

The Victoria Neighbourhood Association's response to changes tabled by the Youth Hub Trust (RMA/202/405) on 8/10/20, with amended plans received 14/10/20

We have taken the opportunity to consider and respond to changes tabled by the Youth Hub Trust team at the extended hearing date on 8 October 2020 and confirmed in the amended plans, received on 15 October 2020.

Since receiving notice of the proposed changes¹ we have

- 1) worked through the supplementary evidence documents and amended plans to ensure we were aware of all the changes, as no consolidated summary was provided;
- 2) checked some of the information provided (e.g. NZS6803:1999) and took advice where needed;
- 3) produced a summary of each change so that all VNA members were working from the same information;
- 4) sought feedback from submitters about the changes and produced draft responses;
- 5) consulted with other VNA members who were involved in the submissions or hearing;
- 6) consulted with SWCPG members about their response and
- 7) obtained endorsement of this response from the VNA Committee.

THE PROPOSED CHANGES

The changes relate to the following aspects of the application:

- 1) maximum office space
- 2) hours of operation (market garden)
- 3) landscaping/decks
- 4) window treatments
- 5) café
- 6) recreational spaces
- 7) Gracefield Avenue parking
- 8) travel / parking plan
- 9) pre-works structural assessment

VNA'S OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF THE PROPOSED CHANGES

Whether taken separately or as a whole, the changes do not address the substantive issues raised by the VNA, by individual members, in evidence from our technical experts or the submission from our legal counsel.

Even the few changes that might have a minor effect for some residents do not go far enough to alter our opposition to the Youth Hub application. In most cases, the proposed changes create other problems, compromising both the residents and the applicant. This is why the site is inappropriate for such a large non-residential activity.

We still oppose the application in its entirety.

¹ Changes are covered in the following documents: Supplementary Evidence (and plans) from A W Just and K M Seaton (both dated 8/10/20) and Memos from N Fuller and A Wilkins (dated 7/10/20).

1) MAXIMUM OFFICE SPACE

The change: A cap of 419m² floor area devoted to offices.

Implications:

- (i) Residents' concerns about possible 'creep' related more to increases in the **number of agencies and clients/other visitors** than to floor space.
- (ii) We pointed out discrepancies in the applicant's estimates of services and visitors. They reiterated a total 13 agencies and 50 – 100 visitors per day (not 18+ agencies and 100 – 200 visitors).
- (iii) The proposed cap on floor space does not address the applicant's request for 'flexibility' in how the Youth Hub would develop, if consent is granted.

Overall impact of change: NIL

A cap on floor space or number of services/visitors does not address the issue that this is a non-residential activity that should not even be located in the Residential Central City Zone.

2, 3 & 4) Market garden hours, landscaping/decks, window treatments

Overall impact of changes: Overall effect NIL

Only minor effects for some properties. We have advised the Salisbury and Durham St property owners of the change related to window treatments.

5) THE CAFÉ

Changes include:

- (i) re-locating the cafe from the Salisbury St entrance to a more central space;;
- (ii) not providing the cafe with outside seating, but maintaining the same internal space as before;
- (iii) confirming the cafe's 'not-for-profit' status (and the possibility of it being closed to the public);
- (iv) shifting the gallery to the original cafe space, with the same footprint, and using the original gallery as a spiritual space.

Implications:

- (i) An art gallery also would present a non-residential frontage on the street, attracting people with no relationship to the site.
- (ii) The gallery space is much larger than what was previously allocated, with additional negative effects, e.g. galleries typically have a significant amount of standing room, which can cater for even more non-residential visitors and/or activities than a café.
- (iii) The cafe still has access to the courtyard adjacent to residents, and the gallery now has access to the same courtyard. There also is easier access from the main entrance to the first courtyard (via additional doors) and from the entrance through to the spiritual space and out to another courtyard (via additional doors).
- (iv) All associated spaces become a common non-residential area, in a single connected environment (causing more disturbances for nearby residents).

Overall impact of changes: NIL

The café and gallery are still non-residential activities, regardless of location or commercial status. They should not be approved.

6) RECREATIONAL SPACES

Changes include:

- (i) use of Events Centre
- (ii) access to rooftop terraces

Implications:

- (i) Designating Events space as ‘training/workshop space’ does not alter the estimated number of people coming to the site for non-residential activities.
- (ii) Andrew Just said examples of activities held in the art and recreation spaces would be provided. This was not done, so plans are still vague.

Overall impact of change: NIL

The large 200-seat Events Centre is still one of our major concerns, and our opposition is unchanged.

