
23 FEBRUARY 2023

SWEET NEW ZEALAND CO. LTD.
ATTN.: NATHAN FUNG
C/- CIVIX LTD
ATTN.: NICK MATTISON
BY-EMAIL

Dear Nick

**CONCEPT SUMMARY, 19-25 VERRAN ROAD & 19 WEST GLADE CRESCENT,
BIRKENHEAD, AUCKLAND**

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 BDG Architects Ltd. You have advised me that you intend to lodge a request with the Ministry for the Environment to be considered under the Fast Track Consenting legislation.
2. The concept plan (dated 23 February 2023) is in my opinion an appropriate urban design solution for the Site as an Integrated Residential Development (“**IRD**”), a particular type of residential activity defined within the Auckland Unitary Plan: Operative in Part (“**AUP: OP**”).
3. The key urban design characteristics of the 110-dwelling concept are:
 - a. The proposed layout follows what I would regard as fairly well-established norms for higher density developments, specifically in terms of the ‘internalisation’ of additional scaled and height within the Site and ‘stepped up’ to that from lower-scaled development at the Site’s outer edge. The buildings have also been placed regularly
 - b. An existing stream, its riparian area, and an identified Significant Ecological Area will be kept free of development, and will be protected.

- c. The key opportunity presented by the Site is to connect the existing West Glade Crescent cul de sac to Verran Road, which is the key structuring element of the Site concept. Complementing this is a secondary loop road within the Site, and the result is a fairly well-resolved relationship of building frontages and public access, and rear gardens that face private neighbours. This structure has also been integrated into the sloping landform, although the final scale and design of retaining walls remains a matter that further detailed design would need to resolve and this could result in minor changes being necessary.
- d. The accessways will be publicly accessible and function akin to streets. In these respects, the buildings generally front them positively, with front doors obvious and passive surveillance provided for.
- e. As an IRD, the proposal includes 1,613.9m² of communal facilities (or approximately 16m² per dwelling), being a basketball court, BBQ area, community facility and its associated secure outdoor area. The community facility is currently envisaged as an Early Childhood Education centre and if so that would cater to the needs of the existing local community as well as residents. Pedestrian paths are also proposed skirting the bush area south of the proposed development area (the bush would also be retained in communal ownership although would not in my opinion be a communal amenity facility). There are no accepted industry metrics for determining what extent of such facilities should be expected within an IRD but in consideration of the extent to which the proposal complies with the AUP: OP on-site amenity standards for outdoor living space, outlook space, and landscaped area (for the Site as a whole) in particular, I am comfortable that residents will be provided with sufficient amenities within the Site, a sense of spaciousness, access to sun and daylight, and privacy. My conclusion would remain the same whether the community facility / potential ECE and its outdoor area was or was not included as part of the proposed communal facilities for residents.
- f. Based on long-sections prepared by BDG that I requested specifically for this purpose, I am satisfied that any adverse effects likely on adjoining residential-zoned land would be acceptable and that the development would not unreasonably shadow, overlook, or visually dominate any neighbour. Because of the Site's slope and that many buildings incorporate a 'step' within the building forms themselves, they frequently appear to be one storey lower on their 'high' or 'external' side, with the taller height sides within the Site itself.
- g. The BDG plans for the buildings remain indicative and conceptual, but what has been identified in terms of building design and appearance leads me to the view that the potential effects of the buildings will be manageable by way of shape and form, materials, and visual design including of roof forms. Although these remain to be finalised, based on my experience with similar-scaled developments elsewhere I am confident that these could be addressed without causing concern.
- h. The overall scale, intensity and character of the development – noting that the Site includes land currently zoned both Mixed Housing Suburban and Single House – will be for something notably more intensive and different to the prevalent existing character of detached 1-2 storey houses that predominates most of Auckland's existing suburban area. But it will be in

keeping with many small-to-medium scaled IRDs I am familiar with and which have included buildings of comparable scales as those proposed.

- i. I am in-principle comfortable with the 4-storey apartment building heights proposed but note that subject to final plans and a full assessment being undertaken, reductions in these may be required. I would not expect this to result in any need for a wider reconsideration of the Site design; merely a reduction in individual building scale and height.
4. My reading of the AUP: OP is that IRDs are enabled generally and larger sites that can provide more efficient use are also recognised. But policies relating to existing and planned built form character also remain in-play.
5. The proposal will not maintain the existing residential character and amenity of the Site (notably the Single House zone portion). However, my assessment is that the proposal would in built form terms:
 - a. Enable a variety of housing types and efficiently use what is a relatively large site (policies H4.3(1) and (8); and H3.3(8));
 - b. To the extent that the proposed publicly accessible access-ways will perform the function of streets, satisfy policies H4.3(3) and H3.3(3);
 - c. Maintain the reasonable amenity of adjoining residential-zoned properties in terms of policies H4.3(4) and H3.3(4); and
 - d. Provide sufficient on-site amenity and provision to manage storm water and other environmental values in terms of policies H4.3(5), (6), (7), and (10), and H3.3(5), and (6).
6. The key issue raised by the proposal is in built form terms its fit with policies H4.3(2) and in particular H3.3(1) and (2). In these respects:
 - a. The proposal possesses a scale, intensity and character of buildings that will be compatible with a suburban built form character as envisaged for the Mixed Housing Suburban zone.
 - b. The proposal will not maintain the existing character of the existing suburban area within the Site itself, and neither does it reflect what the Single House zone typically plans for on the land.
 - c. However, I have read the AUP: OP's key test within the Single House zone as not to maintain each site in a particular state but instead maintain the qualities of the neighbourhood as a whole. In this respect, the Site is not highly conspicuous and where its scale could be most readily seen (from the south), the separation distances provided by the densely vegetated gully mitigate potential visual effects noting that dwellings to the south at 41 and 37 Waipa Street in particular are from medium density housing developments comparable to the proposal. Overall, the proposal will be discrete and not at all visible to most casual travellers through the area. I am on this basis satisfied that the character of the neighbourhood as a whole will be maintained, as will the specific localised character of a spacious and well-vegetated stream valley.

7. **Because the proposal is still in a concept-design stage, and notwithstanding my general level of comfort, I recommend that in the event that the proposal is accepted for consideration under the Fast Track Consenting regime, a full urban design assessment of the final plan set (including architectural, landscape and engineering (retaining wall) documents) be required to accompany the application.**

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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