

Urban Design Memo

To: Gillian Cockerell

From: Colin Hattingh

Subject: Weston Lea Ltd Application, Peacocke (Amberfield)

Date: 9 October 2018

File: 010.2018.00009853.001
and
011.2018.00006695.001

The purpose of this memo is to provide comments in relation to urban design for the application. These comments consider the relevant standards, assessment criteria, design guide criteria and objectives and policies.

Description of Proposal

As described in the AEE, this is an application for land use and subdivision consent to create lots for future residential and commercial development within the eastern portion of the Peacocke Structure Plan. The site area in question is approximately 139ha.

The two main documents that describe the urban design approach followed are:

1. Appendix D - Urban Design Report, prepared by UrbanismPlus, dated May 2018.
2. The S92 response (Urban Design)

Urban Design Panel

The proposal was presented to the Urban Design Advisory Panel (the Panel) on 14 March 2018.

The Panel is an independent group of industry experts who provide comment on key development proposals before they are submitted for resource consent. It is a non-statutory, voluntary process supported by the Economic Growth and Planning Unit. The Panels' recommendations are an important reference point and indication of whether a proposal aligns with the elements of the City Design Guide (VISTA).

The Panel were very supportive of the proposal and made the following key comments and recommendations (emphasis added):

- "The panel particularly appreciated the **clearly articulated vision, and the well-considered and sensitive design response**. The proposed layout is closely linked to the site's natural and cultural features - where landform is clearly a strong design prompt – skilfully overlaid with a mix of open spaces, vehicular, cycle and pedestrian networks, and a range of building typologies".
- "It would help to have **design parameters/guidelines** defined not only for the housing typologies but for the development of the streetscape interface as well. Clearly expressed and well-implemented design management (such as through a design panel) is essential to achieve consistent residential design quality".
- "Further **design development of communal elements** such as the playing fields, communal garden area and the cycle and pedestrian paths should include consideration of how these spaces will be managed and maintained".

A similar point to the above was made in reference to the proposed archaeological reserve. While the applicant has stated that "advice from the Urban Design Panel has been incorporated into the Masterplan" (page 5, Annexure D), it is not clear how this has

been done, specifically in relation to the recommendation of the need to develop further design guidelines for the streetscape interface and ongoing design management.

Appendix D – Urban Design Report

The following extracts help illustrate the urban design approach that the applicant has followed, including the key urban design principles that have informed the master-planning process.

Page 5 – Peacocke Growth Area:

- *“Peacocke is distinguished by its setting on the Waikato River, proximity to the CBD, Hamilton Airport, and connection to the Southern Links state highway and urban arterial routes network”.*
- *“The Waikato River provides high amenity value through views, proximity and access, and premium public space options, including access to the Hamilton Gardens via a future new river crossing. The Waikato River combined with an extensive gully system provides opportunities for interesting walking and cycling networks, and recreation spaces”.*
- *“It is envisaged that the transition from rural to urban will respond to the natural characteristics of the land, and existing and proposed infrastructure, as it accommodates residential development, an extensive network of reserves, two sites for active recreation, and a suburban centre”.*

Page 15 – Urban Design Principles:

Responsive - It will be a responsive environment in relation to the landform. North-south street alignments will follow the contours and work in with the terraces, minimising earthworks and allowing overland flow paths to follow historic alignments. Access to and along the river will be maximised. Areas of biodiversity will be respected and celebrated.

Legible - It will be a legible environment which is easily navigated. Key natural features such as, the ‘Knoll’, the gully, the gardens of the existing dwelling, the ‘Island’ and the Waikato River will all be highly visible and accessible from the public realm. Legibility is further assisted by the deformed grid pattern which offers many choices of movement direction.

Connected - It will be a highly connected environment made possible by a street network which offers safe walking and cycling options. Additional dedicated walkways and cycle paths will link all key destinations, including the village, river edge, residential parks, and the archaeological reserve. Provision for buses will be made along Peacockes Road and onto the ‘Island’. These physical connections and places to meet will contribute to a more connected community, energised by the social interaction within the public realm.

Diverse - It will be a diverse environment which reflects a cross-section of society. There will be a wide range of housing choices with lots which vary from over 700m² for larger families down to lots of around 400m² for smaller households, first-time buyers, or the elderly. Values will range from the aspirational to the affordable. The plan allows for future medium density in specific areas earmarked to be further subdivided from parent lots.

