

MEMO

To: Scott Blair, Senior planner
From: Ekin Sakin, Principal advisor, urban design
Date: 23 September 2014
Re: RMA 2024/576 137 Cambridge Terrace

.....	1
Introduction	2
Scope	2
Assessment	2
Context.....	2
Background	3
Key areas of disagreement with the applicant's urban design assessment –Appendix 8 of the application document.....	3
District Plan Provisions	4
Urban Design Assessment	6
Context and fit to context	6
Relationship of the proposal to its context.....	7
Worcester Street - encouragement of pedestrian activity and amenity	9
Coherence of Cambridge Terrace.....	9
Cambridge Terrace - encouragement of pedestrian activity and amenity	10
Adjacent heritage building, Worcester Chambers	11
Road wall height breach and reflecting the established road wall height	11
Bulk management	11
Dominance of bulk.....	12
Other side effects of dominance in a given context.....	12
The fine grain detailing proposed for the first 12m of height.....	13
Management of bulk on adjacent heritage building, Worcester Chambers	13
City Centre and Central city Mixed Use Zones urban design matters of discretion.....	13
Conclusion.....	22
Recommendations should revision be considered	22
Appendices.....	25
1. Cambridge Terrace- Durham Street elevation	25
2. View shafts	26
3. Existing buildings and heights on Cambridge Terrace	27
4. Hotel design examples	28

Introduction

Scope

This assessment is for a proposed 200-room, 11-storey hotel development in a single 42m high building in the Commercial Central City Business Zone, at the north corner of Worcester Street and Cambridge Terrace intersection.

The site for the proposal is currently occupied by Harley Chambers, a three-storey former Group2 Heritage listed commercial building. Harley Chambers is earthquake damaged and has been vacant since the Canterbury earthquakes. It is proposed to be demolished as part of the development proposal.

Assessment

In carrying out this assessment, I rely on:

The review of the application documents including the drawings and the urban design assessment provided, drawing/document sets dated 14 May, 15 May and 16 May for planning, architecture and urban design sections respectively;

Several visits to the site and the surrounding streets at different times of the day and days of the week throughout the autumn, winter and spring months of 2024. This included a site visit with Mr Blair where we discussed my urban design opinion on the proposal;

Discussions with urban designer and heritage colleagues as well as Mr Blair alongside a review of previously granted and live resource consent applications for hotel developments¹;

Additional modelling by my team, showing the difference between the proposal massing and massing which continues the road wall height along Cambridge Terrace;

Review of submissions in response to the notification; and

The Christchurch City Council decision on the PC14 IHP recommendations for the City Centre zone on 18 September.

Context

The application site is a high-profile central city corner site, at the intersection of two significant public spaces of Christchurch, Worcester Street and Cambridge Terrace/ Ōtākaro Avon River promenade.

I consider the site's context in reference to a number of scales and with respect to a number of significant items, features and places:

1. The wider central city and distant views within (long range);
2. The neighbourhood scale environment and associated viewshafts (mid-range); and
3. Its immediate environment (short range).

¹ One of which was RMA/2024/1819 48 Peterborough Street, a land use consent for a substantial new hotel a ground floor and 10 storeys with 148 rooms.. Mr Blair was the reporting planner and I provided the urban design advice. This consent was granted on 2 August 2024.

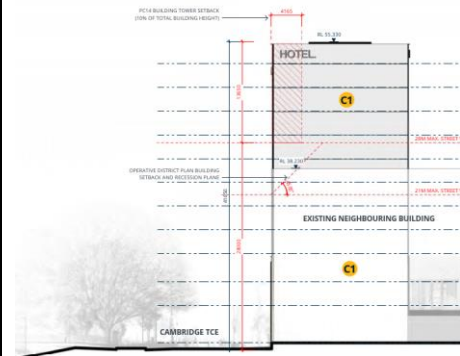
I expand on this context as part of this urban design advice.

Background

I participated in a brief pre-application process where I met the applicant together with their architect and planner consultant. The pre-application correspondence led to a couple of positive changes, a reduction in Worcester Street canopy extent to reduce visual clash with the views of the Worcester Chambers east elevation and the addition of texture and signage to the blank fire wall to the north, that would be visible above the neighbouring Lane Neave building.

Other recommendations for a building entry from Cambridge Terrace and the creation of a street-wall height to continue the consistent street wall-height (but not necessarily reduce the overall height) established along Cambridge Terrace were not taken up.

	
Pre-application: Worcester Street canopy	Application: Worcester Street canopy

	
Pre-application: Northern fire wall elevation	Application: Signage and texture on Northern fire wall

Key areas of disagreement with the applicant's urban design assessment –Appendix 8 of the application document

It is my opinion that there is a distinct streetscene context for this application site for both of the streets it faces and that the proposed design does not adequately recognise or reinforce this context.

For Cambridge Terrace, the key street-scene aspects are the consistent street wall height and the ground floor relationships with the street through frequent entries.

The proposal would represent a sudden jump in height from the existing street edge due to the

proposed height difference of approximately 14m to 17m (50% greater than the existing road wall heights).

For Worcester Street, the key street-scene aspect is the low height of building elements at the street edge, where they are adjacent pedestrian activity.

The proposal does not appear to engage with these aspects. The applicant's urban designer, Mr Clease suggests that there isn't a coherent context to respond to.

- It is my opinion that the building is overly dominant on Cambridge Terrace, with an impact on pedestrians, lacking human scale and sufficient activation of the street.

The pedestrian dominance is due to the lack of moderation of height at the street edge, well past the corner. An uninterrupted 42m façade height is proposed, without a lower road wall height. The combination of lack of entrances and the approximately 1m ground floor height also limits the level of activation possible on the Cambridge Terrace footpath for this longest elevation of the building.

