Module 3a: Small Homes
Welcome to HLC's Auckland Housing Programme Design Guidelines.  
This is Part 3, Module 'a' - the supplementary module with guidance for small homes. 
Each Module is contained in a separate PDF document.

Design Guidelines Part 1: 
AHP Wide Guidance

1a: The Design Guide
Start here for an overview of HLC's objectives within the Auckland Housing Programme. The module sets out the design outcomes which are required of our delivery partners, including masterplanners, architects and landscape designers.

1b: The Built Environment
Explore the detail of how to achieve our design outcomes in order to deliver housing and the public realm well, under HLC's part of the Auckland Housing Programme.

1c: The Approval Process
Find out about the design review process for development in HLC's part of the Auckland Housing Programme.

Design Guidelines Part 2: 
Neighbourhood Specific Modules

2a: Northcote
2b: Roskill South
2c: Ōwairaka
2d: Māngere West- Stage 1

Design Guidelines Part 3: 
Supplementary Modules (Recommended)

3a: Small Homes
3b: Children Living at Density
3c: Waste Management

Potential future supplementary modules:
Affordable housing
Mana Whenua
Process around developing own/further modules

Note: Please view all guidelines as mandatory for all proposals unless marked as 'recommended'.
We request that delivery partners also follow all recommended design guidance unless they can demonstrate a practical reason not to.
1.1 Neighbourhood

1.1.1 Group size and variety
1.1.2 Massing and arrangement
1.1.3 Communal outdoor space
1.1.4 Pedestrian access
1.1.5 Vehicle access
1.1.6 Clustered and group carparking
1.1.7 Shared Services

1.2 Home

1.2.1 Design quality
1.2.2 Storage
1.2.3 Private outdoor space

There are some design requirements that apply specifically to small houses, in addition to the guidance related to their respective typology. The intent is to create high quality, high amenity, small houses on small lots, arranged to create positive social dynamics including: active street frontage; sunny outdoor space with good indoor-outdoor flow; well integrated into the wider development.

Small homes are encouraged as smart, inherently sustainable and flexible options for adding density to existing neighbourhoods.

Small homes may be affordable but in many cases affordability is not their primary purpose. They provide for a lifestyle that is flexible, safe, community engaged, simple and liberating. Small homes are desirable for many demographics.

For small houses to be successful and desirable they must embrace to solve the design challenges presented by their scale. The following guidance is intended to help designers and developers do just that.
1.1 Neighbourhood

Small homes, as with any other new homes, are to be designed in accordance with Neighbourhood guidance outlined in module 1b. However, in the case of small homes there is additional guidance outlined in this module to aid designers and developers in locating multiple small homes on a superlot in clusters or groupings.

These ‘small home villages’ are encouraged for their potential to:

- Utilise land efficiently
- Contribute to the delivery of diverse housing options and choice to the market
- Deliver options for intergenerational family living within the same block
- On some occasions, deliver affordability (although it is acknowledged that not all small homes will be affordable homes and vice versa).

The following guidance is intended to facilitate the success of a small home village in terms of its liveability, community and identity outcomes.

1.1.1 Group Size & Variety

**targeted outcomes:** LIVEABILITY, IDENTITY

The group size and variety of small house typologies within a grouping or ‘small home village’ is significant because it offers the potential for establishing a community of different household make-ups in close proximity, and enables a cohesive spatial group to be formed.

i. Layouts should take into account an optimum amount of variety to avoid complete repetition in a group, and to avoid ‘one of everything’ creating lack of cohesion.
1.1 Neighbourhood

1.1.2 Massing & Arrangement

targeted outcomes: LIVEABILITY, IDENTITY

The massing and arrangement of small houses is significant because it influences how the small houses can positively effect the quality of the overall development, create good urban form outcomes, and ensure good solar access and amenity to each house.

i. Small houses should be aligned to face the street or lane, taking into account how groupings of small houses ‘turn corners’ to enable both streets to be activated by building frontage.

ii. It is important that designs take into account the mix, massing and arrangement of stand-alone, duplex, &/or terraced; single and two-storey houses in relation to surrounding built form context to:

- Orientate small houses for good solar access
- Ensure good solar access to the individual lots
- Avoid overshadowing of neighbouring houses
- Avoid overbearing by neighbouring houses
- Provide consistency of streetscape appearance in terms of height, scale and rhythm of buildings
- Ensure frontage relationships are positive, avoiding ‘backs’ facing public realm or other units ‘fronts’.
1.1 Neighbourhood

1.1.3 Communal Outdoor Space

*targeted outcomes: LIVEABILITY, COMMUNITY*

Designers should consider the quality and liveability of outdoor spaces during site layout and massing and arrangement decisions. Small sites and subsequently fragmented site areas can make individual private outdoor spaces suboptimal in terms of solar access, useability or privacy, designers are encouraged to explore communal spaces to deliver a quality outdoor open space.

Due to small homes inherently inspiring external engagement and a heightened relationship with the outdoor environment, there is opportunity for increased neighbourly interaction through communal spaces. Shared green spaces between small numbers of units where food growing, outdoor cooking and play can happen together are often in line with the desired lifestyle small home inhabitants desire.