7) GRACEFIELD AVENUE PARKING**Changes include:**

- (i) removing one car park from the Gracefield Ave access, but maintaining the other five;
- (ii) shifting some of the cycle parks to the Salisbury St entrance (with same total number of 70);
- (iii) designating all parking spaces at the Salisbury St entrance as P5 (except for spaces for the disabled).

Implications:

- (i) The proposed changes do not go far enough and therefore do not achieve the desired outcome in Anne Wilkins’s 7/20/20 Memo that Salisbury Street should be the key access point.
- (ii) The reasons for maintaining five parks were given verbally at the hearing, with written confirmation sent to Marjorie Manthei on 14/10/20. We believe there are ways that all parks could be shifted to the Salisbury St entrance². However, this would cause other problems (e.g. Salisbury St would need access at night and there would be more pressure at that entrance)—another example of why the site is inappropriate for such a large facility.

Overall impact of changes: NIL

Salisbury Street should be the ‘key point’ for all access, with no vehicle access from Gracefield Avenue. Even then, the negative effects from increased traffic and pressure on parking would not be resolved.

8) TRAVEL / PARKING PLAN**Changes include:**

- (i) adding monitoring and review to the Travel Management Plan;
- (ii) liaising with the City Council Travel Planning team;
- (iii) appointing a Travel Management Coordinator;
- (iv) providing information re limited parking through a variety of media;
- (v) making it easier to bike, walk, cycle.

Implications:

- (i) The proposed changes only monitor how negative the effects would be if consent is granted.
- (ii) The proposed monitoring does not even include feedback from residents regarding the impact of traffic and parking during the week, evenings and weekends.

Overall impact of changes: MINOR

The changes do not resolve the anticipated negative effects, which cannot be mitigated by a Travel Plan. Whether or not there is a plan, the negative effects from increased traffic and pressure on parking would be significant.

² The current carparking from Salisbury St is inefficient, due to the wide aisle to the west of the parks on one side only. It could be widened to accommodate more cars (including the three for staff living on-site). There also is space within the site (without reducing the set-back from neighbours) to reconfigure the buildings so the health centre is closer to the Salisbury St entrance (with disability park nearby). Youthline staff do not need a designated park because the services offered in ChCh (according to Youthline’s website) have no need for an office on-site.

9) PRE-WORKS STRUCTURAL ASSESSMENT

The change:

Replacing the requirement for the applicant to undertake pre-works structural/condition assessment for all habitable buildings within 5m of the site boundary with: *'All construction activities shall be managed and controlled in accordance with NZS6803:1999'* (Condition 23 in Kim Seaton's Supplementary Evidence).

Implications

- (i) Pre-works structural assessment is an important issue affecting those living (or owning property) around the perimeter of the proposed site. They overlooked responding to this issue when it was first raised, but this does not mean they are unconcerned about possible damage to their properties.
- (ii) NZS6803:1999 appears to cover only 'noise management plans', not vibration management plans. We can find no reference to vibration in that standard. Therefore, the proposed change would not address the matters of primary concern.
- (iii) We asked a VNA member involved in our submissions³ to give advice. His comments are summarised below.
 - Properties surrounding the proposed site are designated Technical Category 2 (indicating soils with potential for liquefaction in future earthquakes); on the south side of Salisbury St, the designation is Technical Category 3 (greater risk of liquefaction). Therefore, pre-works structural condition assessment (PWSCA) on sites with these designations is appropriate and should be undertaken.
 - The original condition (deleted #19 in Kim Seaton's document) should remain, but strengthened by an explicit statement that the consent holder would arrange and pay for a pre-works structural/condition assessment for all buildings within 5 metres of the site boundary or, if advised by a specialist geotechnical engineer, at a greater distance based on assessed soil conditions.
 - NZTA guidelines on dilapidation surveys near roading construction include additional measures, including expert advice from a geotechnical engineer if there is a history of foundation settlement in the vicinity. Assessments should, therefore, be extended to all buildings and siteworks (such as pavements and drains).

We have advised property owners around / near the perimeter of the site of the above implications.

SUMMARY

The proposed changes do not address the underlying substantive issues that were the focus of the VNA's submissions. The Youth Hub is still predominately a non-residential activity which seriously compromises the residential amenity and residential zoning of the area.

The VNA's opposition to the Youth Hub application is unchanged.

³ Geoff Banks (58 Gracefield Ave) attended both days of the hearing and spoke briefly at the additional day on 8/10/20. He is a professional engineering consultant who often acts as expert witness on engineering matters, which is why we asked for his input.