

BEFORE THE NEW PLYMOUTH DISTRICT COUNCIL
INDEPENDENT HEARINGS COMMISSIONER

IN THE MATTER of the Resource Management Act 1991

AND

IN THE MATTER of an application under section 88 of the Act by Devon 5 Investments Limited for consent to develop five comprehensive townhouses and subdivide land at 1-5/196 Mangorei Road, New Plymouth

STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF Glenn Brebner

Registered Architect

5th September 2018

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. My name is Glenn Brebner. I am a Registered Architect and an Associate of the New Zealand Institute of Architects (NZIA). I am a director of BOON Limited and Team Architects NZ Limited, a consortium of nine architecture practices throughout New Zealand.
- 1.2. I received an honors degree in Architecture from the University of Auckland in 1992 and have been involved in the profession of architecture in New Zealand for the past 26 years. Over this time, I have undertaken a broad range of project types, and urban and regional development initiatives. These include single homes, multi-unit residential developments, commercial developments, and civic and community facilities including: education, health and aged care, sport and recreation, arts and culture.
- 1.3. I have been the recipient of over twenty NZIA local awards for excellence in architecture and recipient of a New Zealand award for architecture in the category of Urban Design.
- 1.4. I have a passion for the Taranaki environment and for sustainable urban development,

particularly in the area of urban land use, housing affordability, and community recreation.

1.5. I participate in many community activities and have served as a trustee of the Taranaki Arts Festival Trust since 2003, a charitable entity that organises and promotes arts and cultural events for the benefit of the Taranaki region.

1.6. Key residential and urban development projects I have been involved with include:

- New Plymouth Foreshore walkway – Liardet Street Overpass (2009);
- Liardet Street Apartments, New Plymouth (\$6.5m 2008);
- Weymouth Street townhouses, New Plymouth (2001);
- Durham Mews Townhouses, Christchurch (\$2.5m 2007);
- Westport performing Arts Centre (\$2.5m 2010);
- Masonic Trust Manadon Retirement Villas (2018);
- Caroline Bay Aquatic Centre, Timaru (\$24.5m 2008);
- North Taranaki Multisport centre, Waitara (\$5.1m 2017);
- Fraser Park Multisport Centre, Hutt City (\$12.5m current);
- PSC Chalmers Rest home apartment development, New Plymouth (current);
- Catalyst Housing – Marfell Affordable Housing, New Plymouth (2018).

1.7 I confirm that I have read, and agree to comply with, the Environment Court’s Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses (Environment Court of New Zealand Practice Note 2014). This evidence I am presenting is within my area of my expertise, except where I state that I am relying on the evidence of another person. To the best of my knowledge I have not omitted to consider any material facts known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions I express.

2.0 OUTLINE OF EVIDENCE

2.1 This evidence provides:

- The project description of the site and the proposed activity;
- Design Philosophy - an overview of the process undertaken in designing this project;
- A general description of the proposed development;
- A description of the design process involved;
- A response to the concerns raised by neighbours.

3.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

3.1 This application is for resource consent for a five unit terraced townhouse development on a currently unoccupied site located between a commercial shopping centre and existing

residential dwellings.

4.0 THE DESIGN PHILOSOPHY

4.1 The approach to the site and building is to create an attractive residential enclave offering a high degree of residential amenity close to a popular neighbourhood shopping center and public transport services. The design is intended to achieve a welcoming sense of arrival and a stimulating identity achieved through the modulation of repeated building form. The design also closely considers the relationship of public and private domains in regard to inter-unit relationships, as well as the relationship with surrounding commercial and residential activities.

5.0 DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND ACTIVITY

5.1 The subject site occupies the southern head of a natural valley running northward toward a low area between Mangorei Road to the east and Nevada Drive to the west. Surrounding landform to the west, south, and east is generally higher than the site therefore most views are down to the site from the surrounding vantage points with the exception of the view from the north looking up the valley.