Mr Clease, suggests that a 'human scale visual interest' is provided by the cladding differentiation at the lower levels and that this reduces the visual bulk of the building in combination with the simple façade treatment at upper levels.

District Plan Provisions

The application site is in the City Centre² zone. It breaches the 28m maximum building base height and, for the 5 m portion of the building that is beyond 30m from the street corner, the maximum 21m road wall height. The breach of the maximum road wall height results in a Discretionary Activity status where the proposal is assessed against the District Plan's objectives and policies. In undertaking this assessment, the Council's discretion is not limited to the assessment matters contained in the District Plan. Nevertheless, the assessment matters can provide useful insights as they describe some of the ways of giving effect to the relevant objectives and policies.

While I do not consider that the urban design assessment of the context and the urban design merits of a proposal change according to District Plan provisions, the relative weighting of critical aspects can differ when the assessment is done in the regulatory framework of the relevant District Plan.

In carrying out an urban design assessment for this site, I have been advised by Mr Blair that the most relevant objectives and policies of the District Plan are those set out in his Section 42A report at **Appendix B**. Of these I consider these to be of the most relevance to my advice:

15.2.4 Objective- Urban Form, scale and design outcomes and policies:

- Scale and form of development (15.2.4.1); and
- Design of new development (15.2.4.2);

15.2.6 Objective- Role of the City Centre Zone and policies:

- Amenity (15.2.6.3); and
- Pedestrian focus (15.2.6.5)

² City Centre zone is the new name for the former Commercial Central City Business zone since 18 September 2024 Council decision which accepted the recommendations of the Independent Hearings Panel for Plan Change 14, relating to Christchurch Central City.

Of these I consider that my advice should relate specifically to the following selected clauses of these policies:

Scale and form of development (15.2.4.1)

- a. Provide for development of a significant scale and form in the core of District Centres and Neighbourhood Centres, and of a lesser scale and form on the fringe of these centres.*
- b. The scale and form of development in centres shall:*
 - i. reflect the context, character and the anticipated scale of the zone and centre's function;*
 - ii. increase the prominence of buildings on street corners;*
 - iii. for Local Centres, maintain a low rise built form to respect and integrate with their suburban residential context;*
 - ...*

Design of new development (15.2.4.2)

- a. Require new development to be well-designed and laid out by:*
 - i. encouraging pedestrian activity and amenity along streets and in adjoining public spaces, to a degree that is appropriate to the location and function of the street;*
 - ii. providing a principal street facing façade, or facades (where located on a corner site), of visual interest that contributes to the character and coherence of a centre;*
 - iii. facilitating movement within a site and with the surrounding area for people of all mobilities and ages, by a range of modes of transport through well-defined, convenient and safe routes;*
 - iv. enabling visitors to a centre to orientate themselves and find their way with strong visual and physical connections with the surrounding area;*
 - v. promoting a safe environment for people and reflecting principles of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED);*
 - vi. enabling the re-use of buildings and sites while recognising the use for which the building is designed;*
 - vii. incorporating principles of low impact design including energy efficiency, water conservation, the reuse of stormwater, on-site treatment of stormwater and/or integration with the wider catchment based approach to stormwater management, where practicable;*
 - viii. achieving a visually attractive setting when viewed from the street and other public spaces, that embodies a human scale and fine grain, while managing effects on adjoining environments;*
 - ix. providing adequate and convenient space for storage while ensuring it is screened to not detract from the site's visual amenity values;*
 - x. increasing the prominence of buildings on street corners;*
 - xi. ensuring that the design of development mitigates the potential for adverse wind-related effects;*
 - xii. ensuring that the upper floors (including roof form and associated mechanical plant) are well-modulated and articulated to provide visual interest to the building when viewed from beyond the Central City or from adjacent buildings above; and*

- xiii. *recognising the importance of significant public open space by maintaining sunlight access to, and managing visual dominance effects on, these spaces;*
- b. *Recognise the scale, form and design of the anticipated built form within a site and the immediately surrounding area and the functional and operational requirements of activities.*

Amenity (15.2.6.3)

- a. *Promote a high standard of amenity and discourage activities from establishing where they will have an adverse effect on the amenity values of the Central City by:*
 - i. *requiring an urban design assessment for development within the City Centre Zone;*
 - ii. *setting design standards to manage access to sunlight, reduce adverse effects from wind, ensure a high quality street interface and avoid the impact of overly dominant buildings on the street and other public spaces;*
 - ...
 - ix. *recognising that amenity values develop and change over time to meet the changing needs of people and communities, including increased and varied housing densities and types, which may detract from the amenity of some, but enhance the amenity of others. Those changes are not of themselves an adverse effect.*

Pedestrian focus (15.2.6.5)

Ensure compactness, convenience and an enhanced pedestrian environment that is accessible, pleasant, safe and attractive to the public, by:

- i. *identifying a primary area within which pedestrian orientated activity must front the street;*
- ii. *requiring development to support a pedestrian focus through controls over building location and continuity, weather protection, height, wind generation, sunlight admission, and the location of parking areas;*
- iii. *establishing a slow street traffic environment; and*
- iv. *ensuring high quality public space design and amenity.*

...

Urban Design Assessment

Context and fit to context

This section relates to the following policy references:

15.2.4.1 Policy – Scale and form of development, clauses b. (i) & (ii)

Concerning the scale and form of development reflecting the context, character and anticipated scale of the zone and an increase in prominence of corner buildings.

I note that policy 15.2.4.1 b (i) directs the form and scale of development to “...reflect the context, character and the anticipated scale of the zone and centre’s function”. New development is expected to reflect the ‘anticipated’ scale but also context and character generally (no reference is made to an ‘anticipated context or character’).

15.2.4.2 Policy – Design of new development, clauses a (i), (iv), (x) & b

Concerning the design and layout of development to encourage pedestrian activity and amenity, visitor orientation and wayfinding, an increase in the prominence of buildings on street corners and recognition of the scale, form and design of the anticipated built form in the immediately surrounding area and the functional requirements of activities.

