

LANDSCAPE PEER REVIEW

TO_ Luke Balchin – Planner

NPDC REF: LUC20/47660

DATE_ 26 JULY 2021

SUBJECT_ Peer Review of the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Rev 3 including preceding versions as of 1st April 2021 and 11th February 2021. This review concludes my response.

Dear Luke

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This memo should be read in conjunction with the peer review dated 10 March 2021. This response concludes my review of further information provided from the site visits carried out by Bluemarble and the use of Mixed-use-reality handsets, consideration of the Council's decision to apply the Permitted Baseline planning argument, and submissions received from notified parties.
- 1.2. In Section 3 of the LVIA v3, it is noted that in all cases, submitters have *"more than one view from each property. Generally views are from seaward facing windows & Doors, western facing windows, and outside deck areas. The images attached are not from every viewpoint within each property, but represent the views available"*. The images attached to the report only show one viewpoint for each apartment, and that view is one which looks at the development.
- 1.3. I note the reference to amenity from the RMA *"those natural or physical qualities and characteristics of an area that contribute to people's appreciation of its pleasantness, aesthetic coherence, and cultural and recreational attributes (s 2 RM4)"*. I also recognise that Council have limited their restriction to the Business B criteria zoning assessment criteria in the Plan – Bus13 relates to height:

1. *The extent to which the extra height of the proposed building will:*

- *Adversely affect the character and visual amenity of the surrounding area;*
- *Have an overbearing effect on sites within the Residential Environment Area;*
- *Adversely affect outstanding and regionally significant landscapes;*
- *Intrude and/or block an urban viewshaft*

2. *The extent to which the site layout, separation distances, topography, planting or set backs can mitigate the adverse effects of the extra height.*

2. VISUAL EFFECTS ASSESSMENT

2.1. PRIVATE VIEWPOINTS

Submitter	Bluemarble Assessment	Comment
Hurlstone 1B/120 St Aubyn Street	“the loss of view from the property is small”	I agree with the assessment of significance of effect as experienced from this receptor based on the information provided in both the Landscape Assessment post visiting the submitter, and from an analysis of the Shading diagrams. The MRHS image uses a semi-transparent model of the proposal. It would be more accurate to remove the areas of the view which the building is set behind.
Comber 122A St Aubyn Street – Oceanside Apartments (Seaside)	“the proposal will be close and visible from the clear windows that face the submitter but the visual amenity from the high amenity areas is unchanged”	The effect of the extra-height may have a dominance effect but information of what ‘clear windows’ are affected are not described. Consideration of overbearance is technically restricted to the relationship between Business B environment areas and Residential areas – but not to other Business B environments. I also note, and agree, that the primary amenity experience northward will not be affected. The MRHS handset images are also difficult to interpret due to the transparent nature of the layers.
MacArthur 122 St Aubyn Street	“The proposal will not affect the primary views experienced by this submitter... the proposal...will be highly noticeable. This could create a dominance effect, some of which could be reduced by building colour (the model used in the images has the proposed building as black - this dark colour intensifies potential dominance effects). However, there is no escaping that due to proximity, this submitter may feel overlooked and will lose ‘sky space’, noting that permitted activity on the application site could create similar effects.”	The description of the effects on 122 recognises the relationship the submitter has with the subject site and notes potential dominance effects. I agree, if applied, the permitted baseline is highly likely to create similar effects – which could be closer (no boundary setback), and/or have different amenity effects. As noted in my original memo, the existing bamboo between the subject site and the submitter is a good example of how greenery can soften the built-up components of a development. Similarly, the use of different materials and colours on 122A and B shows how these aspects of a building can be used to reduce the bulk and dominance of a structure on its context. The proposal has proposed a 7m(approx.) setback from the boundary, and will be residential – therefore, in terms of activity, is in keeping with the context of the area.
Sharrock 4/120 St Aubyn Street	“Presently this view extends to Paritutu and includes two of the Sugar Loaf Islands, pōhutukawa trees at Kawaroa and the rocky foreshore. These elements will still be visible with the proposal.”	The building is coloured black and therefore appears bulkier and more dominant in the view given many of the buildings in the fore, middle and background are coloured in lighter tones – corresponding to the coastal edge. There is also a contrasting white strip along the roof line which is quite focally dominant. However, its form steps up and is modulated to the point where it