5.2 The site adjoins a commercial shopping centre to the south and residential land to the north and west. The residential land to the west is characterised by a typical single lot low-rise suburban land use pattern. The adjoining residential land to the north is atypical of the surrounding residential development pattern, being a large lot occupying the valley topography, and with a single home situated in the property's northwestern edge some distance from the proposed townhouse site.

5.3 The proposed terraced townhouse development comprises five attached residential units. Each of the proposed residential units comprise three bedrooms, two bathrooms, and single garage with ancillary service and storage areas. On-site parking is provided for two vehicles per unit. The remaining site area not occupied by buildings is to be paved for the purpose of on-site vehicle access, maneuvering, and parking, and landscaping including outdoor living areas.

6.0 DESIGN PROCESS

6.1 I was approached by the applicant Mr Reeve Barnett, director of Devon 5 Investments Limited (the Applicant) in March 2017 to undertake the design of the proposed development at 196

Mangorei Road. I viewed this project as an exciting opportunity for New Plymouth City, especially due to recent public conversations in respect of sustainable urban land use and contemporary housing solutions to better serve our communities into the future.

6.2 My role has been to develop the concept design with the Applicant, and to provide an achievable development proposition that meets the needs and objectives of developer, buyer, and city (the latter measured by alignment with the relevant objectives of the NPDC District Plan; as discussed in Mr Brophy's evidence). This has included an exploration of a number of design options and design review processes to overcome the unique challenges of the site and its surroundings. These challenges include:

- a) Existing site contours;
- b) Site access;
- c) Vehicle access and on-site maneuvering;
- d) Sufficient units to achieve a viable development scenario;
- e) Ground bearing capacity;
- f) Optimising occupant access to sunlight;
- g) Achieving appropriate degree of occupant privacy relative to adjoining commercial activity;
- h) Residential amenity of neighbours, and amenity values of the environment generally;
- i) Construction methodologies to minimise disruption to the neighbourhood during the construction period

These are covered in more detail in below paragraphs of my evidence.

6.3 Over several months the design solution was carefully evolved to accommodate the site constraints. The result is the proposed five unit, two level terraced townhouse design each comprising private entries, parking, and deck and terrace outdoor living areas.

6.4 An attached terrace building typology was selected as being the optimal method of achieving the five units required for development viability. Other typologies were rejected including detached housing due to limitation of site size, and stacked apartment formats due to higher costs of construction, complexities of legal title, and untested market appeal.

6.5 Building position on site is largely derived from the requirements of motor vehicle access and on-site maneuvering requiring a shared vehicle entry and court to the south of the proposed building. Other determining factors included observing the District Plan daylighting controls to west, north, and east neighbouring residential properties to ensure no adverse shading effects to these properties, and achieving equal to, or greater than the minimum required side yard boundary setbacks to new buildings.

6.6 Consideration was given to the building form to outwardly express individual dwellings and reduce the appearance of building bulk. Building forms are repeated to create a pleasing

rhythm and to express a common identity to the development and avoid over-articulation and visual clutter when viewed from neighbouring properties and the surrounding environment.

- 6.7 Cladding materials, textures and tones, although not definitively established, were considered and arranged to enhance visual appearance and to further reduce any potential adverse visual effects that may be associated with building scale. Screens over windows and balustrades also provide important filters between external public and interior private areas. In response to feedback to the design received from Martha Dravitski (NPDC Landscape Architect) as part of the resource consent application assessment, the Applicant has agreed to a consent condition that requires the consent holder to utilize different tones, colours and cladding materials to avoid all units looking the same. Although such a condition is agreed, we believe that the scale and modulation of form is sufficient to differentiate dwellings and there are many good examples of high quality uniform appearance multi-unit housing developments around New Zealand's urban centers.
- 6.8 Consideration was also given to waste management for the five new units with each unit including a screened refuse bin area adjacent to each unit's entry area, readily accessible for each unit.
- 6.9 Landscaping was viewed as an important design factor from the outset. To create a high level of residential amenity where adjoining the neighbouring commercial activity, the degree of planting, in particular the use of specimen tree species, is intended to create a sense of "oasis" on arrival with associated the softening effect to building structures. Landscaping has also been considered for areas bounded by neighbouring residential properties including low hedge boundary planting and taller specimen tree planting to soften and screen buildings. In response to feedback to the design received from Martha Dravitski (NPDC Landscape Architect) as part of the resource consent application assessment, we have amended the design to increase outdoor deck and terrace areas and allow resident connection to landscaped garden areas for each unit. Landscaping is addressed further in Mr. Bain's evidence.
- 6.10 Variability of ground bearing strength has been considered and the likely method for construction is pile foundation, panelised suspended floor, and light-weight pre-fabricated timber wall and roof construction. This is intended to minimise site excavation and the requirement for heavy transport and craneage commonly associated with concrete and heavy weight construction methodologies.
- 6.11 In summary, through a robust design process we believe the proposed design to be an optimum solution that meets the needs of development viability, market demand, and appropriateness to environmental context including sensitivity to neighbouring residential and commercial activities.

