

To: The Panel

From: Cam Wallace – Barker & Associates Limited

Date: 18 September 2025

Re: Section 67 Matters – Urban Design Response

The purpose of this memo is to provide an urban design response to relevant Section 67 matters identified by the Panel. Specifically, items 1(a) and (b), 3(c) and 4.

1.0 Open Space

1.1 Overall Open Space Provision

1(a) The Panel has requested further explanation of the way in which the proposed open space areas will be in accordance with what is anticipated within the Precinct and the AUP.

I note that there is no specific guidance as to the overall area quantum of Open Space to be provided for within the Precinct except for a 1,000m² threshold for the development of publicly accessible open space. The policies and matters of discretion themselves focus more on qualitative matters. At the time of developing the Drury Centre Precinct, relevant guidance taken into consideration included Auckland Council's Open Space Provision Policy 2016. Within that document, there is some additional guidance as to open space provision and sizes, notably neighbourhood parks are generally sized between 0.3-0.5ha, pocket parks are around 0.1ha, while civic spaces range from <0.1 to 0.4ha. In terms of their location, pocket parks are generally to be in urban centres (or other high-density zones), neighbourhood parks are generally directed towards residential zones whilst metropolitan centres would be expected to have one or more civic spaces depending on the size of those spaces.

In terms of the specific request of the Panel as part of the s67 request, I observe that the Drury Centre Precinct Plan 2 identifies several individual open spaces, while the policy framework talks about their connectivity and integration with key site features and destinations as well as other qualitative matters. Figure 1 overleaf highlights the core network of open spaces proposed around Valley Park.

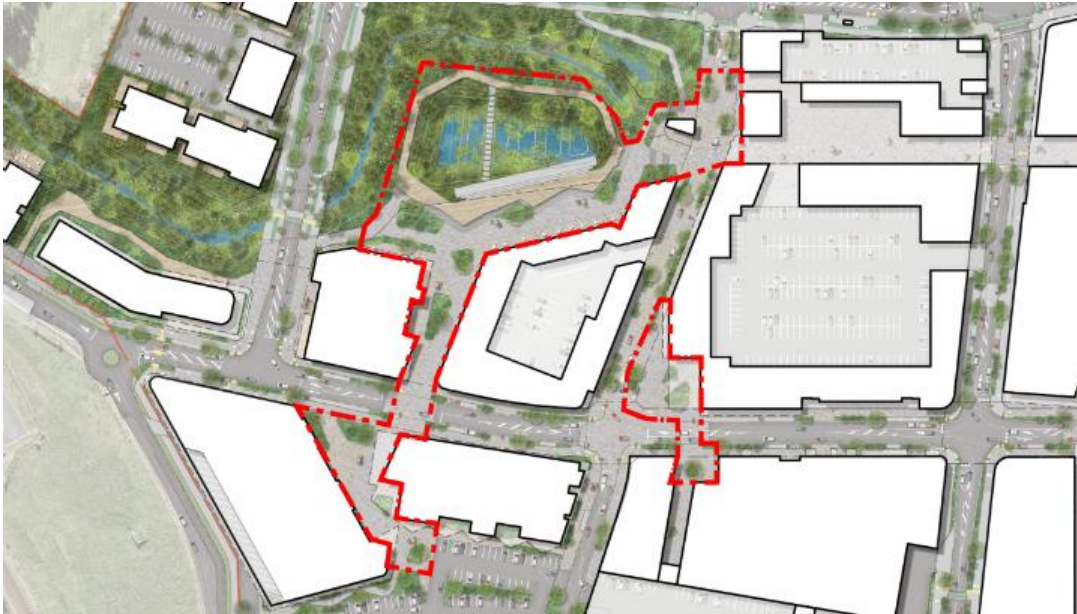


Figure 1 - Valley Park and Connected Open Spaces

Comments related to the provision of these spaces as anticipated by the Precinct and AUP are set out below.

