

MEMORANDUM

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To: Newmarket Holdings Development Limited Partnership, C/- John Sax

From: Matt Riley - Senior Associate / Urban Designer, B&A

Date: 1 April 2021

Re: Urban Design Memo - Fast Track Consenting Referral Application, Proposed Mixed-Use Newmarket Development

1. INTRODUCTION

Newmarket Holdings Development Limited Partnership ('**NHDLP**') proposes to lodge an application for a referred project under the Covid-19 Recovery (Fast-track Consenting) Act 2020 to utilise the fast-track consenting process via an expert consenting panel. This application relates to the development of a contiguous landholding at 33-37 George Street, 13-15 Morgan Street and 10 Clayton Street, Newmarket.

To support the application for a referred project, this memo provides a high-level review of the urban design aspects of the proposal, including:

- Summary of the proposal and the site context;
- Summary of work completed to date; and
- High level urban design assessment of the proposal.

2. THE PROPOSAL

Key elements of the proposal are:

- Four residential apartment buildings are proposed on a podium base, which contains carparking;
- The four buildings are of differing heights, with the lowest building (29.8m) being towards the site's northern (Auckland Domain) frontage, and the tallest building (63.7m) being at the site's south-eastern corner;
- There is a pedestrian connection north-south through the site, with a publicly accessible plaza at its centre; and
- The connection and plaza are edged by active uses, including food and beverage operators.

Refer to Appendix 1 for concept imagery of the proposal.

3. THE SITE

The site is an approximately 7,873m² landholding on the boundary between Parnell and Newmarket. It is located to the north of the Newmarket Metropolitan Centre and directly to the south of the Auckland Domain, one of the city's largest public open spaces and an important historical and cultural asset. There is an approximately 10m fall in the site from its northern (George Street) frontage through to its southern (Clayton Street) frontage.

The site is in a large block with poor formal permeability, contrasting with a more fine-grained Newmarket laneway network to the south.

The surrounding area, to the north of the Newmarket Metropolitan Centre, is a developing mixed use neighbourhood. Existing buildings in the area are largely low-rise (up to four storeys), with some buildings of a more mid-rise scale. Immediately surrounding uses are commercial, office, and some emerging areas of retail. Further to the west along George Street, also opposite the Auckland Domain, is a group of terraces and apartment buildings developed from the mid-1990s onwards.

The site is well-situated in terms of amenities, being within a close walking distance of public transport stops (bus and rail), public open space, schools, Auckland Hospital, the University of Auckland campuses on Khyber Pass Road and Park Road, and the retail/commercial offerings of the Newmarket Metropolitan Centre.

The site has Business-Mixed Use ('MU') zoning in the Auckland Unitary Plan ('AUP'), as do the majority of surrounding sites. Business-Metropolitan Centre zoning applies to the Newmarket retail and commercial area, approximately 120m to the south.

A Height Variation Control applies to the site and immediately adjoining properties, raising the permitted building height from the MU zone's default 18m to 27m. A volcanic viewshaft passes over the western part of the site at a height of approximately 34m at the site's north-west corner and 49m at its south-west corner.

Volcanic viewshafts pass over the significant majority of the Newmarket Business-Metropolitan Centre zoned sites to the south. The viewshafts reduce the permitted building height on these sites from the zone's default 72.5m to a band of around 30m-55m height.



Figure 1: The site

4. WORK TO DATE

B&A undertook an initial urban design review of the development potential of the site in mid-2017. This review identified high level opportunities for development of the site as being:

- Capitalising on the site's proximity to amenities including public transport, public open space, a centre of a scale second only to the City Centre, and its location largely outside volcanic viewshafts, to provide an intensified level of development;
- Providing a neighbourhood focal point to a growing working and residential community at the northern end of Newmarket;
- Addressing existing poor levels of permeability in the area and providing a pedestrian focused connection between the Auckland Domain and Newmarket; and
- Providing an opportunity to reinforce the sense of place and cultural heritage of the area.

An iterative process of urban design input and review was then undertaken with project architects Warren and Mahoney to develop a concept scheme for the site.

5. ASSESSMENT

In support of the Private Plan Change application that was lodged with Auckland Council for the site, B&A undertook an urban design assessment. That assessment, which was accompanied by extensive diagrammatic and visual analysis, identified a range of desirable urban design outcomes for development of the site. These were based on an analysis of the site, its context, and best practice urban design. The outcomes were grouped under the themes of: A high quality pedestrian environment; Quality built form; and Relationship to neighbouring sites.