7.0 RESPONSE TO NEIGHBOUR'S CONCERNS

7.1 *Adverse visual amenity.* A permitted baseline development would allow an equal or inferior visual amenity outcome when viewed from nearby residential properties in my view. The surrounding typography significantly limits the number of properties and respective vantage points from which to gain a view of the proposed development. Height, daylighting, and boundary set back development controls have been met therefore visual amenity comparison with a permitted baseline development would need to be measured by site coverage and building bulk and dominance. Given the limitations for opportunity to view the site from nearby residential properties, site coverage will not materially affect the visual amenity. Building bulk has been mitigated by close attention to the modulation of building form and establishment of "fine grain" façade treatment. The surrounding landform and distances between the proposed development and existing occupied buildings mitigates any adverse effects derived from building bulk and dominance.

7.2 *Adverse effects on character.* The area is uniquely characterised by the intersection of surrounding commercial and residential activities. Therefore, it is not accurate to define the environmental character by only the residential character and amenity. The proposed development would be typically regarded as medium-density in the New Zealand housing context. High density generally being associated with multi-story apartment type development. The location and design of the proposed townhouse development would appear to be a wholly appropriate response to the site providing an appropriate scale of development that responds to both the surrounding commercial and residential character of the area.

7.3 *Adverse dominance effects.* As previously described, the concerned neighbour's property is a comparatively large lot when compared with the general surrounding residential character. As the character of this property is atypically low density, one could potentially consider any two storey development on an adjoining property to have an overbearing effect on such a low density property, even where a compliant permitted baseline activity. The proposed townhouse building form is notably residential in scale, limited to two levels, consistent with the other residential development in the area, and has been designed to mitigate any potential adverse visual effects arising from bulk and dominance.

7.4 *Adverse effects on privacy and outlook.* The proposed development has been designed so as to protect and enhance neighbours' privacy and outlook. The development provides a residential buffer between the commercial shopping centre and allied hospitality activities, which enhances outlook from neighbouring residential properties by increasing the values of residential character and amenity. The new townhouse development is a significant distance from the concerned neighbour's residence and has been designed so as to not directly face or overlook the neighbour's existing indoor or outdoor living areas.

7.5 *Adverse traffic effects.* The development has been expressly designed to maintain all resident vehicle movements including access, maneuvering, and parking, on the southern side of the building and away from neighbouring houses and their respective indoor and outdoor living areas. Mr Steele's evidence discusses traffic effects in detail.

8.0 COUNCIL OFFICER'S REPORT

- 8.1 I have reviewed the Section 42A Report for the Application received on 29 August 2018, including the proposed conditions of consent, particularly focusing on my area of expertise.
- 8.2 I agree with the report's recommendations and recommended consent conditions in that context.

9.0 CONCLUSION

Through a rigorous design process, I believe the proposed design creates a quality residential development that fits its site and the surrounding environment. I also believe that every new building has the potential to create adverse effects and every opportunity has been taken with this design to ensure any such effects are negligible. On balance the proposed development will make a very positive contribution to the immediate and greater New Plymouth urban environment.

Glenn Brebner

Director

BOON Team Architects