

AUCKLAND URBAN DESIGN PANEL

RECOMMENDATIONS



Project:	48 Esmonde Road, Takapuna
Location:	135 Albert Street, Level 14, Room 10
Date:	10 th October 2019
Time:	1:30PM – 5:30PM
Members:	Stuart Houghton (chair), Jon Rennie, Janine Bell, Matt Riley
Planner:	Erica Su
Urban Designer:	John Stenberg
Landscape Specialist:	Ainsley Verstraeten

Introduction

The Panel thanks the applicant for their presentation.

The Panel acknowledges the significance of the site and the opportunities it presents and notes that this will be the first of multiple sessions as the project progresses.

The Panel supports in principle the opportunities the site offers for greater intensity and scale of development. The Panel notes in particular the island-like qualities, proximity to Takapuna and the city centre, public transport, and coastal amenities. The Panel is of the opinion that the following are key matters to be addressed further at future presentations to the Panel.

Clarity of conceptual approach

The Panel considers that the proposal would benefit from a greater clarity of the vision, outcomes and principles that inform the design. Some of the imagery and discussion around island precedents, while relevant, is not strongly reflected in the proposal at present. Other concepts and organising ideas may also be relevant. Clarifying the key qualities that should inform the design and development response will be helpful in evaluating the proposal further.

Massing response to context

The current massing response has clearly been informed by detailed environmental site analysis and identified site layout considerations (e.g. solar access, wind, views). The Panel recommends further work be undertaken to develop a stronger understanding of an appropriate massing response to the surrounding urban

context. In particular, the relationship to Esmonde Road, coastal environment, neighbouring residential areas, and Takapuna metropolitan centre.

Public access

The Panel agrees with the applicant that, for a scheme of this scale and density, public access is fundamental to the integration of the scheme with its context and surrounding neighbourhoods to achieve some public benefit. In particular, achieving a legible, quality, and publicly accessible north-south access between Esmonde Road and the water edge (and potential future Francis Street connection) should be a key objective. Beyond this, the Panel is supportive of the approach of creating quality access in the right place to create a legible and connected urban village for residents and the public.

Public/private interface

Greater clarity is required as to the definition and qualities of the public/private interface of internal open spaces and linkages through and internal to the development. The current urban design response to open space (pg. 23) highlights the current lack of clarity in this regard.

Transport

The Panel observes that the site is not a Transit Oriented Development but notes that it has opportunities afforded by proximity to high-frequency public transport. In particular, the Panel notes the importance of close integration with Esmonde Road bus services as the high-frequency route between Takapuna and the City Centre in immediate proximity to the site. The proposal should seek to achieve close integration of the development with bus stops to access these services.

While an overbridge to Esmonde Road may provide public benefit, a more fundamental consideration is to achieve a better quality at-grade crossing of Esmonde Road that supports the development and access to public transport. It is important to recognise that there are multiple origins and destinations to be facilitated.

The Panel supports the intent to minimise carparking to encourage the use of alternative transport modes. Further details of how much carparking is to be provided and the way in which this will be incorporated into the development is important to evaluating the overall success of the proposal.

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Mix of use

The Panel supports the intent to provide a degree of mixed-use within a predominantly residential scheme. These aspects can support the public access and public benefits aspects of the proposal.

Other information

The Panel recommends the following information in addition to the above information is provided at the following panel session:

- A baseline complying development to the THAB zone to enable a comparison to what is proposed. In particular, the bulk and massing of development, yield, carparking, and building coverage and landscape requirements.
- Further contextual analysis of the massing response and potential alternatives including a greater range of cross-sectional and 3D contextual views is required.

Conclusion

The Panel looks forward to a further review as the design develops.

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AUCKLAND URBAN DESIGN PANEL

COVER SHEET



Site Address: 48 Esmond Road

Project Name: Esmonde Road

Applicant: Kingston Property Ltd.

Agent: Abu Hoque

Reporting Planner: Erica Su

Reporting Urban Designer: John Stenberg

Reporting Landscape Architect: Ainsley Verstraeten

Date of Meeting: 28 November 2019

Require AUDP to assess (tick all relevant boxes):

Bulk, scale and massing

Landscape strategy

Facade strategy

Detailed façade design

Detailed landscape design

Description of the Proposal:

Site is located at 48 Esmonde Road and is a potential gateway site to Takapuna. The THAB zoning applies to the site in recognition of its proximity to a high frequency public transport route (approximately 8-10 minutes to Fanshawe Street in the CBD), access to amenity provided by Shoal Bay and approximately 1km walking distance to Takapuna Metropolitan centre.

