

**PRIVATE PLAN CHANGE 43 – FRANKTON MIXED USE ZONE  
URBAN DESIGN ASSESSMENT  
SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT**

**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 RA Skidmore Urban Design Ltd. has provided urban design advice in the preparation of proposed Plan Change 43. In February of this year an Urban Design Assessment report was prepared and formed part of the AEE accompanying the plan change request to the Queenstown Lakes District Council (“the Council”).
- 1.2 Following a review of the plan change request the Council has made a request for further information. This is set out in a letter dated 16 June 2011. The following is a supplementary report to my February report and responds to the five urban design issues set out in the request for further information. This report should be read in conjunction with the February 2011 report.

**2. Indicative Layout Plans and Urban Design Principles**

- 2.1 The request for further information seeks a review of the ‘Indicative Layout Plans’ prepared by Walker Retail Architects in achieving the urban design guiding principles:

- Ensure a cohesive and high amenity environment is created;
- Provide good connectivity

with particular regard to pedestrian connectivity within and beyond the plan change area, and in connecting to the surrounding network of streets and trails.

- 2.2 Firstly, it is important to note that the Indicative Layout Plans do not represent a fully resolved design concept. More detailed analysis and design resolution would be required to lodge a resource consent application for an Outline Development Plan. The Indicative Layout Plans have primarily been prepared to test capacity of the site and to better understand the constraints created by accommodating sufficient on-site parking. They represent one of a range of alternative site layouts that could be accommodated on the site.

Different design options for the site would be determined with consideration of the mix of activities to be accommodated. An important aspect of the proposed Plan Change is the requirement for approval of an Outline Development Plan for the whole site prior to lodgement of resource consents for individual buildings.

- 2.3 At a broad level the Indicative Layout Plans that have been submitted with the Plan Change request are useful to explore the relevant urban design issues that relate to the site.
- 2.4 The site layout has been configured in a legible and cohesive manner. A strong axis runs through the site with an east-west orientation. This is broken by a number of cross north-south axes. These serve to both break the mass of buildings and to provide visual and physical connections into the site from SH6. The site configuration provides the framework to achieve a cohesive and high amenity environment when addressed in detail under the Outline Development Plan provisions.
- 2.5 Detailed landscape design, including planting and the design of plaza spaces has not been developed at this broad schematic level.
- 2.6 The indicative layout shows direct and contiguous pedestrian connections throughout the site providing clear and easy access to all buildings. The plan does not show connections to pedestrian routes in the wider context, however, the direct connections to the adjoining street environments of SH6 and Hansen Road will enable direct connections to pedestrian paths in the wider environment as they are developed. The detailed design of pedestrian paths and the way they connect to adjoining streets, which may also require amendments and upgrading, would be considered at the time of a resource consent application.

### **3. Indicative Layout Plans and Reverse Lotting to SH6**

- 3.1 The request for further information requests a review of the effectiveness of the Indicative Layout Plans in minimising the impacts of reverse lotting of medium/large format retail sites in relation to SH6.

- 3.2 It is important to achieve a high amenity interface with SH6 as this is a main axis into the urban heart of Queenstown. However, given the limited potential for direct access from the SH, there is a tension between achieving an orientation of buildings fronting the SH corridor and achieving good access to buildings. The Indicative Layout shows the building mass along the SH frontage broken into four distinct buildings, with generous separation between buildings to enable a visual connection into the site. The configuration and orientation of buildings also allows flexibility for the location of main entrances. The depth of the building footprints depicted also allows flexibility for internal layout.
- 3.3 The Indicative Layout shows some physical stepping of the buildings to ensure blank and unrelieved facades do not result. The location and footprint of upper level elements is varied to enable variation in the vertical profile of buildings. The proposed height limit for the front area of the zone is 9m which allows some flexibility to accommodate two levels of commercial development and a varied roof profile.
- 3.4 As noted above, the Indicative Layout Plans are not resolved to the level of building design. As I set out in the design principles in the February Report, in order to achieve a positive interface with the State Highway control should be reserved over building design to ensure a varied, interesting and positive interface with the State Highway. I recommended that visual richness could be achieved through physical stepping, variation of materials and colours, use of architectural details to achieve articulation, varied roof forms, and ensuring the relationship between buildings and the street is maintained by using large areas of glazing. I recommend that these matters are included in the assessment criteria for buildings, with a new matter being included as follows:

*The extent to which building design will ensure a varied, interesting and positive interface with the State Highway (building design should demonstrate visual richness through physical stepping, variation of materials and colours, architectural details to achieve articulation, varied roof forms, and a visual relationship between buildings and street maintained by using large areas of glazing).*

#### 4. Set back from SH6

4.1 The request for further information seeks “a review of the effectiveness of the building setback from SH6 in terms of the open nature of the entry experience into Frankton along the stretch of this road leading up to the Frankton roundabout.”