I note that policy 15.2.4.2 (b) directs development to “Recognise the scale, form and design of the anticipated built form...”. ‘Recognising’ the ‘anticipated form and design’ is different to ‘Reflecting’ the context and character together with ‘anticipated scale’ aspect of the policy 15.2.4.1.

15.2.6.3 Policy – Amenity, clauses a (i) & (ii)

Concerning the requirement for an urban design assessment and the setting of design standards relating to sunlight access, wind, high quality street interface and the avoidance of the impact of overly dominant buildings on the street and other public spaces.

Pedestrian activity and street activation are key aspects of the context for this site therefore they are discussed in this section and not separately.

The application site is a high-profile central city corner site, at the intersection of two significant public spaces of Christchurch, Worcester Street and Cambridge Terrace/ Ōtākaro Avon River promenade.

Relationship of the proposal to its context

I consider the context of the proposal site in reference to the wider city (the long range), its nearby environment, particularly with respect to streetscene (the medium range) and its immediate environment (the short range), including with respect to a number of significant items and features.

1. **The wider central city and the distant views** within (the long range), this then relates to the how the height and scale is shaped by the design, which is subject to restricted discretion due to being in the District Plan specified band between 28m and 45m.

Central city includes a small number of taller buildings which appear in the background in distant views across the city. The proposed building is likely to fit comfortably within this wider context with its comparable height and slender profile from a distance. This is demonstrated well through the visualisations in the application documents.

2. **The nearby environment** (medium range) including streetscene and associated viewshafts:

- **Worcester Street** pedestrian axis and the clusters of character in the city blocks along this axis

Mr Cleese describes Worcester Street accurately and arrives at the conclusion that it doesn't have a consistent built form as one of its streetscape values. I generally agree with the description but suggest that it does not acknowledge the relationship of the buildings with the street edge which is an important aspect of built form. Hence I differ in my conclusion and suggest that there may be inconsistencies in the age and style of buildings (as would be expected in any city), but there is a strong consistency in the shaping and relationship of the building edges along the Worcester Street.

The different precincts where there is a consistency of scale and street edge along Worcester is clearly visible in the images provided in the application. Below mark-ups are done on these images.



Analysis indicated in the images above

The long blue line indicates the continuity of the Cambridge terrace edge with the consistent road wall heights. These are shaded red on the image to the right. **Blue lines** to the east of the river indicate the street edge relationship of existing buildings with lower podium or overall height.

The green line indicates the continuous location and height of the trees along the Avon Ōtākaro river corridor.

The red dotted lines indicate clusters of buildings with similar relationship to Worcester Street on a given block.

The block between Rolleston Avenue and Montreal Street has a consistent scale and set backs with domestic scale (heritage houses) to the north and civic/educational scale to the south (the art centre buildings).

On the block between Montreal Street and Cambridge Terrace, along the **south edge** of the

street, the four storey corner building form interacts with the street edge through outdoor dining, the three storey office building form includes a planted street edge and a set back, the Civic Offices includes a public space and a large entry canopy, the Anthony Harper building includes a low podium and outdoor dining to the street and the Canterbury Club building forms include planted setbacks or lower canopy to the street edge.

On the block between Montreal Street and Cambridge Terrace, along the **north edge** of the street, there is a gap comprising two vacant sites between the Art Gallery and the Worcester Chambers heritage building. The anticipated built form for these sites includes a 21 m road wall height and a set back from that at the upper levels as well as any proposed design being subject to assessment against urban design matters.

Design of existing buildings on Worcester Street, especially that of the taller buildings, employ methods that soften their building edge where it meets the streetscene. The civic offices design includes a public space and a large entry canopy and the Anthony Harper building utilises a front podium, the height of which matches adjacent heritage buildings of the Canterbury Club, before rising away from the street.

The proposed building design includes a large canopy which is likely to fit with the Worcester Street streetscape. While the building height is uninterrupted for 42m, the generous canopy combined with the relatively narrow 18m width of the building are likely to be mitigating factors to dominance. I note that prominence at corners is anticipated although this does not need to equal greater height.

Worcester Street - encouragement of pedestrian activity and amenity

The proposed well-defined entry from Worcester Street is generous and would indicate that the building clearly and successfully fronts Worcester Street, hence contributing positively to pedestrian activity and amenity.

- **Cambridge Terrace** streetscene including its close relationship with the Ōtākaro Avon River corridor including its tree lined paths on both sides of the river

This is one of the most well-established post-earthquake urban edges of a key public space (the Ōtākaro promenade) in Central City. This edge is characterised by building heights in the vicinity of 25-28m, elevations with high quality architectural articulation and active ground floors with high level of glazing and frequent entries. The edge starts at Armagh-Durham corner to the north and continues to Cashel-Durham corner to the south.

This edge provides a built demonstration of the relationship of recently built buildings, adopting the post-earthquake height limits, with the river corridor, with the tree canopy heights along the river and with the low height heritage buildings where they are across the road (i.e the Provincial Chambers). The contemporary and taller Cambridge Terrace buildings form a comfortable relationship with the lower height and historical detailing of the heritage buildings they face where the contemporary scale does not dominate heritage scale.

The proposed building design does not appear to sufficiently recognise this medium range for Cambridge Terrace.

Coherence of Cambridge Terrace

A consequence of the design of the building as an uninterrupted block without a base or a tower (as defined in the Plan) is the abrupt conflict with the remarkable coherence of the street edge that

exists along Cambridge Terrace. Consistent heights at the vicinity of 25m- 28m are observed along Cambridge Terrace for multiple blocks on either side of the site. Additionally, these buildings are constructed within the same decade after the 2011 earthquake and are a coherent cohort with respect to post-architecture elevations with generous use of glass, moderated with secondary elements such as fins and louvres, high ground floors and frequent entries to mixed uses, successfully displaying the physical outcome of the mid-rise central city height vision of the earthquake regeneration plan. While the architectural detailing of the proposal is generally consistent with this cohort in terms of materials, the form is not.