The following is an assessment of the proposal against those themes.

5.1 A high quality pedestrian environment

Overall, it is considered that the development achieves a high quality pedestrian environment. I make the following specific observations:

- The proposed pedestrian plaza, edged by active uses, will deliver a new community focal point to a growing working and residential community in this northern part of Newmarket.
- The north-south pedestrian connection will provide valuable improved permeability through the wider area, extending an existing network of laneways in Newmarket through to a new interface and frontage with the Auckland Domain and the southern part of Parnell.
- Primacy is given to the pedestrian environment through the placement of carparking within the podium structure, screened from view, and the positioning and design of vehicle entry points and exits, which avoids impinging on the primary north-south connection.

- The development presents activated, street level frontages to both its Auckland Domain and Newmarket facing frontages and, where practicable, along the north-south pedestrian connection, providing for a safe, legible and engaging movement route between Parnell and Newmarket.

5.2 Quality built form

I consider that the development achieves a quality built form through tiered building heights, modulation of form, space between buildings, and the ability to respond to the site's landscape and cultural setting. This enables the development to integrate into the immediate streetscape and sit in a comfortable relationship to the Auckland Domain and Auckland War Memorial Museum, while forming a positive addition to the cityscape. I make the following specific observations:

- Lower building height towards the site's northern frontage enables the development to visually integrate within the future urban form of mid-rise buildings along George Street enabled the AUP.
- Greater building height at the site's south-eastern end places this increased scale where it will be seen within a wider urban environment.
- Building bulk is appropriately modulated through the setting back and stepping of corners on floor plates, recessed upper floors, and the space between buildings.
- The site's north-south pedestrian route and public plaza offer the opportunity, through detailed landscape and architectural design, to build on the landscape setting besides Auckland Domain and to integrate mātauranga and tikanga.

5.3 Relationship to neighbouring sites

Potential adverse effects to neighbouring sites include visual dominance, privacy and shading. I consider that visual dominance and privacy effects are appropriately managed and the extent of additional shadow cast by the development envelope – when assessed against the existing and planned future environments – is not significant. I make the following specific observations:

Visual dominance

- Visual dominance effects on sites adjoining the subject site are generally of a very low level. This is because these sites largely have primary views facing away from the subject site, or oblique views to it. Furthermore, proposed building bulk above the 27m height permitted by the MU zone is setback from boundaries, with boundary walls being up to 16m in height, significantly less than the 27m height permitted directly on boundaries by the zone.
- Sites on the opposite side of the road to the subject site (on the northern side of George Street and western side of Morgan Street) have more direct views to the development and will therefore experience a prominent new structure within their viewing environment. In my opinion, however, the proposed buildings will sit comfortably within these views, noting the setback of taller height elements and the degree of modulation and articulation brought to building forms.

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Privacy

- Privacy to neighbouring sites is successfully managed by use of the MU zone's outlook space standard. This requires a minimum setback of glazing facing out over adjoining sites.

Shading

- Shading analysis undertaken for the Plan Change shows that, for much of the year, additional shadow cast by the proposed development beyond that of building bulk permitted by the zone is limited to the George Street, Carlton Gore Road, Broadway block. At those times the shadow extends beyond this block, it generally hits Business zoned sites and moves quickly.
- Additional shadow is cast largely on the roofs of existing buildings, rather than building facades or site yards.
- As surrounding sites redevelop up to the heights permitted by the MU zone, the extent of additional shadow cast by the development will markedly reduce.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The proposed development is of a scale and intensity that capitalises on the site's proximity to public transport, public open space, and employment retail, commercial, educational, and health services in the Newmarket and Parnell areas. From an urban design perspective, it will be a valuable contribution to the wider Newmarket and Parnell area:

- providing enhanced connectivity, giving Newmarket a frontage to the Auckland Domain, and providing a new community focal point to the northern end of Newmarket;
- while appropriately managing potential adverse effects on neighbouring sites and positively integrating building massing into the surrounding area.