Table 1 - Open Space Provision

Open Space Element	Comments
Homestead Park	Not provided. The rationale and reasons for its non-provision are set out in Sections 5.3.1 and 5.3.2 of the Urban Design Assessment.
South-eastern Neighbourhood Park	Consented as part of the Stage 1 Fast Track application. This is a neighbourhood park approximately 7,000m ² in size, more than the recommended 3,000-5,000m ² within Council guidance.
Valley Park (Pocket Park)	Valley Park encompasses an area of approximately 8,300m ² of which approximately 4,600m ² is in the form of the 30m wide “promenade” while a further 3,700m ² is part of the stormwater basin which integrates a recreational walking track with the promenade area.
Town Square	Two civic spaces in the general location of the Town Square on Precinct Plan 2 are provided. The spaces measure approximately 1,000m ² and 1,650m ² in size and are proposed to be connected via a raised pedestrian table form a consistent / level surface between each space. These form part of a wider network of open spaces that includes Valley Park, Road 11 and Stream A Riparian Corridor. A third, interconnected, “urban” pocket park is located around the intersection of the Road 11 Shared Space and Hotiki Road and measuring approximately 1,400m ² .

Station Plaza	The Kiwirail Fast Track application for the Drury Central Rail Station did not include provision for a civic space in front of the station (i.e. Station Plaza) as identified in the Precinct provisions. Instead, it provides a large surface car park and bus turnaround. I note that Auckland Council Parks did not raise any issue with the non-provision of this civic open space within their comments on the Rail Station application.
Hingaia Stream Corridor	Approximately 4hHa of land is being set-aside along the Hingaia Stream corridor as part of the proposal. This includes a 1.2Ha Esplanade Reserve.
General “open space” in the form of revegetated stream corridors along “Stream A” and Fitzgerald Stream	The proposal delivers around 11,000m ² of revegetated and enhanced riparian corridor which is integrated with pedestrian routes enabling some public access / recreational value. In addition, this space provides for separation between buildings, general visual amenity and “green relief” from the more urban setting of the Centre.

In addition to the above, Boffa Miskell have prepared a series of plans demonstrating the general dimensions of the open spaces proposed in and around Valley Park. Additionally, I have undertaken a brief baseline assessment against open spaces provided within other metropolitan centres including Westgate, New Lynn, Takapuna and Manukau. The key differentiation with these other centres with Drury relates to topography. The other metropolitan centres are essentially located on flat land with no need to integrate with distinctive landscape features such as streams or to traverse changing topography.

Putting that to the side, I would observe that the spaces proposed are generally consistent in size and dimensions except for Manukau Square (which I consider to be excessively large and a generally poor example). I do acknowledge the slightly irregular geometry of these spaces; however I believe they are generally of an overall scale to provide sufficient space for appropriately sized gatherings and other programming to occur. The two squares proposed also have the benefit of being able to “spill out” onto Hotiki Street, effectively increasing the area available. For the Panel’s benefit, I note that Hotel / F&B Plaza as shown in the Boffa Miskell plans shares very similar dimensions and size as the square which connects Hurstmere Road and Waiwharariki in Takapuna – the main difference between the two being that the Drury application proposes active frontages along its side rather than largely blank walls. Te Pumanawa Square in Westgate also provides a useful precedent to understand how a depth of around 30m (such as the Promenade) could work. This example has F&B fronting the square with zones for al fresco dining, raised landscape / grass beds, street furniture and trees within a space of around 27m wide. I would also observe that the general approach adopted in Drury is consistent with the recently developed Waiwharariki Anzac Square in Takapuna which is essentially a series of interconnected open spaces through the centre separated by roads and lanes.

Overall, it is considered that the proposed open spaces proposed represent a comprehensive network of recreation amenities that is well aligned with the metropolitan centre’s form, function, and the needs of residents, workers, and visitors. In my opinion, the proposal could be considered to deliver more open space than what is anticipated within the Precinct and AUP – noting that there is potential for other open spaces to be developed in the surrounding land.

1.2 Valley Park

1(b) Please provide further comment on the way in which Valley Park open space will function as an appropriately-scaled area of civic plaza.