		sits quite comfortably in the urban fabric. I also note the parts of the building that overlap existing buildings in other montages have been removed from this view. This includes the retention of the bamboo at the ground floor which is demonstrably effective at softening the overall impression of the buildings bulk, and reducing the effective overall height – and therefore ‘extra-height’.
Stewart 11/120 St Aubyn Street	“The views to the west are minimal - just a glimpse through the subject site carpark to houses on the other side of Dawson Street. The proposal will not prevent any views from this property apart from the aforementioned view towards Dawson Street.”	The building is coloured black and therefore appears bulkier and more dominant in the view given many of the buildings in the fore, middle and background are coloured in lighter tones – corresponding to the coastal edge. No landscape mitigation is included within the courtyard zone of the proposal – The existing view and sharrock montage shows how effective the bamboo is at softening the junction between proposed and existing as well as reducing the overarching impression of the total height of the building. The MRHS image seems to locate the development closer to the viewer than it would be. Removing the parts of the building that are behind 122A and 122B would be useful.
Hey 1A/120 St Aubyn Street	“The primary view is seaward and to the north-east. To the west, part of Paritutu is visible over the carpark area on the subject site. The proposal will prevent views of Paritutu but the affect on overall visual amenity from this very low, noting that Paritutu while noticeable is not dominant, being located 4km away.”	Comments for Stewart apply (re: colour and façade treatment) to the view from Hey with respect to removing the parts of the building that are behind 122A and 122B. Vegetation would assist in reducing potential glare effects (difficult to know if this would occur) in the morning, and it would soften the overall bulk of built form.
White 2/120 St Aubyn Street	“To the west Paritutu, the power station chimney and two of the Sugar Loaf Islands are visible as distant elements. The proposal will prevent views of all these elements to some extent, depending on which part of the apartment the viewer is located. Overall, the primary visual amenity available to this apartment is maintained as the open and spectacular seaward and north-eastern views dominate visual amenity.”	Comments for Stewart apply (re: colour and façade treatment) to the view from White with respect to removing the parts of the building that are behind 122A and 122B. Vegetation would soften the overall bulk of built form.
Pease 3/120 St	“The views experienced by this apartment are similar to that of 2/120 described above, except that this apartment is one storey	Comments for Stewart apply (re: colour and façade treatment) to the view from Pease with respect to removing the parts of the building that are behind 122A and 122B. Vegetation would soften the overall bulk of built

Aubyn Street	higher. Therefore, the loss of outlook to the west is lesser. Paritutu and two of the Sugar Loaf Islands will still be visible from this property.”	form. The linear white stripe on the roof is very acute. Vegetation would soften the overall bulk of built form.
Clegg 10/120 St Aubyn Street	“Located on level 1, this is a long apartment in the middle block of Richmond Estate and includes an outdoor deck area that faces the sea. The proposal will not prevent any views from this apartment.”	For some reason the MRHS building is partially transparent instead of it remaining as per the previous images and the existing infrastructure of the Richmond Estate and 122A and B apartments remaining in the foreground.
Holt 1/127 Devonport Apartments	“This apartment is located on the top level of the Devonport Apartments and has two large windows that look directly over the site towards the sea. This view also extends east and west with the proposal located in the centre. The proposal will reduce views of the sea for the width of the proposal but sea views west and east will remain. The proposal will be visible as an intervening element between the viewer and the sea and will create a moderate effect on character experienced from this property.”	It would have been helpful for the context of the view to be provided particularly as it is referred to and the effect is assessed as being moderately adverse. Colour is likely to be the most effective tool to reducing the dominance of the extra-height on views from this submitter.