I note that this is an area of difference in assessment between Mr Clease and myself. Mr Clease suggests that there isn't a coherent edge around the proposal site whereas I consider this edge is clearly evident and is an important part of the character of the vicinity. I refer to images and photos and suggest that the difference may be due to how far beyond the site Mr Clease observed the existing context. Due to the small number of vacant sites near the site, it is possible to miss the very well-established Cambridge Terrace edge. The Cambridge Terrace edge starts at Durham Street, then follows the shape of the river and sets up a pleasant relationship with the river corridor and its tree heights, as well as being a comfortable height fronting a number of low-rise heritage items such as the Provincial Chambers and the Former Municipality Building.

Cambridge Terrace - encouragement of pedestrian activity and amenity

The proposed hospitality activity on the ground floor is likely to be able to provide a level of street activation which has been missing from this site for over a decade and is welcome. I note that the ground floor height is close to 1m above street level, hence the activation is more likely to contribute to the pedestrian activity along the river corridor across the road than the footpath on Cambridge Terrace. When on the footpath, the eye level of a pedestrian at about 1.4m height is unlikely to find a visual connection to the restaurant activity, in context of the narrow footpath in this section. Overall, this will result in a shortfall in street engagement and vibrancy. This elevation is long, and is broken by the wide vehicle access which is detrimental to the street experience.

I strongly recommend a separate entry from Cambridge terrace to provide a point of interest, and contribute to a softer and more active edge to this street. It appears possible to accommodate steps and/or a ramp where a long table is shown on the ground floor plan. Cambridge Terrace elevation is longer and the footpath is narrower, hence it would greatly benefit from a relief in the form of an entrance way. This is also more consistent with the remainder of the Cambridge Terrace street edge where there are frequent entries, adding vibrancy to the street.



In front of Inati Restaurant on Hereford Street which has a high ground floor level height. The eye height of the pedestrian is at the chair level. In this case the footpath is wide enough to provide planting, and a seat and the building has two main entrances which balances the reduced interaction due to the height difference between the street and the interior space.

3. **The immediate environment** (short range) and adjacent neighbours which relates to the recognition of scale, form and design of the immediately surrounding area

- The experience of pedestrians when immediately next to the building on Worcester Street and on Cambridge Terrace.
- Its immediate neighbours, including three heritage buildings, the Worcester Chambers adjacent, the Canterbury Club across the road from Worcester Street and the Old Municipal Chambers, across the road from Cambridge Terrace.

Adjacent heritage building, Worcester Chambers

The proposed set back of the building and the canopy from Worcester Chambers is welcome which would provide views to the side elevation of the heritage building that were not possible previously. I regard this as a positive effect of the proposal.

Road wall height breach and reflecting the established road wall height

As proposed, the building road wall height would present a sudden and significant change from the established road wall height on Cambridge Terrace at 25-28m. I consider this to be too great a jump that requires moderation through design.

The building design is subject to the corner site exemption from the maximum road wall height rule. However, this is limited to 30m from the street corner. The District Plan rules would direct the design of the proposal to include a 21 m road wall height for the 5m closest to the adjacent Lane Neave building.

Due to the well-established existing road wall height at 25m to 28m along Cambridge Terrace, and the presence of the large openness along the river corridor which supports the greater than 21m road wall height currently, I consider that the proposal site would not need to include a road wall height at 21m. I consider that the appropriate road wall height for the proposal site is between 25m and 29m. This range represents a $\pm$ one floor variance which at this height is able to be visually absorbed without disrupting coherence.

As an alternative, I make a recommendation following the conclusion section regarding the northernmost 5m of the proposal site. I consider this 5m presents a visual and physical opportunity to reconcile the height difference between the proposal and the adjacent buildings on Cambridge Terrace. I can support a total height for this section that is between 32m and 35m and without a road wall height. This is because height in the vicinity of nine-storeys would introduce an intermediate height between the six to seven-storey high road wall and the 11-storey proposed hotel building, taking away the otherwise likely abruptness of the height jump.

Bulk management

The applicant suggests that the material and detailing differentiation at three storey height is a measure to control massing. I consider that detailing at lower levels such as the deeper metal detailing proposed, adds interest at a human scale, increases the sense of amenity and high quality and is likely to contribute to visual interest. However, it does not offer relief from the impact of the large mass that remains. A large bulk however painted or surface textured, remains a large bulk compared to the scale of the human next to it. The viewing distance on the footpath is narrow also in this case, the footpath is particularly narrow adjacent the proposed building, as such there won't be much escape from the bulk of the building.

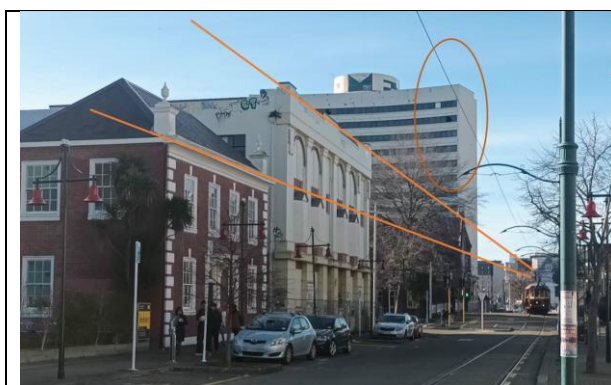
Dominance of bulk

In addition to the above, the length of building along Cambridge Trc is also devoid of gestures to moderate the dominance that comes from length. The nearby context offers examples for how this could be approached. Lane Neave building has an angle (afforded by site shape), Deloitte building has waves (reduces flat plane perception), Awly building has distinct separation into multiple parts.