Unique - It will be an environment that celebrates the uniqueness of its history, geography, and future aspirations. A strong sense of place will be engendered through the open space design, and a sense of identity will be reinforced by celebrating Māori and more recent history through the street furniture design, public artworks, and an archaeological reserve”.

Comment:

As per the comments made by the Urban Design Advisory Panel, in my opinion, the proposal is well-considered and responds in an appropriate manner to the context and setting - in particular, the existing landform and the Waikato River. The urban design report is comprehensive and provides a clear description of the key elements or components of the design.

The proposal demonstrates a good understanding of the various site constraints and opportunities and these have been used to inform and shape the design process and outcomes. This includes constraints such as the steep topography and the limited opportunities that exist to view and access the River directly.

The site offers many opportunities including the opportunity to connect and integrate with the River, using the natural features to ensure a unique development and the opportunity to reinforce and celebrate the history and cultural identity of the site.

The principles underpinning the design and the stated objective to deliver a development that is responsive, legible, connected, diverse and unique are supported. These align with the key principles underpinning the Peacocke Structure Plan (Chapter 3).

Key District Plan Objectives and Policies

From an urban design (design and layout) perspective, the following objectives and policies are of particular relevance (emphasis added):

Chapter 2 – Strategic Framework:

2.2.1 Hamilton is characterised by an increasingly **sustainable** urban form.

2.2.1a - Development makes use of the identified opportunities for **urban intensification**.

2.2.1b - Development is designed and located to minimise energy use and carbon dioxide production, by:

- i. Minimising the need for private motor vehicle use.
- ii. Encouraging **walking, cycling** and the use of passenger transport.
- iii. Maximising opportunities for people to **live, work and play** within their local area.

2.2.3 Promote safe, compact, sustainable, good quality urban environments that **respond positively to their local context**.

2.2.3a - Development responds to best practice urban design and sustainable development principles, appropriate to its context.

2.2.3b - Development responds to Low Impact Urban Design and Development and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles.

2.2.7 The health and wellbeing of the **Waikato River** is restored and protected and the River is celebrated as being at the heart of the region's identity and a feature of national importance

2.2.7a - The natural character of the Waikato River, gully system and its margins are preserved and protected from inappropriate subdivision, land use and development.

2.2.7b - The natural, cultural, heritage and amenity values of the Waikato River are protected, enjoyed and enhanced.

2.2.7c - **Access and connections** with the Waikato River are maintained and enhanced.

Comment:

Although the ongoing development of Peacocke for residential purposes essentially represents further suburban sprawl, it is strategically and well located in respect of the City as a whole and the Central City in particular. This strategic location is acknowledged by several strategic planning documents (such as The Hamilton Urban Growth Strategy) and the District Plan.

Of more importance, though is that the design approach that has been followed in the development of the Masterplan, seeks to create a relatively compact and integrated community that is centred around the River, a future community or neighbourhood centre and a connected roading and movement network. In that respect, I consider that it is aligned with the Objectives and Policies of Chapter 2 and that it will provide a safe, compact, sustainable and good quality urban environment that responds positively to the local context. The masterplan is built on a number of best practice urban design and sustainable development principles.

Chapter 3 – Structure Plans:

3.3.6 **Development responds to land suitability** including topography, landscape, natural features, soil type, natural hazards, heritage features, adjoining land uses.

3.3.6b - Large-scale earthworks and modifications to landforms are avoided where possible to ensure development **retains features of the landscape** identified on structure plans.

3.3.6c - Road layouts adjacent to identified natural features recognise and retain their natural form where practicable.

3.3.7 A range of **well-connected, functional public open spaces**.

3.3.7b - Recreational activities are considered for colocation with:

- i. Multifunctional stormwater management.
- ii. Walkways and cycleways.
- iii. Cultural and heritage sites.
- iv. Significant Natural Areas.

3.3.7c - Promote appropriate and improved **access to the Waikato River** to better enable sporting, recreational, and cultural opportunities.

Comment:

In my opinion, the proposal is a suitable response to the existing context (including the topography, natural and heritage features). As described in the urban design report (page 13) the concept is underpinned by the notion of “*nature, the river, the land, and the history of all who have inhabited this place, and ... the green street alignments. They are sinuous and flow with the contours, and echo the flow of the river. Their design allows for the earth to be touched lightly, major natural water flows to be maintained, and the movement of soil to be limited to well below the average.*” The concept also provides for a range of well-connected, functional public open spaces, including improved access to and along the River edge.

