

Aro Valley rezoning annoys

By OLIVIA WANNAN

Wellington City Council's review of its public consultation processes has not come soon enough for some Aro Valley residents.

They have been left reeling in disbelief by the lack of communication they received from the council during the rezoning of several properties bordering the Aro St shops.

As part of a 2009 district plan change, affected property owners were told the rezoning of 68-82 Aro St was proposed in the draft plan – but that was the last communication they received.

As the district plan was developed, the rezoning from inner residential to suburban centre was taken out of the plan and then put back in as part of the submissions process.

Although the information was in the consultation materials available at libraries and on the council website, the council gave no separate

notice to those affected. That surprised property owner Christabella Boardman.

"If there was any change to what was happening then we should be notified in advance," she said. "But there was nothing."

All but one of the owners was able to make submissions about the rezoning, but only because one learnt of the changes while contacting the council about resource consent.

Ms Boardman said she was also concerned that the council had failed to inform her of the effects the rezoning would have.

"If this is going to affect how much my rates go up because now I'm in a completely different zone, I haven't had any of that notification."

Lambton ward councillor Stephanie Cook said that under the Resource Management Act such rezoning required minimal consultation.

"The officers applied the letter of the law," Ms Cook said. "That meant the wider community had no opportunity to have a say."

Ms Cook said the council was undertaking a review of its public consultation procedures under district plan changes.

Several councillors had had concerns and had requested the review last year.