AUTHOR



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Date: 01/04/2021

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APPENDIX 1: PROPOSAL - CONCEPT IMAGERY

Figure 1: Site layout

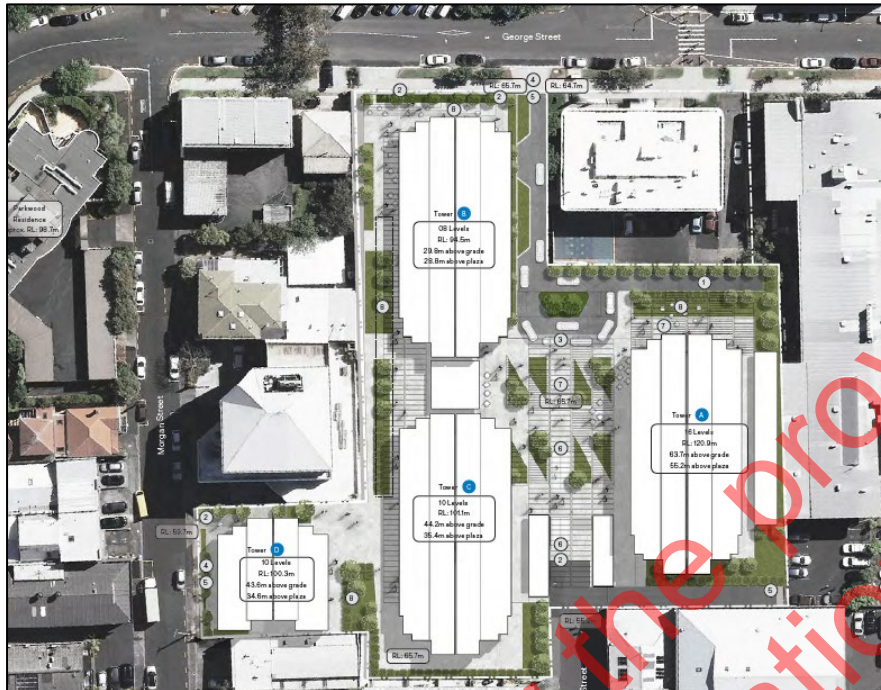
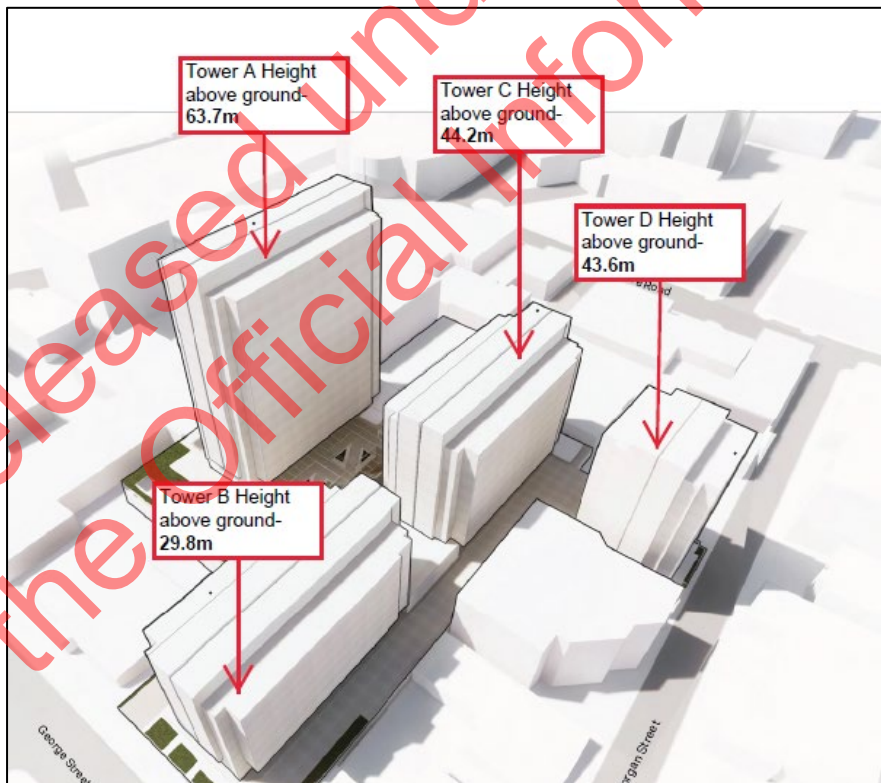


Figure 2: Building heights



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Figure 3: Looking north along Clayton Street to the site



Figure 4: Looking south from George Street to the site