3.4 Peacocke Structure Plan

As per 3.4 c) (Vol 1, Page 3-9) “*the Peacocke structure plan promotes ideas regarding urban design concepts and consideration around urban form, the transport network and the natural environment. These ideas are based on the following key principles*”:

- **Contextual Design:** Ensure that future development considers the natural environment, built environments and how development fits into the surrounding area as part of the design solution.
- **Concentration:** Ensure that future development is undertaken at an appropriate density and intensity of use that preserves and restores the ecological integrity of the area while improving the quality of life for residents, facilitating a vital economy, and promoting the efficient use of land and community assets.
- **Accessibility and Connectivity:** Ensure that the movement network within the area is legible, permits ease of movement and avoids severing neighbourhoods by ensuring an integrated street network that provides an appropriate block layout that is well connected and integrated with the wider environment.

- **Legibility and Identity:** Ensuring that the future layout is easily understood, through the development of routes, neighbourhoods, nodes, edges and landmarks.
- **Innovation:** Encourage future development within Peacocke to be innovative and implement best practise methods.

The vision is that the area “will become a high quality urban environment that is based on urban design best practice, social well-being, and environmental responsibility” (ODP, Vol 1, page 3-9). Also, the following objectives and policies:

Natural Environment:

3.4.1.2 Create ecological and open space **links** between gully and river.

3.4.1.2a - Provide green corridors between the major arms of the Mangakotukutuku Gully and Waikato River.

3.4.1.2b - Align collector and local street networks to create strong physical and visual connections between the gully system and river.

3.4.1.2c - Provide a **green corridor along the Waikato River** that provides pedestrian and cycling facilities and amenity.

3.4.1.3 Develop only on suitable slopes and avoid modification of landforms.

3.4.1.3a - Slopes steeper than 15 degrees are regarded as unsuitable for development given accessibility, stability and the extent of earthworks required.

Built Environment:

3.4.1.4 Integrate movement routes with surrounding neighbourhoods.

3.4.1.4a - Extend existing primary movement routes into the growth cell and use new routes to ‘stitch’ these together. Use these routes to orientate the secondary street network.

3.4.1.4b - Create a **high degree of connectivity** both within and out of the Structure Plan area.

3.4.1.5 Ensure that higher density development is linked to social and natural amenity.

3.4.1.5a - Increase **density around nodes, parks and riverfront areas**.

3.4.1.5d - Encourage urban form that reduces dependency on the car by focusing on intensification and encouraging walking, cycling and the use of passenger transport.

3.4.1.7 Provide a **public edge to the gully and river**.

3.4.1.7a - Avoid new development ‘turning its back’ or privatising edges to major natural features and recreational areas.

3.4.1.9 Locate neighbourhood centres within walking distance to recreational areas.

3.4.1.9a - Development should be contained in distinctive neighbourhoods that are walkable and safe and linked by a high quality open space network.

Cultural Environment:

3.4.1.15 **Protect** historic and culturally significant sites or features.

3.4.1.15a - **Respect** known pa sites, borrows pits and other cultural associations with waterways and the land, through the creation of protective reserves or enlightening developers to ways of **integrating** these features into new developments for the benefit of all stakeholders.

Comment:

As previously described, the concept plan for the area and the further detail design has been built around urban design principles such as being responsive, legible, connected

and unique. These correspond closely to the underlying principles for the Peacocke Structure Plan. The result is that the proposed natural, built and cultural environments are, in my opinion, appropriate and suitable for the area in question.

This is evident through (amongst others) the following attributes:

- A proposed mix of residential sections, dwelling types and sizes.
- A perimeter block layout, minimising rear sections and house designs that front the street creating public fronts and private back-yards.
- Where possible, a mainly north-south block orientation in response to the topography, creating east-west sections which is optimum from a solar-gain perspective.
- A layout where the River and gully edges and most other open spaces are lined with public streets which is positive from a passive surveillance and CPTED perspective.
- A celebration of the history of the area and site especially regarding Māori occupation and the more recent agricultural activities of the Peacocke family.
- The inclusion of an archaeological reserve, located on the far eastern side of the 'Island'. Other areas of ecological value have also been integrated into the open space network and will be accessible to the residents.
- The main areas of ecological value (the riverbank and the gully) are to be kept in their current natural state - apart from the construction of walkways and cycleways that cross the gully.
- The provision of a network of open spaces that includes neighbourhood parks, passive recreation areas and an active recreation reserve.
- The provision of a highly connected and legible movement network that is integrated with adjacent land uses.
- Strong visual connections between buildings, streets, and public spaces including strengthening of views towards the Waikato River.

