

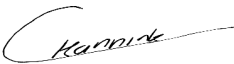
Specialist Response Template – Fast-track Approvals Act 2024
Substantive Application

1.0 APPLICATION DESCRIPTION

Application and property details

Fast-Track project name:	Downtown Carpark Site Development
Fast-Track application number:	FTAA-2512-1158 BUN60460864, LUC60460865, DIS60460866 and WAT60460867

2.0 Technical Specialist Memo – Parks Planning

To:	Sarah Wilson – Lead Planner & Adonica Giborees - PPL
From:	Cas Hannink – Senior Parks Planner
Qualifications & Relevant Experience:	I hold the qualification(s) of a Bachelor of Urban Planning with First Class Honours with experience across Parks Planning, Resource Consents and the private sector in Auckland, New Zealand. I am a member of the New Zealand Planning Institute. I have prepared expert evidence and technical assessments for resource consent applications, plan changes, notices of requirement for designation and fast-track applications.
Preparation in Accordance with the Code of Conduct:	I confirm that I have read the Environment Court Practice Note 2023 – Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses (Code), and have complied with it in the preparation of this memorandum. I also agree to follow the Code when participating in any subsequent processes, such as expert conferencing, directed by the Panel. I confirm that the opinions I have expressed are within my area of expertise and are my own, except where I have stated that I am relying on the work or evidence of others, which I have specified.
Signature:	
Date:	21/04/2026
Reviewed for release by Parks Lead Agency	Hester Gerber: Manager Parks Planning 23/04/2026 

3.0 Executive Summary / Principal Issues

This technical specialist memo builds on earlier Parks Planning feedback and provides further clarification sent on (24/03/2026), information requests, and identified risks in relation to the Downtown Carpark Redevelopment. It highlights the concerns for the proposed street tree locations including soil volume limitations, species/form selection, service conflicts, and replacement planting while noting a Tree Owner Approval will be required. Furthermore, the memo confirms the limited Parks Planning role in privately owned public spaces. The memo also supports the importance of maintaining connectivity within the wider waterfront open space network, notes that shading effects on St Patrick's Square are not considered significant and identifies nearby civic plazas and waterfront spaces.

4.0 Documents Reviewed

The following documents have been reviewed in preparing this memorandum:

- Appendix 9B_Landscape Drawings
- Appendix 9C_Architecture+Landscape Report_Part1
- Appendix 9C_Architecture+Landscape Report_Part2
- Appendix 9C_Architecture+Landscape Report_Part3
- Appendix 9E_Shading Analysis_Part1
- Appendix 9E_Shading Analysis_Part2
- Appendix 9E_Shading Analysis_Part3
- Appendix 11_Urban Design Assessment
- Appendix 12_Landscape+Visual Assessment
- Appendix 37_St Patrick's Square Public Space Audit
- DCSD Fast-Track AEE_18 December version
- Appendix 6_FN0001_FTA_S67responses_20260402

5.0 Specialist Assessment

5.1 Tree Planting and Tree Owner Approvals

- 5.1.1 One pōhutukawa tree (2000L) is proposed within the road reserve while three other pōhutukawa trees (2000L) would be within the M-Social Hotel site boundaries. Parks Planning and Council's Urban Forst Team (as the future asset owner) assessment is therefore limited to the road reserve tree, while recognising that the same concerns outlined below may apply to those located within private land.
- 5.1.2 As confirmed by Councils Senior Urban Forest Specialist, Bernardo Santos, the proposed 15–20m³ tree pit does not align with the Auckland CoP (Chapter 7) for a large canopy species such as pōhutukawa, and is unlikely to support full maturity or long-term performance. In a constrained, wind-exposed environment with ongoing pruning pressures, this increases the risk of decline, higher maintenance, and reduced functional value.

- 5.1.3 Given the reduced soil volume, the proposal does not adequately acknowledge the associated limitations, including reduced longevity and the need for a defined replacement strategy. The proposed species and form (e.g. multi-stem vs single-stem) is not provided, and the constructability of tree pits in proximity to underground services, including input from relevant utility providers where applicable, have also not been appropriately addressed.
- 5.1.4 A Tree Owner Approval (TOA) will be required before the commencement of works to which a relevant advice note has been included accordingly in section 8 below.

