

28 JUNE 2022

ROKOKAURI NORTH HOLDINGS LTD
C/- TOLLEMACHE CONSULTANTS LTD
ATTN.: RENEE FRASER-SMITH
BY E-MAIL

Dear Rotokauri North Holdings Ltd

FAST TRACK COMMENTS FROM HAMILTON CITY COUNCIL – URBAN DESIGN RESPONSE

1. Thank you for providing me with the comments received. I have reviewed these. Hamilton City Council has made comments relevant to my expertise.
2. I confirm my agreement to continue to abide by the Environment Court's Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses and I have done so in preparing this document.

Council paragraph 15.2(a)

3. Notwithstanding the Council's general comment at its paragraph 1.4 in support of the proposed layout of streets, blocks and open spaces, at its paragraph 15.2(a) the Council confirms that it seeks:

“Provision of pedestrian access between Road 11 and Road 10 (cu [sic] – de - sac”.

4. For the purpose of my response, I have identified that if a pedestrian linkage was required one would be optimal if it was at least 6m wide; provided with lighting to assure safe night-time use; was straight; and was positioned generally along the alignment of the southern boundary of Lot 165 through Lots 175 and 176. Such an alignment would connect Road 10 to Road 11 as sought by the Council in a logical point at the cul-de-sac turning head, and also align conveniently with the intersection of Road 11 and Road 12 (making the link as visible and 'connected' as possible). I have also assumed that the

Council would be willing for the link to be vested as part of the public street / movement network.

5. I do not see the need or obvious benefit, or mitigation of any relevant adverse effect, that would result from providing a dedicated through-block pedestrian connection as sought by the Council. My reasons are:
 - a. Connectivity and choice are very important spatial qualities to urban designers and I can confirm were matters that I sought to generally maximise while inputting into the subdivision layout. But by the same token connectivity is spatially very expensive, needs to be carefully integrated with allotment frontages, and needs to be understood as something to be balanced against other land development factors. It is never possible to provide every allotment with optimal access (as not all space can simultaneously be an allotment and also a road or access way serving a neighbouring allotment). The proposed blocks are quite compact and for instance I regularly see urban block lengths in excess of 250m or 300m across the country. Road 10 is a short cul-de-sac, approximately 100m long.
 - b. Because of the access limitations along Te Kowhai Road and, to an extent, Road 1, the only means of exiting the area of Road 10 will be to the south-east at the intersection of Roads 1 and Roads 3. Pedestrians using a link from Road 10 to Road 11 would, for most trips, still need to turn south to Road 3 and then travel east to Road 1. This journey is already proposed to be direct, convenient and safe by simply walking along Road 10 to Road 3.
 - c. As the zone is developed over time, my expectation is that Road 3 is the route that would connect furthest westwards following the storm water facility (and across it). Pedestrians wishing to undertake that journey from Road 11 would gain no benefit from a link to Road 10 and then turning south along that road to Road 3 compared to simply walking south along Road 11 to Road 3 to start with.
 - d. Pedestrians wishing to travel south of the principal storm water feature through the middle of Rotokauri North would in any event walk to Road 3 directly from either Road 10 or Road 11.
 - e. The local destinations likely to attract pedestrians from Roads 10 and 11 would not benefit from the requested pedestrian linkage; the proposed recreation reserve is south of Roads 10 and 11; the proposed interim cycle link to the east is accessible from Road 3, and future buses using Road 1 would also be accessed from Road 3.
 - f. In terms of a pedestrian wanting to walk from a dwelling at the northern end of Road 10 (say Lot 166) to a dwelling at the same approximate point at Road 11 (say Lot 172), then there would definitely be an obvious benefit to a pedestrian link as sought by the Council; one would reduce the walk distance from 271m down to 96m. That would be an appreciable saving. But a 271m walk from one house to a nearby house and where there is no other general desire line for pedestrian travel generally (such as a shop), remains in my opinion well-within the accepted parameters of being 'conveniently walkable' (generally 400m for a 5-minute walk). Such a walk would

occur on flat land in the context of well-overlooked and visually interesting streets, and take pedestrians passed the proposed recreation reserve at Road 3 (a feature that will benefit from being frequently seen and visited by people). If the trip were undertaken by bicycle, travelling at an average speed of 15km/h, it would take slightly more than 1-minute.

