

3 May 2024

Urban Design Response to Matters Raised in the Hearing

1.0 Introduction

My name is Jaime Devereux. I assist Wellington City Council under contract as an Urban Design Advisor in the Design Review Team. In this role, my key task includes undertaking urban design assessments of resource consent applications and reviewing them against the design related provisions of the District Plan.

I have read, and am familiar with, the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses in section 9 of the 2023 Environment Court of New Zealand Practice Note.

I confirm that I have visited the site and read through the submissions received.

I have identified 5 key urban design matters that have been discussed over the extent of the hearing. This includes:

- Defining the planned urban built character
- Appropriateness of a car park with access from Dekka Street
- Appropriateness of a car park with access from Nicholson Road
- CPTED concerns
- Transport options and car parking treatment

I also have an additional matter regarding landscaping that I missed when assessing the application, in particular in relation to the acoustic fencing.

2.0 Defining the planned built character

There have been a number of questions regarding character. One of the key changes in the 2024 Operative District Plan is that there is a change in focus from existing character to the planned built character. Objective MRZ-01 states the purpose of the Medium

Density Zone, which *provides predominantly residential activities and a variety of housing types and sizes that respond to:*

1. *Housing needs and demand; and*
2. *The neighborhood's planned urban built character, including 3 storey buildings, and additional height and density where appropriate.*

Objective HRZ-O1 states the purpose of the High Density Zone, which *provides predominantly residential activities and a variety of housing types and sizes that respond to:*

1. *Housing needs and demand; and*
2. *The neighborhood's planned urban built character, of at least 6-storey buildings.*

Under both the Medium and High Density Residential Zones, non-residential activities enabled as permitted activities include home businesses, visitor accommodation, childcare services and community gardens (so are generally small scale and activities that are typical within a residential zone). However, I do note that other non-residential activities are not excluded either, and can be considered appropriate when meeting the policy matters for non-residential activities.

3.0 Appropriateness of a car park with access from Dekka Street

Non-residential activities that support the local needs of communities can be appropriate where they can meet the outcome sought under the non-residential policy framework.

I have based my assessment on the applicant stating there is demand for additional car parking to meet the existing demands of the supermarket. This issue has also been raised by some submitters as well.

As Dekka Street is closely visually related to the commercial centre, the extension of the car park is considered to be generally in character with the local context on this side of the site. The curved, sloping driveway to an elevated site, combined with the proposed landscaping, will result in the car parking being largely screened from the streetscape and is considered to not degrade the character of the neighbourhood along this frontage.

I note the question regarding the difference between character and streetscape. Character effects can extend to a wider townscape character, including residential amenity. I conclude that there would be limited impact on the streetscape of Dekka Street and that there would be some impact on the character of the residential zoning. Noting, as previously stated, non-residential activities can be accommodated within the residential zone if appropriately mitigated.

4.0 Appropriateness of a car park with access from Nicholson Road

Guideline G18 States: *Locate and design on-site car parking areas so that they are not visually dominant elements at the street edge.*

While it is acknowledged that the car parking is set back from the front boundary of Nicholson Road, car parking will still be a dominant feature of the site when viewed from the street edge. Landscaping will provide some visual softening, but due to sightline requirements, will not provide any screening that could prevent the car parking from being a dominant element. The advice note in the guideline states:

Where on-site outdoor car parking areas are located between buildings and the street edge, use landscape elements such as planting or screening to minimise the dominance of parking areas and associated structures (such as retaining walls) and give the appearance of a front yard, rather than a parking area.

The applicant and Council are in agreement that Nicholson Road has a residential character. While the proposal does not include any buildings, the intent of the design guide is clear that on-site car parking areas are not a good urban design outcome on the residential streetscape. Given the scale of the proposed car parking, I believe it would be difficult to state it is comparable to a residential scale. If an apartment complex or intensive residential development was being proposed, car parking would require resource consent and still be assessed for urban design outcomes, with the design guide requiring car parking to be visually minimized from the street edge.

With regard to the applicants proffered condition regarding changes to signage, I would be supportive of a black and white directional sign (no more than 1m high x 0.8m wide) to maintain safety, if the commissioners were to approve the application as proposed.

5.0

CPTED concerns

A number of concerns have been raised regarding CPTED matters.

Guideline G13 of the Residential Design Guide states: *Create pedestrian paths through larger sites where this is safe, consistent with appropriate maintenance of site security and will enhance pedestrian connectivity.*

If the car parking access was removed from Nicholson Road altogether, this pedestrian accessway may not be appropriate, as it is not direct with clear sightlines and there would be a higher likelihood of concealment and entrapment spaces.

As the use of the car park would be discouraged after 10pm, lighting the area (with low level lighting as a potential solution proffered by the applicants' lighting engineer) could encourage its use and result in a false sense of safety. To clarify, the preference is to have no lighting after 10pm, unless there is a safety or security issue that arises. In which case, sensor lighting could be used instead to deter unwanted persons while not encouraging after hour use by the general public.