Chapter 5 – Special Character Zone:

As stated under 5.1.5 a) *"The Peacocke Character Zone identifies the unique natural area within the Peacocke area that has strong landscape features. These include the Mangakotukutuku Gully network, the Waikato River, and the strong natural topography found in the south of the area. The development of the Peacocke area needs to respond positively to these landscape features. The aim is to create an interesting and distinctive urban form based on these natural areas"*.

5.2.1 The Special Character Zones retain and enhance their identified values.

5.2.1b - Development is **consistent** with the reasons for the site being included within a Special Character Zone.

5.2.1c - The size and scale of buildings and structures is compatible with the amenity of the locality.

5.2.1f - New urban development in the Peacocke Structure Plan area should demonstrate consistency with the urban design guide for the development and create residential and commercial areas of high amenity which respond positively to the area's natural environment.

Comment:

From an urban design perspective, I consider that the proposed masterplan responds to the existing natural features found within the area. While the proposal (if implemented) will result in a change of character from rural to urban (suburban), the resulting development will achieve the vision for the Peacocke area which is to create a high-quality urban environment that is based on best practice urban design, social well-being and environmental responsibility.

Chapter 21 – Waikato River Corridor and Gully Systems:

21.2.2 The river corridor and gully system is used in a way that recognises and is sensitive to its social, cultural, spiritual and historical character.

21.2.2a - **Multi-functional use** of the river corridor and gully systems shall be encouraged.

21.2.2b - The river corridor and gullies shall be used for sporting, recreation and cultural opportunities.

21.2.2c - Building designs should suit the wider site context, and shall consider:

- i. Surrounding natural characteristics.
- ii. The cultural significance of the surrounds.
- iii. Whether opportunities exist to create an iconic feature that enhances the character of the locality.

Comment:

As discussed in the Urban Design Report (page 67), *“the eastern part of the site will accommodate a recreational walking and cycling route along the river, and also the edges of the gully. These will potentially form part of the Te Awa River Ride in the future along the Waikato River”*. Acknowledging that the exact location of the paths is still to be determined and that there are potentially locations where an off-street path cannot be accommodated, it is an important element that will help ensure the river corridor and gully system is actively used.

Chapter 23 – Subdivision:

23.2.5 Subdivision occurs in a manner that **recognises historic heritage and natural environments**.

23.2.5a - Subdivision avoids, remedies or mitigates adverse effects on:

- i. Scheduled heritage items.
- ii. Scheduled archaeological and cultural sites.
- iii. Scheduled significant trees.
- iv. Scheduled significant natural areas.
- v. The Waikato River and gullies and river banks, lakes, rivers and streams.

23.2.5b - Subdivision protects, and where possible enhances any:

- i. Landforms and natural features.
- ii. Vegetation.

Comment:

The proposal includes a number of features that recognises the cultural and historical importance of the site. This includes an archaeological reserve and two public open spaces. The applicant has also alluded to other opportunities that will be looked at to reinforce the historical significance of the site (see Urban Design report point 6.4, page 46)

Chapter 25 – City Wide:

25.15 – Urban Design

25.15.2.2 Urban environments that promote a positive **sense of place** and are reflective of the characteristics of the surrounding local environment.

25.15.2.2a - Development within residential, business and City living areas is encouraged to promote a sense of human scale.

25.15.2.2b - Development will be expected to respond positively to the **character** of the area, the scale and proportion of buildings and spaces in which it is situated.

25.15.2.4 Subdivision and development which is well connected, legible and promotes sustainable energy use.

25.15.2.4a - Subdivision and development design responds positively to local amenity and character values and promote use of renewable energy sources.

25.15.2.4b - Subdivision and development patterns through good through site linkages and **consideration of site context** promote walking, cycling and other active modes of transport.

Comment:

In my opinion, the proposal is reflective of the characteristics of the surrounding local environment and as a result will promote a positive sense of place. This is seen in a number of aspects of the masterplan, but also in the concept (see image below) that has been developed. The concept (see page 13 of the Urban Design report) “seeks to reconcile two fundamental dynamics. The first dynamic is that of nature, the river, the land, and the history of all who have inhabited this place, (the green street alignments). They are sinuous and flow with the contours, and echo the flow of the river...The second dynamic is that of human intervention and urbanism, represented by the red street alignments. These are direct and straight, purposefully connecting across the site toward the river, and the cultural reserve in the southern part”.



