

# LANDSCAPE PEER REVIEW

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**TO\_** Luke Balchin – Planner

**NPDC REF:** LUC20/47660

**DATE\_** 10 MARCH 2021

**SUBJECT\_** Peer Review of the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment included as an appendix to the Land Use Consent Application at 1 Dawson Street, New Plymouth.

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Dear Luke

## 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Natural Capital have been engaged by New Plymouth District Council (**NPDC**) to review The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (**LVIA**) provided with the Land Use Consent application for the above proposal. It has been reviewed to determine whether the information provided adequately enables a clear understanding of the landscape, including both urban, natural character, and general amenity values; and whether this understanding informs a complete assessment of likely and potential visual and landscape effects as a result of the proposal on the receiving environment and identified receptors.

1.2. The Peer Review follows the following process:

- Consent Application Familiarisation
- Site Visit
- Review as to the adequacy of the following areas of assessment:
  - o Methodology
  - o Landscape Description
  - o View Catchment and Viewing Audience
  - o Landscape & Visual Effects Assessment
  - o Summary of Queries / Recommendations

## 2. SITE VISIT

2.1. A site visit took place between 1300 - 1400hrs Monday 1<sup>st</sup> of March. The site was viewed from Dawson Street, the applicant's property on which they proposed their extension, St Aubyn Street, and the Coastal Walkway.

### 3. ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

*Whether the methodology used represents best practice in assessing the actual or potential landscape effects of the activity.*

- 3.1. The LVIA adopts an approach to assessment that is consistent with the NZILA Best Practice Note (NZILA, 2010). The assessment focusses on the visual effects of the proposal on urban character and amenity, and effects on urban viewshafts recognised in the New Plymouth Operative District Plan.

### 4. VIEWING CATCHMENT & VIEWING AUDIENCE

*That all key viewpoints are covered, and the actual or potential landscape and visual effects of the activity have been adequately considered.*

- 4.1. With respect to public viewpoints, the catchment and representative viewpoints was agreed during pre-application exchanges. We are therefore in agreeance with the spatial extent and specifically assessed public viewpoints.
- 4.2. I agree with the spatial extent of private receptors assessed. I have aligned the BTW reference of those who have provided written approval with the receptor reference within the Bluemarble LVIA below.

BTW Reference No.	Bluemarble Receptor Identifier	Address	Legal Description	Owner
1	D – one of the apartments	Richmond Estate - 120 St Aubyn Street	Unit 7A, Lot 2 DP 6788 - TNL2/368	Michael Douglas Hammond and Helen Mavis Schouten
2	E – one apartment	Devonport Apartments 127-131 St Aubyn Street	Unit 2I DP 13859 (Apartment 38) - 175460	Denise Newland
3	B – Middle Apartment	4 Dawson Street	Lot 2 DP 377813 - 312238	Nancie Maughan Stokes and Neil Thomas Waugh as trustees on behalf of Mollie Nicholas
4	Not assessed	3 Hine Street	Lot 2 DP 6436 - TNL2/344	Ingrid and Michael Mckie, Mckie Trustees Limited
5	B – Seaward Apartment	2 Dawson Street	Lot 1 DP 377813 – 312237	Nancie Maughan Stokes, Bruce Carlaw Richards, Dianne Stokes
6	G – Chinese takeaway ground floor and residential above	141 St Aubyn Street	Part Section 122 TN OF New Plymouth - TN237/81, TNF2/1378	Hong Keng Chow, Jian Wen Chow

## 5. VISUAL EFFECTS ASSESSMENT - LANDSCAPE CHARACTER & AMENITY – PUBLIC

*That all key actual or potential landscape effects of the activity have been adequately considered. Has the report described how the proposed development will change existing natural character values and visual quality and amenity values s7(c) & (f) of the RMA 1991)?*