Plans prepared by Boffa Miskell demonstrate a series of inter-connected open spaces in and around Valley Park. Collectively these spaces provide for an area of approximately 11,800m². Adjoining Hotiki Road (and connected with Valley Park) are two proposed “plazas” – the Hotel / F&B Plaza at approximately 1,000m² and the Aquatic Centre / Library Plaza at approximately 1,650m².

These two spaces are joined via a consistent / level surface treatment over Hotiki Road in a manner consistent with other squares in metropolitan centres such as Te Pumanawa Square and Waiwharariki Anzac Square (which cross over Maki Street and Hurstmere Road respectively). In addition, as the applicant has proposed to retain ownership of Hotiki Street it retains the ability to temporarily close the street to vehicular traffic to support larger functions or events if required. Use of the Hotel / F&B Plaza also can spill north into the Valley Park promenade effectively increasing its overall space. The dimensions of these spaces vary but are generally greater than 20m (although narrow to around 15m in places). Whilst the geometry of these spaces is slightly irregular, there is sufficient flat space available to support community functions. Another useful precedent for context in terms of size is Freyburg Square which features a flat, triangular space below a terraced feature with dimensions varying between 11m to 20m in depth with an overall width of 25m and approximate area of 325m². This space regularly hosts events including farmer’s markets, small concerts, carnivals and other temporary activations like a human chess board. Based on my experience with Freyburg Square, I consider that the plazas are more than sufficient to function as areas of appropriately scaled civic-plazas. In addition, I would observe that the approach adopted in the application avoids the issue of having excessively oversized civic open spaces. Examples of poorly sized / designed civic spaces can be seen in examples such as Aotea Square and Manukau Square which are far too large for their day-to-day uses and often result in an appearance largely devoid of use. Whilst they work well for very large (and rare) gatherings such as major concerts or protests, the need for such activities to be accommodated within the open space network of Drury is considered highly unlikely.

2.0 Billboards

3(c) The Panel notes the comment in the Urban Design Assessment (section 5.8) in respect of the billboards, but wishes to understand the reasoning behind the proposal to use billboards in lieu of well-designed and articulated building elevations or architectural features in such prominent locations.

Matter 3(c) seeks further explanation around the architectural merits of the LED digital signage proposed as part of the application. For clarity, LED digital signage is proposed on the corners of buildings on Lot D (fronting Te Ara Hingaia Road) and Lot B (fronting Rakuika Road). Each of the buildings on which these signs are located houses a car-parking structure, whilst the signs themselves are positioned behind areas of landscaping fronting the carriageway adjacent to Lot D and footpath adjacent to Lot B.

As an observation I note that digital signage integrated into a building’s form is an architectural feature that is becoming increasingly well-established across New Zealand’s urban environments. Well-designed LED digital signage can contribute to the overall aesthetic appeal of a commercial environment, contributing to a positive modern character. The dynamic displays afforded using LED digital signage can be updated instantly, allowing for new relevant visuals that can adapt to different retailers, events, seasons, or times of day. This helps to prevent visual monotony and creates a sense of vibrancy and activity within a commercial

area. They can also support wider scale legibility within an urban environment by helping to signal / identify key nodes or access points. Ultimately, the appropriateness of this type of signage invariably relates to their context with the potential to give rise to both positive or adverse urban design (as well as landscape and traffic) effects.

In this instance, both LED digital signs have been positioned on (parking) building corners at locations along major vehicular routes to and from the Drury Centre. The primary viewing audience of buildings in these locations is expected to be moving quickly (generally 30km/h or more) and are separated from the edge of the built form. In particular, the adjacent road to Lot D is a motorway off-ramp while Rakuika Road is designed as a key collector road linking the Centre with the wider Drury East urban area. The configuration of the centre itself has very deliberately positioned car parking activities at its periphery to ensure a finer grain, pedestrian focus along Roads 3, 11 and 13 as well as Valley Park. The car parking buildings themselves include several other architectural treatments including that they are screened / sleeved with a combination of vertical timber screening, vertical landscaping elements and textured poly carbonate screens in addition to their curved profile. All combine to add a layer of visual richness, depth and interest to these façades appropriate to their context. Smaller, more fine-grained architectural detailing on these façades are, in my opinion, better suited to areas where pedestrian movement is prioritised. I note that Council's urban designer supports the general approach to site layout and façade treatments.¹

