



Kepa Road Apartments

Urban Design Summary Statement
Prepared for Sanctum Properties Limited

4 March 2022



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1.0 Introduction

Boffa Miskell Limited has been requested by Sanctum Properties Ltd to prepare an Urban Design Summary Statement in respect of a proposed residential development on a 2,255m² site at the corner of Kepa Road and Kurahaupo Street in Ōrākei (the Site).

The proposal is being submitted for consideration for processing under the 'Fast-Track' pathway for resource consenting provided for by the Covid-19 Recovery (Fast Track Consenting) Act 2020.

The purpose of this statement is to provide a summary of the Site's key characteristics relevant to urban design outcomes and a preliminary assessment of the proposal from an urban design perspective. Should the project be successful in entering the Fast-Track system for resource consent a full Urban Design Assessment will be prepared at the EPA stage.

Boffa Miskell has provided input into both landscape and visual effects and urban design aspects of the development of the concept for the Site by project architects Monk Mackenzie since our engagement in the project in September 2021. This statement should be read together with the Landscape Effects Evaluation of the project also prepared by Boffa Miskell.

2.0 Site Context

The Site has a total area of approximately 2,255m² and comprises three existing lots: 182 Kepa Road, 184 Kepa Road and 8 Kurahaupo Street, Ōrākei. The Site is loosely rectangular in shape and has a fall of approximately 8m from the south-west corner to the north-east corner of the Site.

There are three existing one-to-two storey houses on the Site. The dwelling on 8 Kurahaupo Street is one half of a duplex. The duplex extends onto the neighbouring site at 10 Kurahaupo Street.

Kepa Road is an arterial road linking the inner eastern suburbs of Kohimarama and Glendowie with Ōrākei and Remuera, extending east from Ngapipi Road at the Orakei Road roundabout. That part of Kepa Road adjacent to the Site is on a ridgeline, on both sides of which the land falls away to the north and south. Kurahaupo Street is a local residential road which slopes down to the north, following a gully that is part of a series of ridges and gullies where the coastal eastern suburbs' land mass slopes down to the inner Waitematā Harbour, defined at its edge by Tāmaki Drive.

Directly to the south of the Site on the opposite side of Kepa Road is a large area of open space under the management of the Ngati Whatua Ōrākei Reserves Board. This land slopes down steeply to Ōrākei Basin.

The Site's location on the northern side of the Kepa Road ridge offers expansive views out over the residential neighbourhood of Ōrākei to the north through to the Waitematā Harbour.

The Site has access to a range of services and amenities in Eastridge Shopping Centre, approximately 200m to the east along Kepa Road, and a small group of shops directly to the west at the corner of Kepa Road and Kupe Street.

Regular bus services pass along Kepa Road and Ōrākei train station is approximately a 20-minute walk to the west (1400m metres).

The Site is subject to two different zonings in the Auckland Unitary Plan – Operative in Part (AUP). Business – Mixed Use (B-MU) zoning applies to 182 and 184 Kepa Road and Residential – Terrace Housing and Apartment Building (THAB) zoning applies to 8 Kurahaupo Street.

B-MU zoning also applies to the property directly to the west (180 Kepa Road) and to a band of properties on the north side Kepa Road from East Ridge shopping centre west through to Coates Avenue. THAB zoning also applies to the property directly to the north (10 Kurahaupo Street) and similarly stretches in a band applying to properties on or near to Kepa Road from East Ridge shopping centre through to Kupe Street.

The existing built form in the area is predominantly one to storey typically suburban, residential houses in a range of detached and attached forms. Further to the east along Kepa Road are recently constructed four to five storey apartment buildings at 236, 243 and 250 Kepa Road.

3.0 Planning Context

As stated above, the Site has B-MU and THAB zoning. These are two of the AUP's more intense zones, anticipating a change over time to larger, bulkier buildings along the strategic Kepa Road transport corridor.

3.1 THAB zone

Auckland Council guidance¹ on the THAB zone states that:

- The THAB zone *'is a transformational zone that is reflective of Auckland's need to accommodate population growth and achieve a compact urban form through intensification in appropriate locations'*; and
- *The THAB zone is a critical component in providing for residential intensification for Auckland and giving effect to the outcomes sought by the strategic planning documents and the [Regional Policy Statement] in particular.'*

From a review of the zone description and objectives and policies, the primary urban design outcomes sought by the AUP for the THAB zone are:

- Providing for high-intensity, multi-storey, urban residential living in a range of forms, including terrace housing and apartments;
- Acknowledging that the change from suburban to urban built character will bring with it a high degree of visual change;

¹ Auckland Unitary Plan Practice and Guidance note, *'Residential development in the THAB zone and assessing alternative height in relation to boundary'*, January 2020, Auckland Council, pages 3 and 5.