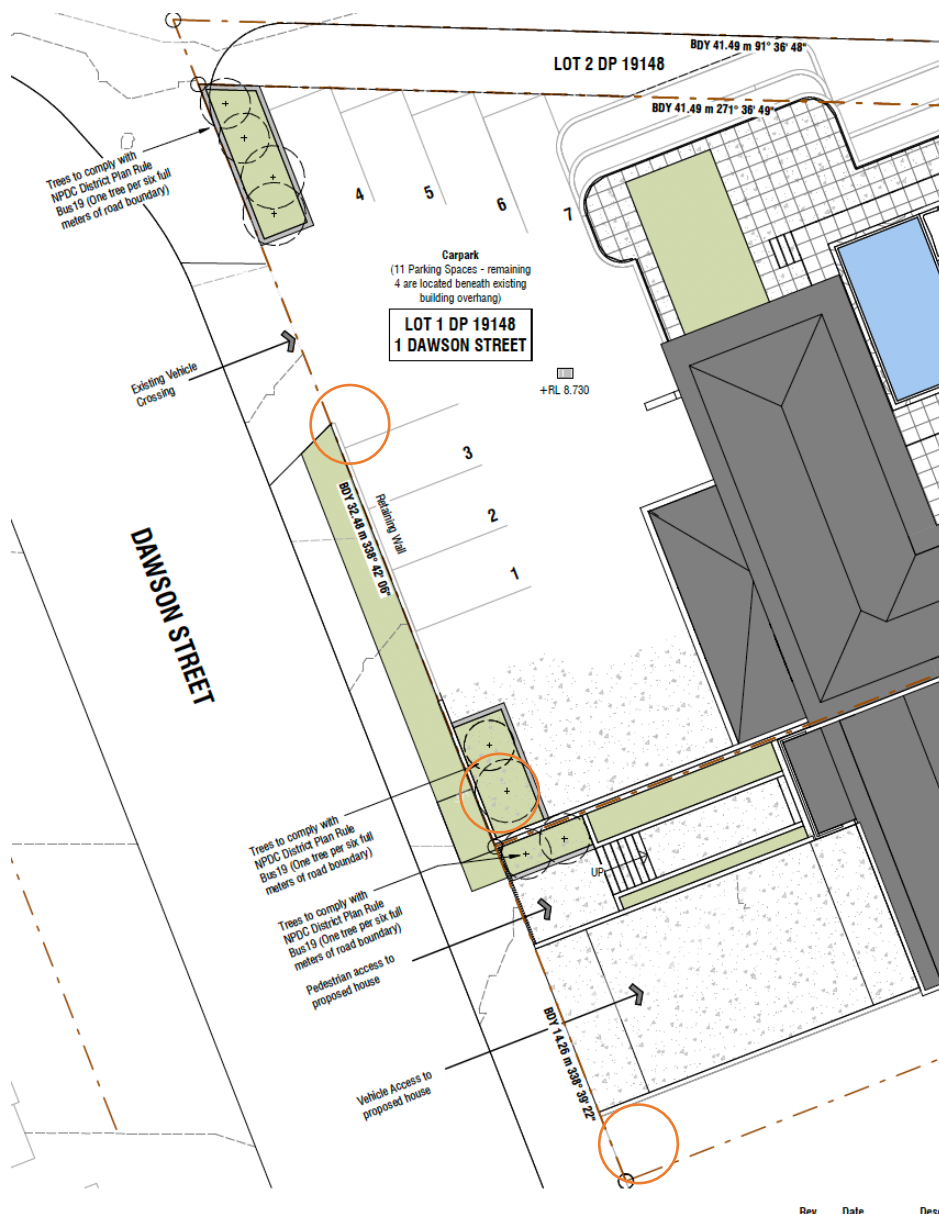
### 5.1. URBAN VIEWSHAFTS

- 5.1.1. 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.
- 5.1.2. 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.
- 5.1.3. 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.

### 5.2. PUBLIC VIEWPOINTS

Bluemarble Receptor Identifier	Location	Bluemarble Assessment	Natural Capital Assessment
A	View west from coastal walkway	Very Low	Agree
B	From Honeyfield fountain	Very Low	Low
C	View from Regina Place – further west by grass area	Very Low	Agree
D	View from Kawarua Park Railway Crossing	Very Low	Agree
E	View from Hone Street	Low beneficial	Agree
F	View from Dawson Street/SH45 Intersection	Very Low	Very Low - Low
G	View from Kawarua Point	Moderate beneficial	Very Low

- 5.3. Essentially, although I am not in total agreement with the weightings, I consider the development has a low likelihood of creating an adverse effect on the appreciation of urban form, character and amenity from any of the agreed viewpoints.
- 5.4. It will be a new element, and in some cases, highly visible when considering Viewpoint B and C. From Viewpoint A, the design has been set back from the coastal edge, and although for a small moment in time (that shown in Appendix B, montage for Viewpoint A) it could have a fleeting sense of dominance; this is no more overt than the apartments already constructed adjacent the coastal walkway edge at 120 and 122A St Aubyn Street.
- 5.5. From Viewpoint B and C it will be seen as a clear 'extension' or 'addition' to the existing building; its form, angles and colour within the montage suggesting a different use type and occupancy; a juxtaposition of styles and uses. The setting back of the top floor assists with reducing its overall dominance of the scene; with the ability of the Richmond Estate tower being seen 'behind' it providing depth and scale to the development. From a streetscape perspective, I consider it valuable to look at the landscaping component of the proposal in a little more detail with respect to tree species and placement.



