Delmore Fast-Track

25/06/2025 – Auckland Council Response

Annexure 29:

Urban Design

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19/06/2025

Dear Dylan,

1. Thank you for the opportunity to review the proposal for the Delmore Fast-Track Approval Application. The proposal site spans approximately 110 hectares across Upper Orewa and Russell Roads in the Orewa/Wainui area of Auckland. Currently used for pastoral and agricultural purposes, it features rolling topography with ridgelines, gullies, streams, and pockets of native and exotic vegetation.

2. The site includes significant ecological areas and protected bush, with key natural features influencing its development potential. It lies within the Future Urban Zone (FUZ). It is in proximity to emerging residential areas such as Ara Hills and Milldale, with connectivity planned via the Notice of Requirement 6 (NOR6) (extension of Grand Drive) arterial corridor.

Proposal

3. The proposal for the Fast-Track consent application for the development of up to 1,250 residential dwellings is planned in two main stages, with some areas of open space, protected vegetation, and supporting infrastructure. The project includes partial construction of a new arterial corridor (NOR6), 27 local roads, and 40 Jointly Owned Access Lots (JOALs). Housing typologies include stand-alone and detached typologies across a range of lot sizes. The proposal includes a 3,200m² neighbourhood park (the Applicant has recently proposed a second neighbourhood park), multiple drainage reserves, and pedestrian links to surrounding areas.

Wider Urban Context and Community Amenities

4. The wider context and urban amenity of the site features the following, as described in pages 9-10 of the Urban Design Assessment document, and the Connectivity and Accessibility Analysis Memo dated 11 June 2025 and Delmore Local Centre Market Assessment documents that were provided following the request for information from Auckland Council.

Connectivity and Transport Access

5. The site's main spine for access will be NOR6, a designated arterial road that extends Grand Drive through the development and connects it to Wainui Road. This corridor is intended to accommodate general traffic as well as public transport and active modes, and it forms the main structural spine of the development. Vehicle connections are also planned to neighbouring sites via several local roads, helping to integrate the site with future urban development to the east. No connection to Russell Road is proposed with a cul-de-sac proposed at the end of Road 01 as shown in the roading plans. The proposed connections are shown in Figure 10 of the Urban Design Assessment on page 21. This is incorrect as no connection to Russell Road is proposed. The proposal creates effectively a single connection to the north into Grand Drive in Stage 1 and a local road connection to Upper Ōrewa Road in Stage 2

6. Internally, the proposal adopts a network of 27 local roads and 40 JOALs (private accessways). A gridded street layout is used where feasible, promoting connectivity and legibility within the development. In constrained areas with streams, gullies, or steep slopes, cul-de-sacs are used. This is not an ideal outcome, but I acknowledge the significant constraints of the site. Wider JOALs in certain areas provide semi-public pedestrian access with landscaping and footpaths, providing access to homes that do not directly front public roads.

7. I understand that Auckland Transport have commented further on a number of connectivity and transport access issues with the development. These comments should be read in conjunction with Auckland Transport's further comments.

Stage 1 - Proposed Connections (new or clarified in RFI response)

8. **Road 8 Stub to Eastern Boundary:** A vehicle connection stub from Road 8 will be formed as a T-head and extend to the eastern site boundary. It includes a batter slope, designed to allow future excavation and extension into neighbouring FUZ land.

9. **Pedestrian Path from Road 8 to Ara Hills / NOR6 Corridor**: A 3-metre-wide pedestrian pathway, with some stairs, is proposed from Stage 1A-4 to connect toward the NOR6 corridor and Ara Hills. The path runs through an offset planting area, with ecological design considerations noted. While the memo initially mentions Russell Road, the orientation of this connection is more accurately described as linking eastward toward the Ara Hills centre and future transport corridor, not to Russell Road. (refer to diagrams from Connectivity and Accessibility Analysis by BA)

Stage 2 - Proposed Connections (new or clarified in RFI response)

10. In response to Council feedback, several additional pedestrian connections have been proposed in Stage 2. These include paths from Road 14 and Road 5 connecting to a consented stub road within the Ara Hills development, as well as a pathway through the consent notice area linking Road 17 (Stage 2B-3) to Road 12 (Stage 2B-1). These connections are shown on the updated plans provided in the 250611 - DELMORE - RFI RESPONSE - PLANS document, but are not included in the Connectivity and Accessibility memo. The proposed path through the consent notice area would cross a Significant Ecological Area (SEA) and would require ecological input to determine feasibility and appropriate mitigation. From an urban design perspective, however, the additional connections are supported in principle as they help improve future permeability and integration with neighbouring land. As noted in the Council's Parks memo, there is potential to further enhance legibility through the strategic realignment of path locations and entrances, and their stronger integration with the open space network.