In my view, the correct approach to the subdivision has been followed – one that seeks to work with the existing landform and other natural features as opposed to an approach that imposes and dictates outcomes, largely ignoring any unique features. Furthermore, the layout and pattern will provide good through site linkages which is positive in terms of promoting walking, cycling and other active modes of transport.

Assessment Criteria (1.3.3)

The following assessment criteria are considered relevant to this proposal:

	Comment:
B – Design and Layout (B1, B17, B18)	I consider that the proposed site layout is consistent with the relevant objectives of the Peacocke Structure Plan and with the proposals shown on that Plan. The proposed transportation network will achieve a legible and logical pattern of development in accordance with the planned transportation network identified within the Structure Plan.
C – Character and Amenity	See above comment.

(C11, C16)	
Any other relevant criteria	I consider that the proposed development has considered the existing rural activities and the proposed arterial transport corridors shown on the Peacocke Structure Plan.
(E19)	

Subdivision Design Guide (1.4.2)

The following design guidance is considered relevant to this proposal:

1.4.1.3, 1.4.1.4	Comment: As demonstrated by the various proposals within the Urban Design report, where possible, public open spaces have been bounded by public transport corridors. The proposed layout also ensures that these spaces: • Incorporate natural features that contribute to the functioning of ecological corridors and stormwater functions • Incorporate existing trees and features of interest • Provide recreational amenity • Contribute to the development of a coherent open space network for the site • Are easily accessible The provision of a highly connected network of transport corridors will ensure an accessible, walkable neighbourhood that enables relatively direct trips in and between neighbourhoods and to local points of interest and activity. In terms of block layout and the design of sections or allotments, the following has been achieved: • Blocks are no more than two allotments deep • Good sunlight and daylight for future dwellings - by aligning roads north-south and allotments east-west (where possible) • The number of cul-de-sacs has been minimised
---------------------	---

Vista

Vista is a non-statutory design guide that highlights key urban design principles considered fundamental to Hamilton's development as a dynamic, prosperous, memorable and sustainable city. A guiding principle is that the careful design of buildings and spaces will create a strong sense of place and a city that is 'distinctively Hamilton'.

Two of the key elements relevant to this proposal are 'Design Quality' and 'Sense of Place'. In terms of Design Quality, I consider that the development articulates a clear and integrated concept or vision. The masterplan has been generated by a unifying conceptual idea, based on local the context, natural setting, local narratives and the past history of the area. This provides additional meaning to the development and offers a basis for the further detail design of individual elements or parts.

In terms of Sense of Place, in my opinion, the Masterplan has responded to the local context – both natural and built. The site has its own special characteristics and the layout and design of spaces reflects this special setting and incorporates features of the natural environment such as the topography, gully network, trees and local buildings with their history and unique attributes.

S92 UD Matters

As alluded to by the Urban Design Advisory Panel, while the proposed Masterplan is supported and considered to be appropriate for the context, it is important that the urban design outcomes are successfully and consistently delivered over time.

This aspect was raised in Councils S92 request (paragraphs 90 – 92). The Panel had suggested the need for further design parameters/guidelines (particularly for the housing typologies and for the streetscape interface) and well-implemented design management. These mechanisms are obviously only useful if they can be enforced.

The Urban Design report does include a section on Residential Design Guidance (see 5.9, pages 39 to 41) and the applicant is proposing the following approach:

“The subdivision is designed to enable compliance with Hamilton City Council’s range of guidance and rules in the Hamilton City Operative District Plan (‘the Plan’), as referenced below. In several instances, more restrictive standards are advised. Further detail is to be provided in the development management process, post-subdivision, including building materials, landscape elements, and architectural standards”.

While I consider that the additional rules are appropriate, it is not clear what the *“Further detail to be provided in the development management process, post-subdivision, including building materials, landscape elements, and architectural standards”* is referring to or how this will be applied or enforced.

While it may not be appropriate or necessary for Council *“to be involved in design standards for individual dwellings beyond those that relate to the implementation of the district plan standards”* (see S92 response, page 36), the success of developments such as Hobsonville Point and Greenhill Park (to name a few) has been helped by the drafting and application of additional design guidance and peer review.