## 6. PRIVATE VIEWPOINTS

Bluemarble Receptor Identifier	Location	Bluemarble Assessment	Comment
A	8 Hine Street	Very Low	Agree
B	2, 4, 4A Dawson Street	Very Low	<p><b>2 &amp; 4 Dawson have provided written approval.</b></p> <p>4a is essentially directly opposite the development's southern extension. The over-height portion of the southern extension will have little material effect on visual amenity as it is purely associated with the 'roof' or ceiling component of the structure. The extension is set back from the road by at least 10-12m making it approximately 30m from the receptor – this assists with reducing dominance effects.</p> <p>Consideration toward including columnar/fastigiata tree species could be potentially advantageous in the driveway zone to assist with filtering views between dwellings, increasing amenity, (softening the area of hard space attributed to the driveway), reducing heat island effects, and framing the development. The existing building is already over-height, and the addition of the lounge/kitchen/dining areas above it will likely have little material effect on the amenity of the area. Shading is covered later.</p>
C	122A St Aubyn Street – Oceanside Apartments (Seaside)	Low	<p>I agree with the assessment of significance of effect as experienced from this receptor so far as I am able to judge from the ground. It appears the Oceanside apartments have been constructed with greyed out windows to the west (facing the existing building) and little amenity is gained from the rear, south side of the apartments. It is plausible, given the undeveloped nature of the site on which the southern extension is located, that apartments would be located here at some point in the future. The over-height component of the southern extension does little to push the effects rating over Low in terms of amenity given that two to three storey residences here would be a non-fanciful use of the site in the future – the dominance effect of the balconies and courtyard on the eastern side of the southern extension is lessened by being set back from the 'boundary'. In a different scenario, balconies could be built up to the boundary as no set back rule applies. I also note, 122 St Aubyn Street has direct views toward the rear of these apartments and any concerns over privacy would need to be managed in that direction presently. Methods or techniques to live in close proximity to 122 St Aubyn are also likely to apply to the proposed southern extension.</p> <p>With respect to the seaward extension the built form is set well back from the existing building's coastal edge and the previous proposed overhang on the eastern side has been pulled back in line with the existing side wall. These iterations have lessened the dominance of the top floor on both the Oceanside Apartments and the Coastal Walkway experience. It also appears as though room design/designation is ordered in such a way as to avoid focus being placed toward the east. I.e: Lounge ordered with tv to the west wall, Dining table set away from</p>

			eastern wall to enable circulation, plants shown to eastern edge of northeast terrace.
D	100-120 St Aubyn – Richmond Estate	Very Low	I mostly agree with the discussion around the significance of change to the apartments in the Richmond Estate within the LVIA towards amenity – the over-height portion of the building being a ‘small’ encroachment and one difficult to discern with specificity unless apartments are visited. Although the change to amenity and the character of urban form will likely be very low for upper levels of the tower, I recommend consideration toward roof treatments to ensure refrigeration or other mechanical infrastructure located in this area is either screened, or of dark, matt finishes, and that the roof itself is non-reflective where possible. Shading is covered later.
E	131 St Aubyn Street – Devonport Flats	Moderate to no effect	On face value, I agree with the discussion around which apartments are likely to be affected and to what degree in terms of changes to urban form/amenity and character. This mainly revolves around the unknown of how prominent or disrupting (or not) the over-height portions of the proposal would be. However, I have no information relating to the layout of the apartments, and/or whether the third-floor apartments have any views over the existing warehouse in the direction of the sea. Further information to enable a robust assessment would be needed or notification may be required.
F	16 Dawson Street	Negligible	Agree
G	141 St Aubyn St	Negligible	Agree – and receptor has signed the written approval form.
H	8 Dawson Street	Negligible	Agree
I	131 St Aubyn Street (Requires correction to 122 St Aubyn Street)	Negligible	<p>122 St Aubyn Street is a two storied apartment that is oriented north and northeast, with views toward the rear of the duplex at 122A and toward the Richmond Estate apartments and its car park/vehicle movement area. Views from the balconies and living spaces within the apartments toward the rear of the development’s existing building are partially screened by a stand of dense bamboo.</p> <p>The development’s lower eastern courtyard is located at a similar height as the top floor of the apartment at 122 St Aubyn Street. The building itself is set back from the boundary by way of a ‘courtyard’ and is proposed to accommodate a bedroom and balcony, ‘gym’ and stair well. Above this, is another two bedrooms although only one is adjacent a glazed balcony. The bedrooms are set back approx. 7m from the boundary. Please confirm. The top floor of the development includes another bedroom and an office/library as well as balcony. These are similarly set back approx. 7m? from the boundary. Please confirm.</p>
J	16 Hine Street	Very Low	Agree