5.2 Open Space Provision and management

- 5.2.1 As per the Appendix 1 addendum planning response, dated 7 April 2026, the Te Urunga Hau (The Urban Room) space will be maintained in private ownership. The addendum planning response noted that public access will be provided and secured via relevant easements.
- 5.2.2 This is appropriately deferred to Council design teams and the processing planner given the private function but availability to the public. The applicant has provided a relevant condition for signage and wayfinding (Conditions 48) but no relevant easements for public access have been provided in the applicant's conditions set.
- 5.2.3 Parks support public accessibility to the Urban Room. This space is, however, viewed to be largely internalized to the development where it provides an extension to commercial outdoor space. Any mechanism, such as an encumbrance/easement to allow public access will need to bind a suitable entity (i.e. body corporate or incorporated society) to be put in place to manage and maintain this space. Parks will not be party to any instrument in this regard.

5.3 Shading on St Patrick's Square and Council owned park assets

- 5.3.1 St Patrick's Square is considered a traditional 'green' park, to which all other civic plazas and waterfront spaces and the associated effects are deferred to other Council design teams for comment. I have undertaken further discussions with Council's Principal Urban Designer, Mustafa Demiralp, for the relevant shading on St Patrick's Square. I agree that the parts that are shaded within the St Patrick Square during the identified times, are not significant considering the following factors:
- Shading on both 22 June and 29 July is very short-lived, around 3 minutes.
 - The shading occupies a very minor portion of the square. (June 22 – 0.03% of the square (considering approximately 2000 sqm overall areas), and July 29, approximately 1.1% of the total area.
 - The shading falls onto the transitional areas on the edges of the square.
- 5.3.2 For all other assets within a 200m catchment of the subject site and rather than traditional 'green' parks, the area is predominantly characterised by civic plazas and waterfront spaces such as the below:
- Te Komititanga: large civic plaza directly outside the ferry terminal / Commercial Bay
 - Queens Wharf: public waterfront promenade and event space

- Britomart Precinct public spaces: network of shared streets (e.g. Takutai Square, Galway St)
- Quay Street waterfront promenade: Linear pedestrian/cycle promenade along the harbour edge, connecting Viaduct to Wynyard Quarter

5.3.3 While the site serves a private function, its availability for public use requires that the proposal does not result in just an isolated destination. This recognises the importance of maintaining continuity within the wider waterfront open space network. Accordingly, detailed design considerations are deferred to Council design teams, reflecting the site's private ownership context.

5.4 Conditions Review

- 5.4.1 Tree Owner Approval will be required, and a relevant advice note has been provided accordingly.
- 5.4.2 As per section 5.2.2 above, no relevant easement has been provided or referenced in the conditions set relating to public access for the shared spaces and areas desired for public access.

6.0 Section 67 Information Gap

I have identified the below information gaps relating.

Information gap	Nature of deficiency	Decision-making impact	Risk / uncertainty created
1. Tree design parameters (species selection, form, and soil volume justification).	The proposal does not clearly justify the suitability of the proposed species and form (including single vs multi-stem) in relation to the constrained 15–20 m³ soil volume, or demonstrates alignment with Auckland CoP Chapter 7 expectations for large canopy trees.	Limit's ability to confirm whether the design will achieve intended canopy performance, longevity, and functional outcomes within the road reserve in accordance with the Urban Ngahere Strategy.	Risk of premature decline, reduced structural stability, and failure to deliver intended amenity and environmental function.
2. Encumbered street tree location due to services.	Insufficient detail provided on how tree pits will be constructed in proximity to underground services, including whether utility relocation or protection measures have been confirmed with relevant service providers.	Prevents confirmation that tree installation is feasible without conflict with existing or future service infrastructure.	Risk of service clashes, design rework, increased costs for asset owner, or inability to implement proposed tree locations as designed.

7.0 Recommendation

Based on the documents reviewed and the specialist assessment undertaken, Parks Planning has no concerns from an open space or reserve provision perspective, noting that no land or assets are proposed to vest to Council as part of this development. Outstanding matters relating to street tree protection have been outlined and the requirement for a Tree Owner Approval has been clearly identified. Shading effects relating specifically to St Patrick's Square have been addressed while the design and operation of Te Urunga Hau (The Urban Room) are appropriately deferred to Council design teams. Where public access to this space is provided, it is advisable that suitable mechanisms are put in place to direct the public around its management in private ownership.

8.0 Proposed Conditions

The recommended advice note outlined below must be considered for inclusion by the applicant.

8.1 General conditions

Commentary

X1.

TREE ASSET OWNER APPROVALS

Advice Notes:

Any proposed works in the road reserve or on existing street trees will require Tree Owner Approval from the Community Facilities Urban Forest Specialist Team as the asset owner. Approval requests can be sent to treemanager@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz.

This advice note recognises Council's role as the future asset owner and ensures the ongoing protection of tree health, as well as the coordinated management of works within the road corridor.

The advice note provides a clear pathway for the applicant to obtain the necessary approvals outside of the resource consent process, particularly where works may affect public assets or involve ongoing maintenance requirements.