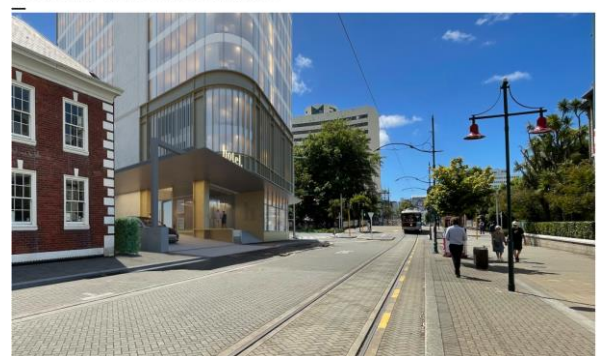
Taking account of established street wall height would have been a simple way to reduce the dominance of the proposed building. I regard what is found here as a uniquely coherent frontage, reflecting the post-earthquake vision shared by experts and the public alike. I consider that the proposal has overlooked this coherence and does not reinforce the context. I accept that there may be alternative ways to mitigate dominance, other than the maintenance of a street wall in some cases. In this instance no other solution to managing the dominance is offered by the proposal other than the suggestion that the finer detailing at the lower levels is a mitigating measure. In my opinion, this is not sufficient to manage the overall bulk of the building when seen at close range.

Other side effects of dominance in a given context

The images in Appendix 2 show the impact of large bulk at the street edge, in long perspectives of streets. The ex-Rydges hotel is a lived example of a disrupted (without transition) perspective of Worcester Street, especially when viewed from west. This proposal if goes ahead would have a similar impact on the Cambridge-Durham street perspective/ view shaft.

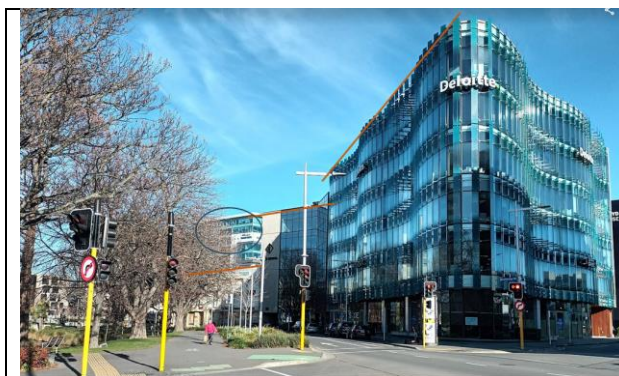


Perspective - Main Entry Looking East

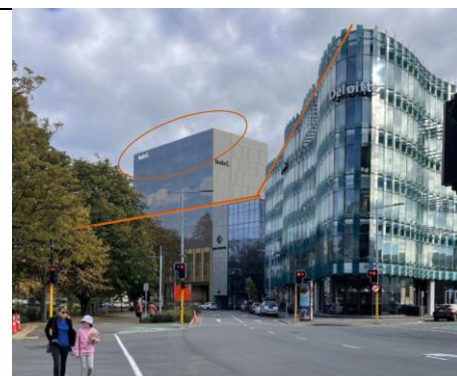


Worcester Street viewed from west towards the Cathedral. The significantly different scale of the ex-Rydges hotel makes it hard to reconcile the view shaft perspective towards the cathedral.

While not the exact same angle, we can see the disruption of the view shaft edge continuity with the proposed building's height at the street edge



Cambridge Street view shaft from north where the taller buildings are viewed in the background



Cambridge Street view shaft from north where the proposed height of the building is

beyond the Worcester St corner which is defined by two lower heritage buildings.	significantly different to its neighbours which disrupts the edge and related perspective continuity.
--	---

The fine grain detailing proposed for the first 12m of height

This is claimed to reduce the impact of the bulk in the application. Detailing at lower levels adds interest at a human scale, increases the sense of amenity and high quality and may contribute to activation. Unfortunately, it does not offer relief from the impact of the large mass that remains. We can paint or surface texture a large bulk any way we wish, it remains a large bulk compared to the scale of the human next to it.

The viewing distance is narrow also in this case, the footpath is particularly narrow adjacent the proposed building, as such there won't be much escape from the bulk of the building.

Management of bulk on adjacent heritage building, Worcester Chambers

I acknowledge the effort made to reduce dominance on the adjacent heritage building, Worcester Chambers by setting the proposal back from it, a lot more than would be required or typically expected.

This is successful for the instance of Worcester Chambers but has come at the cost of increased dominance on the public realm. Otherwise, there is room on the northwest of the site that could accommodate a large amount of bulk (at height) and avoid loading the bulk (at height) to the street edge. I highlight that it's the bulk at height that is the issue rather than the building to the street boundary which is supported in a commercial core for activation and visual interest reasons.

Overall, I consider that the proposal fits well into its context on Worcester Street at the corner but does not reflect or recognise the context on Cambridge Terrace with its longer elevation, lack of bulk moderation and insufficient street activation measures.

City Centre and Central city Mixed Use Zones urban design matters of discretion

The extent to which the [building](#) or use:

- i. [recognises and reinforces the context of a site, having regard to the identified urban form for the Commercial Central City Business Zone, the grid and diagonal street pattern, natural, heritage or cultural assets, and public open spaces;](#)

This is one of the matters where my assessment differs from that of Mr Cleese's. I consider that our difference may be due to the different level of granulation in assessment and/or how comprehensively the context is considered. Whilst I agree that the overall height can be comfortably absorbed into the wider city-scape, setting up distant visual relationships with existing taller buildings, where not moderated at the edges, it has significant impacts on the more immediate environment.