## **7. SHADING**

- 7.1. The shading diagrams clearly show the existing development's shade profile, the proposed development's profile, and I assume, a boundary to boundary permitted structure to 10m high (please confirm). Shading in urban areas is to be expected, it is a natural part of encouraging and allowing taller buildings within CBD's. Understanding the specifics of the shading is therefore important to the final outcome of the notification and effects conclusions.
- 7.2. The shading diagrams rely on the application of the permitted baseline planning argument which demonstrates what could potentially occur if a 10m high building was constructed from boundary to boundary. It is an interesting and helpful comparison. However, for the purposes of assessing the effect of the over-height of the proposal, I personally recommend an additional set is produced that focusses solely on the proposed development without the 'permitted' building's shadow. My instinct is that the over and above shading from the over-height of the southern extension will be very low in terms of overall significance. The shading from the northern additional height may be slightly greater – but additional analysis will enable clarity of effects to all parties in terms of forming a final decision on the level of the effect.
- 7.3. It appears that to the west, shading is restricted for a short period of time between sunrise and 10am in the June series. Is there information on the length of time this shading occurs with respect to weeks, or months?
- 7.4. The birds eye view analyses create a similar set of queries with respect to 'how much of the shade is from the 10m part of the southern extension, and how much is from the additional height' and 'how much is actually from the addition to the north'. The query around longitudinal effects of shading on parts of the Richmond estate and 122 St Aubyn Street also applies. Perspective images were provided previously where infringing shadows were over and above that permitted. They may provide additional information that will in turn assist in drawing more empirical conclusions on the level of effect of the shading created by the over-height portions.

## **8. GENERAL QUERIES**

- 8.1. I note the sections on SK3.03 and SK3.01 itemise the over-height as 1.4m and 2m respectively. Is it possible to have measured sections so we are able to view the respective floor to height measurements of each floor? I assume the floor level on top of the existing building has defined the second floor FFL, and all other levels have been worked out from that? From Dawson Street, it looks as though the top level of the southern extension has a taller floor to ceiling ratio than the garage or first floor? Is this correct?
- 8.2. What is the purpose or plan for the space left between the proposed dwelling and the boundary line? Is vegetation in this zone an option?
- 8.3. Is the 'courtyard' shown in SK2.02 grass, artificial turf, or non-permeable paving/deck? Likewise, the green strips either side of the pedestrian entrance to the dwelling on SK2.02 – what are the

proposed species/finish of this area. Is it necessary to have a solid wall between the driveway and the pedestrian entrance when they are to the same establishment? Similarly, further information on the type of walls and gates proposed would be welcomed.

- 8.4. The green strip shown west of the boundary on SK2.02 is not on the applicant's site and is not currently 'green'. What was the purpose here?
- 8.5. What is in the zone above the solid black line which appears to denote the 'ceiling' height of the southern extension when viewing the eastern elevation. Is this a design feature or a requirement for some other reason? It projects higher than the roof height of the main lounge/kitchen/dining areas – what is the purpose here?

## 9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1. With respect to the Marsland Hill Viewshaft and the extension's setting adjacent the coast, chromatic options could be investigated to align the vision of the applicant with the ability of the proposal to sit sympathetically within both the urban fabric and the cityscape when seen from a distance. I have no overarching concern with lighter coastal colours being included in the design from a character perspective. I have sympathy toward using a dark roof colour, though many roofs around the development do not employ such materials. It is my understanding that it is the walls of the development that will be seen from Marsland Hill, rather than the roof top per se. The issue in this regard would be avoiding glare.
- 9.2. A more detailed plan of the proposed landscaping would be helpful, including treatments to hard surfaces, solid fences, courtyards, vegetation etc as discussed/queried above.
- 9.3. That further information is provided on the elevation as seen from Dawson Street and from within the Richmond Estate looking toward the southern extension to allow better understanding of the proportions proposed as outlined above.
- 9.4. That more specific information is provided in terms of perspectives and longitudinal effects of proposed shading on the applicable neighbouring sites to assist with empirical analysis of the actual likely effects of the over-height.

*Your sincerely*



Erin Griffith  
Principal | MUrbDes  
MNZAIA | Assoc.NZPI | MUDF