The site is approximately 2ha and can accommodate a 140m x 90m rectangle comfortably. The proposal includes the provision of a 20m esplanade reserve to Shoal Bay. The proposal is for residential apartments with between 300-400 apartments being sought, a hotel complex, and office and retail small enough not to create a destination.

The proposal is seeking to develop in three stages, Hotel stage, northern group of apartments and a south western grouping of apartments. Car parking will be provided in two basement levels, although parking numbers have not been determined. There remains a commitment to providing a sustainable development. A potential pedestrian/cycle link across the mangroves to Frances Street and a link over Esmonde Road to get to Barry's Point Road continues to form part of the design thinking. The distances to any useful shopping and transport services in Takapuna and Barry's Point Road and the Akoranga BRT Station would be approximately 1-1.2km.

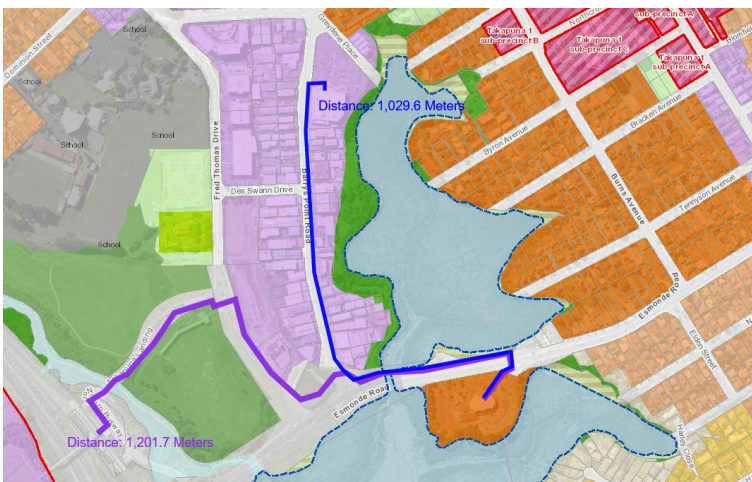


Fig 1: Walking Distances to Akoranga BRT Station and supermarket Barry's Point Road

Height infringements will be significant (up to 30m) relative to that provided by the THAB zone. The massing and its composition have been the focus of further analysis by the design team. **A plan change is also being sought** to help facilitate the development proposal.

CONSENTING MATTERS:

The site is located at the Residential – Terrace Housing and Apartment Building (THAB) Zone. A very small part of the site towards the northwest portion is also shown as zoned Coastal – General Coastal Marine Zone. The site is subject to, around the periphery of the site, a Marine Significant Ecological Area – SEA-M2-60a. Much of the frontage to Esmonde Road is subject to a Vehicle Access Restriction Control – Motorway Interchange Control. The periphery of the site is also subject to a coastal storm-water inundation 1% AEP plus 1m sea level rise control. The site is approximately 2.15 ha and is not directly adjoining any private property.



The maximum building height for the THAB Zone is 16m and the site is not subject to any height variation control which enables additional height. The proposal will exceed this height standard quite substantially, as illustrated in the diagram below, with the red, blue and black lines indicating the 16m maximum building height plane. At this stage, other design details of the proposal are not known, though the use and development of dwellings and hotel will require consent as well as the use of the existing signalised vehicle access, all as restricted discretionary activities.

URBAN DESIGN ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES:

The project remains in an early stage of design development. The massing has changed, and the design team considers that this has changed to consider the wider environment of the site. The panel is therefore asked to provide its views on the following urban design aspects:

- The clarity of the conceptual vision and principles informing the design.
- The massing response as informed by the environmental site analysis and the resulting layout proposed and the ability to manage height and dominance on the landscape and coastline.
- The ability of the built form to contribute positively to a gateway/entry to Takapuna and sit comfortably within its wider spatial context.
- The interface between Esmonde Road and the Esplanade Reserve

- Legibility and safety of pedestrian/cycle linkages through and around the site.
- Public experience of the board walk – arrival and exit points.
- Relationship between buildings and their activities in relation to supporting the amenity of publicly accessible spaces and private spaces

PLANNING ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

1. The site is large, elevated and relatively isolated, making the site highly visually prominent. In addition to the proximity to the motorway entrance and exit, Akoranga Bus Station, it is one of the first notable sites as people travel to Takapuna and Devonport. The site is also, for a large part, adjoining the coastal marine area. The development will also be highly visible to the residential properties in the surrounding area. Pedestrian/shared path across to Francis Street in Hauraki to the southeast and an over-bridge over Esmonde Road proposed will enhance connectivity to the surrounding neighbourhood.
2. Landscape, natural character and visual effects assessment will be required.
3. Esmonde Road experiences extremely high volume of traffic and is the only road frontage to the site.
4. The development is high intensity and will provide some communal spaces as well as non-residential activities. These will contribute to on-site amenities but also may have impacts on residential amenity (visual privacy, sunlight and daylight access, sense of space etc.)
5. Some of the Unitary Plan provisions of relevance to the panel review e.g. objectives, policies, assessment criteria, standards and purpose statements are outlined below.

