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30 JUNE 2022

DRIVE HOLDINGS LTD  
C/- BARKER & ASSOCIATES LTD  
ATTN: NICOLE HERON

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Dear Drive Holdings Ltd

## FAST TRACK CONSENT APPLICATION SUMMARY ASSESSMENT – URBAN DESIGN

1. Thank you for engaging me to provide a professional urban design assessment of your application for fast-track referral application.

### Introduction

2. I have been asked to summarise the urban design issues relating to the application by Drive Holdings Limited for resource consents regarding the construction of seven new multilevel buildings on 75-79, 81-87 & 89-97 Tamaki Drive, 6, 8-10, 12 and 14 Patteson Avenue, 26, 28, and 30 Marau Crescent, Mission Bay (**"the Site"**) providing for retail, food and beverage, and residential activities (140-170 apartments) and supporting car parking, loading bays, vehicle manoeuvring areas, landscaping and plant (**"the Project"**).
3. This summary assessment is intended to assist the Minister's initial decision whether or not to refer the application to for fast track consideration. In the event that the application is accepted, I would prepare a full assessment for the subsequent Expert Consent Panel.
4. To undertake my assessment I have:
  - a. visited the Site and its local environment (most recently 21 June 2022);
  - b. reviewed the concept plans prepared by Buchan Ltd;
  - c. been briefed by Barker & Associates Ltd on the specific requirements that would apply to the consideration of a Fast Track application; and
  - d. been briefed by Barker & Associates Ltd as to the reasons for consent and restrictions of discretion that apply.

## Summary of assessment

5. In my opinion the proposal is in line with industry best-practice urban design principles. In summary:

### *Previous proposal*

- a. The Site was previously the subject of an application for resource consent that was refused by the Council and Environment Court. The previous proposal was premised on:
  - i. a 'blue sky' design approach to the Site based on its relatively large size and what the designers felt its different parts had capability to absorb in terms of development scale and height;
  - ii. maximising the built form emphasis of the commercial street axes of Tamaki Drive and Patteson Avenue, and responding to the scale and width of the open spaces adjacent to the coast all by way of additional building height; and
  - iii. seeking to provide a Marau Crescent frontage modelled on something closer to a Mixed Housing Urban zone outcome to match the southern side of the street, rather than a Local Centre zone one.
- b. The previous proposal included buildings varying in height from 1-storey (a podium) to 8-storeys in height. All buildings along Patteson Avenue and Tamaki Drive were taller than the zone height standard. The key issue of contention that arose from that was the effects of building height above the zone standard, including lost views from residential properties south of the Site to the water / sky horizon. Related to this, and not an issue at the Council hearing but subsequently identified by the Council's witnesses at the Environment Court, were concerns that any building height above the zone standard should not exceed the maximum height of local trees, and should also be set lower than the height of Takaparawhā Bastion Point so as to not visually dominate those. The Court decision also reiterated that the central issue raised by the proposal was the Applicant's promotion of buildings taller than the height standard. In its decision it expressed its understanding that the Mission Bay Local Centre zone height standard had been arrived at through the Auckland Unitary Plan process as being the best and correct fit for the centre.
- c. The current proposal, as explained in more detail below, has arisen as an attempt to address the key matter of contention in the previous proposal by approaching the zone height standard, and indeed all zone standards, as fixed constraints that were not to be infringed (i.e., a "design to comply" approach). The only standard not now proposed to be complied with is the restriction on residential activity along the Marau Crescent ground floor level, which I note could be readily complied with in any event such as by designing a non-residential activity to occupy that space.

- d. In these respects, the current proposal contrasts clearly with and is in my opinion materially different to the previous proposal. Because of the very high degree of zone standard compliance that has now been proposed, my assessment of the current proposal has also been markedly different to that for the previous proposal because different restrictions of discretion are now triggered than had been the case.

*Current proposal*

- e. The proposal will substantially change the character of the Site and would become, for the time being, the visually largest development within Mission Bay. Specific conclusions are:
- i. I have undertaken a thorough analysis of the Site and its context.
  - ii. The proposal has been arrived at following what I would describe as a rigorous architectural design and review process. As noted earlier, a direction from the Applicant was provided to the architects to seek maximum-possible AUP: OP compliance. This is of itself a commonplace design instruction, and I regard recognition of statutory Plan provisions as one factor that can legitimately inform design. In my assessment I specifically considered the restrictions of discretion that apply to new buildings that comply with the standards.
  - iii. In the design process I was consulted at several stages including high-level initial design scoping and briefing of key outcomes that I felt were important. I reviewed several iterations of draft plan development and as a result of that can confirm that the proposal is been based on and informed by a considered urban design approach.
  - iv. Mission Bay is a local centre that operates in tandem with adjacent local centres at Eastridge and St Heliers. It is adjacent to the regional attractor of Selwyn Domain and Mission Bay Beach.
  - v. The existing environment is of a residential suburban area wrapping around a commercial centre located on flat land centred around the junction of Tamaki Drive and Patteson Avenue. This is in my opinion the 'natural' location that I would have expected a centre to locate at.
  - vi. The Site is occupied by a variety of buildings in various states of built form quality, but which relate positively to the street frontages, particularly Tamaki Drive and Patteson Avenue. At this time the buildings are 1 or 2 storeys in height, and the De Fontain corner building (a faux-heritage façade) is a local landmark. But the Site does not contain built form of such a quality or urban design significance that those buildings or activities should be protected or 'held back' from redevelopment under the scheme of the AUP: OP.