- 2.2. The LVIA summary statement identifies that the view of Holt (Devonport Apartments) is the only property whereby the proposal is ‘front and centre’ and the effect on the “overall quality of the landscape is not materially changed. The sea is still predominantly visible as part of an expansive outlook”. This is contrary to the assessment of the proposal creating a ‘moderate’ effect in the assessment table. The Devonport Apartments are also within Business B and therefore consideration of the dominance of the building is outside the scope of Council to consider. Consideration of the effect of the extra-height on the character and visual amenity of the surrounding area is applicable. On balance, I consider the moderate effect of the extra-height on the visual amenity of the coastal edge and surrounding area from this receptor could be mitigated by sensitive colour, and façade treatment choices.
- 2.3. I agree with the statement that submitters will not experience a “loss of coherence or pleasantness from a loss of view”, particularly given the Council’s decision to consider the permitted baseline.
- 2.4. I also agree with the conclusion that “In terms of Operative District Plan assessment criteria, the character and visual amenity of the surrounding area will remain substantially unaffected – noting that in my opinion this statement relates to views from public places and those Submitters who are affected by a ‘very low’ effect.

- 2.5. The final defining statement of the assessment being “In short, the proposal creates identifiable material visual change, but the effect is limited, and does not alter the fundamentally seaward view and outlook experienced from submitter’s properties. The loss of views, in the context of the visual amenity available, is small in scale and small in percentage or proportion of view available.”
- 2.6. I agree the material effect to the primary amenity views is very low. However, I note that amenity is a broad concept that involves layering of many different elements. I consider the proposal and information supplied has illustrated that overbearance (or the perception of being dominated by, or overlooked by another building/activity) is permitted to occur on adjoining sites given the underlying business environment zoning. I also, with appreciation of the submitters subjective view, consider the extra-height shading effects are very low – still appreciable, but not significant, given the permitted effects of the zone.

3. SHADING

- 3.1. The summary paragraph identifies that effects are split into visual effects and shading effects – with shading effects not being considered as part of the assessment on amenity and visual character. Boon Architects are referenced as carrying out this part of the assessment.

- I have reviewed the shading diagrams and offer a couple of comments that may align the information presented.
- That the 3D perspective shading models correlate to the 2D time frames – so one can be compared with the other to give additional information (ie: which part of the façade is being affected).
- That the 3D perspective analysis quality is higher as it is difficult to make at the difference between green and the greeny-blue colour used for the proposed and permitted shading.
- That the graphs provided for longitudinal shading effects include a comparison with the permitted baseline shading as well – both on the bar type graph and the line graph for consistency. The rest of the document defines effects by showing existing shading, permitted shading, and extra-height shading. This should follow through to the graphs.
- That an effects rating is provided for the degree of effect – eg: what does lowest degree, mid degree, and highest degree correlate to? the area that is shaded, a timeframe, or something else? And how does this translate into level of effect?

- 3.2. Comments are as follows:

3.3. **MARCH: Autumnal equinox: Sunset 7:30pm**

- Shading effects within the timeframes shown appear to be within the permitted effects envelope for 5pm; some very minor extra-height shading at 6pm to part of a façade on the Richmond estate central block but there isn’t a 3D render to match; and at 7pm the shading from the extra-height is less than the permitted shading – due to the building being set back from boundaries.

3.4. **JUNE: Midwinter solstice: Sunset 5:10pm**

- At 3pm there is a slight additional area on the 2D associated to the extra height on 122 St Aubyn, but no 3D to match.
- At 4pm extra-height shading is experience in the second floor balcony area of 122 St Aubyn Street, with the existing building casting shadows across the windows of the second floor. Combined permitted and extra-height shading is located across the roof of 122.
- At 5pm on the 2D model there is either no additional extra-height shading, or the permitted baseline isn't shown, as I cannot see a purple dash. There is no 3D model to check – but a 4:30pm model suggests extra-height shading is limited to a small portion of the façade of the western wall, and roof of the Stewarts's apartment 11/120.
- Sunset is at 5:10pm.

