

Richard Knott Limited

Urban Design | Masterplans | Built Heritage
Town Planning | Landscape and Visual Assessment

To: Jethro Joffe, Baseplan Ltd

From: Richard Knott

Date: 11th November 2025

Special Character Matters

Re: LUC60456483 - Construction of two separate dwellings on two abutting separate properties
22 and 22A Summit Drive, Mount Albert

1. Introduction

This memorandum responds to matters relating to Special Character raised in Auckland Council's *'Resource consent application – Further information request'* (16th October 2025); this includes *'Suggested recommendations – not pursuant to section 92 of the RMA'*.

The site is located within the Mount Albert, Residential Isthmus C – Special Character Areas Overlay (within the Isthmus C2 sub-area).

The proposed application is thoroughly described in the AEE and the specialist reports which accompanied the application. For brevity I do not repeat that detail, or the matters raised in the information request, in this memo.

The Applicant has commissioned me to provide an independent review of the proposal, which I have carried out and the proposal has been amended to include my recommended amendments from a special character perspective. As part of my review, I visited the site and local area on the 24th October 2025.

2. Preparation of this memorandum

This memorandum has been prepared by Richard Knott. Richard is an expert in Historic Heritage and Special Character matters and has worked in the areas of historic heritage, special character, urban design and planning for over 35 years.

Richard has provided heritage area, heritage building and character area advice to Auckland Council, Christchurch City Council, Queenstown Lakes District Council, Mackenzie District Council and Hamilton City Council, as well as to many private clients. He recently prepared a whole of Hamilton study to identify historic heritage areas and undertook the assessment of new buildings and areas to be included on the schedule of historic heritage in the Mackenzie District Plan.

He is the holder of a Making Good Decisions Certificate (with Chairs Endorsement) and has sat as an Independent Planning Commissioner for Auckland Council, Hamilton City Council, Taupo District Council, Tauranga City Council and Whangarei District Council, including on a number of heritage and character area related hearings. He was a panel member of Auckland PC81 Additions to Schedule 14 Historic Heritage Schedule and PC82 Amendments to Schedule 14 Historic Heritage Schedule, as well as a panel member for PC78 Intensification and its associated plan changes.

Having a design background as well as a heritage/planning background enables Richard to have a full appreciation of the impact of changes within special character areas.

Richard Knott Qualifications:

- Post Graduate Diploma Building Conservation (2002), Bournemouth University, UK
- Master of Arts Urban Design (1995), University of the West of England, UK
- Bachelor of Planning (post graduate) (1989), University of Manchester, UK
- Bachelor of Arts (Hons.) Town and Country Planning (1988), University of Manchester, UK

Richard Knott Professional Memberships:

- Member Institute of Historic Building Conservation
- Member New Zealand Planning Institute
- Chartered Member Royal Town Planning Institute

3. Response to matters raised

S92 Matters

Requested information item 2 – that photorealistic visualisation, with and without the proposed landscaping be provided (a) viewed along the driveway of the subject site and (b) viewed between the two front-lot dwellings.

Requested information item 3 – that details be provided of the design of the garage doors.

Response:

The requested montages have been provided as follows.

- Item 2a requests a view which would be very similar to the existing viewpoint provided in the lodged resource consent at Viewpoint 1. There is no benefit or insight that will result from producing an additional simulation at a slightly different angle, which cannot already be ascertained from a review of the architectural plans and other visual simulations. The additional view has therefore not been provided. However, the simulation for Viewpoint 1 has been reproduced with the amended design changes as well as with the proposed landscaping layer both on and off.
- Item 2b has been provided as a new viewpoint and visual simulation with the proposed landscaping layer both on and off.

The amended architectural plans and visual simulations include additional details and changed premised on my recommendations set out later in this memo. This includes changes to the design of the garage doors, with accompanying detail.

Suggested recommendations – not pursuant to section 92 of the RMA

Summary of issues raised by Auckland Council:

Whilst it is a rear site, the development will have high visibility within the special character streetscapes. The proposed design is not strongly in keeping with the special character qualities. Recommends the use of red brick in traditional proportions, other traditional materials such as painted weatherboard or rendered brick, more uniform profile for metal wall cladding, reconsider the use of cedar where a standard shiplap profile may be more appropriate, in this instance a stained/oil finish would need to be appraised in conjunction with landscaping on and beyond the site.

A gabled or hipped roof is recommended. If it is visible from the public realm the trapezoidal roof cladding is recommended to be revised to be more reflective of traditional materials, such as tile or corrugate. The overall building form could be simplified. If a flat roof is desired, a design more closely references local mid-century modern residences could be considered.