11. It is understood that currently, no public transport options are available within or near the Delmore site. Future provision is proposed via the designated NOR6 corridor, which is it is envisaged as a connector service. This is 30 minutes all-day with potential for a higher peak frequency (every 20 minutes). According to the applicant's Connectivity and Accessibility

memo, approximately 51% of lots will be within a 500-metre (6-minute) walking catchment of the FTN, and 81% of lots within an 800-metre (10-minute) catchment. These figures align with public transport accessibility targets in the Regional Public Transport Plan 2023-2031 and Auckland Transport guidance. The steepness of the site may also deter public transport patronage. While topography limits the expansion of fixed-route services across the site, the memo notes the potential for future on-demand public transport would extend coverage. However, I note that Auckland Transport has commented that its ability to run any future public transport services for the development is dependent on several factors, the critical one being the ability of roads to accommodate bus services, including carriageway width, gradient and turning facilities. The various matters identified by Auckland Transport at paragraph 25 onwards in its 23 June comments require further consideration.

12. Auckland Transport also comment in detail at paragraph 32 onwards on the need for an active mode connection across SH1 prior to occupation of dwellings. While the applicant's Connectivity and Accessibility memo references the overbridge connection, AT notes there is no certainty around its delivery. Without this connection, AT considers that the development will be severed from key destinations, limiting transport choice and increasing reliance on private vehicles. AT also raises concern that the memo refers to shops, schools, and public transport services that are not yet in place and may be 10 or more years away. The limited short-term utility of these active mode connections indicates gaps in broader transport planning and integration.

Centres and Retail Activities:

13. The Orewa Town Centre is located approximately 3.2 kilometres to the east and provides a range of retail and commercial services, though it is not within a walkable catchment. Closer to the site, a neighbourhood centre is planned within the Ara Hills development, located between a few hundred metres and approximately 1.2 to 1.3 kilometres away. A second neighbourhood centre is proposed within the Milldale North Private Plan Change area, approximately 800 metres to the south.

Milldale North

14. The Milldale North Local Centre is approximately 2.3 kilometres to the southwest. This distance will increase from the blocks located further north and northeast, particularly from Stage 2, and this centre will potentially be outside of comfortable walking distance from Stage 2 and further areas to the north.

Ara Hills Centre

15. Ara Hills neighbourhood centre is closer and would potentially be more desirable from the residents' perspective, considering the easier access. This centre is approximately 800m away from the central point of the proposal site. This would be an approximate 10-minute walking distance. Similar to the Milldale North Centre, the distance will increase from the further

points close to 1.5km (up to 18-20 minutes walk) as far as I could measure from the provided Appendix 13 (Indicative Wainui-Orewa Structure Plan), particularly from Stage 2.

16. During my site visit on 16 May 2025, I visited the Ara Hills neighbourhood centre location. The lots are currently formed and vacant. There were advertisements and billboards on site for sale. As advertised on Bayleys' website[1], there are two vacant lots on this location, Lot 580 (1,889m², Business - Neighbourhood Centre) and Lot 581 (4,761m², part Business-Neighbourhood Centre, part Residential - Terrace Housing and Apartment Buildings) are for sale in Ara Hills. However, these sites appear as FUZ zones in Unitary Plan maps, and currently, no development is present.

17. A market assessment report[2] was provided to support the centre's strategy. It notes that the Ara Hills neighbourhood centre is approximately 1.9 hectares in land area and estimated to deliver approximately 6,790m² GFA. With a combined future catchment of 6,030 residents across both Ara Hills and Delmore, the report estimates a GFA yield per capita of 1.1m², which is consistent with or higher than comparative centres such as Hobsonville Point (0.7m²), Millwater (0.4m²), and Stonefields (0.9m²). This helps substantiate the view that the Ara Hills centre could potentially accommodate the day-to-day convenience needs of both developments. It can also be noted that this centre will be largely located within a walkable distance from most of the Delmore proposal site, while some further parts of the development site towards the north and east will potentially remain outside of the comfortable walking distance, with up to approximately 1.5km distance.

