

# PEERS BROWN MILLER LTD

Arboricultural & Environmental Consultants

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## CLAUSE 23(1) TO SCHEDULE 1 OF THE RMA RESPONSE – PRIVATE PLAN CHANGE, 3 BRIGHTSIDE RD, 149, 151 & 153 GILLIES AVE – ARBORICULTURAL MATTERS

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**PREPARED FOR:** Southern Cross Hospitals Ltd  
cc: Daniel Shaw – SFH Consultants Ltd  
cc: Bianca Tree – Minter Ellison Rudd Watts

**BY:** Richard Peers

**DATE:** 27 February 2019

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### 1.0 Background

An application for a private plan change involving the above-named properties has been lodged with Auckland Council.

The Council planner handling the application has sent a letter to the applicant, under Clause 23(1) to Schedule 1 of the RMA, asking for some further information to be provided. Peers Brown Miller Ltd (PBM) has been asked to address one particular request outlined in the letter - listed under the heading: **Visual and Landscape – bullet point 7**. Accordingly, this memo provides some comment that should assist the Council planner with her assessment.

It should be noted that I am very familiar with the tree cover within, and around, all the named addresses.

### 2.0 Discussion of Visual and Landscape Item 7

- *An analysis of the degree to which the existing trees and other vegetation found at 3 Brightside Road and on the sections at 149, 151 and 153 Gillies Avenue could be expected to survive with development under the controls of Chapter H25 (Special Purpose – Healthcare Facility and Hospital Zone) provisions. While mitigation measures such as level of screening and buffering could be seen as information requirements under a resource consent application, it would be helpful that these measures are addressed by LA4 for the private plan change request.*

To assist with composing a response to this question, the following sources of information were studied;

- Chapter H25 – Healthcare Facility and Hospital Zone, viz;
  - H25.4.1 Activity Table – (A20) & (A21)
  - H25.6.3.1 – Yards Table

The 3m front and side yards cited in the Yards Table must be provided in the first instance. However, A20 and A21 are the most relevant to this proposal, and the plans presented with the Plan Change application are based on front yard setbacks of at least 10m and side yard setbacks of varying distances – with the minimum being some existing lengths of 3m setback behind the existing hospital building. Any new building that triggers A20 or A21 is a restricted discretionary activity with matters of assessment including the extent to which the visual effects of the building can be softened by landscaping (H25.8.2(2)(b)).

- Plans of the Archimedia plan set, viz;
  - Massing Reference Plan – Ground Floor – Sheet No A920 Rev C (Page 42 of 50)

This plan gives a good overview of the entire site, showing the indicative ground floor building mass, the various setback distances and, importantly, feature trees, hedges, and masses of shrubbery, as surveyed - with bases of most trees shown accurately and driplines also accurately depicted. Trees outside the site boundaries are shown as well, viz. street trees and some trees on neighbouring residential properties.

## 2.1 Tree Categorisation and Discussions thereof

There are three categories of tree cover to consider, being;

### (a) Notable Trees – Schedule 10 of the AUP

There are three Notable trees that would be implicated in any development activity proposed for the site. Two, a Pohutukawa and an Australian Frangipani, stand within the grounds of the existing hospital at 3 Brightside Rd. The other, a Firewheel tree, stands in a neighbouring property (147 Gillies Ave) at the street frontage and with a portion of its canopy and root zone extending into the front yard of the subject site. All three are protected under the provisions of **Chapter D13. Notable Tree Overlay**.

With regard to the two trees within the site, perusal of the above-referenced plan would show that they can comfortably be accommodated within the design layout. Indeed, the Frangipani tree stands in an area of the existing hospital grounds that is unlikely to be affected by any development activity, and its screening function for neighbours would therefore not be diminished.

The Pohutukawa would be retained, as shown on the A920 plan, as an important landscape and amenity feature – with a very minor degree of activity undertaken within its root zone. It is noted that it is highly visible in the Brightside Ave streetscape.

The Firewheel tree stands in a location whereby its overhanging canopy would be within the 10m setback, as can be seen on the A920 plan. Its root zone and crown can therefore be comfortably accommodated within front yard landscaping elements. Its bulk would also provide a ‘softening’ effect against the built form, as one approaches southwards along Gillies Ave.

The well-being of the three Notable trees would be a paramount consideration of any of the design exercises for a proposed development, and arboricultural input would be part of that. The applicant is committed to the successful incorporation of these trees.

#### **(b) Street Trees**

There are several street trees on the berms outside the site in Brightside Ave. There are just two street trees on berms outside the Gillies Ave frontage. These trees are all protected under the provisions of **Chapter E17. Trees in roads**.

All the street trees can be retained comfortably and their presence would be recognised in the design exercises. The advice of a consulting arborist would be sought in order to ensure that this is the case.

It is obvious also that their presence would be very functional in terms of screening and softening of built structure within the site.

#### **(c) Trees within Site**

It can be seen on Plan A920 that the ground floor of the anticipated development footprint (coloured orange) sits back from the Gillies Ave frontage by further than 10m. On the Brightside Rd side, the setback is precisely 10m.

With the existing hospital building, it can be seen that the majority of its footprint is further back than 10m – with two small portions of the building extending into the 10m strip but not into the 3m strip.

I have visited the site and inspected all trees, hedges and vegetation within the 10m strips shown on A920. I can say with confidence that all the trees shown around the perimeter of the development footprint would be able to be retained if the building footprint were to be established as shown on that plan. Even the large trees near the corner of Brightside Avenue that have the footprint encroaching on their driplines would tolerate any excavation work at or about the distance shown from their bases.

Pruning for clearance from the building line would also be able to be achieved without adversely affecting their health or diminishing their overall profile, as they are viewed in the streetscape. There are four feature trees along the Gillies Rd frontage that could be comfortably retained, and one feature tree in the northwest corner that also can be incorporated. Existing hedges, some shrubs, and some of the existing stonework walls would combine with the larger trees to provide screening functions and maintain the visual amenities currently being provided.

### **3.0 Conclusion**

It is recognised that an actual proposal would contain design elements that require various activities to be undertaken within the front and side yards – not least vehicle access and movement facilities. The presence of feature trees, and the need to maintain the amenities that they provide, would be taken into account, and it is anticipated that, in order to ensure that effects on the trees can be restricted to an acceptable level, a consulting arborist would be part of the design team.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if any further information on arboricultural matters is required.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R Peers', written over a horizontal line.

**Richard Peers**  
**Director**