

Memorandum

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Attention: Megan Barr

Company: Kāpiti Coast District Council

Date: 24 October 2024

From: Miriam Moore – Senior Urban Designer

Message Ref: Urban Design Peer Review: 160 Mazengarb Road

Project No: BM240777

Boffa Miskell has been commissioned by Kāpiti Coast District Council (“Council”) to review the urban design matters related to the proposed development of 41 dwellings and associated car parks, with an internal communal grassed area at 160 Mazengarb Road. The site is zoned General Residential.

Review Process

The following application documents were reviewed as part of the initial urban design review:

- AEE provided by Emma Bean at Cuttriss Consultants (30 July 2024)
- Architectural Plans including indicative Landscape Plans provided by Designgroup Stapleton Elliot (30 July 2024)
- Urban Design Assessment provided by Lauren White at Urban Acumen (26 July 2024)
- Landscape Plans provided by Designgroup Stapleton Elliot (24 July 2024)

The Proposal has been considered against the Kāpiti Coast District Council Residential Design Guides. The commentary below is intended to provide feedback to the applicant to enable consideration and design responses. Commentary provided in this memo is focussed on where I consider the Proposal to not be meeting anticipated design outcomes or where I disagree with the Urban Design Assessment (UDA).

Assessment

The applicant has provided a thorough UDA which outlines many of the design decisions on the site. In general, I consider the proposal to be a distinct change of character from the surrounding neighbourhood and certain design considerations can improve the outcomes for the site – both for amenity and function. I agree with the UDA that the proposal provides a new typology which will increase housing supply and choice within the area. There are some minor changes which I consider could improve some of the urban design outcomes onsite, discussed below, and summarised at the end of this memo.

Siting and street frontage

In general, I consider the proposal to have been well laid out to address and activate the street frontage. I agree with the UDA that the site layout has considered the new internal laneway as a street in its design response successfully. The layout of the typologies could be improved by locating the two-storey C typologies to better manage shading effects, which I have detailed in my assessment of *Guideline 38*. I also consider that the proposal could use duplex typologies in some instances to reduce the number of side yards on site, where the space recovered could be better used for increasing pedestrian permeability, and more meaningful landscape treatment with planting. These suggestions have been detailed in the remainder of this memo.

Access and Bicycle Parking

<p>Guideline 11: Locating off street at grade parking between buildings and the street is discouraged.</p>	<p>The laneway design has successfully internalised car parking from being located between Mazengarb Road and the dwellings, however the Guideline is not being achieved internally when the laneway is considered as a street.</p> <p>On the balance, I agree with this approach for the same reasons that have been detailed in the UDA, although I consider a more consolidated design approach (duplexes typologies and co-locating driveways) could provide more opportunities for landscaping within the site to offset the hardscape.</p>
<p>Guideline 16: Large developments with multiple street frontages should create pedestrian connections between streets. A fine grained block pattern encourages more intensive pedestrian use and enables the development of comfortable and sheltered public open spaces or walking routes.</p>	<p>While I agree that no through link can be provided due to the singular frontage, the finer grain of the development would benefit from a secondary pedestrian entrance along the frontage. This would reduce the number of internalised dead-end routes and improve the internal circulation of the site. This could be achieved without reducing yield by creating space through utilising a duplex typology along Mazengarb Road.</p>

Outdoor Living Space

Privacy of some outdoor living spaces has been compromised by being located in the front of the dwellings, which can be accepted on balance, to maximise solar orientation to these spaces. Landscape treatment for these yards have utilised low 1.2m fencing to keep an open feel, providing a balance of passive surveillance over the wider site, as well as privacy for residents.

The smaller private outdoor spaces across the site are complemented by the communal outdoor space in the centre of the site, to provide a secondary option of outdoor space. This space has been activated to facilitate social activity by including a seating area.

Storage, Waste and Service Areas

Servicing areas have been well-considered in the design of the site, including provision for bike lockers down side yards to provide storage options in lieu of garaging.