- vii. In this environment, and having carefully considered the restrictions of discretion for new buildings that comply with the zone standards and the additional restrictions that apply in the case of providing residential activity at the Marau Crescent Ground Floor level, I see no urban design reasons why building to and within those zone standards for building bulk and mass would not be appropriate. The Site enjoys separation from many adjacent sites and residential-zoned land to the south rises upwards on a hill, giving elevation to the residential development to the south and providing mitigation of potential built form effects.
- viii. The proposal would be visually well-contained by and sit within the natural landform 'bowl' around Mission Bay. This would limit general visibility and prominence in the wider environment to viewers within that area and atop the landform bowl's edge, including Takaparawhā Bastion Point.
- ix. The proposal would be separated from adjacent land on three sides by the width of a public street and along the eastern boundary will incorporate a number of recessed steps in the building's form so as to mitigate potential effects on adjacent residential activities.
- x. The built form will visually enclose the adjacent streets and positively contribute to their attractiveness and pleasantness. The building will have numerous access points including for the disabled, and canopies / verandahs for the benefit of pedestrians will extend above the footpath on Tamaki Drive and Patteson Avenue. A landscape plan indicating pedestrian amenity upgrades for the public footpath, including street tree planting, is also proposed. In my opinion these outcomes, although changing the existing character of the street substantially, should be classified as positive urban design effects.
- xi. Car parking has been internalised within the building in a basement and through the technique of ground-floor 'sleeving', whereby land use activities have been placed around the outer edge of the Site to screen the parking areas from public view. Accesses to the car parking areas are in my opinion well-suited to the Site and will not compromise the amenity of the streets.
- xii. The proposal has been visually expressed as a number of adjoining buildings seeking to generally maximise building continuity along the street edges. In my opinion this is in line with best-practice urban design principles for commercial centres. By being designed as a number of buildings rather than one very large singular mass, the proposal has mitigated many potential adverse built form character effects that might have eventuated in a manner that will also contribute to the visual interest and attractiveness of the street.

- xiii. The buildings present a highly activated (the provision of openings, doors and windows allowing access and two-way visibility at the ground floor) and visually engaging façade. The variation in façade design and inclusion of numerous openings and recesses (primarily for balconies) will provide significant opportunities for occupants to look out over the street and passively surveil it. In my opinion these are positive urban design outcomes.
- xiv. The design and layout of the proposal is in my opinion in line with Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles, noting that the AUP: OP does not of itself contain any such principles and I have instead considered the seven principles set out in the Ministry of Justice's 2005 *'National Guidelines for Crime Prevention through Environmental Design in New Zealand'*.
- xv. I am supportive of the lack of commercial activities at the ground floor frontage of Marau Crescent. I regard this as an inferior commercial street compared to Tamaki Drive and Patteson Avenue (and of note is the substantial length of Tamaki Drive frontage subject to either a Local Centre or Business: Mixed Use zone, both capable of accommodating ground-floor commercial activities). A purely-residential interface will best maintain the characteristics what is an otherwise residential street.
- xvi. Having considered the proposal's effects on the environment and the objectives and policies of the Business: Local Centre zone, I have concluded that in urban design terms the proposal will be acceptable, generally positive, and in line with the scale, intensity, and built character of development sought within the zone.

## **Conclusions**

- 6. On the basis of all of the above, I am supportive of the granting of consent and consider the proposal to have been well-designed. The buildings will in general meet what I would regard as 'standard' urban design expectations for urban-density mixed use buildings, and be in line with the outcomes sought by the AUP: OP.
- 7. The key effect of note will be the large scale of the proposal and the change it will result in on the Site, along the street frontages, and visible within Selwyn Reserve. Having regard to the restrictions of discretion that apply to the proposal, I see no basis to conclude that this substantial change will of itself be inappropriate or problematically adverse in urban design terms.

Please feel welcome to contact me should you wish to discuss any aspect of the above further.

Yours sincerely,



**IAN MUNRO**

urban planner and urban designer

B.Plan (Hons); M.Plan (Hons); M.Arch [Urban Design] (Hons); M.EnvLS (Hons); M.EngSt  
[Transport] (Hons); MNZPI

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