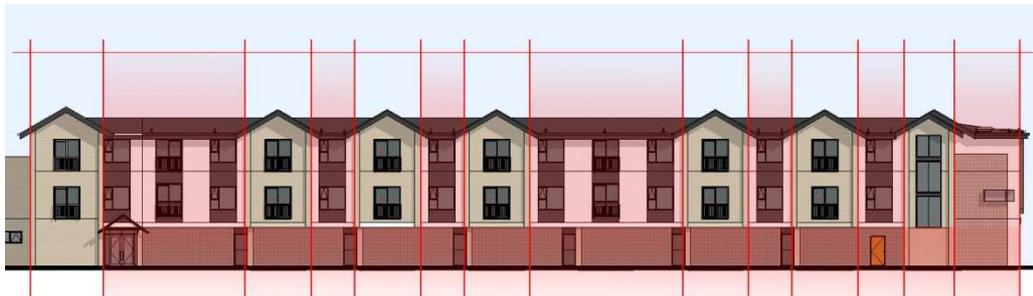


Fig. 8. Above – Block D elevation.

## Block E

Block E is the main building and houses the shared communal and service spaces for the village. Its location creates a central hub for the adjoining blocks and the wider village.

The layout of spaces has been carefully considered to maximise usage of the limited ground floor space. The proposed solution is to locate the café, pool and gym on the ground floor while locating the other communal spaces on the first floor (where residents can take full advantage of views from this level). The ground floor layout needs to maintain the strong connections required of administration and sales offices, while providing a generous cafe space with direct connection to the main kitchen and other facilities.

The care lounge and dining room are also located on the first floor of this block with a direct and seamless connection to Block D. Note: independent access and circulation are also provided to the care facility via Block D.

Deep eaves and large glazed areas allow solar penetration into the spaces and provide framed views of the golf course and bowling green. Strategically placed outdoor spaces on both levels provide further amenity to this central and important facility.

The form of the building is articulated with balconies wrapped with a playful and considered folded form - providing a contrast with the more complex facades of the adjoining blocks.

The porte-cochere extends out at the entry providing a welcoming, sheltered drop-off, with the light open entry clearly defined from a distance. Upon entering the foyer, those occupying the space experience a view through the cafe to the bowling green.

## Block F

Fig 9. Below. Block F is made up of 2-bedroom, independent living apartments.

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318 Lambton Quay  
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New Zealand

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PH. +64-4-920 0032  
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Views over the golf course can be seen from the north-facing apartments. Views over central Lower Hutt and the Eastern Hills can be seen from the southern apartments. Under-croft parking has again been designed to maximise openness and provide a greater sense of space to the reduced width of the shared space street. Units provide passive surveillance over the shared street and the opposite (south facing) villa's provide surveillance under the under-croft.

This block is broken into two differing façade treatments which are separated by a vertical glass link that accentuates the entrance. This link provides the necessary vertical circulation to the building and provides a buffer for the different façade forms (east and west of the central link). These differing treatments of the façades rely on different bay widths and roof lines, and clearly differentiate the building into several forms - so as to ensure the block is not read as a single block or form.



Fig 9. Above. Block F elevation

## Conclusion

An important factor in the design of this village is the careful consideration to the effects on neighbouring properties. Mitigation measures include ensuring appropriate visual permeability across the site is provided. A variety of roofscapes together with articulation of block structure and material assist in reducing visual scale of buildings.

These measures come together in the development of this village, with key consideration for the way the skyline works between building form and the backdrop of the hills.

This proposal will contribute positively to the local area and provide an exemplar for aged care village development within an existing context. This has been achieved with the contribution of good CPTED outcomes, façade and edge activation, and internal amenity - adding to the rich village environment.

Designgroup Stapleton Elliott  
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Wellington 6011  
New Zealand

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New Zealand

---

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