New Proposed Centre located in Stage 2

18. The proposal site did not include a centre of its own in the initial application, but following initial concerns raised particularly the Stage 2's position outside of the comfortable walking catchment to centres, a small 1000 sqm neighbourhood centre has recently been introduced into the Delmore proposal itself within the Stage 2 area at the intersection of Roads 14 and 17. With this new neighbourhood centre, the proposed convenience needs of the development and walkability outcomes are improved.

19. According to the Connectivity and Accessibility memo, 93% of lots within the development are now within an 800m / 10-minute walking catchment of local shops, including the newly proposed internal neighbourhood centre at the intersection of Roads 14 and 17. This figure is noted to increase to 100% with the completion of a proposed walking track through the covenanted bush in Stage 2.

20. The revised proposal improves access to local shops through the introduction of a small neighbourhood centre in Stage 2. While some areas remain beyond a comfortable walking

[1] https://inthenorth.bayleys.co.nz/news/greenfield-sites-offer-chance-to-shape-new-orewa-community
[2] 52294.5.02 Delmore Local Centre Market Assessment

distance to larger centres, the updated layout supports a more walkable neighbourhood and helps address convenience needs across most of the site.

Education

21. A proposed education campus is located approximately 600 metres from the Delmore site on Upper Orewa Road. The campus is expected to include a primary, intermediate, and secondary school. It has been identified in the Wainui Future Urban Structure Plan and will be subject to a future designation process by the Ministry of Education.

22. According to the applicant's Accessibility and Connectivity memo, approximately 80% of proposed lots are within a 1,600-metre (20-minute) walking distance of the future campus, and the furthest lot is located around 2,000 metres (25 minutes) away. Only 3% of lots fall within an 800-metre walking catchment, which is generally considered a comfortable distance for primary-aged students. The memo cites research indicating that active travel is most common for primary-aged children living within 1.3 kilometres of school, and for secondary students within 2.25 kilometres, beyond which walking rates decline significantly (Mandic et al., 2023, *Journal of Transport & Health*, vol. 30).

23. The broader area has a range of existing schools in Orewa, Milldale, and Silverdale, however, these would be accessible via the local road and state highway network. As noted in the applicant's Accessibility memo, primary-aged students would likely need to be driven to Atuhoehoe or Nukumea primary schools, while an existing school bus route serves Orewa College via Upper Orewa Road.

24. The future plans for the education campus are considered a positive aspect of the future urban context that supports development in the surrounding area. However, I couldn't come across any information in the provided documents related to the details of this proposal. The AEE stated that this campus will be subject to the Ministry of Education's designation process.

Recreation and Parks

25. Within the Delmore development, two neighbourhood parks are proposed.. In addition to this, the plan includes open spaces, drainage reserves, walking tracks, and lookout points near the adjacent Nukumea Scenic Reserve. Larger recreational areas nearby include Metro Park in Millwater (2 km away) and Victor Eaves Park in Orewa (2.5 km away); however, they are within driving range.

26. A 3,200m² park in Stage 2 was included in the original application, but there was a noticeable gap in provision for Stage 1, with limited access to a local neighbourhood park. In response to Auckland Council feedback, a second park of approximately 2,500m² was added in Stage 1. Both parks are noted to provide a flat 30m by 30m open play area and use 1:3 planted batter slopes to manage level changes and avoid large retaining walls[3]. This addition is a

[3] 250610 - DELMORE RC - Terra Studio Response Memorandum

improvement for the local amenity. However, as outlined in Cas Hannink's parks memo, concerns remain regarding both parks' compliance with Council's acquisition standards. The Stage 1 park is undersized at 2,500m² - 500m² below the minimum requirement, while the Stage 2 park's topographical constraints may render it functionally equivalent to a pocket park rather than a neighbourhood park. Critical technical requirements remain unconfirmed. The parks comments classify this as a high-risk information gap that could result in non-acquisition at capital cost and inadequate open space provision for 1,250+ dwellings.

Employment

27. Local employment opportunities are available at the Orewa (approximately 3.5km via Grand Drive) and Silverdale Town Centres (approximately 3 kilometres to the south). The Highgate Industrial Area is 1.6 kilometres from the site. A significant new industrial area, Silverdale West, is planned 3.2 kilometres to the south and is currently progressing through a Private Plan Change process (PC103).