- g. In consideration of the overall extent of connectivity proposed by way of the block structure and street network, and the complementary network of off-road paths proposed through the storm water facility space, my opinion remains that the proposal can be described as being well-connected and convenient for people to move through including a generally quite wide range of route options.
 - h. For completeness I would expect a connection along the lines sought by the Council to be provided if Road 10, instead of being only 100m long, were greater than 200m long; that would present a noticeable inconvenience to pedestrians, likely to discourage walking as a mode.
6. Notwithstanding my view that the link sought by the Council is not necessary, I would have no urban design reasons to fundamentally oppose it. In the event that the Expert Panel determined to require the link, I recommend the following in addition to my assumptions above at paragraph 4:
- a. Lots adjoining the link should be required to treat the link as if it were a street in terms of front yard setbacks and front fences, and any lot that becomes a de-facto corner lot by fronting the linkage and either Road 10 or 11 as the case may be, should be a minimum 12.5m wide (to account for the second front yard setback along one long side).

Council paragraph 15.2(b)

7. At paragraph 15.2(b) the Council seeks:
- “Provision of dedicated left-turn lanes at the signalised intersections – this has the potential to affect the subdivision boundaries.”*
8. I have no opinion on the need for left-turn lanes at the signalised intersections.
9. But I recommend that if additional lanes are to be added that they be required within the footprint of the intersection and within the signal pole perimeter so as to maintain a single carriageway / crossing area for pedestrians. They should not be physically separated ‘free left-turn lanes’ whereby pedestrians have to first cross the left-turn lane then wait at an island for the signals to allow a second crossing movement (and possibly a third if another left turn lane is at the opposite side of the intersection). Even if supported by a zebra crossing, free left turn lanes fundamentally function by providing vehicle-based capacity efficiencies at the expense of pedestrian and cyclist amenity. Given that the proposal seeks a subdivision outcome that prioritises pedestrian and cycle amenity, solutions to provide greater vehicular through-movement efficiencies at intersections should complement rather than degrade that.

Council paragraph 17.2

10. At this paragraph the Council confirms that it does not support a suggestion I made in my urban design report to 'split' a long service lane JOAL into two. My suggestion was made in response to pre-application comments made by Council officers where concerns were raised with the length of the lane and a possibility, as they saw it, that inappropriately fast-moving traffic or through-travel might occur.
11. I understand that the Council's view is now that the length of the JOAL is not of concern to it.
12. On that basis I confirm that I do not see the need to split the lane into two. In reaching that view I note that I have in my urban design report made separate reference to the appropriateness of the Applicant's proposal to limit vehicular speed within the rear lane JOALs to 20km/h or less (which could be achieved in a variety of ways).

Council paragraph 17.8

13. Here the Council has identified combined fences and retaining walls up to a combined 2.5m height at the boundaries of 301 and 321 Te Kowhai Road. The Council has flagged this as a concern but has not identified a combined height that it might see as acceptable.
14. I am advised by Ms. Fraser-Smith that this issue arose as a "last minute engineering issue" after I had completed my urban design report and that I was not consulted on, and which changed the engineering plans that I had previously reviewed and discussed with the project engineer. That is a most regrettable occurrence.
15. I have now reviewed the plans that were lodged. I agree with the Council that the proposal would create unreasonable, and more to the point easily avoidable, privacy effects on the neighbours by allowing elevated overlooking across the neighbouring sites.
16. I recommend that the combined height of the boundary wall and fencing be restricted to a maximum height of 2m, which I regard as sufficient to avoid adverse effects of visual dominance or loss of spaciousness for the neighbours. Within that, the fence component should be a minimum of 1.5m height, so as to provide reasonable privacy for the neighbours (only a person standing directly at the fence and purposefully looking over it would have clear views to the neighbouring sites). The reduction in retaining height (up to 1m) could be 'absorbed' into the allotments by way of slightly grading / sloping them up from the street. Alternatively low-height key-stone retaining walls at the street frontage of up to 0.5m height would also help flatten the allotments without creating any problematic effects. In any event, there are numerous ways to address the issue.

Please feel welcome to contact me should you wish to discuss any aspect of the above further.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ian Munro', with a long horizontal line extending to the left.

IAN MUNRO

urban planner and urban designer

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