- Achieving attractive and safe streets;
- Providing for quality on-site amenity for residents and meeting their day to day needs by providing for privacy, outlook, daylight, sunlight, and necessary amenities;
- Managing building height and bulk to maintain daylight access, and a reasonable level of privacy, and to minimise visual dominance effects to adjoining sites; and
- Recognising that design quality is increasingly important as the scale of development increases.

New buildings and all dwellings require restricted discretionary activity consent in the THAB zone. This allows assessment against a number of design-based criteria, with discretion being restricted to matters including effects of the proposal on neighbourhood character, residential amenity and safety.

To achieve the anticipated zone outcome of high-density residential housing, the THAB zone enables significantly greater building bulk and height closer to site boundaries than lower density residential zones. This is by means of the Alternative height in relation to boundary (AHIRB) standard. Use of the AHIRB requires restricted discretionary consent, with discretion restricted to visual dominance effects, attractiveness and safety of the street, and overlooking and privacy on neighbouring sites.

3.2 Business – Mixed Use zone

From a review of the zone description and objectives and policies, the primary urban design outcomes sought by the AUP for that part of the Site which is within the B-MU zone are:

- Development should be of a design quality that positively contributes to the visual quality of and interest of streets and other public open spaces;
- Larger-scale development should be of a design quality that is commensurate with its prominence and visual effects;
- Enable the development of intensive residential activities; and
- Require activities adjacent to residential zones to avoid, remedy or mitigate adverse effects on amenity values of those areas.

As with the THAB zone, new buildings require restricted discretionary activity consent in the B-MU zone. Discretion is restricted to a broad range of matters including:

- The contribution that buildings make to the pleasantness of the street;
- Provision for convenient and direct access to the street;
- Effectiveness of screening of carparking areas;
- Opportunities for passive surveillance of the street afforded through glazing; and
- The application of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) Principles.

4.0 Opportunities and constraints

Based on an analysis of the characteristics of the Site and wider area, including the planning context set by the Site's zoning, the following opportunities and constraints to its development can be distilled:

- The Site is located on a corner with two street frontages. Corner sites perform well for larger scale buildings, and residential buildings in particular, as they enable outlook to be optimised over the street and have fewer boundaries with adjoining properties where effects on neighbours might need to be managed.
- The Site is of a generous size and reasonably regular shape and proportions, increasing its efficiency for standard construction and providing the opportunity for a high-quality development of a larger bulk and scale than currently exists in the area, consistent with the outcomes sought by its zonings.
- The slope of the Site down from Kepa Road provides the opportunity to provide carparking in a semi-basement level.
- The Site is in a high amenity location, with expansive views over the wider area in all directions but particularly to the north and south, and has good access to open space, services and public transport, providing a good opportunity for intensive residential development.
- Potential high-quality views include (but are not limited to) those to the north to the Waitematā Harbour. These views are over neighbouring residentially zoned land. Development will need to ensure that any adverse visual dominance and privacy effects resulting from orientating to those views are appropriately managed. Attractive views to the south across Kepa Road to the open space outlook of Ōrākei Basin are also available.
- Building development on the Site should positively address and front to Kepa Road. The road, however, is a busy arterial and is on the south side of the Site. This presents design challenges in how to balance on-site residential amenity with a high-quality street interface.

5.0 Proposal

Two architecturally designed apartment buildings composed as a single composition are proposed on the Site, being a lower-level building to the north and a higher-level building to the south, adjoining Kepa Road. There are two levels of basement parking which extends under both buildings. A single vehicle access to the parking levels is from Kurahaupo Street. A total of 45 apartments are proposed across the two buildings.

The southern building has a total of seven floors of apartments, accommodating the lowest apartment level within the slope of the Site. To both Kepa Road and Kurahaupo Road, six floors of the building can be seen.

The northern building has a total of six floors of apartments, also accommodating the lowest apartment level within the slope of the Site. To Kurahaupo Road, five floors of the building can be seen.

Both proposed buildings infringe the THAB/B-MU zone's building height standards. The southern building, which is in the B-MU zone, exceeds that zone's maximum 16m occupiable height by a maximum of 5.290m and the 18m total building height (16m occupiable height plus 2m for roof form) by 3.290m. The northern building, which is in (in part), within the THAB zone, exceeds that zone's maximum 16m height by a maximum of 1.113m.

The northern building utilises the AHIRB standard along its northern boundary with 10 Kurahaupo Street and is fully within the recession plane for that standard.

No outlook spaces extend over the Site boundaries into neighbouring properties.