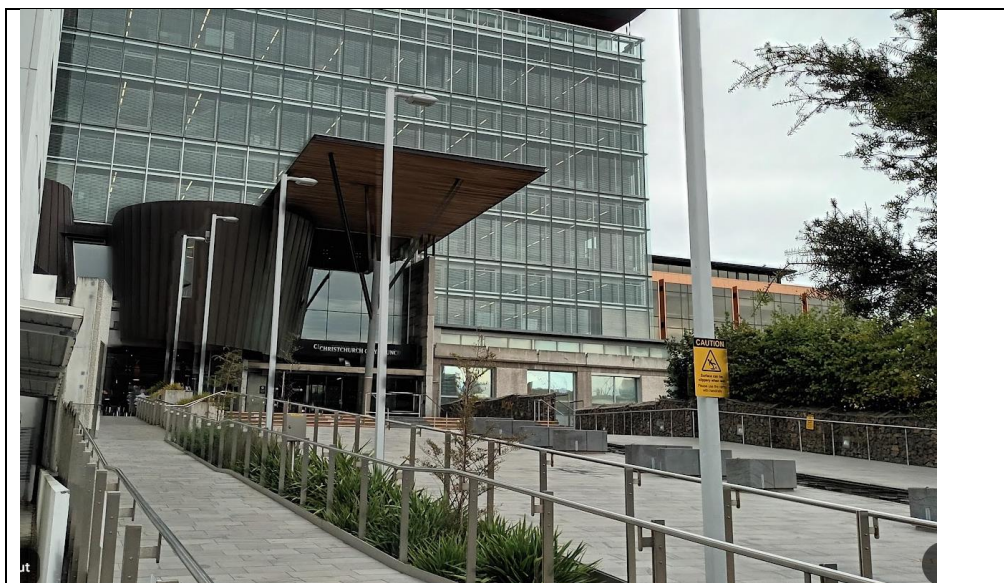
In my assessment, I have established that the consistency of the street wall (and the overall) height is an important component of the context in this location and is an expected part of the urban form for the

vicinity. Due to the proposed height and bulk being close to twice that of what is a consistent edge on Cambridge Terrace, the proposal is a significant departure from this established form.

In his assessment, Mr Clease assesses that *“the surrounding streetscape displays remarkably little coherency in terms of consistent streetscape or road wall height”*. He concludes that the proposal recognises and reinforces the context of the site. His rationale is partly based on the presence of existing tall buildings nearby, such as the Christchurch City Council, Anthony Harper office building and the ex-Rydges hotel buildings and an assessment that appears to mix the use and age into the evaluation of form, edge and scale to arrive at his incoherency assessment.

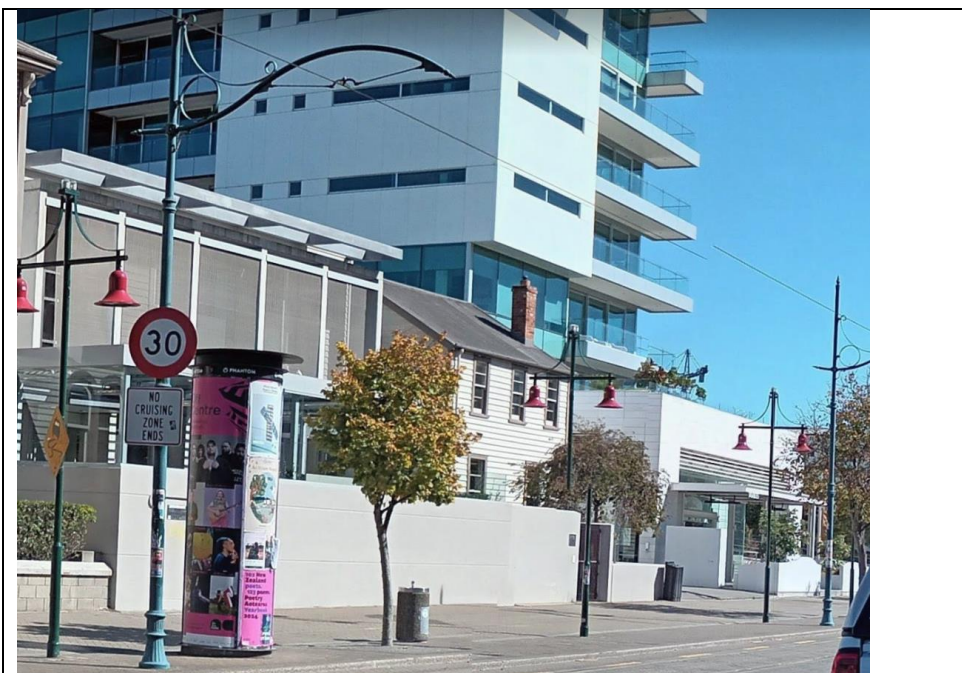
Mr Clease appears to suggest that a 15m step up from the Lane Neave to the corner with the proposed building would be no different to the existing 15m step down from the Lane Neave building to the corner. This is quite incorrect when one views both sides of the intersection. The existing two heritage buildings set up a balanced gateway to the west of Worcester Street which is far from an incoherent streetscape, rather is a legible corner definition. This assessment does not make arguments for or against the demolition of the Harley Chamber. However, the building is part of the context of the site and should be acknowledged accurately to be able to appropriately recognise the context of the site.

Further to agreeing that the overall height is able to be absorbed in to this context, I highlight the shaping of the buildings cited, at the street edge. The Council building has a deep public space and a large canopy which significantly moderates the impact of its bulk for Worcester Street.



Civic Offices Worcester Street entry

Similarly, the Anthony Harper building has a lower mass at the street edge, matching the height of the adjacent Canterbury Club heritage building, it is further softened at the street edge through allocation of space for outdoor dining.



Anthony Harper building Worcester street edge, adjacent Canterbury Club buildings



The ex-Rydges Hotel has a podium which greatly moderates its height at the street edge.



