

SUMMARY STATEMENT OF SARAH DUFFELL

Senior Urban Designer, Wellington City Council

15 September 2022

- 1.0 My name is Sarah Duffell. My qualifications and experience are set out in my Urban Design Assessment dated 21 July 2022.
- 2.0 I assessed the potential urban design effects of the proposed Ryman village in terms of the local context and conditions, the applicant's urban design statement, and the advice of heritage and landscape advisors.
- 3.0 I have also commented on the submissions which raised matters of urban design relevance, principally character, visual dominance, privacy, views and the applicability of the Residential Design Guide of the Operative District Plan.
- 4.0 The conclusions of my initial evidence remain relevant.
- 5.0 The following further comments relate to Urban Design-related evidence presented at this hearing by both the applicant and submitters.
- 6.0 A correction to my original evidence should be made to section 4.2. The reference to the Landscape and Visual Assessment should read 'Updated Landscape and Visual Assessment (July 2021)'. The August 2020 report was superseded and not considered when writing my evidence.
- 7.0 Relating to use and applicability of the Operative District Plan's Residential Design Guide (RDG), I advise that it for a non-complying activity, the scope of Urban Design comments is not limited to the matters in the RDG and would encompass all relevant matters and other best practice guidance. As the RDG is used as a residential quality outcomes tool elsewhere in the city I therefore use it as a broad guide for this application, as does Mr Burns, alongside other best practice urban design advice.
- 8.0 I did not specifically consider the Design Guide: Residential (DGR) of the Proposed District Plan (PDP) in my initial evidence as this was not publicly notified at the time my evidence was prepared. I would be happy to answer any verbal questions about the DGR, including any about the possible use of City Outcomes Contributions as raised by one submitter, if these provisions of the PDP will be considered to have weight.
- 9.0 Questions have been raised about the scope and degree of change to the design since this development was first considered. I have been involved since the first approach to the Council by Ryman. The main changes of note are significant amendments to Building B02 facing Campbell Street and B07 facing Donald Street to bring the appearance of the buildings more in line with the scale and development patterns of the surrounding area. The buildings now have more modulated facades, finer-grained elevational treatment and less imposing parapets. I agree with Ms Skidmore's comments that the development has moved from institutional to a more domestic character, and believe this outcome achieves a nice complement to the context.
- 10.0 Several witnesses and submitters have referred to the development as contrasting with the context. It is true that Karori contains a lot of housing in a more traditional style, but the last two years in particular have seen a number of developments consented and built in Karori in differing styles and densities to much of the older individual houses. It is not unreasonable to say that many new buildings now appearing in Karori are in a more contemporary architectural style and this development is not dissimilar, although greater in overall scale.

The new developments also introduce much-needed housing diversity into Karori. All locations evolve over time, and this development can be considered part of that.

