

AUCKLAND URBAN DESIGN PANEL

RECOMMENDATIONS



Project: Omaha
Location: 135 Albert Street, level 14, room 10
Date: 27th May 2021
Time: 1:30PM – 4:30PM
Members: Alistair Ray (chair), Mike Thomas, Vaughan Smith, Daniel Marshall
Planner: Nicholas Simpson / Masato Nakamura
Urban Designer: Chris Butler
Landscape Specialist: Ainsley Verstraeten

- ✓ Support for the following reasons
- ☐ Support subject to some changes (stated below)
- ☐ Support subject to fundamental changes (stated below)
- ☐ Cannot support for the following reasons

Introduction

The Panel thanks the applicant for the well-considered presentation. This certainly has the potential to be an excellent higher-density urban development. The Panel welcomes the building forms and spaces created between the buildings which should help to create good levels of outlook and privacy as well as encouraging social engagement.

The Panel supports the over-height components of the project, noting that the over-height elements are placed well away from sensitive neighbours. The additional height actually provides a greater degree of roof variation.

The Panel supports the move to accommodate non-residential uses within the site as well as on the street-edge and the move to create a publicly accessible link through the site. The Panel notes that the scheme is designed in such a way that the spaces are flexible and adaptable should these uses not be commercially viable.

The inclusion of on-site amenities (spa, pool etc) for residents is encouraged as this will assist in creating a cohesive community.

The Panel supports the early architectural concepts with a good use of texture and colour that adds warmth and richness. However, the Panel does have concerns with the large extents of floor to ceiling glazing used for residential apartments and the

problems this can cause with lack of privacy, often resulting in excessive numbers of closed blinds and curtains through the day.

The Panel would like to draw the applicant's attention to the following areas which need further consideration as the project develops and will be required to help the project reach its full potential:

General

- Further engagement with iwi and incorporation of the Te Aranga design principles
- Further consideration and incorporation of measures to improve the environmental performance of the development.

Public realm / open spaces

- The hierarchy of open-space – providing an obvious indication of areas where the public are encouraged to wander freely versus those spaces that are more for residents only. It is suggested that to provide the feeling of security to residents, some areas need to be less publicly accessible.
- Legibility of the through site link – currently it feels like the route is not obvious given the tightness of the corner and the narrow gap, with the design of the public realm perhaps leading users away from the route. The design of the spaces and buildings may need to be adjusted to assist with the legibility.
- To assist with the above, a strategy for wayfinding and lighting needs developing.
- Further design thinking to make the spaces feel more intimate and residential in nature. Currently some of the spaces appear a little civic in nature – the large steps to the podium in particular. Further consideration should also be given to the idea of incorporating “play” elements – noting the intent to accommodate families and provide a healthy environment.
- Consideration as to how sufficient tree planting (numbers and scale) can be provided in the central spaces noting the fact they will be located on a podium / parking structure.

The Building

- Signage strategy – to ensure a sensitive approach and integration with the architectural strategy.
- Measures to avoid excessive heat gain on western elevations – noting that residents may prefer to be able to control this themselves as opposed to excessive tree planting to screen.

To the extent permissible by law, the Council expressly disclaims any liability to the applicant (under any theory of law including negligence) in relation to any pre-application process. The applicant also recognises that any information it provides to the Council may be required to be disclosed under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (unless there is a good reason to withhold the information under that Act). However, the Council is able to withhold information for certain reasons including to prevent unreasonable prejudice to someone's commercial position. All resource consent applications become public information once lodged with council.

- Further refinement of the architectural concept to avoid the buildings feeling overly commercial and to address matters of privacy through excessive floor to ceiling glazing.
- Consideration of using opaque or solid balconies to avoid loss of privacy and views of unsightly elements on the balconies.
- Further development of measures to assist in controlling noise from the motorway / railway, considering the use of winter gardens and enclosed balconies in the most sensitive locations.
- Consideration of single aspect commercial units in the central buildings facing the principal public route through the site to help concentrate activity and assist in the legibility of public versus private spaces.
- Consideration of handling the transition between adjacent commercial and residential uses on the ground floor of buildings – noting that a solution will be required to handle the different floor to floor levels required whilst still providing a coherent external façade strategy.
- Further development of colours and materials and façade design to help avoid the buildings appearing as one large dominant mass.
- Handling of plant and rooftop elements.

Basement

- Security considerations if public parking is provided in the basement for the commercial uses.
- Residents cycle parking and storage of more bulky items – providing sufficient space and security
- Refuse storage and collection strategy – especially with respect to the ground floor non-residential units.
- The impact of structure on the car parking layout and how the access to the upper/podium parking will be efficiently provided.

Conclusion

Given the Panel generally supports this project, a further Panel review is not expected subject to the resolution of the above items to the satisfaction of the Reporting Urban Designer.