In my view, the implementation and dependence on District Plan Standards alone will only partly achieve the outcomes sought and I would recommend that additional design guidance and peer review be considered (especially relevant to the future medium density housing)

Submissions

The following submissions have raised urban design concerns: 2, 35, 37, 46 and 77.

Summary

1. The submissions can be grouped together. They have all expressed concerns regarding the eventual quality of the dwellings and have suggested the need to include some form of additional design guidance to help ensure an appropriate standard is realized.
2. Submission number **2** has acknowledged the prime location of the development and the opportunity that exists to *‘create an area of value that entices people to the lower end of the city to a desirable suburb’*, but is concerned with the lack of building covenants and the size of sections proposed. The submission is seeking the inclusion of sufficient building covenants and a reconsideration of the small sized sections (these have not been specifically identified).
3. Submission number **35** is opposing the fact that there are no design standards set for multi-storey duplexes and townhouses and that there is a risk, therefore, that cheap and unattractive buildings will be constructed. The submission is seeking the setting of design standards for multi-storey duplexes and townhouses to *“ensure the architecture is of a high standard with excellent visual impact and liveability”*.

4. Similarly, submission number **37** is concerned that, without any covenants to ensure a quality mix of housing design, that the area will “*become nothing more than an ugly infill development*” and not one that Hamilton residents will be proud of. Apart from additional covenants, the submission is also seeking a greater number of quality open spaces and green spaces and more planting.
5. Submission number **46** is opposing the proposed housing density on the basis that “*this proposed medium density development would represent a radical departure from the present Peacocke community, which encompasses some 100 lifestyle blocks*” and that as a result the current residents of the community “*would be adversely affected by the abrupt change in land use from rural to urban, which would see significant changes to traffic patterns, noise and light pollution, environmental degradation through habitat destruction, loss of shared enjoyment of open green space, and an infringement on innumerable aspects of rural living which drew them to these lifestyle blocks in the first place*”. The submission does not agree with lot sizes down to 200m² as these “*will not provide a high standard of living*”.
6. Lastly, submission **77** is wanting the quality and size of the houses erected (particularly those facing the river) to be carefully considered and that “*cheap and shoddy*” should not be tolerated.

Response

1. As stated, the submissions have raised concerns regarding the design quality of the dwellings that will be constructed. The submitters are wanting to ensure the area does not become another ‘ugly infill development’ but rather a place that Hamiltonians can be proud of.
2. As has been shown by a number of other recently completed developments, notably Hobsonville Point in Auckland, one method to help ensure consistent outcomes are achieved, is through the drafting and implementation of additional design guidelines, peer review and/or covenants.
3. While I share the concerns expressed, based on the documentation submitted and the review undertaken by the Urban Design Panel, I do not believe that this proposal (the Masterplan) represents an inferior solution from a design and layout perspective.
4. The Panel concluded that the Masterplan represents a “*clearly articulated vision, and the well-considered and sensitive design response. The proposed layout is closely linked to the site’s natural and cultural features - where landform is clearly a strong design prompt – skilfully overlaid with a mix of open spaces, vehicular, cycle and pedestrian networks, and a range of building typologies*”.
5. The applicant has also articulated a clear vision for the area which is: “*A vibrant new community that embraces the Waikato River at Peacocke, Hamilton’s premier new growth area*”.
6. The vision will be achieved through the application of several best practice principles including a holistic approach applying two overarching imperatives. These are (see Appendix D, page 15): “*The **first** is that for city-wide sustainability reasons this growth area must be developed efficiently so more housing, of the appropriate mix, is provided within the urban boundaries. This will help the city gain high returns on its infrastructure investment, minimise pressure on the environment in the other peripheral areas, and deliver better outcomes than conventional sprawl developments. The **second** is that living standards are of the highest order and that*

in addition to high quality houses, most, if not all, dwellings have good solar access, and good indoor-outdoor flows to private open space”.