The relationship with streets, lanes and open space is also critical. It is important these spaces are high quality, green and easily accessible to small homes.

1.1.4 Pedestrian Access

*targeted outcomes: LIVEABILITY, COMMUNITY*

Small home villages can lend themselves to being more pedestrian in nature than typical development. Pedestrian access into and across the site requires specific consideration to ensure access to homes, communal spaces and cluster or group car parking creates positive spaces and achieves targeted outcomes for community and liveability.

i. Ensure pedestrian access to small homes through lanes or communal spaces is designed with consideration of:

- Access to and location of communal areas
- Access to and location of cluster or group parking
- Access to homes/units
- Privacy of homes/units
- Wider site context and connections to them through the site
- Generous path widths
- Clear sightlines
- CPTED principles.
1.1 Neighbourhood

Examples of positive communal outdoor space and pedestrian access
1.1 Neighbourhood

1.1.5 Vehicle access

targeted outcomes: LIVEABILITY, COMMUNITY

In many cases, small homes are likely to be focused around/off laneways or communal spaces where their front yards occur as part of integrated landscaping with the laneway streetscape or public realm.

Efficient use of small spaces and ensuring a quality community environment are top priorities when it comes to considering vehicle access.

i. Design access to small homes with pedestrians in mind. Where including vehicle access to fronts of lots compromises the pedestrian experience, consider rear loading or decoupling vehicles from individual lots.

ii. Any vehicle access in the vicinity of small home village must be low speed environments where cars are allowed ‘by invitation only’ e.g. as per Community Street.

iii. Consider providing limited vehicle access to units such as temporary parking spaces for loading and unloading, and providing clustered or group parking elsewhere on the block.

1.1.6 Clustered or group car parking for small homes

targeted outcomes: LIVEABILITY, COMMUNITY

Clustered or communal carparking is encouraged in small home villages. As with outdoor space, pairing each individual car with the relevant house can result in inflexibility in massing and arrangement opportunities and sub-optimum outcomes for groups of small homes.

Where decoupling the vehicles from the homes results in more functional and desirable layouts, communal car parking is encouraged with the following guidance:

i. Where group or cluster car parking is provided within a ‘small home village’, consideration should be given to the location and appearance of these car parks. Clusters should be small in number with generous landscaping integrated in the design.

ii. Group or clustered car parking location and layout should be designed with the potential for future development in mind; locate and arrange space in a way that could accommodate the construction of new/additional homes when car parking is no longer required.

iii. Refer also: 2.1.H6 - 2. Clustered or group car parking guidance in module 1b
1.1 Neighbourhood

1.1.7
Shared Services

*targeted outcomes: LIVEABILITY, IDENTITY*

The scale and nature of small homes means some features of typical larger homes may be appropriate to become shared amenity within the ‘small home village’.

Design of shared services must consider the location, user groups and potential uses of these spaces, as well as their safety, security and accessibility.

Spaces or uses that may be appropriate to share within ‘small home villages’ include:

- Bike storage
- Washing lines and laundry
- Large item storage e.g. ladders, prams, surfboard etc.
- Other specialty facilities e.g. workshop, indoor play space, kitchen etc.
- Waste collection/bin storage.
1.2 Home

1.2.1 Design Quality

targeted outcomes: LIVEABILITY, IDENTITY

Small homes require a higher level of design than typically larger homes. Both the internal and external spaces have a heavy reliance on well executed design to function well, look appealing, and feel spacious and comfortable. Simply scaling a large home down is not enough, careful consideration of spatial relationships, ceiling heights, window locations and dimensions among other features are all additionally important in this context to ensure the small house is desirable to live in.

i. The following design principles should be followed:

• Simple and clean lines combined with intelligent and clear geometrical forms
• Overscaled volumes and openings - double height space, voids, full height windows
• Light filled, airy internal space
• Ingenious design of well scaled service spaces - kitchen, bathroom, laundry
• Ingenious storage solutions - e.g. within furniture and cabinetry
• Flexible spatial division - e.g. sliders as space dividers.
1.2 Home

1.2.2
Storage

**targeted outcomes: LIVEABILITY**

i. Storage needs to be carefully considered into the design and build of small homes (for both everyday household items and bulky items such as bicycles) to ensure a quality outcome.

- Design furniture with storage built in - e.g. stairs with draws under tread or window seat with hatch lid
- Build in cabinetry - e.g. consider using space between internal wall studs for extra depth to cupboards
- Carefully consider all elements of the house to explore possible dual purposes
- Consider externally accessed storage - e.g. access under house or under stair from an external door

1.2.3
Private Outdoor Space

**targeted outcomes: LIVEABILITY, COMMUNITY**

Quality external space is vital to Small Home living. Outdoor space may be private and/or communal.

i. Where outdoor space is private, a variety of factors require careful consideration in the location and design of the space, including:

- Orientation, to ensure good solar access
- Whether locating it at ground level as a courtyard, or upper level as balcony provides the best outcome in terms of liveability, privacy and overlooking, and what this might then mean for the floor plan design of the home
- Providing privacy balanced with potential connection or interaction with communal and shared spaces
- Anticipating and providing for potential uses such as seating, food growing and entertaining etc.
- Ensuring the space is sized adequately for intended uses.