Summary of Urban Amenities and Strategic Alignment

28. While the site is not currently supported by a structure plan or private plan change process, which is generally considered best practice for coordinating land use and infrastructure, an emerging urban framework is acknowledged. The proposal anticipates future access to a range of urban amenities as discussed above, including neighbourhood centres, a proposed education campus, local parks, and future frequent public transport services via the NOR6 corridor. However, this must be considered alongside the concerns raised by Auckland Transport and Council's Parks Team as previously noted in paragraphs 11, 12, and 26 regarding the timing, certainty, and integration of the transport connections and quality and functionality of the proposed parks. These components can be considered to collectively support the longer-term vision of an integrated and accessible neighbourhood to some extent, with some gaps and uncertainties present. In this context, the development shows some alignment with the direction of the National Policy Statement on Urban Development (NPS-UD), particularly Objective 3 and Policy 1(c), by enabling future residents to live within an area that is planned to have access to centres, employment, education, and open space, with improving provision for public and active transport connections over time.

2.1 Objective 3: *Regional policy statements and district plans enable more people to live in, and more businesses and community services to be located in, areas of an urban environment in which one or more of the following apply:*

(a) the area is in or near a centre zone or other area with many employment opportunities
(b) the area is well-serviced by existing or planned public transport
(c) there is high demand for housing or for business land in the area, relative to other areas within the urban environment.

And,

2.2 Policy 1 (c) *have good accessibility for all people between housing, jobs, community services, natural spaces, and open spaces, including by way of public or active transport;*

29. While the emerging urban structure and amenity provision are acknowledged, the absence of a structure plan or private plan change limits the opportunity to strategically test and coordinate key urban design outcomes such as block layout, density distribution, open space hierarchy, and infrastructure integration. These remain important considerations to ensure the development supports a coherent and enduring urban form over time. The matters and concerns raised in the parks and Auckland Transport comments also require further review and assessment.

Urban Form

30. Connectivity within the site and to the surrounding area is limited. While site constraints such as Significant Ecological Areas (SEAs), covenants, streams, and topography are acknowledged, a more deliberate approach to future-proofing key connections is expected. These should be identified and safeguarded within the proposal, as they are critical to establishing an integrated urban structure over time. The current design appears fragmented, with a high number of cul-de-sacs that reinforce a car-dominated movement network. This conflicts with best practice urban design principles, which prioritise permeability and multi-modal movement. However, the additional connections introduced in the recent amendments will help improve future permeability and integration with adjacent areas.

31. While the fragmented nature of the groups of urban blocks (pods) as a result of the site's existing constraints is noted, these pods' organisation within themselves are generally considered positive. These pods created a largely connected network within themselves; however, in most cases, they show limited connectivity options to the neighbouring pods or sites.

Block and Lot Sizes

32. The Urban Design Assessment does not provide specific numerical data on block dimensions or average lot sizes. However, based on a review of the plans, the lots generally appear suitable for the proposed housing typologies. The development is arranged in a series of blocks that follow the site's natural ridgelines, with housing located on elevated land and natural features such as gullies and streams retained between them. The blocks tend to have a regular, rectangular form with relatively consistent depths to support efficient lot layout. The street network defines the block edges and provides a clear internal structure through a combination of local roads and JOALs.

33. Lot sizes vary across the site to accommodate different housing types and respond to changes in topography. Some lots are deeper where they back onto open space and allocated space for planted slopes, avoiding retaining walls where possible. A total of 1,250 residential lots are proposed. Most units appear to provide both a front yard and a rear yard, typically a smaller yard addressing the public or semi-public realm (e.g. street or JOAL), and a larger private yard at the rear. However, some of the deeper unit typologies, such as Type 3G1 (approximately 16 metres in depth), could occupy a substantial portion of the lot area. In certain instances,

such as Lots 216-221, this may result in constrained outdoor living space, and potentially, minimum outdoor living area requirements may not be met[4]. Notwithstanding these examples, the majority of lot sizes appear appropriate for the intended housing typologies.