There has been some discussion regarding lighting effects on neighbouring properties. I note that other development could also require lighting, such as multi-unit development or permitted non-residential development that would also be expected to comply with lighting standards.

6.0

Transport options and car parking treatment

There are a number of design outcomes sought under the title 'Well-Functioning Sites' under the Residential Design Guide that relate to car parking and walkability in the residential zones. This includes:

- O7. New development maintains or enhances the walkability and permeability of the pedestrian network.*
- O8. New development provides for safe and convenient cycle and pedestrian movement and access.*
- O9. Vehicle access, garage doors and car parking do not dominate the streetscape.*
- O10. Open spaces are designed and located to provide amenity and be accessible, safe and easily maintained.*

In addition to this, the Medium and High Density Residential Zones have a list of matters that relate to non-residential activities. One of these is to reduce reliance on travel by the private motor vehicle. Yesterday, Mr Quinn said the purpose of the car park extension is to future proof the existing use of the car park. However, the proposal should also be future proofing for changes in transport usage as well, in line with the policy direction of the District Plan, including bikes and other modes of transport. I note Ms Key has proposed at least 8 additional covered parks. As cycle parking would best be located close to the supermarket entry, an updated site plan with bike parking included in the existing car park area would be my preference, rather than relying solely on a written condition of consent. The bike parking should be sufficient in size to accommodate e-bikes and cargo bikes, as per G13 of the Residential Design Guide. This would also allow for the applicant to include mobility parking in the landscape plan that has been removed to make way for the new access linking the existing and proposed car parks.

7.0 Note about landscaping

Based on questioning from the commissioners regarding the location of acoustic fencing in relation to external boundaries, I note that I had not previously picked up on this as the location of the fences are excluded from the detailed planting plans. When looking at the landscaping plans further, I discovered that all of the more substantial planting, such as hedging, will be located on the other side of the fences and will not be aiding the softening of the car park as much as I first thought. My preference would be to see more planting in the car parking area to reduce the visual impact of hard surfacing.

7.0 Conclusion

I have based my assessment on there being a demand for additional car parking for a supermarket that provides for the wider community. In my view, a car park could potentially be acceptable where located immediately adjacent the New World site on Dekka Street as it visually sits within the character of this area due to the proximity of the Local Centre Zoning. However, the proposal does not sufficiently integrate the development into the planned urban built character for both the Medium and Density zoning when viewed from Nicholson Road. In conclusion, when assessing the development against the relevant 2024 urban design considerations, I do not consider the proposal to be consistent with the intent of the Residential Design Guide and

relevant District Plan policies. In summary, the proposal does not have urban design support.

Commissioner Black questioned the extent to which the Nicholson Road portion of the car park would need to be removed, or planting extended, to be supported. To clarify, I do not have a set of plans to view that addresses how an alternative design could work to be able to confirm whether it could be appropriate or supported. However, if the car park did not include 33 Nicholson Road (which is surrounded by the residential zoning on all side and rear boundaries), I could support the application with an updated site and landscape plan that omits 33 Nicholson Road from the application site. Additionally, if access from Nicholson Road was removed, I would also suggest that the pedestrian accessway from Nicholson Road was also removed to avoid potential CPTED issues.

8.0 Recommended Conditions

In the event the Commissioners approve the application as proposed, I recommend the following amendments underlined in bold, or struck through, in the following conditions:

Accessible car parking, bicycle parking and provision for electric vehicles:

2. Prior to the commencement of construction, the Consent Holder must provide an updated carparking layout plan to Council for approval that details:
 - the location of required accessible parking, and
 - the replacement of two of the existing car parking spaces with covered bicycle parking. That plan will provide for at least eight additional bicycle parking spaces that are of a size that can accommodate e-bikes and cargo bikes.

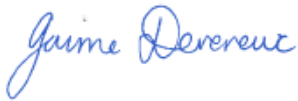
Landscaping Plan:

21. Before construction commences on the site an updated Landscape Plan (that includes 26 Ganges Road) must be submitted to, and certified by, the Council's Compliance Monitoring Officer. The Landscape Plan must include:
 - Hard surface treatments, including pedestrian accessways and any semi- permeable surfaces.
 - Fence and retaining wall heights and materials.
 - Location of accessible car parking, bike parking and e-charging facilities ~~(if/where applicable).~~
 - Rubbish storage area that ensures that rubbish can be adequately contained within the site and screened from the street.
 - Existing trees and vegetation that will be retained and proposed replacement trees

for any trees identified on the submitted landscape plan that can no longer be retained as per the arborists report.

- The individual location and species (with both scientific and common names).
- The bulk of the screening vegetation must be a minimum of 1.2m in height at the time of planting.
- PB size at time of installation.
- A maintenance plan/schedule.

Prepared by:



Jaime Devereux