3.5. **SEPTEMBER: Spring equinox: Sunset 6:20pm**

- At 4pm, extra-height shading is limited to the roof of 122A, and less with respect to 122 St Aubyn street than a permitted building.
- At 5pm, extra shading is experienced by the roof of 122A and 122B, along with a small portion of the western façade of 122, but this will be limited due to the angle of the sun and the proximity of the buildings to each other. Extra-height shade is limited to a small strip on the roof of 122. A small triangle of shade lands on the roof of a car parking garage below/in front of 10/120, but does not appear to affect residential spaces.
- As the sun sets between 5pm and 6pm, both the shade from the existing building, a permitted building, and the extra-height, moves up the façade of 10/120(Clegg), 11/120(Stewart) and 1B(Hurlstone, until at 6pm (sunset at 6:20pm), the 2D plan shows a limited amount of extra-height shading to the far eastern corner of the roof of 1B/120. The 3D image illustrates how this wraps around the northern façade of the tower block, but it is largely between windows.

3.6. **DECEMBER: Summer solstice: Sunset 8:50pm**

- Shading effects are negligible due to the sun's higher position in the sky and wider arc.
- 2D Renders begin at 6pm where the proposed extra-height is shown to shade the north-western corner of 122B, and a small triangular area on the roof of 122A. Shading does not appear to reach the facades or apartments within the Richmond Estate or 122 St Aubyn Street. However, the graph on SK5.05 suggests shading effects begin to occur at 2pm for 122A in December. This is contrary to the plan images – or perhaps due to the shading diagrams provided only starting at 6pm. Given the graph on SK5.05 apportions a 'mid degree' of additional shading to 122A for 5.5hrs in December reducing to 1hr of 'lowest degree' additional shading in June, the applicant may wish to clarify where this occurs and what effect this shading has, on what part of the building.

4. URBAN VIEWSHAFTS

- [repeated from my original memo]: *I accept the computer modelling which illustrates the over-height portion of the development will not be visible from/within the Cameron Street Viewshaft due to intervening Pohutukawa trees located on Queen Street. Therefore, there is NO CHANGE to this view.*
- *I accept the discussion around the complexity of the Marsland Hill viewshaft. I agree the view is eclectic and cityscapes are dynamic over time. What is illustrated by the montage within Appendix B, is how the dark colour used in the montage punctuates the centre or core of the scene where built form touches the sea. In considering the character and theme of buildings around the proposal, essentially all buildings directly adjacent are of light 'coastal' colours.*
- *I am comfortable with the proportion of the view that the proposal will remove – I consider its protrusion into the view to have an overall low effect on appreciation of the view. However, I question if there are other colour schemes that may tie in with the applicant's vision while reducing its punctuation of the chromatic palette in the area. It is possible an options analysis may be useful, with colours also taking into consideration visual effects from viewpoints/receptors closer to the development.*

5. RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1. That Council seek clarification of effects on 122A in particular with respect to SK5.05 and the proposed additional shading to 122A for 5.5hrs in December reducing to 1hr of 'lowest degree' additional shading in June.
- 5.2. Mitigation recommendations should be developed to reduce the bulk and dominance of the building on submitters, a bulk that is exacerbated by the extra-height and colour of the building put forward in the latest renders. I note that in the original renders, the building was a tan like colour. I also consider it relevant to mitigate for bulk and dominance effects on the view from Holt (Devonport apartments), and the viewshaft from Marsland Hill, so that the building sits more comfortably within the chromatic theme of the area. This is not to say that dark areas are not desirable, 122A & B include darker areas to the facades.
- 5.3. Vegetation would be advantages within the eastern courtyard to assist with enhancing the general amenity and character of the internal space between the proposal, 122, 122A & B, reducing the apparent bulk and extra-height' of the proposal – as demonstrated in the Sharrock MRHS montage.
- 5.4. Shading effects appear to be relatively benign with the exception of point 5.1 above, and clarification on the degree of shading caused by the extra-height in the graphs versus a permitted building.
- 5.5. The Council have deemed it is appropriate to apply the permitted baseline, and therefore, conclusions on shading effects, must take this into consideration.

Your sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Erin Griffith', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

*Erin Griffith
Principal | MRHSbDes
MNZAIA | Assoc.NZPI | MUDF*

**natural
capital.**