<p>Guideline 33: Integrate waste and storage areas into the building design and ensure that they are of a sufficient size relative to the number of units.</p>	<p>While the waste storage areas have been well integrated into the site design, I query whether the number of waste receptacles provided is adequate for the number of units, especially as they are intended to be free hold and require a residents group to efficiently manage waste collection.</p>
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Building Mass and Height

The Proposal features a high-quality building design, which has carefully considered bulk and massing in the locating and designing of the buildings. I agree that while there is a repetition of building design, the colour palette creates a variation across the site, maintaining a cohesive design while providing interest.

<p>Guideline 38: Building mass and height should be designed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. create visual interest; b. minimise physical dominance; c. minimise potential shading or privacy effects on neighbouring sites. 	<p>Although the dwelling typologies of one-to-two-storeys do not lend themselves to significant shading effects on neighbouring properties, I consider a better design response would be to locate the two-storey C typologies on the northern border. Locating two-storey units here would avoid height-in-relation to boundary infringements and locate most of the shading on-site, over car-parking</p>
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	spaces, rather than the private outdoor space of 12-16 Niu Sila Way.
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Entrances

<p>Guideline 51. Ensure entrances (as well as address and letterbox) are clearly defined and visible from the street to enable them to be easily located and accessed.</p>	<p>The UDA has raised the issue that the entrance for the B typologies are down the side of the building, which is suboptimal outcome for entrance legibility. A canopy feature helps to identify the entrance down the pathway. While I consider a preference would be to provide a front door addressing the pedestrian pathway, on the balance, four out of 41 units having a side entrance is an acceptable outcome.</p>
	<p>The front door entrances to units 08 and 19 are not clear as the front doors are off a secondary pathway. The applicant should consider changing the access to Unit 19's side yard from the western side of the property, to avoid confusion and improve legibility to the front entrance (shown in <i>Figure 1</i>).</p>
	<p>If a through link is created for the pedestrian pathway leading to Unit 08 as suggested in <i>Guideline 16</i>, this would help improve legibility to the front entrance by opening up the path network. If not, a clearer design solution may be to co-locate the front and back entrances like the A, B1, C, D and F typologies for consistent front entrance legibility across the site, and to maximise internal circulation and space inside the unit.</p>
	<p>Entrances for the A, B1, C, D and F typologies double as the glazed-doors to provide connectivity between the primary living area and the private outdoor area. While this is not optimal, given the size of the units, this is an acceptable outcome on balance. Using a glazed hinge door improves legibility of the door as a front entrance as opposed to the more typical sliding glass door used for access to private outdoor areas.</p>



Figure 1: Unit 19 (B2 on left) has its entrance on a secondary pedestrian path. Side yard entrance could be changed to western side (marked in red) to improve legibility.



Figure 2: Unit 08 (B2 centre) has its front entrance on a secondary, dead-end pedestrian path.

Amenity and Sustainability

<p>Guideline 62: Use planting to improve the outlook from dwellings and the street and to soften hard surface areas such as car parks, service areas or along internal site boundaries and driveways/shared accessways</p>	<p>While some specimen trees have been provided. I consider there to be a lack of robust planting across the site, as is evident by the shortfall in landscape treatment. There is limited opportunity to plant along the driveway due to the frequent breaks for car parks.</p> <p>Much of the provided landscape treatment areas are small with limited ability to provide meaningful landscape amenity onsite. Given the significant increase in housing and change in typology, I consider more vertical planting (specimen trees) would help to offset the dominance of the hardscape, and integrate this type of development within the general residential zone.</p> <p>I strongly encourage the applicant to reconsider the proposal to seek further opportunity to increase the landscaped area. This could be achieved by providing some duplex typologies to open up more space for more specimen trees and other planting opportunities.</p>
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Summary and Recommendations

Overall, I consider the Proposal to largely be of a high-quality, with a well-considered design response. I acknowledge the typology and intensity is a change from the character of the existing area, and consider some minor changes to the proposal will help to improve the design outcomes for the site and surrounding area.

I recommend the following,

- Introduce some semi-detached typologies to open up space for:
 - A pedestrian connection from Mazengarb Road to link to the pedestrian path between units 08 and 09.
 - Larger pockets of land for landscape treatment which support planting of more specimen trees across the site.
- Reconsider the design of front entrances for units 19 and 08 to improve legibility.
- Consider relocating the C typologies to the northern boundary.
- Increase the size of the storage space provided for waste receptacles.