- 11.0 In terms of the use of numerical standards for sunlight access, two important points are relevant:
- The numbers for sunlight access in Guidelines 2.5 (internal living spaces) and 4.3 (outdoor living spaces) are not rules, even for new developments.
 - The guidelines in the RDG are primarily applied to assessing the amenity conditions of new dwellings, not existing ones. In respect of existing dwellings, the RDG indicates that there is a requirement to *“Locate and model building form to avoid unnecessary or unreasonable shading of private outdoor spaces or windows to main living rooms in adjacent dwellings ... in residential buildings on adjacent sites.”*¹
- 12.0 What is considered ‘reasonable’ or ‘unreasonable’ in terms of shading on indoor and outdoor spaces always includes consideration of other factors as well as sunlight. It might include matters such as outlook, access to daylight, orientation, the time of day or time of year, internal room use or any other mitigating factors such as access to sunny communal space. I support Ms Brownlie’s approach in taking more of a qualitative rather than numerical view on this matter, and support the use of examining the degree of change and the effect of this for these properties rather than trying to achieve the RDG guidance of sunlight received per day.
- 13.0 Relating to sunlight access into living spaces for some of the new units, Mr Burns’ observation is that a proportion of new units would fail the RDG in respect of this. This has not been raised as a significant Urban Design concern due to the same reasons as above and the likely mitigating factors available. All the new rooms that may have low levels of direct sunlight access in mid-winter will be designed to meet modern requirements of heating and insulation and have windows that allow adequate daylight in and views out. Many are situated so they will experience medium- to long-range views that in many cases include gardens and hills. The residents will also have access to other internal lounges in more sunny locations. I am satisfied that the living conditions for those units that don’t receive direct midwinter sun will not be physically unpleasant or oppressive.
- 14.0 In respect of the fence on the south/Scapa Terrace boundary, I confirm that a fence of up to 2 metres high in this location would not give rise to Urban Design concerns. It would probably not need to be an acoustic fence due to the lack of noisy activity on the Ryman side.
- 15.0 My evidence has two diagrams on page 7 referring to the windows of buildings B02-B06 facing the south boundary. I note that these windows have been amended to have sill heights of 1600mm, with the ones at the uppermost level amended to this size just prior to the hearing. I agree, as per the material and diagrams presented by Mr Burns, that any loss of privacy or potential to overlook adjacent properties that may have existed would be further reduced by these amendments.
- 16.0 The applicant is unsure about the applicability of a condition relating to lighting. I am comfortable that lighting within the site would be designed to facilitate legibility and safe movement for Ryman’s own requirements, but it is at the edges of the site where lighting may become an issue for the neighbourhood. It would be advisable for the Urban Design team to have final overview of the lighting at the site edges, and in the Donald Street Park, to ensure compatibility with the surrounding neighbourhood.
- 17.0 Similarly for signage, this site must be legible for access including after dark. I anticipate that Ryman will position their entrance/name signs in locations where they are visible, and the location shown on the plans is acceptable. Urban Design suggests that some form of lighting

¹ Operative District Plan, Residential Design Guide, Guideline 2.7

after dark for the signs at the edge of the site will assist legibility. Final approval of the Urban Design team to ensure no light spill nuisance to the neighbourhood would be advisable.

- 18.0 Having heard the rationale for removal of the access to the walkway on the northern side of the site, I advise that this does not raise urban design concerns.
- 19.0 The applicant has raised the issue of WCC approving the final choice of colours for the development. I advise that the actual colour is not the issue, rather, it is that whatever colours are chosen are able to achieve the intended visual effect of moderating the bulk of the building and ensuring this is complementary to the context. This is more important for materials with colours that are permanently applied or included in the finish or exterior materials.
- 20.0 The suggested condition relating to a requirement for final approval of colours and materials was not approached with the view to imposing restriction, rather to respond to the current environment of building material supply and to ensure that visual mitigation of the bulk of the building is achieved. We are currently experiencing applicants with restrictive colour or material conditions having to return for applications under S127 for a Change of Conditions due to originally specified materials no longer being available and wanted to try and avoid that outcome for a development of this scale. I am comfortable that the indicative palette of colours achieves this effect, however a final consideration of this once the development is closer to being built and materials have been selected would be appreciated.
- 21.0 Considering the late submission from the owners of 40 Campbell Street, I consider their request to move the Campbell Street garage entry point further north is not feasible due to the presence of residential apartments in this location and the distance from the parking location. If any mitigation for matters such as headlight glare was warranted it could be implemented on the submitter's property. Nothing else in their submission would raise urban design-related concern.
- 22.0 I have considered the proposed conditions submitted by Responsible Development Karori and consider that 'Additional Conditions' numbered 4 (artificial light) and 9 (sustainability) may relate to Urban Design considerations, although I note the latter would be more related to the requirements of the Proposed District Plan than the Operative Plan. Lighting is discussed in paragraph 14 above. None of the other suggested conditions in this document relate to Urban Design outcomes.