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To: Mark Benjamin – Mt Hobson Group (MHG) **Date:** Tuesday, July 30, 2024
Aoife Mac Sharry – JKGL

From: Matthew Jones, Isthmus Group Ltd (IGL) **Job No:** 4900

Subject: 538 Karangahape Road – Proposed Commercial Building (amended design).

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this memorandum is to provide landscape assessment commentary related to the amendments to the design of the proposed commercial building at 538 Karangahape Road, Auckland.
- 1.2 Since the resource consent application was lodged in late 2023 the project team has refined the design predominantly in response to submissions received through the notification process. This relates to:
- The building’s massing and urban form,
 - Its alignment with planning envelope controls, and
 - Wind mitigation.
- 1.3 This is illustrated in the Fearon Hay *538 Karangahape Road - Revised Design Proposal Design Statement (Rev A)* drawing set (26 July 2024) and is comprehensively described and outlined within the planning documentation prepared by MHG. However, in relation to landscape assessment matters this is summarised as:
- Amending the massing and form overall, including to Gundry St, Abbey St and on the western boundary (including reducing the Abbey St podium / terrace by one level),
 - Refinement of the composition of the western façade, and
 - Setbacks on the building’s southwestern corner.
- 1.4 As a general statement, the proposed design and form of the building now generally complies with the Plan Change 78 building setback requirements, with infringements remaining to the Gundry Street frontage setback and the overall maximum height. This has resulted in a refined design overall, however the overall design intention and ‘strategies’ are retained. Although responding to a series of individual matters related to the above, the process for the amended design has been conscious to achieve “...a cohesive architectural response when viewed in the round”¹ for the whole building.

¹ Refer page 3 of the Fearon Hay, *Design Statement (Rev A)*, dated 26 July 2024.

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2 LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT COMMENTARY

- 2.1 I prepared a landscape assessment report for the resource consent application² which assessed the design (of that previous scheme) related to:
- a) The appropriateness of the site for such a building;
 - b) Potential effects on the Karangahape Road streetscape (street interface, scale and activities); and
 - c) Potential effects on the broader cityscape (scale, form, context).
- 2.2 Within that report I concluded that the proposal “...provides a positive response to intensification and the urban form of the city centre. The design is of high-quality and will assist in ensuring the city centre is an attractive place to work and visit. It will also provide a positive contribution to the Auckland skyline through its interesting building form that is commensurate with its setting, from both the immediate streets and from the wider cityscape context.”³ Brief commentary related to the amended design is provided below.

Amended massing and form

- 2.3 In relation to the amended building, the scale and massing has reduced, overall. The height and form of the building fronting the respective streets retains, and in fact will improve, the human scale to the streetscape. This is achieved through the façade heights, their materiality and the setbacks to the terraces (including wintergardens) and upper levels of the building. There are three strong edges to the streetscape.
- 2.4 When viewing the building from the north and south, its overall form will be slenderer on its upper levels, set upon the podium. The building will remain prominent (not dominant) viewed upon the ridge, reading as part of the cluster of existing buildings in the area.
- 2.5 The bulk, form and appearance of the building remains cohesive and proportionate, overall.

Western façade composition

- 2.6 The amended form of the building (to comply with the setback requirements to the respective boundaries of Abbey Street and 582 Karangahape Road) has resulted in change to the composition of the western façade. The new design provides more variety with modulation (building setbacks along this boundary), and also variety to the materials and façade treatment. This creates greater interest, depth and articulation to the façade which helps to break up its scale and massing. This is illustrated and

² Refer Isthmus *Landscape Assessment 538 Karangahape Road – Proposed Commercial Building*, dated November 2023.

³ Refer to the *Conclusion* (page 36).

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described on the images on pages 4, 5 and 6 of the Fearon Hay, *Design Statement (Rev A)* (26 July 2024).

- 2.7 The sawtooth roof form remains which provides interest to the skyline.

Setback on the southwestern corner

- 2.8 In relation to the setbacks on the building's southwestern corner, for the reasons outlined above the proposed design provides an appropriate scale to this site boundary and street frontage.

Hopetoun Street Apartments

- 2.9 Regarding the apartment building at 15 Hopetoun Street, within the Fearon Hay *Design Statement* a long section has been provided (page 13) which illustrates the comparative height of that building with the amended proposed building on the Karangahape Road cross section and through to Maungawhau (Mt Eden).
- 2.10 Further to this long section, should a visual simulation be deemed necessary, it would be useful for Auckland Council to please provide specific detail of the location from which this should be prepared.

Visual simulations

- 2.11 A series of updated *visual simulations* are currently being prepared to reflect the amended design. These are updates to the existing visual simulations prepared to date and also includes new simulations from Viewpoints B and H (per Appendix B to the original landscape assessment). Once these are complete, they will be issued to Auckland Council.

3 SUMMARY

- 3.1 In summary, in my opinion, the amended design is appropriate for this site and still provides a positive response in relation to its urban context within this part of Auckland's city centre. It contributes to and presents a positive streetscape interface which respects the streetscape character of each of the street frontages of the site. It will provide enhancement and activation of the streetscape environment.
- 3.2 In relation to wider views of the proposal from the broader cityscape, the design still positively contributes to the cityscape and skyline. It presents an interesting building form and façade treatment, whilst remaining of an appropriate scale.
- 3.3 I remain consistent with my overall conclusions reached within my original landscape assessment report, noting there have been positive improvements to the design.

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M Jones', with a stylized, cursive script.

MATTHEW JONES

Principal

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