Example of a continuous tall elevation at the street edge at corner of Colombo and Armagh

- ii. in having regard to the relationship of Ngai Tūāhuriri/ Ngai Tahu with Ōtautahi as a cultural element, consideration should be given to landscaping, the use of Te Reo Maori, design features, the use of locally sourced materials, and low impact design principles as is appropriate to the context.

I acknowledge the statement from the applicant states that they have had regard to the relationship of Ngai Tūāhuriri/ Ngai Tahu with Ōtautahi as a cultural element.

- iii. in respect of that part of the building or use visible from a publicly owned and accessible space, promotes active engagement with the street, community safety, human scale and visual interest;

I consider that the proposal partially meets this matter. Active engagement and human scale is provided to a degree, through the use of the main entry and the generous canopy on Worcester street. Cambridge Terrace side of the proposal does not satisfy the matter due to the lack of entries, combined with the high floor level, separating the activities from the street edge adjacent a narrow footpath. I agree that there will be a feeling of visual activation across the road for pedestrians using the river corridor.

Overall, for this high-profile corner location, I consider that it is not acceptable to under-cater one of the street frontages, particularly where this frontage is twice as long as the other one (18m and 37m).

A generous entry from Cambridge Terrace would make a significant improvement which appears

possible with the proposed design. A better standard would contribute to the footpath by employing tools such as outdoor dining and/or planting.

- iv. takes account of nearby buildings in respect of the exterior design, materials, architectural form, scale and detailing of the building;

I consider that this matter is not met. Please see discussion under Coherence on Cambridge Terrace.

- v. is designed to emphasise the street corner (if on a corner site);

I agree that the proposal is designed to emphasise the corner. I note this comes at the cost of a high level of dominance for pedestrians on Cambridge Terrace. The issue is in the experience of an unbroken height of 42m when nearby at human scale. Whilst it is positive that the three lowest floors all have a continuous relationship with the public realm as afforded through glazing, I do not consider that the additional height contributes positively to a pleasant emphasis of the corner when approached on Cambridge Terrace.

I note that two policies include a direction to increase the prominence of buildings on street corners and the road wall height exception in the District Plan supports greater height at street corners though this is limited 30m which the proposal breaches by 5m.

From a pure urban design perspective, a street corner defined by two historic buildings creating a gateway is another valid way to achieve increased prominence of buildings at corners. Not all corners require significant height to be prominent where other methods including significant landscape features and artworks can produce prominent corners as is the case with many Christchurch Central city corners with heritage buildings and/or art in landscape settings.

- vi. is designed to incorporate Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles, including encouraging surveillance, effective lighting, management of public areas and boundary demarcation; and

I accept Mt Cleave's assessment for this matter. I note that the vehicle entrances are very wide and will require a high level of management to keep both the perceived and actual safety level on the street.

- vii. incorporates landscaping or other means to provide for increased amenity, shade and weather protection.

There are limited to no opportunities for planting in the chosen layout of the proposal. This is partly due to the particular site layout chosen with vehicle access taking up space that could be utilised for planting. Alternatively, if a podium arrangement was utilised, there could be planting at the podium height, increasing amenity for the street.

Two street trees appear to need to be removed (one is existing, and another has been provided for in the shape of a tree, pit, which is in itself a significant item of infrastructure). The loss of these trees will reduce the level of street amenity in a key area of the city. These should be replaced as a minimum in an agreed location with the city's transport unit.

- viii. is built to and along the full length of the street(s) and public space boundaries in a manner that the design of the building:

The proposed building is not built along the full length of the two streets it faces. This is due to the incorporation of vehicle access in and out of the site. While I accept that a minimum of one vehicle

entrance would be expected for a hotel building, I don't believe two entrances are an unavoidable necessity. There are other hotel buildings in the city which have a single vehicle entry point.

I can accept the proposed gaps on two street edges as long as these are well balanced with a high level of pedestrian activity and amenity. This is the case for Worcester Street but not Cambridge Street.

I consider this matter is not met but would be met if an entrance was incorporated to the Cambridge Terrace façade which as proposed lacks sufficient activation including due to the above 1m ground floor height.

- a. provides for visual and physical integration, connection and relationship of the building with other buildings on the site, along the street frontage and in the vicinity;

I consider this matter is met for Worcester Street but not for Cambridge Terrace as discussed in detail under the 'Context and fit to context' section

- b. provides visual interest to reflect the context and character of the site and surrounds;

I consider that this matter is met.

The proposed development is likely to provide visual interest which would be compatible with its high-quality public realm context. The design reflects the site's access to river and Street views with generous glazing to the south and east elevations. High-quality materials and façade detailing similar to the contemporary buildings in the surrounding environment are proposed to be utilised.

For clarity, I don't support the proposed form in full for the Cambridge terrace streetscene context. This is discussed elsewhere.

- c. incorporates architectural variation into the façade and building form to provide interest and to break up the bulk of a building;

I consider this matter is, just, not met.

I acknowledge that while the architectural variation on the façades is restrained, it is of high quality and sophisticated with a legible design concept. I consider the proposed architectural design to be successful in isolation but falling short of bulk management (breaking up the bulk) of the building sufficiently, particularly along its long elevation along Cambridge Terrace.

- d. provides for main entrances, openings and display windows onto the street, and maintains clear and visible visual and physical connections between the interior of a building and the street; and
- e. provides for functional and quality space for public amenity and accessibility, such as for outdoor dining, and contributes to the functional width of a public footpath, without compromising the overall character of the street frontage and its continuity.

