

R4 | Residential Design Element Passive Surveillance

Overview

Dwellings that overlook the street can help enhance the safety of both the street and the house. Windows facing the street provide opportunities for “passive surveillance”, or “eyes on the street”, which helps reduce opportunities for crime. This is because people using the street are safer when they can be seen from adjacent buildings. Data has also shown that houses are less likely to be burgled when they have doors and windows that are visible from the street or other public spaces, as intruders are more likely to be detected.

Purpose

This Residential Design Element is a non-statutory design guide created to assist developers, designers and planners achieve policy outcomes under the Auckland Unitary Plan (AUP). This guide provides assistance in achieving the following AUP policies:

Single House Zone Policies	Mixed Housing Suburban Zone Policies	Mixed Housing Urban Zone Policies	Terrace Housing & Apartment Buildings Zone Policies
H3.3(3)(a)	H4.3(3)(a)	H5.3(3)(a)	H6.3(3)(a)

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Design Principles

- R 4.1** The front elevation of a dwelling (excluding the garage door) should have at least 20% glazing. Preferably this glazing would be the windows of a frequently used ground floor room, such as a kitchen, dining, living or family room. This room should include at least one large window at eye level facing the street (or facing a shared driveway if the house does not have a street frontage).
- R 4.2** The front door should be clearly visible and accessible from the street. This ensures any suspicious activity can be seen by passers-by. The safety of occupants of a house is also enhanced if they have views of who is approaching their home.
- R 4.3** Balconies oriented towards and overlooking the street encourage use and activity that can contribute to more ‘eyes on the street’, directly reducing opportunities for crime.
- R 4.4** To achieve passive surveillance, it is important that fencing or landscaping in front of the house does not block views in to or out of the site. To do this, fencing in the front yard should be below eye level (1.2 - 1.4 metres in height). If higher fencing is necessary (to keep in dogs etc) it should allow unobstructed views through to the street (i.e. be “visually permeable”); or be located behind the front elevation of the dwelling (for more information on how to achieve this refer to the Design Element R2 - Fencing and Walls).
- R 4.5** The practice of using passive surveillance to create safer streets also applies to parks and other public areas. Glazing and balconies should be orientated to overlook public areas, while fencing and planting should avoid significantly blocking views to these areas.

Getting it right



There is little opportunity for passive surveillance of the street when glazing is not provided for at eye level. The front door is also obstructed from view due to its setback from the front of the building.



Ample glazing provided on the street facades allows for passive surveillance from frequently used rooms of the house. Landscaping should be maintained below a height of 1.4m if passive surveillance of pedestrians is to be maintained.

Getting it right



Ground floor views to the street from the living room can be designed with adequate privacy to the residents, using setbacks, landscaping and furnishings to differentiate between public and private space.



Windows overlooking parks and other public open spaces can provide safety for the users of these spaces due to the feeling of being seen.

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