6.0 Preliminary urban design assessment

Having reviewed the Monk Mackenzie architectural plans, it is considered the primary urban design issues the proposal presents are the potential dominance and neighbourhood character effects of the proposed height infringements and the dominance and privacy effects on neighbours of use of the AHIRB

Below, a preliminary assessment is provided of these two primary potential effects of the development, together with an assessment of how and to what extent those effects are addressed. This is followed by a short review of other urban design aspects of the proposal, including the streetscape interfaces of the development and on-site residential amenity.

6.1 Proposed building heights

The height of the proposed southern building is such that it will be a prominent visual presence in the wider area, with this prominence being accentuated by views to it from the west and east along Kepa Road and due to its ridgeline location. As surrounding B-MU and THAB zone lots redevelop, however, both buildings will be seen as part of (and will integrate with) a wider grouping of multi-level buildings along a one-kilometre long section of Kepa Road from Dudley Road in the east through to Coates Avenue in the west.

It is considered that sound urban design techniques are used to accommodate the proposed height on the Site in a manner which positively addresses its scale and assists with modulation of the buildings. The broad approach is of stepping height down from south to north across the Site, working with the fall of the land, with the southern building being taller and the northern building be lower.

Each building has a top floor pulled back along the length of its northern edge and partly back from its western and eastern edges. This is an effective technique to break down the scale of the buildings. This breaking down of scale is accentuated on the western and eastern ends of the buildings with recessed cuts up the full height of the elevations.

Both buildings present their narrow sides to the east and west. For the southern building, which will be more visible due to its height and location directly adjoining Kepa Road, the end elevations of the building are approximately 16.6m wide. This is relatively slim in the context of a multi-level building, and together with the manner in which the building is articulated, will assist in managing the perception of scale of the building when looking towards it from further to the west or east along Kepa Road.

The northern façades of both buildings are highly glazed and have balconies connecting through to principal living rooms of the apartments. The other three elevations of the buildings comprise predominantly solid cladding elements. These are punctuated by vertical lines of glazing which run from the first to top floor of each building. On the southern elevation of the buildings, these glazing lines are placed amongst deeply sculpted bays which also run up the buildings' façade from first to top floors.

As a composition, these techniques mean that the southern elevation to each building will read as highly modulated and varied, but with an overall very strong, and relatively solid, architectural form. The over-height part of the southern building will read as part of this form. Standard techniques to deal with over-height elements typically include setting the bulk back from the lower floor. While, as discussed, that technique is used on parts of the top floors of both

buildings, it is not used on the southern elevation. That situates the greatest height element of the southern building towards Kepa Road, which is the most visible part of the Site and proposed development.

It is considered that, overall, this is a well-balanced architectural and urban design response to the characteristics of the Site and demonstrates a strong but cohesive and high-quality architectural approach.

Traditionally, in urban design practice, corner sites are considered to be appropriate locations for increased height. This is because of the legibility to the urban fabric that buildings of greater scale tend to bring to a neighbourhood when placed at a corner. This principle is employed here and then used in conjunction with a stepping of building height down to the north and highly modulated facades in order to break up the overall massing of the buildings.

In summary, the height and scale of the buildings will bring about a significant change in the existing character of the neighbourhood and will be a visually prominent presence. Buildings of increased bulk are, however, anticipated by the Site's zoning and that for other sites along the Kepa Road ridge, such that the character of the ridgeline will be likely to change over time to a collection of multi-level buildings. This trend is already emerging. The proposed heights of the buildings, and particularly the southern building, are considered to be an appropriate and positive response to the Site's location at a corner on a key arterial route. The modulation of the buildings' massing and the articulation of form represents a visually coherent and high-quality architectural approach. It is considered that, at least for the short term, while the buildings will be visually prominent, they will avoid being visually dominant – in the sense of not being a disproportionate or uncomfortable change in scale.

Overall, it is considered that the approach to building height and scale is such that the over-height aspects of the development will have less than minor adverse effects on neighbourhood character. Furthermore, as a quality architectural statement to a corner site, the development will signal the emerging urban nature of inner Auckland suburbs and a quality, compact form of development.

6.2 Use of the AHIRB

The proposed northern building makes use of the AHIRB along its northern boundary with 10 Kurahaupo Street. This enables the building, consistent with the intent of the standard, to have bulk closer to the boundary, so facilitating an apartment building form.

Use of the AHIRB requires consideration of adverse effects on neighbouring properties. That property which would be potentially adversely affected by its use is 10 Kurahaupo Street, with those potential effects being visual dominance and privacy.