3.0 Lot C Connection

(4) The Panel also seeks consideration of an option for an improved alignment to this lot from the secondary pedestrian connection from the west (within Lot B) to Te Hononga Road, so that the internal pedestrian connection can be extended eastwards in a more logical alignment in terms of its lead-up to a relocated building entrance within Lot C.

The western "through carpark" pedestrian connection has been re-positioned to connect in with the southern arm of the intersection between Te Hononga Road, Road 13, and the Lot C vehicular access as shown in Figure 2 below. The proposed amendments to pedestrian access through the Lot C carpark ensure that pedestrian movements can be accommodated on the main pedestrian desire line from the western part of the Centre (and close to the Lot B pedestrian laneway) in a manner and location that balances the wide range of access requirements for different modes in and around the Centre.

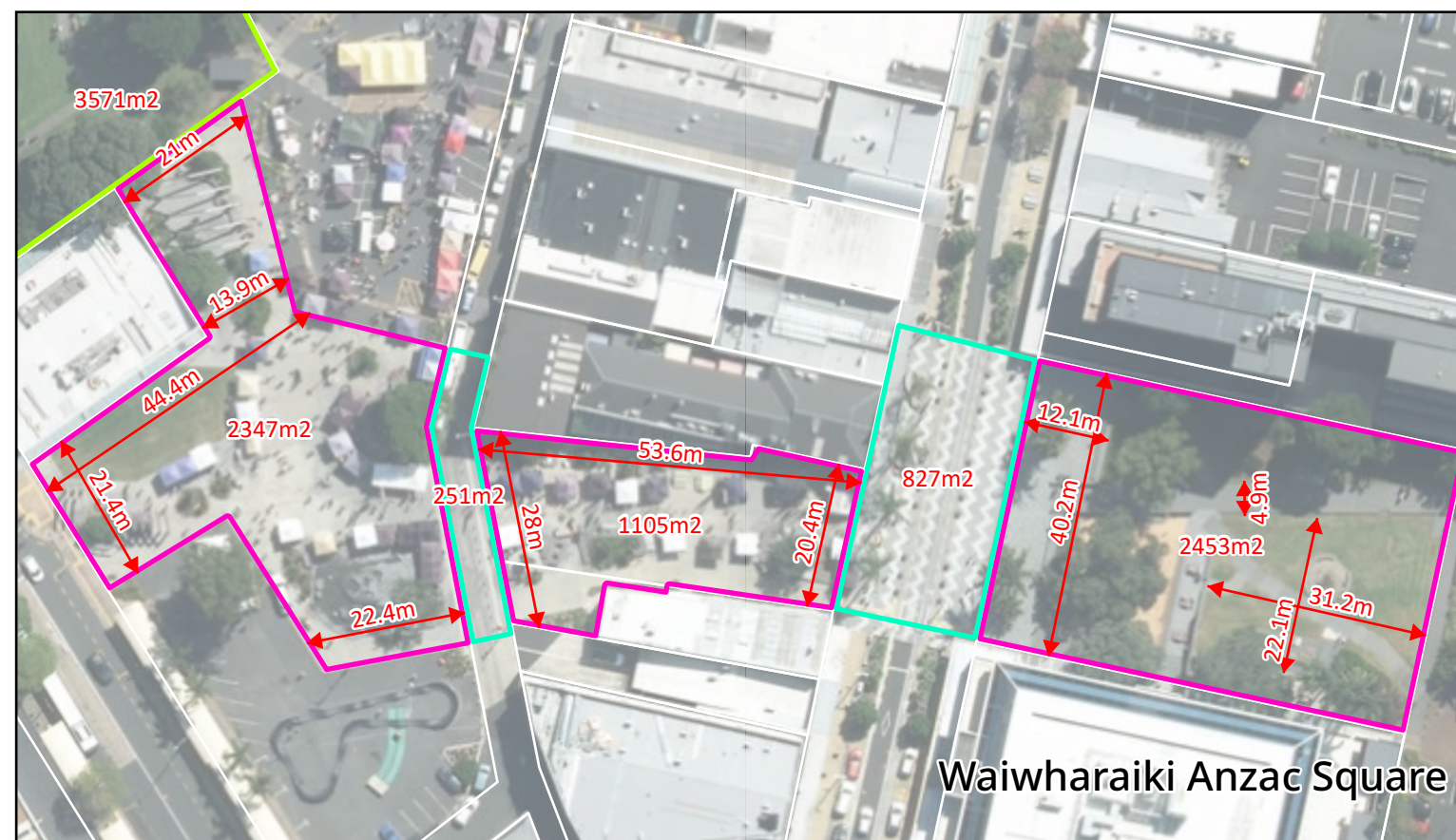
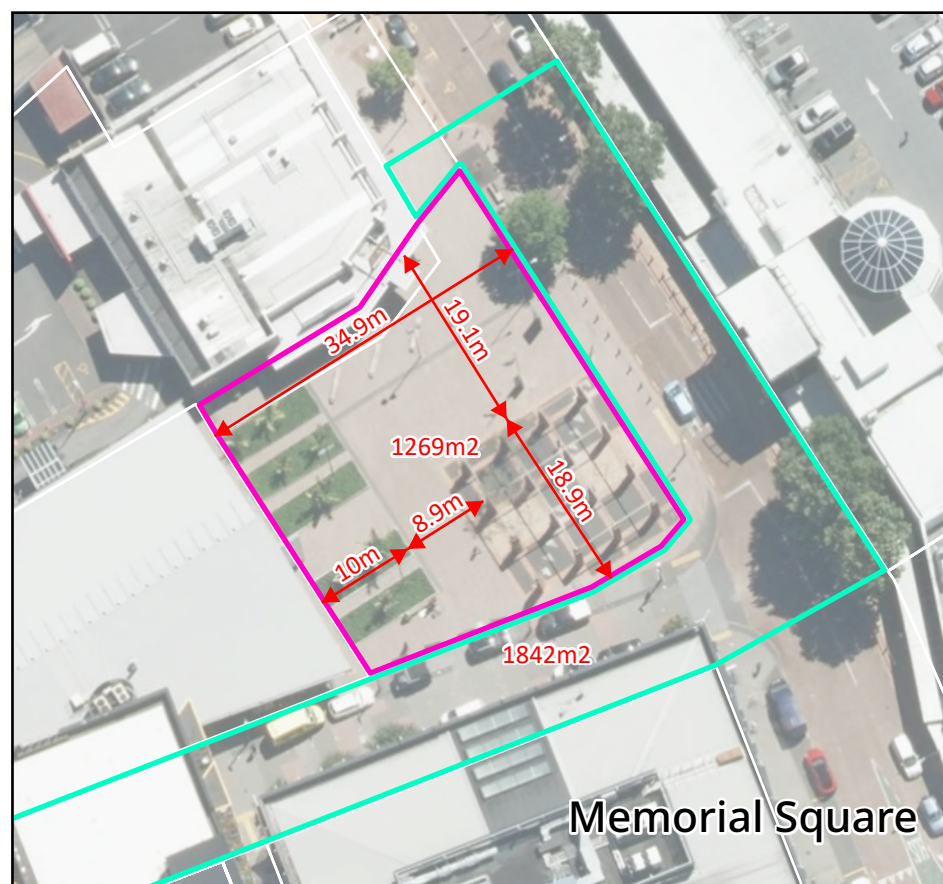
