ianmunro

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9 DECDEMBER 2022

WATCHMAN CAPITAL LTD
ATTN.: MR. BILL RITCHIE
BY E-MAIL

Dear Watchman Capital Ltd

CONCEPT SUMMARY, 31 NGONGOTAHA ROAD ROTORUA – FAST TRACK REFERRAL

1. Thank you for asking me to provide a short summary of the concept that has been developed in collaboration with the other project consultants and in particular BDG Architects Ltd and McKenzie & Co Ltd.

2. The concept plan (dated 8 December 2022) is in my opinion a successful urban design solution for the Site. It has been arrived at over a number of design iterations and reviews that I have contributed to.

3. The key urban design characteristics of the 196-unit concept are:

    a. Integration of site constraints including topography, storm water, and an existing stream running north-south along the Site's western boundary. The block structure is premised on public streets to the Council's infrastructure standards.

    b. A consistent and quite successful reflection of the urban design structuring principle of 'fronts and backs', such that no true rear lots are proposed (allowing all of the medium density dwellings to enjoy the spacious outlook depth of a public street or other open space). Dwellings will front streets including Ngongotaha Road, which I regard as positive outcomes.

    c. A variety of housing typologies and dwelling sizes including detached dwellings, duplex dwellings and terraced housing. These have been distributed on the Plan so as to balance solar access, passive surveillance of streets, and vehicle access (rear lanes).

    d. In recognition of the negative safety and amenity effects that narrow-width medium density housing can have on streets where vehicle access comes directly from the street (creating long continuous rows of garages or parking pads and mountable kerbs), rear service lane JOALs have been included extensively wherever the terraced houses have been proposed.

This helps to give streets higher visual quality, make footpaths markedly safer for pedestrians (and small children), and enable much more on-street car parking to be provided for visitors and drop-offs. As a result and in conjunction with the quite small block sizes (and perimeters) proposed, in my opinion the development will be pleasant for pedestrians to walk through with a variety of route choices available.

e.   A 3m shared path has been included east-west from Ngongotaha Road to an internal north-south road within the Site that adjoins (in places) the stream and open space. This will provide an additional recreational amenity that connects with the stream (and associated storm water devices).

f.   Although on the concept plan storm water areas associated with the stream have a very geometric shape, this is on the basis of analysis to ensure that sufficient holding volumes have been identified. In a detailed design, these would have a much more naturalistic appearance and be landscaped so as to seamlessly integrate with the stream's riparian margin (also to be planted and enhanced).

g.   The placement of rear service lanes and communal car parks has also been informed by seeking to buffer adjoining sites to the north and south (and the railway line), and in addition provision by way of lot depth has been made for a dense landscaped screen to be planted along the northern boundary with an adjoining site so as to visually mitigate the presence of the development.

h.   Also so as to maintain the amenity of streets, rubbish bin storage and collection would be associated with the rear lanes and not result in bins being kept permanently at the street in front of terraced houses.

i.   In terms of dwelling typologies, I have collaborated with BDG Architects Ltd to ensure that these will meet client and market requirements while still providing a positive visual outcome for residents and visitors. This includes variation in the appearance of the buildings so as to avoid adverse visual effects from excessive repetition. This will include variation in roof form, cladding materials, window sizes and proportions, and colours.

j.   The floor area of the dwellings and their associated outdoor space, and their relationship and proximity to other dwellings (solar access / outlook / privacy), are in my opinion consistent with what I routinely see with medium density housing and raise no particular effects of concern or that could not be well-mitigated through a detail design process.

k.   A novel approach included in the proposal is the provision of dedicated resident car parking areas (the concept being that the terraced housing dwellings would have one dedicated parking space associated directly with the dwelling, and then a second space allocated within the communal car park). This reflects what I consider a real-world acknowledgement of what many households require at this time and is a pragmatic outcome I have been expecting to become more popular in residential areas (including by way of private operators) as they densify. Although in the detail these would need to be well landscaped so as to positively contribute to the development's visual quality, I have no in-principle

concerns with the approach and consider it is likely to be much more successful than the alternative I have seen where market car parking demand was not sufficiently catered to in development planning (photo below taken from Auckland).

4. Based on the design workshops and process undertaken to date, and adherence to the key outcomes identified in the Rotorua District Plan (for residential developments), the Government's MDRS as set out in the Resource Management Enabling Housing Act 2021, and the NZ Urban Design Protocol, the concept can be considered to have been rigorously tested by the consultant team and reflects best-practice.

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

Yours sincerely,

IAN MUNRO
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