In assessing the quantum of these effects, relevant considerations are the layout of the house and site at 10 Kurahaupo Street (in order to understand the sensitivity of the property to effects) and the design techniques used to reduce potential visual dominance effects and to retain reasonable privacy.

The house on 10 Kurahaupo Street is, as stated earlier in this report, half a duplex. That half of the duplex which is on the Site will be removed when the development is undertaken, leaving the remaining half of the duplex on 10 Kurahaupo Street, with a newly instated boundary wall, directly on the common boundary.

The 10 Kurahaupo Street property has a long rear yard. The primary outdoor living space of the house, however, appears to be a first-floor balcony at the north-eastern end of the property

adjoining the street. This balcony is oriented away from the Site to the elevated view down the street and through to the Waitematā Harbour.

The proposed northern building has principal living rooms for all apartments in the building along its northern façade facing out towards 10 Kurahaupo Street. However, the building is set back from the northern boundary such that outlook spaces applying from the glazing from these rooms are all within the Site. This is a primary tool used in the THAB zone for managing privacy effects. Compliance with the required depth of the outlook spaces suggests prima facie that reasonable levels of privacy are maintained to 10 Kurahaupo Street. Privacy is further managed to the property by the orientation of the proposed northern building on the Site. It is aligned parallel to Kurahaupo Street meaning that, while its western end is closer to the northern boundary with the adjoining property, its eastern end has a deep setback of up to 17m from the boundary.

Visual dominance effects on 10 Kurahaupo Street are similarly managed by the angled and deep setback of the north-eastern end of the northern building and the recessed nature of the north-western corner of the building.

Any privacy and dominance effects on 10 Kurahaupo Street are further reduced by the layout of that property which places what appears to be the primary outdoor living area at the north-east corner of the lot, in an elevated position, facing away from the Site and out to the coastal view.

In summary, all outlook spaces of the northern building being within the Site, the deep setback of parts of the building from the northern boundary, the recess of the form of the north-western corner of the building, and the layout of the house on 10 Kurahaupo Street are such that any adverse visual dominance and privacy effects on that property from the proposal, including in respect of its use of the AHIRB standard, are considered to be less than minor.

6.3 Public realm interface

The southern building has two ground level pedestrian foyers into the building from Kepa Road and ground floor and upper floor windows that overlook the street. The eastern elevation of both the southern and northern buildings have high levels of glazing at their northern ends through to the principal living rooms of apartments. Additionally, the foyer to the northern building is via a pedestrian path across the central courtyard accessed from Kurahaupo Street.

In summary, the development presents good levels of glazing to both street frontages. While glazing to Kepa Road is of a lower percentage, this recognises the highly trafficked nature of the road and its southerly orientation. Low boundary walls together with shrub planting and specimen trees positively assist in the definition of front yards to both streets and the creation of an attractive street-front amenity.

Overall, the provision of multiple pedestrian entries to street frontages, good levels of glazing to street and upper floor levels, proposed front yard landscaping, and the high-quality architectural approach for the development (as described earlier in this report) are such that the proposal is considered to present a positive interface to both Kepa Road and Kurahaupo Street.

6.4 On-site amenity

All proposed apartments have north facing principal living rooms, off which are generous sized decks. Apartments are of clear and rational layouts, enabling convenient movement around standard sized furniture. Additional storage space for apartments is available in the basement parking levels. Residents also have physical and or visual access to on-site open space and

garden areas that include small specimen trees and other amenity planting, creating a balance of hard and soft on-site open space amenity. Overall, it is considered that the apartments and development provide a high level of on-site amenity for potential residents.

7.0 Conclusion

Having undertaken a preliminary assessment of the proposal, it is considered that the primary urban design issues are the potential adverse character effects of the proposed buildings' height and dominance and privacy effects of the use of the AHIRB on the adjoining property at 10 Kurahaupo Street.

It is considered that the design of the buildings has been managed such that these potential adverse effects are of a less than minor level.

Overall, it is considered that the development represents an appropriate urban design response to the opportunities and constraints of the Site, achieving high-quality buildings which will positively contribute to the attractiveness and safety of the street, have a design quality commensurate with their scale, provide quality on-site amenity, and suitably manage potential adverse effects to neighbours.

About Boffa Miskell

Boffa Miskell is a leading New Zealand professional services consultancy with offices in Auckland, Hamilton, Tauranga, Wellington, Christchurch, Dunedin and Queenstown. We work with a wide range of local and international private and public sector clients in the areas of planning, urban design, landscape architecture, landscape planning, ecology, biosecurity, cultural heritage, graphics and mapping. Over the past four decades we have built a reputation for professionalism, innovation and excellence. During this time we have been associated with a significant number of projects that have shaped New Zealand's environment.

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