7. The approach taken by the applicant is that, *“The subdivision is designed to enable compliance with Hamilton City Council’s range of guidance and rules in the Hamilton City Operative District Plan (‘the Plan’), as referenced below. In several instances, more restrictive standards are advised”.* (see Annexure D, page 39).
8. And further (see Appendix E7 - S92 Response, page 36) *“For the development of detached single dwellings, no further controls/conditions are required beyond the standards of the District Plan. Beyond the single dwelling (duplexes, apartment buildings, and integrated residential developments) proposed developments will require consents and the District Plan residential design guide must be referred to by an applicant for guidance on the outcomes sought. It is proposed that the contents of the Urban Design Report are also to be referred to in the assessment undertaken. Weston Lea may use private covenants in some parts of the site, but it is not appropriate/ necessary for the Council to be involved in design standards for individual dwellings beyond those that relate to the implementation of the district plan standards”.*
9. And lastly (see Appendix E7 – S92 Response page 37) *“Similar to the response to Item 91, the development of medium density housing will primarily be via the implementation of the district plan standards. As noted, the application has 41 parent lots in a preferred location for the development of up to 88 medium density dwellings. This preference can be secured through the master plan consent. Development of medium density elsewhere is able to be controlled by the district plan within an overall density that is consistent with Waikato RPS and district plan density targets”.*
10. The UD report does also contain a section on ‘The Living Environment’ (see Annexure D, pages 33-41) that provides further design guidance on a number of aspects and includes the following image and statements:



- Page 33 – *“Design will promote interaction between the private property and the public realm (streets, parks, and non-residential facilities)”.*
- Page 35 – *“Frontages will promote security through passive surveillance from ground floor living areas overlooking the street environment”.*
- Page 37 – *“High quality street frontages with living rooms and front doors facing the street, and garages not dominating”.*

11. The above aspirations are supported but are of no value unless they can actually be achieved.
12. To summarize – the following tools are available to ensure good design outcomes are achieved:
 - a. Operative District Plan provisions, including the addition of a number of new standards as proposed. Where applicable this includes existing Residential Design Guidance and Assessment Criteria and the addition of relevant sections of the Urban Design Report (Annexure D)
 - b. Other – as mentioned by the applicant, possible covenants post subdivision related to building materials, landscape elements, and architectural standards.
13. It is, however, key that the new standards and design guidance proposed are given statutory weight so that they can be consistently used and applied to the design of individual dwellings as the development progresses.
14. While I agree that it may not be appropriate or necessary for Council “*to be involved in design standards for individual dwellings beyond those that relate to the implementation of the district plan standards*” (see S92 response, page 36), as recommended by the Urban Design Panel), I would suggest that additional design guidance and peer review be considered (particularly regarding the future medium density housing). I had also sought clarity on the statement made by the applicant (see Appendix D, page 39) that “Further detail is to be provided in the development management process, post-subdivision, including building materials, landscape elements, and architectural standards”.
15. In terms of the concerns regarding proposed section sizes, the approach taken by the applicant is supported. This is summarized as follows (see page 35 of the Urban Design report):
 - a. A wide variety of lot sizes has been aimed for in order to create a diverse community and respond to different market demands.
 - b. Larger lots will generally be located on steeper land, in larger blocks, and in locations along the river and gully edges.
 - c. Conventionally sized and smaller lots will generally be located on flatter land.
 - d. Smaller lots will generally be located near the neighbourhood centre and near public open space amenities.
 - e. Smaller lots fronting onto Peacockes Road have been avoided in order to provide an appropriate spacing between driveways connecting with this road.
 - f. Medium density - The masterplan design anticipates medium density housing (duplex or terraced dwellings) on smaller lots to be applied for in a future application, should there be sufficient demand.

Urban Design Memo

To: Gillian Cockerell

From: Colin Hattingh

Subject: Weston Lea Ltd Application – Additional Information and Proposed Changes to the North-Eastern Area of the Site

Date: 9 March 2019

File: 010.2018.00009853.001

The purpose of this memo is to provide comments in relation to the additional information received regarding the above application. In preparing these comments, I have considered the 'Addendum to Urban Design Report', prepared by UrbanismPlus, dated February 2019.

An assessment of the entire proposal was previously provided, dated 9 October 2018.

Proposed Changes

As described on page 2 of the report, the proposed changes to the original layout (see image below) are “focussed around the northern terraces area, adjacent to the river. These changes have some implications for the proposed overall layout, the lot layout in the area of change, lot numbers and mix, the movement network, and the streetscape in the area of change”.



Figure 1 Proposed changes to the layout

The reason given for the changes were... *“primarily in response to submissions that raised concerns in respect to the potential impact of the proposed development on ecology, particularly the native bat population. The bats forage and move along the Waikato River and are known to roost in and around Hammond Park, which is located on the true right bank of the river to the northeast of the Amberfield site. As such, it has been recommended by the project’s ecologists to increase the width of the esplanade reserve in the north-eastern area of the site”* (page 2).

