

Te Hurihanga ō Rangatahi - The Youth Hub

Consent application RMA/2020/405

Statement of Diane Jean Lucas ONZM

- 1 My name is Di Lucas and I am a landscape architect for the company Lucas Associates. I founded this practice in 1979 and have been based in Central Christchurch for more than 30 years. I have a BSc, DipLA and Master of Landscape Architecture, am a NZILA Life Member and Registered NZILA Landscape Architect.
- 2 I have provided assessments and evidence regarding central city planning and development for several decades, including convening community planning exercises.
- 3 I have been involved in assisting the post-quake recovery in the central city, including through an organisation that emerged to assist recovery of the area south of Bealey Avenue, from the Ōtākaro / Avon corridor north, and, west of Barbadoes Street through toward Durham Street. Pita Kāik / Peterborough Village included all interests, commercial and residential. I organised professional rebuild workshops and design competitions to explore affordable recovery options for this highly damaged area. Pita Kāik events for local interests regularly attracted around 80 participants. Residential recovery is almost complete, with considerably increased density and a vibrant community.
- 4 I provide this statement of evidence on behalf of Lynette Stenning, a Pita Kāik resident and community health professional.

PROPOSAL

- 5 The Youth Hub is proposed within the Residential Central City Zone allowing buildings for residential and associated community activities to 14 m high. I have reviewed the application documents.

- 6 Homes would be provided for youth, either sheltered or independent accommodation, plus supervisor and manager units, to in total accommodate around 50 people on site. The youth would each be resident for up to 18 months. I assess the proposal as a predominantly residential activity involving various housing types.
- 7 As well as events and recreational centres, the complex would be topped by a market garden which would provide horticultural training for resident and day attendees. An associated café would be open daily to the public. This and the organic produce from the market garden, plus the events to be provided, will be important opportunities for the community to participate and to support the youth involved. Community support is expected to assist in the nurturing of the youth involved.

CONTEXT

- 8 From surveys undertaken through the area, whilst there had been considerable boarding house accommodation prior to the earthquakes around a decade ago, these have been almost entirely lost. The loss has reduced the social diversity resident in the area. The Youth Hub seeks to increase social diversity through accommodating young people who are scarce residents of the central city, as the central city residential typically involves older people and young professionals. Increasing the number of youth resident within central city residential would complement the increased visits of children and youth in response to facilities such as the Margaret Mahy Playground and basketball courts in the East Frame. In addition, increased training facilities developed and developing in the Business Zone close by include the NZ School of Tourism, NZ Graduate School of Education and the NZMA campus in Madras Street and currently expanding nearby in Peterborough Street. The students attending these tertiary facilities add to the daytime diversity of the neighbourhood. These facilities provide tertiary training, they are businesses, they do not provide the residential accommodation and wrap-around care that the Youth Hub will provide. The SkillWise training facility on Manchester Street provides for people aged 16 to 64 with intellectual disabilities. Groups of people from this facility are daily out and about in our community, and contributing positively to our diversity, our inclusivity. The Cultivate urban farm facility on Peterborough Street nurtures young people into employment and provides a superb community asset. The trainees from all these local facilities assist in diversifying our communities and revitalising the central city. As has been identified through post-quake events in Pita Kāik, integrating elderly from retirement complexes

and youth can be very constructive and beneficial for both. Social and cultural diversity can positively contribute to the amenity and vitality of this area of the central city.

- 9 Reviewing the design proposal, I assess that the Youth Hub will contribute positively to the amenity of the streetscape, the wider neighbourhood, and to city vitality.

- 10 The provision of a café and occasional events at the Youth Hub are a means for the wider community to be involved and become familiar with Hub people and activity.

- 11 The location within the residential zone and close to an assortment of hospitality, retail, office and training facilities, with the main entrance fronting a busy street, with the residential activity and highly modulated residential scale buildings around the site, and the market gardening atop, the residential care-focussed facility is assessed as highly appropriate.

- 12 I assess that the design addresses the street frontages appropriately, in providing the more active frontage to the south to the Salisbury Street wide street character and a smaller-scale residential character to Gracefield Avenue. The setback, acoustic fence and management regime for the café located toward the eastern boundary respects neighbourhood amenity.

- 13 Not at all institutional in character, the complex will be of a scale appropriate to the residential context. The tallest structures being a greenhouse and central to the site, the design is respectful of neighbours and streetscapes. Directly across Salisbury Street, the 3 and 4 storey SOHO Christchurch Apartments under construction are more solidly massed and close to the street.

- 14 Whilst it will involve significant change from the former Bowling Club, I assess the Youth Hub will contribute positively to the two contrasting streetscapes associated, through the impressively diverse built and vegetated character plus the associated youthful activation.

- 15 The Youth Hub design encourages use of active transport and buses, resulting in limited effects of on-site parking and sustainable site design. The well-considered built and spatial design are such that the complex is assessed will complement the character and amenity of the neighbourhood.

- 16 Whilst the site will not provide the 22 apartments anticipated by the City Plan, the proposal will enable an equivalent number of people to reside on site within a complex that will contribute to amenity value.

- 17 With respect to design and location, the Youth Hub proposal is assessed as appropriate. Considering the proposed design and management regime, any potential adverse effects on neighbourhood amenity are assessed as less than minor.

September 2020