
31 AUGUST 2022

**617 NEW NORTH RD LTD
C/- CIVIX LTD
ATTN.: NICK MATTISON
BY-EMAIL**

Dear 617 New North Rd Ltd

CONCEPT SUMMARY, 617-619 NEW NORTH ROAD, KINGSLAND

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 Matz Architects Ltd.
2. The draft concept plans (a PDF file titled *1309-220829_Prelim RC*) demonstrate 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 7-to-9-storey, 34-unit visitor accommodation and 44-apartment development are:
 - a. The Site is an excellent candidate for residential intensification. My key reasons are:
 - i. Being a through site with two road frontages, the Site presents opportunities to provide high density residential activity in a way that can reduce the extent of outlook and orientation along the side boundaries (towards neighbours) than is the norm. The two roads also provide separation distance from neighbours on two sides.
 - ii. The Site is in a local centre directly adjacent to a train station, offering excellent access to the wider urban area. The Site is also directly adjacent to an approximately 15ha Business Mixed Use and Business Light Industry zone employment area. Eden Park

and Fowlds Park are also within a convenient walk of the Site. In summary it is a 'textbook' Site for substantial intensification.

- iii. The zones around the Site currently enable development to 16m / 18m in height and this provides a context for any intensification to occur within, including that development on that intervening area of land will in time also substantially screen development on the proposed site from view in the wider environment. Because of the Site's location at a rail station adjacent to Dominion Road, the Council has excluded it from its recently notified PC78 ("Light Rail Corridor Under Investigation"), but I note I would expect the height limit to change to at least 21m recognising that it is within a walkable catchment of the station.
 - iv. The Site does not form part of any important public view shaft, nor does it enjoy any particular prominence in the environment (such as might occur if the Site were on a ridge).
 - v. The Site does adjoin a site that is the subject of a Historic Heritage Overlay (no. 2809, the former Mount Albert Borough Council chambers). Although I would agree that it would be important to incorporate a sensitive architectural response to that building, in urban design terms the presence of a historic heritage item on an adjoining or adjacent site is not an inherent constraint to development intensity, scale or type on the Site. There are examples of successful historic heritage responses based on an obvious juxtaposition or variance in scale and form, as much as there are examples of responses that seek to provide a mimicked or otherwise similar scale and form. The proposal would not be to directly change or impact on the historic heritage item, and any matter of aesthetic preference between that and the proposal premised on historic heritage effects are the domain of Mr. Wild and not of urban design concern.
- b. The proposal fronts and relates appropriately to its street edges. At New North Road, the ground floor is proposed to be 'sleeved' by a lobby / reception area for the visitor accommodation activity and a long space for a retail outlet such as a cafe. At the Western Springs Road frontage, which I regard as the 'secondary' (or less significant) frontage, a lobby and entrance for the residential apartments is proposed. These will screen most of the proposed car park from view, provide a means of street activation, and visual interest to each street.
 - c. Provision for road widening has been made.
 - d. The proposal has been designed to generally comply with the applicable Unitary Plan standards except for building height. In my opinion the Site has characteristics that lend support to over-height buildings, including by way of the size and scale of the arterial roads and the mixed range of building types and sizes within the locality. I consider that any adverse amenity or character effects of the proposal on the neighbourhood would not be problematic, with the new development positively signalling the intensive, urban train-station-surrounds intended by Council and recent Government policy positions.

4. Based on the design process undertaken, in my opinion the concept has been rigorously tested by the consultant team. It will result in a good-amenity, good-quality intensive development on an area of land well-suited to that.
5. Specific attributes that I am supportive of include:
 - a. A higher quality and more consistent built form interface with the two road frontages than exists at present. I am supportive of the recognition given to New North Road as the 'principal' frontage, with the Western Springs Road frontage being an access lobby and screening device for the internal car park. Along New North Road a narrow 'hole in the wall' style retail use is proposed, envisaged as a café. This has been discussed in detail with MATZ Ltd and additional provision of 1:50 scale plans and precedent imagery has satisfied me that this will be sufficient to enliven the street as well as provide both visual interest and passive surveillance.
 - b. A visually obvious stepped / varied height and bulk strategy across the Site following its opportunities to accommodate height and density. This includes stepping the top levels in from the boundaries to visually distinguish these as an obvious 'cap', and also making them less visually obvious.
 - c. A very obvious differentiation of the ground floor frontage at New North Road within the façade, and the quite successful internalisation of car parking within the building and generally out of public sight.
 - d. Provision of a communal roof lounge within the Site as a social focal point offering excellent elevated views and access to all-day sun.
6. Overall, the concept offers a successful urban design solution to the Unitary Plan's policies for mixed use development and high-density housing. In particular, the proposal successfully demonstrates an outcome that maximises development potential while not visually dominating or overshadowing adjoining sites; proposes an appropriate graduation of building heights and steps for the Site; and provides convenient, attractive and safe pedestrian connections based on a logical movement network. In terms of the zone policies more generally, the proposal is of a suitable visual quality that positively contributes to its environment; provides appropriately for its car parking and ground floor activities; and will avoid, remedy or mitigate potential adverse effects on adjacent residential-zoned land.

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

Yours sincerely,



IAN MUNRO

urban planner and urban designer

B.Plan (Hons); M.Plan (Hons); M.Arch [Urban Design] (Hons); M.EnvLS (Hons); M.EngSt
[Transport] (Hons); MNZPI

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(m) s 9(2)(a)