Justification

The following is a summary of the justification provided by UrbanismPlus in relation to the proposed changes and how they will meet the following urban design objectives (see pages 9 and 10).

- An efficient layout:
 - workable lot widths
 - short vehicular access lengths
 - layout still responsive to landform
- A connected and legible layout:
 - provision of a new continuous park edge road
 - easy pedestrian access to and from the river
 - stronger relationship between the park, the esplanade reserve, and the river
- A good interface between the public realm and private lots:
 - streets and public open spaces will still be fronted by dwellings (apart from lots to the east of the Knoll Park)
- Good residential amenity on all residential lots:
 - rear lots have good outlook, amenity and privacy as the slope and terracing of the land mitigates being surrounded by other dwellings
- A safe and attractive streetscape:
 - access to rear lots combined
 - wider lot widths

Urban Design Assessment

The key changes to the original layout include the introduction of 17 rear lots (accessed via jointly owned access lots), the modification of the layout to the east of the Knoll Park, a reduction of the total number of residential lots to 835 (from 862) and various changes to the local street network and hierarchy.

Regarding the provision of rear lots, from an urban design perspective, these should ideally be avoided if possible. This is consistent with the design guidance provided within the Operative District Plan (ODP) - specifically, Volume 2, 1.4.1.4 a) which states that: *“Where possible blocks should be no more than two allotments deep (refer Figures 1.4.1i and 1.4.1j).*

Figure 1.4.1i: Subdivision layouts creating deep blocks with large numbers of rear sites are to be discouraged

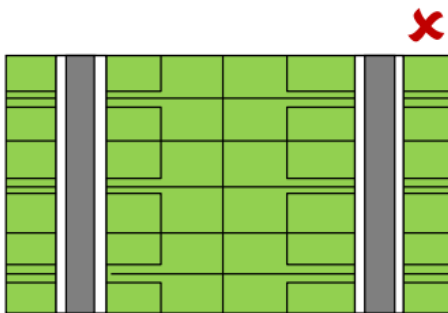
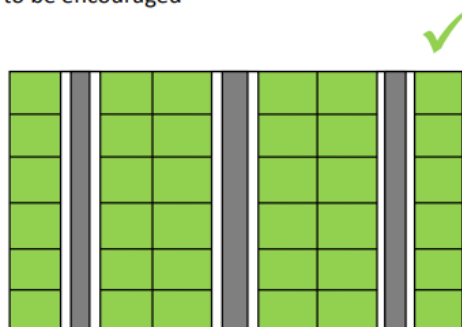


Figure 1.4.1j: Subdivision layout creating blocks no more than two allotments deep and maximising the creation of front sites is to be encouraged



Rear lots tend to always have lower on-site amenity and outlook. The reasons for this include:

- A perimeter block arrangement (two lots deep) ensures that the majority of the lots have street frontage. The front door and main living areas can therefore be designed to face the street while the private backyard can be located to the rear. This clear separation of public and private spaces is difficult to achieve with rear lots.
- Rear lots are often provided as they maximise lot yield and minimise the expense of creating more roads. However, the resultant requirement for longer driveways still requires considerable land to be set aside for vehicular movement.
- Longer driveways to rear lots offers lower amenity for residents and can create servicing issues.
- Private streets often do not achieve the benefits of public streets and can impose a maintenance burden on residents. Further, they often lack dedicated pedestrian and cycle space and are can be poorly lit.

It is, however, important to make decisions on a case by case basis and to consider the various unique attributes of each location and there will always be exceptions to the rule of thumb. In this particular case:

- The changes to the layout are a direct response to concerns raised regarding the potential impact on the local ecology.
- This has resulted in the creation of a larger, more generous riverfront esplanade when compared to the original proposal.
- Pedestrian and cycle connectivity have been maintained or improved.
- The number of rear lots has been limited to 17 and due to the topography and proximity to the river, will still offer the potential for good outlook and amenity for residents.
- The block and lot orientation have still been designed to maximise sunlight and daylight, with roads aligned north/south, and lots east/west, where possible. This allows morning or afternoon sun into the backyards and onto the frontage of the future dwellings.

Considering the above and the overall improvement with regard to opening up the river corridor and the protection of the local ecology, I am of the opinion that the changes can be supported from a design and layout perspective.