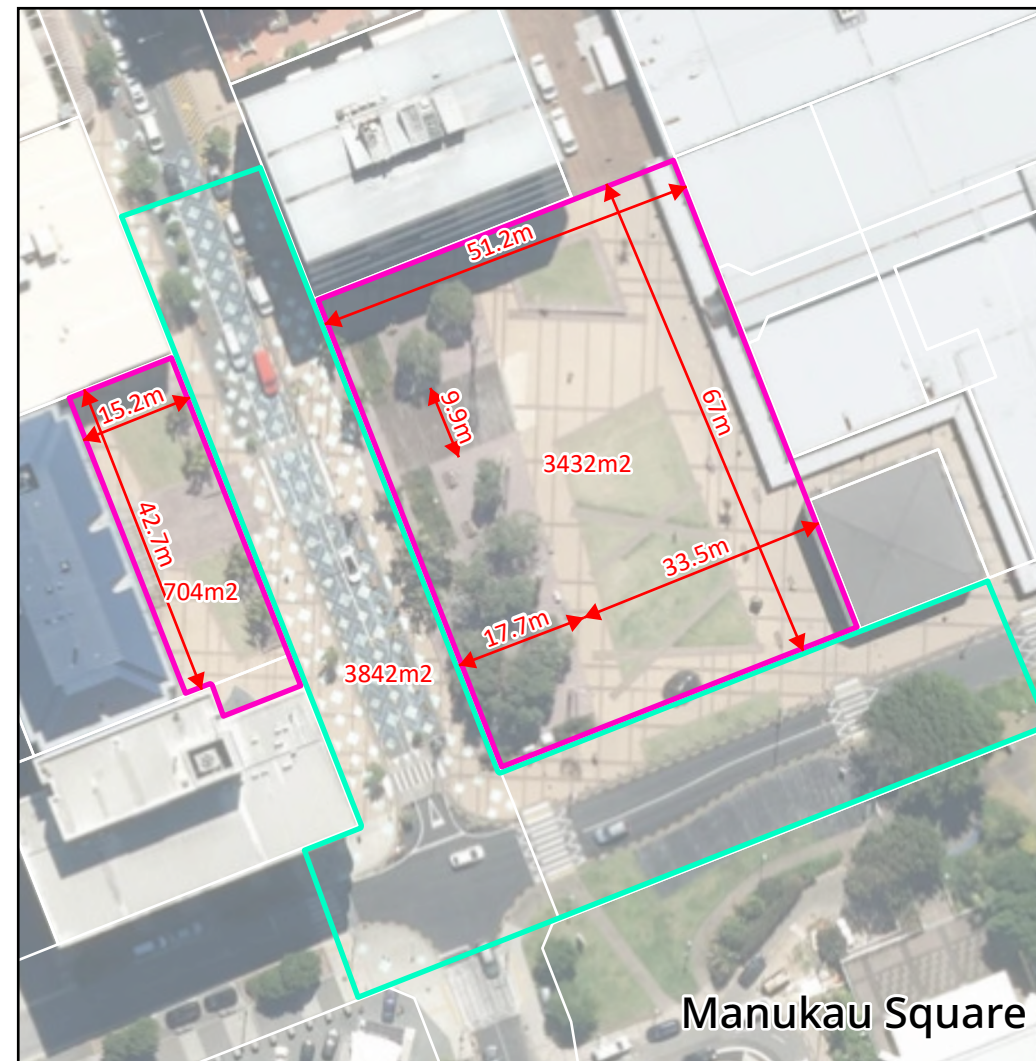
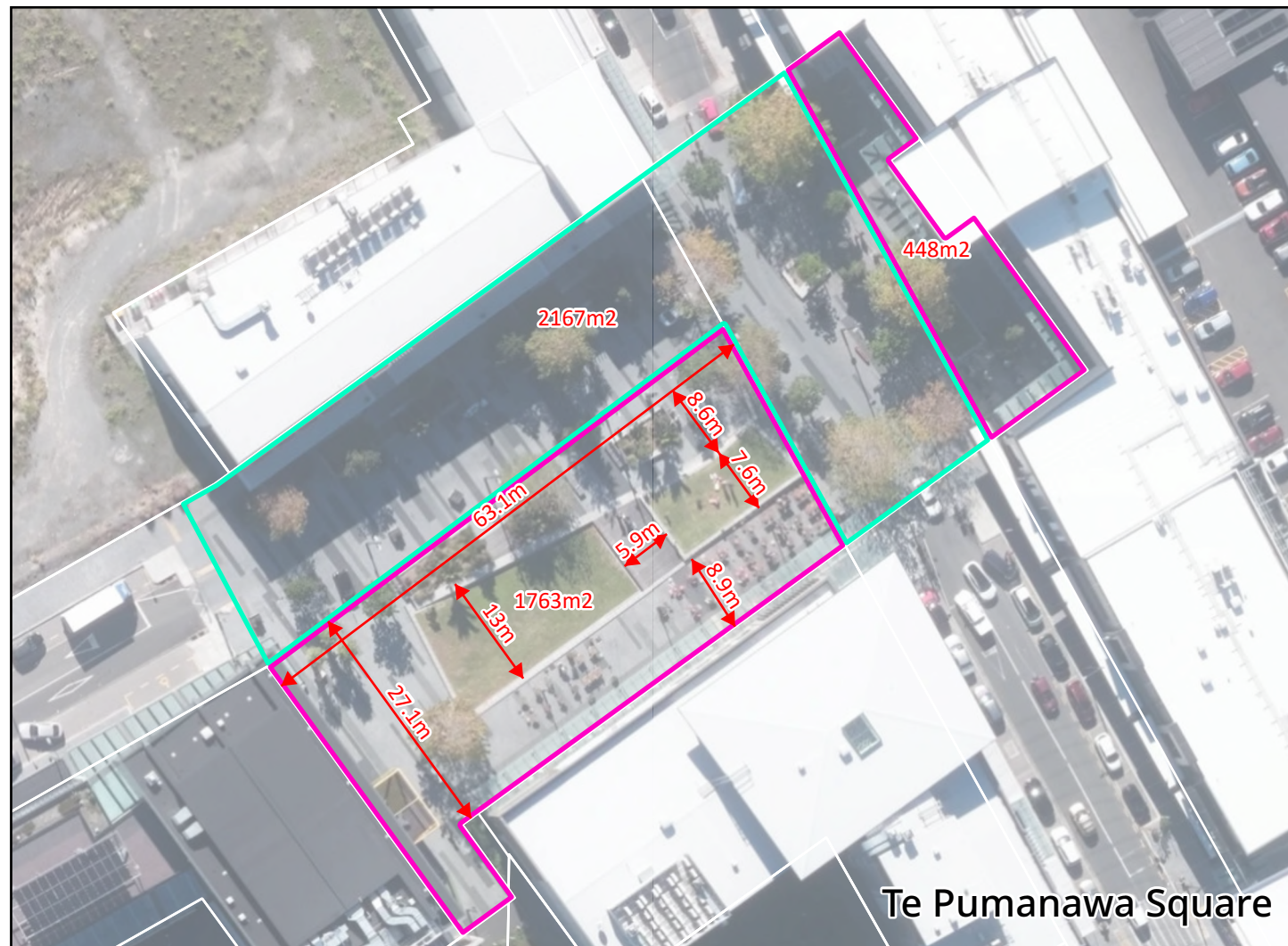
¹ Urban Design Memo, 11 August 2025 - Paragraphs 28 - 29



Figure 2 - Amended Lot C Pedestrian Route (and associated desire lines)

I note that there are several conflicting design elements in this location relating to the proximity of the two signalled intersections along Te Hononga Road, Lot B carpark access, segregated cycle lanes, bus stop locations and internal Lot B pedestrian Laneway. This has resulted in several iterations and design changes through the development of the proposal prior to lodgement through to this most recent amendment. Given the competing design elements, the introduction of an additional mid-block crossing and integration with footpaths within Lot C itself was not considered an efficient or appropriate design outcome.

Attachment 1 – Metropolitan Centre Open Space Benchmarking



Metro Centre Civic Space Benchmarking

-  Neighbourhood Park
-  Shared Space / Street
-  Square

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