H6.2 Objectives

- 1) Land adjacent to centres and near the public transport network is efficiently used to provide high-density urban living that increases housing capacity and choice and access to centres and public transport;
- 2) Development is in keeping with the areas planned urban built character of predominantly five, six or seven storey buildings in identified areas, in a variety of forms;
- 3) Development provides quality on-site residential amenity for residents and the street;
- 4) Non-residential activities provide for the community's social, economic and cultural well-being, while being compatible with the scale and intensity of development anticipated by the zone so as to contribute to the amenity of the neighbourhood.

H6.3 Policies

- 1) Enable a variety of housing types at high densities including terrace housing and apartments and integrated residential development such as retirement villages.
- 2) Require the height, bulk, form and appearance of development and the provision of setbacks and landscaped areas to achieve a high-density urban built character of predominantly five, six or seven storey buildings in identified areas, in a variety of forms.
- 3) Encourage development to achieve attractive and safe streets and public open spaces including by:

- a) providing for passive surveillance
 - b) optimising front yard landscaping
 - c) minimising visual dominance of garage doors
- 5) Manage the height and bulk of development to maintain daylight access and a reasonable standard of privacy, and to minimise visual dominance effects to adjoining sites and developments.
- 6) Require accommodation to be designed to meet the day to day needs of residents by:
- a) providing privacy and outlook; and
 - b) providing access to daylight and sunlight, and providing the amenities necessary for those residents.
- 7) Encourage accommodation to have useable and accessible outdoor living space.
- 9) Provide for non-residential activities that:
- a) support the social and economic well-being of the community;
 - b) are in keeping with the scale and intensity of development anticipated within the zone;
 - c) avoid, remedy or mitigate adverse effects on residential amenity; and
 - d) will not detract from the vitality of the Business – City Centre Zone, Business – Metropolitan Centre Zone and Business – Town Centre Zone.

AUCKLAND URBAN DESIGN PANEL

RECOMMENDATIONS



Project:	48 Esmonde Road, Takapuna (Panel 2)
Location:	135 Albert Street, Level 14, Room 10
Date:	28 November 2019
Time:	1:30PM – 5:30PM
Members:	Stuart Houghton (Chair), Janine Bell, Jon Rennie, Matt Riley
Planner:	Erica Su
Urban Designer:	John Stenberg
Landscape Specialist:	Ainsley Verstraeten

- Support for the following reasons
- Support subject to some changes (stated below)
- Support subject to fundamental changes (stated below)
- Cannot support for the following reasons

Introduction

The Panel thanks the applicant for their further presentation and notes that there have been a number of positive changes responding to feedback from Panel 1. In particular, the masterplan layout has been refined to clarify and strengthen the public access and circulation arrangement, and also the way in which the public/private interface is defined internal to the site.

In relation to the building massing changes, the Panel appreciates the intent behind the change to locate the greatest height more centrally rather than hard to the southern edge to the esplanade reserve. However, there remains a lack of 3D contextual views to assess the success of the move and the overall height and massing as seen and experienced in the surrounding context. This remains a fundamental issue still to be resolved. The Panel will be assisted by 3D modelling, ground level perspective views at a range of scales and representative public viewpoints.

Esmonde Road intersection, pedestrian conflicts

The Panel considers that the success of this development as a large scale mixed-use urban neighbourhood necessitates changes to the Esmonde Road intersection and vehicular access arrangement. As noted at Panel 1, achieving safer and higher quality at-grade pedestrian crossing is a fundamental urban design issue. The ability for pedestrians to safely and comfortably cross both Esmonde Road and the vehicle access crossing into the site is of paramount importance.

Overbridge and marker building

As discussed in the panel, the overbridge is not considered a fundamental of the scheme and indeed may have some disbenefits to achieving the quality pedestrian outcome at street level, which is integral to the vision of an enhanced urban environment.

The Panel notes that the bridge appeared to be driving the overall entrance arrangement and that without this, the marker building and pedestrian access could be reconfigured to provide for a better interface with Esmonde Road.

