

## Urban Design Panel Recommendations

Project identifier	SR 484881
Applicant	Willis Bond
Architects	Athfield Architects
Project address	1 Tasman Street, Mt Cook
Date of panel review	20 May 2021
Panel members	Sally Ogle, Jane Black, Graeme McIndoe
Council officers present	Farzad Zamani, Team Leader, Design Review Morten Gjerde, Urban Design Consultant Nicole Heron, Planner Chessa Stevens, Heritage (on-line)

### Introduction

1. Project designers Athfield Architects presented the proposal and explained their design rationale. They described approximately 180 units with five dwelling typologies compared to the current 40 or so units. Our review comments follow.

### Site planning – bulk, form and location

2. Figure ground drawing shows a mixed grain in this context including small and very large buildings and the proposal maintains this characteristic grain. With the exception of the RA Vance stand, large footprint buildings around the site including the Museum Stand and the Dominion Museum are aligned with Te Aro Grid. The proposal is also aligned to that grid and we support this approach. We note also that other buildings along the eastern edge of Tasman Street are aligned to this grid rather than to the angled edge of the street. It is also positive that the Carillon axis is recognised in the plan layout.
3. The corner of Buckle and Tasman Street is the appropriate location for the tallest building on the site and the articulation of building mass and skyline variation along the edge of old Buckle Street/Pukeahu are positive.
4. Servicing and parking are all suitably located beneath and behind the development, away from the street.
5. The comparative massings shown in the review were helpful. We consider it would be helpful to provide some further imagery and a summary analysis of the main attributes of the arrangement of bulk and form of the alternatives investigated. This may assist in providing a compelling rationale for the optimal solution.

### **Building height**

6. Locating the highest building form to the north of the site and close to the Tasman Street corner is in our opinion an optimal approach. This allows relationship to the higher parts of the city the north and for transitioning down to lower scale development to the south.
7. We also consider that the height of the north tower is appropriate in views from the city to the north. This is because building separation and offsets make it relatively uncommon to have the proposal, the Carillon and the Dominion Museum in the same view.
8. In the view in emerging from the tunnel, the height of the south tower is in our opinion appropriate in relation to the Dominion Museum. However, in the view from the east the south end of the north tower could be considered to challenge the primacy of the Dominion Museum. If that is the case, consideration should be given to adjusting the height of this part of the building. Additional views in the approach from the east should be developed to interrogate this matter. The height of the north tower is such that the Carillon is still significantly higher / the primary skyline element in this view, and so we do not see any issues with overall building heights in relation to the Carillon.
9. We note that the 'over-height' portion of the north tower casts some additional late afternoon shading to the Basin Reserve at mid-winter. We consider this effect to be inconsequential. That is for the reasons of absence of sunlight protection to the Basin; predominant use of the space for summer sports; and likely fleeting timing of shading during a limited number of days at and around mid-winter.

### **Building design**

10. Elements that contribute to design excellence are:
  - Primary factors*
    - Base isolation and resilience
    - Potential architectural/sculptural quality of the terraces
    - Design strategy for fit with context at both macro and micro scales:
      - Contributes to the existing city spatial structure; and
      - Responds well to the scale, alignments and materiality of significant buildings around with different design responses on Buckle Street and Tasman Street.
  - Supporting factors*
    - Diverse range of residential accommodation
    - Contributes to both the wider mixed-use community and creates an on-site community
    - Well located intensive housing on a site that suits this use
    - Food and beverage outlet at street corner and serving the park
    - Intended quality of materials
    - Positive street interface
11. Architectural expression of the base of the north tower to reference the scale of the Mt Cook Police Barracks Building is supported.
12. The design of the tower as a light and crystalline form is supported
13. The design of the individual tower building tops should be simple, clean and unarticulated to be viewed as 'ground' with the Carillon beyond as the figural element. Clutter should be eliminated. Instead, variation in building height and

type within the complex as a whole contributes to skyline diversity and breaks down the visual bulk of the development.

14. The proposed contemporary approach to the architectural aesthetic of the townhouses is supported.

#### **Residential amenity**

15. The plans describe potential for a high level of amenity for dwellings.
  - a. The one south-facing single-aspect apartment on each floor of the south tower comprises a very minor proportion of the total number of dwellings proposed on site. While there will be a lack of sunlight to these apartments, the outlook compensates for this as does readily accessible high quality public space
  - b. Openness at both ends of apartment corridors contributes to the quality and amenity of the journey to and from apartment front doors.

#### **Public access through the development and through site link**

16. We do not consider that a through site link is essential given the scale of the block and the uncertainty as to whether it could be realised through to Sussex Street, and even on the need for or merits of that connection should it be possible. However that the configuration provides for a future connection is not a negative. We also support access control of the on-site open spaces.

#### **Edge to Tasman Street**

17. Definition of the edge to Tasman Street is proposed with a brick building at the corner and then trees and wall to the south.
  - a. In our opinion the brick corner building should extend around onto Tasman Street to more or less match the length of the Police Barracks building. This is seen as an extension of the row of townhouses, not as an attachment to the tower. We consider such an extension would also assist in mitigating the height of the tower in views from Pukeahu.
  - b. Consider potential for the 'garden wall' along Tasman Street to be brick in order to continue the strong brick base, reinforce the street edge and relate to the context of brick structures opposite.
  - c. Residential activity on ground is acceptable along Tasman Street if complemented by the café activity at the corner.
  - d. More information on landscaping is required to demonstrate how this edge performs visually, and in terms of public amenity. We do not consider public seating is strictly necessary along this edge given the proximity to Pukeahu.

#### **Edge to Old Buckle Street/Pukeahu**

18. Townhouses present a positive frontage to the Memorial Park/Buckle Street, achieve a successful scale transition from the tower behind to the edge of the park, and in both scale and materiality relate successfully to the Mt Cook Police barracks building.
19. A reasonably fine-grained frontage is provided with multiple front door connections. The presence of these front doors offers potential for more of a 'stoop' condition which might be assisted by lowering parts of the solid front wall close to each entry.

END