Response:

The concerns raised by the Council have been noted and responded to:

- I do not agree that the buildings will be highly visible within the special character area streetscape. The proposed buildings are located over 50m from the street frontage and will only be visible along the existing driveway which serves them, and through the gap between 18 and 20 Summit Drive; this is illustrated by the updated photo montages. Whilst I accept that they will be visible from the street, I do not agree that they will be highly visible within the special character streetscape.
- This is illustrated by Figure 1, a photograph taken with a very wide-angle lens (equivalent to an 18mm lens on a 35mm film camera, in comparison to the 'standard' 50mm lens on a 35mm film camera). Even in this view, which is angled towards the application sites, the proposed buildings would not be highly visible features in the streetscape.

- The sites are located opposite the intersection with Stilwell Road; Stilwell Road drops away from Summit Drive, such that views into the site quickly disappear from that direction; this is illustrated in Figure 2.

Based on the Council feedback, and following my visit to the area, several updates have been made to the proposed buildings:

- The bricks have been altered to red bricks, utilising a standard brick size, in keeping with the brick used on other buildings in the local area.
- The use of horizontal weatherboard in place of the proposed vertical shiplap cedar was explored. This did not sit comfortably on the building.
- The cedar vertical shiplap has therefore been retained but will be washed/stained a dark grey colour. This sits comfortably with the proposed red brick and appears recessive when viewed against the maunga. As such it also satisfies landscape and visual concerns addressed by other specialists.
- The garage doors have been altered to show a vertical pattern; as such the doors better reflect the design detail expected within the special character area.
- The proportions of the window within the brick area above each garage door has been altered, to better reflect the proportion of double hung sash windows seen on existing buildings within the special character area; for instance, windows on 18 Summit Drive.
- The roof design has not been altered, as the existing low pitches and flat roof areas ensure that the bulk of the buildings is minimised, to maximise views of the maunga. The dark finishes of these will sit comfortably with the dark finish now intended to be applied to the cedar cladding.
- These changes are illustrated on plan RC_04 Rev.A, and the supplied montages, and confirm that the brick will be the dominant element when the buildings are viewed from the street (along the driveway and between the existing buildings). It will be clear to anyone viewing the buildings that their design and materials has been informed by the existing buildings in the local area.



Figure 1: View northeast along Summit Drive, towards Mt Albert Road; existing dwelling at 20 Summit Drive and vehicular access to site to left of centre of photograph (photo RKL 24 10 2025)



Figure 2: View southeast into the site along the driveway from Stilwell Road (photo RKL 24 10 2025)

4. Consideration of Relevant Auckland Unitary Plan (operative in part) Assessment Criteria:

As confirmed in the AEE, the construction of the new buildings in the Special Character Area Overlay is a Restricted Discretionary Activity (D18.4.1(A5)), along with other development standard infringements which also amount to a Restricted Discretionary Activity status.

The relevant assessment criteria from the AUP(OP) are considered below.

| D18.8.2.1.(3) - For the construction of a new building or relocation of a building onto a site: | Response: |
|--|--|
| (a) policies D18.3(1) to (7); | <p>The relevant policies are considered below:</p> <p>(1) <i>Require all development and redevelopment to have regard and respond positively to the identified special character values and context of the area as identified in the special character area statement.</i></p> <p>As described above, changes have been made to the materials of the proposed buildings to ensure that they better respond to the special character values and context of the area. Given their location 50m from the street frontage, and the limited views of the dwellings, with these changes the proposed dwellings meet the expectations of this policy</p> <p>(2) <i>Maintain and enhance the built form, design and architectural values of the buildings and the area, as identified in the special character area statement, so that new buildings, alterations and additions to existing buildings, infrastructure and subdivision (where applicable):</i></p> <p>(a) <i>maintain the continuity or coherence of the identified special character values of the area;</i></p> |

- (b) maintain the streetscape qualities and cohesiveness;*
- (c) respond positively to the design, scale, height, setback and massing of existing development, any distinctive pattern of subdivision, intensity of development, its relationship to the street, streetscape cohesiveness and is of a compatible form which contributes to the identified special character values of the area;*
- (d) maintain the relationship of built form to open space and landscape context;*
- (e) maintain the setting of the special character area, where these features, such as mature trees and landform, contribute to the special character values of the area;*
- (f) enable the removal of additions and features that detract from the special character of the building or identified special character of the wider area;*
- (g) minimise the loss of built fabric and encourage maintenance and repair;*
- (h) require new materials to be compatible with the age, detailing, finishes and colour; and*
- (i) recover or reveal special character values of buildings and features.*

As described above, changes have been made to the materials of the proposed buildings to ensure that they better respond to the special character values and context of the area.

The buildings will be 50m from the street frontage and located behind existing buildings. There will be limited views of them, along the existing driveway and gap between 18 and 20 Summit Drive. As such they will have little impact on the streetscape qualities of the area. In any case, the scale, massing and materials of the buildings, which now includes red brick, are not out of keeping with other buildings in the local area.