Hotel pickup and drop-off arrangement

The Panel considers that the current configuration requires further refinement and while the function may be predominantly to provide for vehicular pick up and drop off activity, it should acknowledge that there is a natural pedestrian desire line through this route and provide greater consideration how this is to be accommodated. The Panel does not see the need for encroachment into the esplanade reserve.

Esmonde Road frontage

The Panel considers achieving a comfortable scale relationship and interface for pedestrians on the Esmonde Road footpath is a key consideration. This will require more detailed sectional studies and potentially design changes to ensure there is sufficient building setback and treatment of levels to achieve the landscaped embankment in a way that does not feel imposing at the pedestrian scale.

Francis Street bridge and esplanade boardwalk

The Panel is strongly supportive of the Francis Street bridge connection as having multiple benefits for connecting communities as well as recreational access. The coastal edge boardwalk around the base of the esplanade reserve is also an important aspect of the scheme. These elements and the public access to Esmonde Road are considered, in Panel's view, integral elements to support additional intensification of the site.

Conclusion

The Panel looks forward to a third review as the design develops. The Panel recommends that the applicant team holds initial conversations with key stakeholders as well as engaging with council planning and design staff prior to a return presentation. As discussed, there would appear to be merit in advancing discussions around a private plan change and development agreement to provide a stronger planning framework for assessing any future proposals.

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AUCKLAND URBAN DESIGN PANEL

RECOMMENDATIONS



Project:	48 Esmonde Road Panel 3
Location:	MS Teams call*
Date:	7 th May 2020
Time:	1:30PM – 5:30PM
Members:	Stuart Houghton (chair), Matt Riley, Jon Rennie, Janine Bell
Planner:	Erica Su
Urban Designer:	John Stenberg
Landscape Specialist:	Ainsley Verstraeten

**This is due to the COVID 19 Level 3 lockdown*

- Support for the following reasons
- ✓ Support subject to some changes (stated below)
- Support subject to fundamental changes (stated below)
- Cannot support for the following reasons

Introduction

The Panel thanks the applicant for their presentation. The package was very clearly presented and addressed all of the issues raised at the last panel. It allowed the Panel to confirm its overall support for the masterplan (noting some key considerations for further refinement and the applicant's stated intention to pursue a future plan change to progress Stage 3 of the masterplan).

We have accordingly set out our minutes below distinguishing between the masterplan as a whole, and more detailed comments in relation to the first stages which have been developed to a greater level of architectural detail.

Masterplan

Building Height and Massing

The further work undertaken as presented to the Panel now demonstrates that the urban context and attributes of this site can accommodate the additional height and massing of the masterplan as currently proposed.

The Panel makes the following comments in relation to the proposed height and massing:

- The approach taken of lower buildings around the perimeter to Esmonde Road and the esplanade reserve stepping up in height to the greatest building height towards the centre of the site is supported;
- The Panel is supportive of the 16-storey height of the tallest building in the centre of the site, relative to heights of other buildings in the masterplan, and consider that the range of analysis material presented demonstrates that these heights can be achieved while maintaining a relativity to the other building heights to appear as a cohesive collection of buildings;
- The Panel's support of the proposed height and massing is contingent on achieving architecture of a high design quality. In particular to achieve the desired balance of cohesion and variance – an important design driver of the masterplan – it is important to both hold onto and further refine and develop the range of treatments that help to achieve a level of depth and diversity including:
 - Distinct stepping in height (individual buildings and overall plan);
 - A sense of depth and space between buildings;
 - Extensively modulated building forms and highly articulated (not flat) building facades;
 - The lighter top strategy, which could be more extensively deployed, including consideration of the silhouette and sculptural form of upper levels and roof forms, as seen within the wider cityscape;
 - Additionally, we note there is no need for common floorplate levels between the buildings (above the ground and podium floors), which presents an opportunity to achieve further variation and expression on building facades. This may also assist with overlooking between buildings.
- It will be critical to ensure that the planning framework to realise the masterplan has a mechanism to ensure the key principles and more detailed considerations around architecture are taken adequately into account.

Importance of public access to realising the masterplan vision

The range of contextual views demonstrates that the collection of buildings will read as a distinct and visually prominent cluster within the urban and coastal landscape of this part of the North Shore. This scale and form of development will become a character defining part of the surrounding built and coastal environment. In addition to the importance of design quality as noted above, the Panel reiterates comments from previous minutes that its support for the proposed height and scale is contingent on high quality public access being achieved - through the site, around the esplanade reserve and to the wider neighbourhood. This is to avoid a negative public association of a 'private citadel on the shore', a place that cannot be accessed or enjoyed. The Panel notes that achieving wider connectivity applies to areas of land outside the site

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and will therefore require on-going work with various stakeholders, including the Local Board and Auckland Transport.