4.2 This request is considered in the context of the District Plan as well as the specific character of the site and surrounding SH6 corridor. Part 4 of the District Plan includes within the section on Landscape and Visual Amenity a Policy for Urban Edges (page 4-11):

##### **7. Urban Edges**

*To identify clearly the edges of:*

- (a) Existing urban areas;*
- (b) Any extensions to them; and*
- (c) Any new urban areas*

*• by design solutions and to avoid sprawling development along the roads of the district.*

Objective 2 for Existing Urban Areas and Communities includes as an implementation method (page 4-53):

- (a) Identification of a rural-urban interface for larger towns and small settlements in order to enhance the character of urban areas.*

In this context the plan change request differentiates between urban and rural areas. The plan change site is within the urban environment, albeit on the edge, and is currently undeveloped for urban purposes. The rezoning request is therefore considered in its urban context.

4.3 The character of the two sides of the SH6 corridor differs considerably. The southern side of the corridor has a broad, low lying topography created by the river terraces with the more distant, dramatic back-drop of the Remarkables mountains. The openness of this side of the corridor is reinforced by the open space uses around the Events Centre including playing fields and the golf driving range, although I note that the designations for those areas (29,

152, and 153) do not require large setbacks for buildings or structures. Designations 152 and 153 are for recreation reserves (currently golf course and playing fields) and require setbacks from road boundaries for buildings and structures of 5m in the residential zone (refer District Plan page A1-16). Designation 29 for the Events Centre does not have a specific road setback condition. Further along SH6, the zone provisions for the Frankton Flats zone and Plan Change 19 (Frankton Flats B zone) will maintain a generous setback of buildings from the SH with an open space corridor providing a park-like pedestrian linkage on this side of the corridor.

- 4.4 The northern side of the corridor has a strong level of enclosure in the vicinity of the Plan Change site created by the location of the steep hill slope (known as K No2) rising in close proximity to the corridor. The development pattern to the west (BP and Terrace Junction) has already created a strong built interface with the road corridor. In my opinion it is quite appropriate to continue this built interface through the Plan Change site. I consider that the critical outcome to achieve is to ensure a positive built interface is created. Control of the design of buildings and the way they interface with the corridor is important. The plan change proposes a relatively low building height limit along the State Highway 6 frontage (9m). It also proposes to limit the height of fencing to the corridor to 1.2m and requires a comprehensive approach to planting within the 5m building setback.
- 4.5 I note that the existing Low Density Residential zoning that currently applies to the site requires planting of the site frontage and the formation of a footpath along SH6, but does not include any provisions to control the way residential development interfaces with the SH. Given the character of the roadway, the volumes of traffic, and the limitation to gaining access from SH 6, if developed for residential use it would be likely that high fences would be constructed to provide a barrier to the road environment. In my opinion, the proposed zoning and associated controls, together with the recommended amendments in this Supplementary Report, will create a more positive interface with the State Highway.

**5. Activity status for Outline Development Plan, Buildings, Residential and Visitor Accommodation Activities**

5.1 The request for further information seeks a review of the effectiveness of the controlled activity status for assessment of the Outline Development Plan, buildings, residential and visitor accommodation activities in achieving suitably high levels of amenity, design and neighbourhood cohesiveness.

5.2 This matter is addressed in more detail by the planning response from John Edmonds and Associates Ltd. From an urban design perspective I consider that the two stage process of approval that is proposed (the Outline Development Plan and then individual buildings) is important. I support the requirement for the ODP to have a Restricted Discretionary activity status. Approval of the ODP will achieve a sufficiently robust and detailed framework to enable subsequent individual applications for buildings to be assessed and determined on a Controlled activity basis. I note that the suite of assessment criteria provide a clear framework for designing and assessing building proposals.

**6. Provisions Relating to Building Design and SH6 Interface**

6.1 The request for further information asks how the recommendations on p.12 of my February report in relation to *“Reserve control over building design to ensure a varied, interesting and positive interface with the State Highway (should demonstrate visual richness through ..... visual relationship between buildings and the street maintained by using large areas of glazing”* have been given effect to in the proposed provisions.

6.2 As set out in Section 3 above, I consider an additional assessment criterion for buildings should be added to the provisions addressing this matter.

## 7. Conclusions

- 7.1 The subject site is currently zoned Low Density Residential. It is considered that this is inappropriate given the evolving character of the surrounding urban environment.
- 7.2 This Supplementary Report has responded to a number of the items in the Further Information Request from the Council, particularly in relation to the performance of the Indicative Layout Plans in relation to a number of guiding principles set out in the Urban Design Assessment report (February 2011). While the indicative plans provides only a broad level concept to demonstrate how the development potential enabled by the proposed provisions can be accommodated on the site, and only represent one scenario, it is concluded that with further design rationalisation, the broad concept would meet the guiding principles.
- 7.3 Additional assessment and clarification has been provided in relation to the proposed provisions. While the State Highway creates limitations to the way development can access and interface with the corridor, it is critical to ensure a high amenity urban interface is created. An additional assessment criterion is recommended to address the way buildings are designed at this important interface.

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