

TO: Hearings Committee

FROM: Garth Falconer, Consultant Urban Designer

DATE: 17 August 2017

SUBJECT: **RESOURCE CONSENT APPLICATION**
LUC-2017-48 & SUB-2017-26
193 to 143 Moray Place, Dunedin
NZ Horizon Hospitality Group Limited

Response on Urban Design matters

This is an unusual project, an extraordinary one – potentially could be a gamechanger for the development of Dunedins central city in ways that are wider than this proposal. The discussion this project has generated has been healthy and informative.

- It is agreed that this proposed new facility brings many things to the central city – high end visitor accommodation including international tourists, added attractions, a big capital investment and an iconic physical form.
- Discussion around urban design context has been centrally important here but its not limited to the character of the surroundings –the broader picture lies amongst the long history of post war flight from the mono centric city and with very little subsequent redevelopment
- Decades of planning attempts have struggled to revitalise to assist in the creation of vibrancy and people place etc –to keep the centre of the city relevant to Dunedin’s life
- Recognising that ideas around “character” are a later addition – remember the Exchange was demolished as recently as 1966.

After listening to the proceedings of the hearing I stand by my earlier comments that I believe that the central city is an appropriate place for taller buildings and more than that its actually an efficient use of valuable land.

Through this application it is clear that any major proposal in the central city needs to provide exhaustive information to satisfy the legitimate and wide ranging concerns of how it will fit with the existing fabric and activities.

It would have been helpful to have the Councils urban design unit report to the hearing on the pre application discussions with the applicant and have clearly stipulated the level of information required for lodgement.

Assessing the submitted and revised proposals effects

Against the existing modest ambitions of the District Plan, I believe a large proposal such as this will always struggle to pass its thresholds.

Visually from a distance the proposal is not overly conspicuous but closer, into the central city it is clearly of a scale and a difference that it stands out –in ways that are more than minor, and there is little mitigation offered. There is also the issue of reflectivity which has had little analysis presented.

Shading – is a major effect as I have already noted on the Kingsgate and the open space in the Octagon. In the Octagon in the middle of winter already there is precious little daylight this proposal at the height proposed would take away significant daylight and that has to be viewed as unacceptable.

Activity –the revised street edge arrangement is spatially closer to the street, the entrance is more direct and the retail edge is more feasible than first proposed. There is still a lot of work to improve this layout for it to be a zone of integration between the hotel and public street.

Heritage – I have been surprised at the small amount of input by professional heritage experts, this is mostly been provided by private submitters. I see that the section of Moray Place has a mixed assembly of heritage architectural values.

Architectural Character –I consider the proposal belongs to the contrasting or juxta positioning category (“a striking contrast” – Mr Entwistle) that Commissioner Lister has outlined as one of ways of a building fitting in- I believe that the building design could be detailed to become an exemplar of a different design and materiality. Though alot more information needs to be provided to satisfy this aspiration.

Podium vs perimeter – the block that the vacant site sits is largely unformed. The steep incline makes a perimeter edge difficult. A podium block is not necessarily a bad form/type of development it is essentially a stepped base. And the proposals so called podium is largely a basement car park that is expressed on the lower side of the site but the tower comes to the ground on the uphill side of the site with the street side is expressed as a retail edge.

Conclusion

Overall I believe with this application it is the spatial envelope is all important to assessment of urban design matters.

As I have outlined in my primary evidence I believe revising the proposal down to the level at 45.6m from existing ground level including lift core limits the intrusion of additional shading into the Octagon and dominance to the north and west. Also working within this spatial envelope the reduced building height would result in the reception being close to level with the middle of the site rather than the uphill section.

From the discussions it appears that there are several ways in which this reduction can be achieved and retain the architectural integrity.

I believe that urban design is optimally a constructive exercise – we should be looking for ways to encourage good development especially with extraordinary projects. So I would recommend that the applicant resubmit plans that directly respond to the stated concerns of height.