Streetscape Design

34. The streetscape design for the Delmore development includes public streets with grass berms, indented parking bays, and street trees spaced at regular intervals. Dwellings are generally one to two storeys, with consistent front yard setbacks. Driveways are paired in some cases but predominantly, each unit has a separate driveway access. Footpaths are provided on public roads and within some wider JOALs, which also include some landscaping and varied paving surfaces.

35. Dwellings are oriented with front doors and windows facing the street or JOAL, and fencing along front boundaries is low and visually permeable, supporting a positive CPTED outcome. The building materials and architectural treatments vary across typologies but follow a consistent palette. These elements will contribute to a defined and legible streetscape layout that accommodates pedestrian access, vehicle movement, and landscaping, together with building facade variations.

36. Along public frontages, keystone or similar modular wall systems are proposed, with raised garden walls included in some locations to soften the combined height of retaining and fencing. Paired driveway configurations used widely throughout the development enable increased street tree planting. These solutions are generally well-considered and contribute to a functional and visually coherent public realm.

37. Overall, the general streetscape outcome is considered positive in most parts of the development. The combination of consistent building orientation and public realm design could support a coherent suburban streetscape. However, some more constrained outcomes are present in particular locations, which are discussed in the following section.

Street Interface and Topographical Transitions

38. Building levels generally follow the site contours and the alignment of the fronting road, with most buildings arranged in a stepped manner that responds to both the natural topography and proposed road levels. I find this approach generally quite successful across the scheme and quite positive.

39. The proposal incorporates a range of retaining treatments to accommodate the site's rolling topography. In most instances, retaining walls are limited to under 1 metre in height and have been integrated with sloped batters in rear yards (notes as generally 1:3 in the Urban Design Assessment) to reduce landform modification and support long-term planting. Landscaping has been incorporated for taller retaining wall interfaces, creating a layered-stepped approach

[4] Appendix 10-2 Landscape Drawings- Pages 10-11

utilising hedging. These profiles are presented on page 2180/44, Typical Retaining Sections of Appendix 10-4, and are considered positive design considerations.

40. On the other hand, there are various instances where the road levels are notably different from the proposed lots. This results in some building blocks forming tall retaining walls along the public roads, and not allowing access and interaction between the public roads and the proposed lots. While these examples are not as common as the positive street arrangements, which are more common within the development with units designed more coherently with street levels, there are many instances where such a condition occurs. These examples are more common across parts of Stage 2 with more challenging topographical features. Some of them can be noted as:

- Lot 637 (A-S2-2-07, Appendix 15-20)
- Lots 703-707 (A-S2-2-14, Appendix 15-20)
- Lots 710-711 (A-S2-2-16, Appendix 15-20)
- Lots 701-702 and Lots 757-763 (A-S2-2-20, Appendix 15-20)
- Lot 845 (A-S2-2-24, Appendix 15-21)
- Lots 948-951 (A-S2-2-32, Appendix 15-21)
- Lots 888-892 (A-S2-2-33, Appendix 15-21)
- Lots 918 (A-S2-2-36, Appendix 15-21)
- Lots 1024-1026 (A-S2-2-45, Appendix 15-23)
- Lots 1128-1132 (A-S2-2- 46, appendix 15-23)
- Lots 1081-1086 (A-S2-2- 48, appendix 15-23)

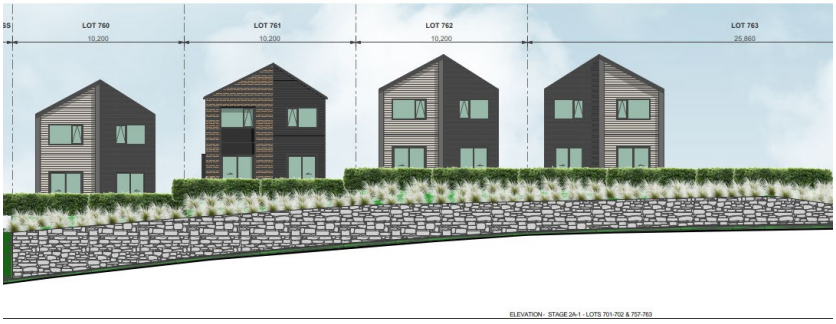

Figure 1: Example of Elevated Lot and Retaining Wall Interface with Public Road. (Lots 760-763)

41. While the presence of tall retaining walls and limited direct lot-street interfaces is not an ideal outcome from a streetscape and accessibility perspective, these instances are primarily confined to more topographically constrained parts of the site. Although these conditions represent a minority of the overall development layout, they should still be acknowledged as a concern. The affected locations detract from the local interface quality and may reduce the overall legibility and permeability of the street network in these areas. They appear to be a localised design compromise in response to site-specific constraints. Further clarification has

been requested through the RFI process regarding the extent and treatment of retaining walls, and a more complete assessment may be possible upon review of the applicant's response.

