

BEFORE THE WELLINGTON CITY COUNCIL

UNDER The Resource Management Act 1991

IN THE MATTER OF Resource Consent Application
SR 471670
For the Retirement Village at 26 Donald Street,
and 37 Campbell Street, Karori

BETWEEN RYMAN HEALTHCARE LTD
Applicant

AND

BETWEEN Wellington City Council before
Independent Commissioners
Helen Atkins, David McMahon, Angela Jones

Summary of Evidence – Angela Mary McArthur
(Landscape and Visual Effects)
Date 15 September 2022

Introduction

1. My name is Angela Mary McArthur. I am a landscape architect and a registered member of Tuia Pito Ora New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects. My qualifications and experience remain as set out in my peer review (28 July 2002).
2. I have prepared this summary statement on behalf of Wellington City Council in respect to my area of expertise. I have been engaged by Wellington City Council to provide an independent review of landscape and visual effects, and effects on landscape character and visual amenity that may arise from the proposed Ryman Healthcare Retirement Village at 26 Donald Street Karori.
3. I confirm that I have read the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses as set out in the Environment Court Practice Note 2014 and I agree to comply with it as if this hearing was before the Environment Court.

Summary

Updated Applicant Evidence and Submitter' Comments

4. I have reviewed the updated landscape plan 'Indicative Landscape Plan', Amendment U and accompanying Plant Schedule (26 July 2022) now updated to Amendment V; and Ms Skidmore's Statement of Evidence, (29 August 2022); and the proposed amendments to the draft landscaping conditions (8 September 2022).
5. Ms Skidmore has made a reference, in her evidence, to the updated landscape assessment guidelines¹, 'Te Tangi a te Manu': Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines released since her original LVA. I have considered the slight change in terminology adopted. The new guidelines refer to 'Minor' effects characterised as 'low' and 'moderate – low' on the 7-point scale of effects². I agree with Ms Skidmore that the rating scale in Te Tangi a te Manu would not change overall conclusions reached in relation to landscape and visual effects.
6. Concerns raised by submitters have been generally addressed in the amended landscape plan Amendment V which provides a revised plant selection along the southern boundary. Tall species potentially creating additional shading for properties along the northern side of Scapa Terrace have been removed and replaced with a selection of smaller native trees and shrubs to be planted at a height between 1.2m and 1.8m, and that will reach approximately 4m at maturity. Planting is shown adjacent to 16,18 and 20 Scapa Terrace previously shown devoid of planting in the location of stormwater pipes. The plant selection consists smaller native tree and shrub species generally appropriate for the location. I would recommend the planting be restricted to species that can be managed at 4m height.
7. Further landscaping details will be required for tree management, amenity garden areas, wind protection devices and paving around the site in accordance with the

¹ Paragraph 55, Ms. Skidmore's Evidence

² Te Tangi a te Manu Landscape Assessment: determining scale of effects pages 150,151

revised landscaping conditions proposed by the Applicant (8 September 2022) which to my knowledge are yet to be finalised (Conditions 56 - 60).

Summary of landscape character and visual amenity effects

8. In summary, landscape values contributing to site qualities are reflected in the retirement village proposal which is a comprehensive and contemporary redevelopment of the site. While the proposal is for new buildings of higher intensity there is retention of open space character and the redundant Teachers' College buildings at the Donald Street frontage.
9. While the site character will change, the sensitivity to change for surrounding road users and residents will depend on the distance, orientation, elevation, and the perceptions of the viewer which may vary. Change itself does not necessarily constitute an adverse landscape or visual effect. At Donald Street and Campbell Street frontages the variation in the compositions of buildings B02 and B07, the mix of colours and materials, and planting proposed will in my view complement the existing street character. Large grade specimen trees proposed will assist integration and in time filter views of buildings from the street and for residents opposite. Overall, the outcome while differing from the existing street character, will be compatible with the surrounding neighbourhood character.
10. From the wider street network, I agree with Ms Skidmore in her assessment that while glimpses of tall buildings, primarily building B01B will be likely, visual effects will be less than minor due to the transient nature of the viewer. The effects of the building proposed will change outlooks, however not necessarily in the negative way.
11. Building B01B will be noticeable or prominent from resident viewpoints in the local neighbourhood, however generally at some distance from the site. The dark colours proposed for the upper levels together with other mitigating factors such as the building location within the centre of the site in context with lower buildings, the set back from street frontages and adjoining residential properties will reduce visual intrusion effects. Tree planting proposed at site boundaries and road frontages will also help filter closer range views into the taller buildings.
12. For residents within properties at the northern side of Scapa Terrace and at 49 Campbell Street there will be views into buildings B02- B06, varying depending on the angle of view, fencing and foreground vegetation. Although the magnitude of change will be moderate to high the buildings do comply with height and setback distances along the boundary. In my view the proposal is not necessarily uncharacteristic of what could be anticipated as future development within the site. Adverse visual amenity effects will be moderated by the transition in building heights, setback from boundary and landscaping proposed.
13. I agree with Ms Skidmore that initially there will be greater visual intrusion effects for residents within 24 Scapa Terrace and 49 Campbell with upper-level windows overlooking the site and that landscaping proposed will in time filter and soften views into buildings.

14. Overall, I concur with the assessment made by Ms Skidmore that adverse effects on landscape character and visual amenity for residents along the northern side of Scapa Terrace and at 49 Campbell Street will be low (minor) reducing to very low (less than minor) once boundary planting establishes and first floor terrace gardens are landscaped with screening shrubs along the southern edge.
15. Adverse effects on character and visual amenity for recreational users of Ben Burn Parks, the council walkway and Karori Road will generally be low to very low (less than minor) due to the orientation, varying distance from the site and transient nature of the viewer.
16. In conclusion, I am supportive of the retirement village proposal within the site. This style of residential development seems a predictable and reasonable option given the residential zoning, the amount of undeveloped land and the location. My assessment views are informed by the Operative District Plan including Objectives and Policies, and the Residential Design Guide.
17. Overall, I agree with the findings and conclusions made by Ms Skidmore in the Landscape and Visual Effects Assessment (LVE Report July 2021) and the updated Landscape and Visual Effects Assessment, Statement of Evidence (29 August 2022).

Angela McArthur

15 September 2022