The buildings will not impact the existing relationship of built form to open space, and do not require the removal of trees or vegetation which is important to the values of the area.

The views and dominance of the maunga makes an important, positive contribution to the values of the SCA. The proposed dwellings will maintain views of the maunga; as illustrated by the montages; the existing clear view from the street towards the maunga is maintained between 18 and 20 Summit Drive and along the driveway. The Maunga remains the dominant feature.

In view of the above, I consider that the expectations of this policy are met.

- (6) Manage the design and location of car parking, garaging and accessory buildings to maintain and enhance the streetscape and special*

| | |
|---|--|
| | <p><i>character values of the area, as identified in the special character statement.</i></p> <p>Car parking and garaging are located over 50m from the street frontage.</p> <p>Whilst there will be a view of the garage door on 22 Summit Drive along the driveway, the levels of the driveway are such that this will not be a full height view. The design of the garage doors has been altered to include a vertical pattern, which is in keeping with the design of doors expected within SCAs.</p> <p>The values of the streetscape and special character values of the area will be maintained.</p> <p><i>(7) Encourage the retention of special features such as boundary walls, fences, paths and plantings that contribute to the character of the area.</i></p> <p>The original short basalt wall at the street frontage to the south of the driveway entrance will be retained (noting that the majority of this is not in the site).</p> <p>The new planting proposed alongside the existing block wall on the north side of the driveway will ensure that in the medium to long term the block wall will not detract from values of the SCA.</p> <p>The other basalt walls which extend from Summit Drive parallel to the driveway are not within the application site.</p> |
| (e) for Special Character Areas Overlay – Residential Isthmus C2: | |
| (i) whether materials used maintain the integrity of, and have a clear relationship to, the traditional character and materials of existing buildings on the street; | The use of red brick for the dominant elements of the buildings, visible along the driveway and between 18 and 20 Summit Drive, shows a clear relationship to the traditional character and materials of existing buildings in the street. |
| (ii) whether the scale, form, mass, proportion and materials of the building is compatible with the architectural style of the existing building on the site, or the architectural style predominant in the street; | <p>The scale, mass, proportion and materials of the buildings is compatible with the surrounding SCA.</p> <p>In particular, the scale and mass of the buildings is not out of keeping with other building seen in the area. Their two storey/split level designs, which follow the contours of the sites, ensures that they do not appear over dominant in views from the street.</p> <p>The brick reflects the brick used on other buildings; the vertical brick element above each garage door reflects the wide brick chimney seen on the front elevation of 18 Summit Drive.</p> <p>The other materials used for the walls, roofs, windows and garage doors are all dark, and will be recessive features on the buildings.</p> |
| (iii) whether the new building detracts from or adds to the consistency and harmony of building forms in the street and the coherence of the streetscape; | The buildings are around 50m back from the street frontage and area viewed behind street fronting buildings. There are only clear views of them along the driveway and between buildings. As such they do not form part of the streetscape, and as such do |

| | |
|--|---|
| | not impact the consistency, harmony or coherence of the streetscape. |
| (iv) whether the building contributes positively to the special character and coherence of the streetscape; | As noted above, the proposed buildings are around 50m back from the street frontage and will not form part of the streetscape. They will as such have a neutral impact on the special character and coherence of the streetscape. |
| (v) whether the building is located so that larger trees on the site are retained, and where this is not practical, replacement planting, particularly of indigenous trees are undertaken where appropriate; | There are no large trees on the site to be retained. New landscape planting will be undertaken as part of the development. |
| (vi) whether any building or site-works avoids physical effects on the natural land-form, including cumulative effects; | Whilst there will be earthworks as part of the development these will not have any noticeable effect on the natural landform. |
| (vii) whether any new or relocated building minimises adverse visual effects on the landscape by avoiding visually obtrusive excavation and by appropriate placement of the building on the site; and | Whilst there will be earthworks as part of the development these will not have any noticeable effect on the natural landform. The landscape and visual assessment confirms that any effects on the views and setting of the maunga are acceptable. |
| (viii) whether pitched roofs, in gabled and/or hipped forms, are used to mitigate adverse visual effects on the natural environment. | The roofs have been designed to ensure that the buildings are kept as low an unintrusive as possible so as to not impact the values of the maunga. |

5. Conclusion

Based upon my site visit, my understanding of the values and character of the SCA and my assessment above, I consider that the proposed buildings, as amended, will be assimilated into the area without detrimental effects on its special character values.



Richard Knott MNZPI MRTPI IHBC IHE



· INSTITUTE · OF · HISTORIC ·
BUILDING · CONSERVATION

Richard Knott Limited
PO Box 272-1352, Papakura, 2244
09 392 0091
021 242 5865
richard@rkl.co.nz