Internal Accessways (JOALs) and Pedestrian Provision

42. A significant number of residential units are proposed to be accessed solely via JOALs, rather than public roads. While JOALs can contribute to an efficient block layout in constrained sites, concerns arise in this case due to the scale of their use and the design of some narrower profiles. JOAL profiles are illustrated in Appendix 18-1, pages 3725-1-3601 and 3602. Some of the wider profiles, such as the 10-metre and 12-metre variants, allow for the inclusion of a separated pedestrian footpath and planting, which is a more favourable outcome.

43. However, a number of JOALs are less than 9 metres wide and do not incorporate dedicated pedestrian paths. This presents safety and accessibility concerns. The reliance on narrow JOALs with no pedestrian provision is inconsistent with the expectations of Plan Change 79, which seeks pedestrian safety and walkability.

44. In addition to the pedestrian network concern, waste management arrangements within these JOALs remain unclear. It is not specified how bins for a large number of units will be stored, moved, and collected.

45. Some examples of lots affected by these concerns include: Lots 2-16, 77-95, 130-154, and 156-169, 292-299. Some of these examples present up to 20 units accessed by a narrow JOAL provide both for primary vehicular and pedestrian access, and represent the only means of frontage. Clarification is recommended on both the operational and design provisions to ensure the JOALs support a functional and safe residential environment.

Unit Typologies

46. The proposed unit typologies generally exhibit functional internal layouts, with clear front and rear orientation and front yard spaces that can support positive landscaped outcomes. While not all dwellings incorporate habitable rooms directly facing the public street or JOALs, some include bedroom windows overlooking these interfaces. In several instances, where one side of a JOAL includes bedrooms facing the accessway, the opposite side includes living or other habitable rooms, helping to maintain passive surveillance and activation. A variety of colour and material treatments are applied across each unit typology. This will provide visual distinction and assist with streetscape variation. While a full review of all 1,250 units was not undertaken, general observations indicate that the proposed arrangements achieve a reasonable level of interface quality and articulation across the development.

Conclusion

47. The proposal has not been developed through a private plan change process, which is the preferred mechanism for coordinating land use, infrastructure, and open space outcomes across large Future Urban Zone (FUZ) areas. However, the application reflects an emerging

urban narrative supported by anticipated access to neighbourhood centres, a future education campus, parks, and frequent public transport via the NOR6 corridor. These components, taken together, suggest the potential for an integrated residential neighbourhood over time. While several recent amendments have also introduced positive urban design features such as, including a local neighbourhood centre in Stage 2, the proposed park in Stage 1, and additional pedestrian connection links, these benefits must be considered alongside the outstanding concerns raised by Auckland Transport and Council's Parks team. In particular, issues relating to the timing, certainty, and functional delivery of key transport infrastructure and appropriateness of the open space provision remain unresolved. The proposal generally presents consistent and positive streetscape treatments along public roads. The housing typologies generally provide functional layouts with landscaping and variation in form and materials, and stepped landscape integration responds to the site's topography in areas where level changes are more pronounced, helping to reduce the visual impact of retaining structures and supporting a more coherent built form.

48. However, several aspects of the development raise urban design concerns that merit further attention. These include the lack of an overarching structure plan or private plan change to guide urban form and infrastructure coordination, the fragmented street network with limited connection options, topographical challenges, the extent of tall retaining walls and elevated lots that limit street-level interaction, and the reliance on narrow JOALs without pedestrian paths. In addition, further clarification is needed on servicing and waste management arrangements, particularly for units accessed via JOALs. The matters raised by Auckland Transport and Council's Parks team also require careful review and assessment.

49. In summary, while the development reflects elements of an emerging urban structure supported by future infrastructure and amenities, it also presents some urban design concerns as identified. These matters may warrant further refinement or assessment as part of the decision-making process.

Should you wish to discuss anything further regarding this application or this memo, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

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