Access and circulation

The following comments are made in relation to access and circulation aspects of the masterplan as now proposed:

- The Esmonde Road intersection entrance and arrangement is much improved from that the Panel reviewed previously. This resolves the matters raised in the minutes of Panel 2 in relation to the intersection, marker building and pedestrian overbridge.
- The refined masterplan demonstrates flexibility to achieve, through a variety of options, a central connection through to a future Francis Street bridge, as well as to the coastal boardwalk around the water's edge. It is important that whatever option is selected, an open and inviting public connection is achieved in this location that caters for both people on foot as well as on bikes.
- Legibility and wayfinding will be an important, more detailed, consideration relative to the further development of the meander surface treatment and landscape strategy.
- The Panel supports the stated private access strategy to the esplanade reserve on the west side, of a singular ungated access point between the buildings.

Interface with Esmonde Road

The Panel notes and supports changes to the Esmonde Road interface, including stepping in building levels and plan, sleeving with street-facing active uses, and breaks between buildings. This demonstrates a high quality, engaging and positive frontage to Esmonde Road can be achieved. This would represent a big improvement on the existing environment and improve the experience of walking along the street.

The Panel notes that the tower building within Stage 3 of the masterplan forms the balance of the public realm interface to the central connection to which public access will be open. In this regard, further work is required to achieve a more active and well-considered ground floor condition of this building to this edge.

Considerations for development of Stage 3 buildings

Consideration should be given to a multi-core access strategy for the Stage 3 buildings. This could bring multiple benefits, including ease of universal access options, as well as further opportunity to break up building massing through expressing vertical circulation on facades.

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As previously raised, consideration should also be given in Stage 3 to creating through apartments rather than double-loaded units in the southwest part of the site in order to avoid south-facing apartments that are exposed to the prevailing wind and will predominantly be in shade. This move could work in with a multi-core strategy.

The residential occupation and interface of the ground / podium level of the stage 3 buildings was not examined / discussed at this panel. When this stage advances careful consideration of the interface between the communal areas and the living spaces of apartments on the ground floor will be required.

Stages 1 and 2

In relation to the Stage 1 and 2 buildings, the Panel reiterates the importance of achieving architecture of a high design quality. Particular considerations include avoiding buildings of an overly commercial (as opposed to residential) character and ensuring well resolved building modulation and façade strategies.

To assist in further development, the Panel makes the following comments.

Public access and public realm

- In the first stages of development prior to a coastal connection being established, opportunities for public amenity at the southern termination of public access through the site should be considered - e.g. a public lookout point with seating.
- Refinement of the meander surface treatment and landscape strategy is encouraged. This might be reviewed through the lens of both wayfinding for unfamiliar visitors arriving from Esmonde Road, and the potential for unintended pedestrian/vehicle movement conflicts where paths may cross unexpectedly. It is suggested a finer level of detail of contrasted surface treatments and thresholds as well as refinement of the size, shape and placement of some planted areas, will help achieve this.
- Signage will be an important element to be addressed and integrated with the proposal and it is recommended this be addressed as part of the first stage resource consent.

Hotel building

- The Panel considers that the façade strategy for both the end elevations that are currently highly solid, be reconsidered. It is noted that in addition to improving the contribution the building would make when viewed from both Esmonde Road

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and the coastal environment, there is value to the development both to the north (offering sun) and south (offering city and coastal views).

- The long elevations also require further refinement. While the Panel is supportive of the overall façade strategy and can see the potential of this to develop visually rich facades, this has not yet translated into an appropriately high level of façade design, particularly as depicted in the Francis Street render where the building appears overly commercial and dull in character.

Esmonde Road building

- The architectural development of this building is heading in a positive direction consistent with the adjustments to the masterplan. The Panel considers that, in particular, the stepping along this edge and extent of modulation and articulation depicted avoids a long continuous wall effect and reads strongly as a residential building.
- It is recommended that closer consideration be given as to how to transition to the esplanade edge condition at the western end.
- The Panel is supportive of the intent to retain the existing street trees along the boundary and considers that these offer important amenity to people on the footpath.

Conclusion

The Panel thanks the applicant for their presentations over 3 sessions and considers that at this stage both the masterplan and Stages 1 and 2 of the development are able to proceed without further Panel input.