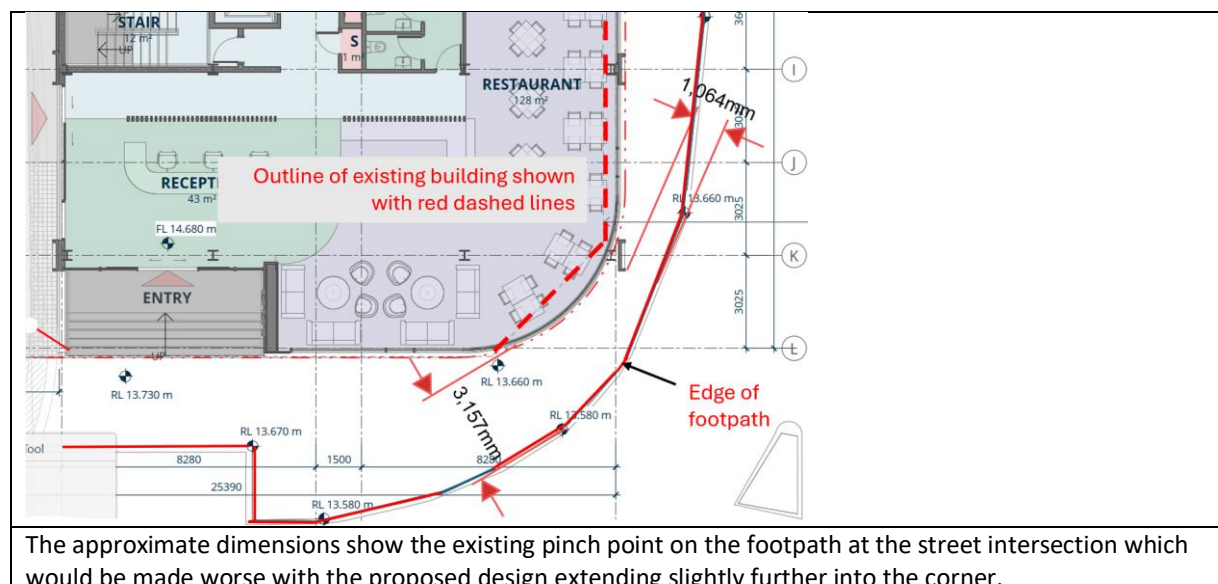
I consider that these two matters are not met.

The building design along Worcester Street includes a proposed generous main entry, a canopy and steps as well as glazing for visual connection between the interior and the street. Together, these balance the large gap created for vehicle access, acknowledging this gap also improves visibility of the adjacent heritage building. This elevation could be considered to just adequately meet the matters above. However the longer elevation along Cambridge Terrace does not meet the matter.

Cambridge elevation on ground floor, includes windows to the street which are above 1m high and make a partial contribution only. No entries are proposed, and a large vehicle entry further reduces

encouragement of pedestrian activity and amenity. This elevation is twice as long as the Worcester Street elevation.

For both streets, the ground floor height at approximately 1m presents a challenge for physical and visual connection as well as for amenity and accessibility for pedestrians. No outdoor dining is proposed, and no contribution is made to the functional width of the public footpath. Instead, the existing pinch point of about 1m width on the footpath at the Worcester-Cambridge corner would be made slightly worse with the proposed building.



ix. For buildings or parts of buildings over 28m in height as the context requires, and particularly for buildings above 45m, the proposal will need to demonstrate (in addition to the above matters):

a. How the top of the building contributes positively to the enhancement of the skyline, including the use of recessed and well-screened accommodation of rooftop plant, and service apparatus and telecommunication masts. Note that large blank walls / facades should be avoided in the tower elements of the building.

I consider that this matter is met.

A subtle screening is proposed to the roof top plant level which provides an adequate definition of a 'building top' design for the proposed height at 42m.

I note that this differentiation is shown on three dimensional renders but is not notated on the elevation drawings. Should the consent be granted, I recommend that rooftop screening subtle design differentiation of sufficient height to screen the roof top plant, is added as condition.

b. A clear and coherent design for the building that avoids dominant built form, and provides visual interest when viewed from short, medium and long ranges, particularly from public open spaces and other areas where there are high levels of pedestrian activity.

This matter is just not met.

I consider that the proposal employs a clear and coherent design approach however does not sufficiently avoid dominant built form.

The building is an uninterrupted block (without a base or tower differentiation as defined in the plan) with a relatively small footprint and an approximate tower dimension of 39m. It has a prominent entry and canopy on Worcester Street. The proposed building has clean lines, a restrained material palette and a softly rounded corner. These in combination, will likely give the building an elegant silhouette from distant views and would likely be considered as a high-quality building by distant viewers. This approach has efficiency benefits due to ability to replicate floor plans without variation in structure.

The flip side of this approach is the absence of moderation of bulk when viewed from adjacent the building or as part of the Cambridge Terrace edge. Building bulk results from the combination of height, length and absence of shaping by way of push/pull relief horizontally or vertically. Worcester Street edge benefits from having the main entry configuration and a generous canopy on a shorter elevation, however similar mitigation is not provided on Cambridge Terrace, hence, when viewed from the immediate area this elevation is likely to make the building appear dominant.

The issue appears resolvable through design. I make recommendations for a couple of possible solutions after the conclusion section.

c. The relationship between the building base and tower elements and the use of the building.

The matter is not met as the building does not include a differentiation of a base and a tower as defined in the Plan.

I consider that the lack of a base and tower definition is one of the key reasons for my assessment of the design as not meeting a number of matters of discretion.

d. How the building manages the individual or cumulative effects of shading, glare and reflections and reflected heat from glass on sites in for sensitive sites including adjoining residential zones or on the character, quality and use of public open space and in particular the Ōtākaro Avon River corridor, Earthquake Memorial, Victoria Square, Latimer Square and Cathedral Square.

The application includes a comprehensive shading analysis. Mr Blair covers this aspect in his report and the matter is considered to be met.

e. For buildings located to the east of New Regent Street and to the east of the Arts Centre heritage items and settings in Appendix 9.3.7.2, how the building manages the individual or cumulative effects of shading and visual dominance on those heritage items and settings.

The building is not located in the locations specified in the matter.

f. The mitigation of the adverse impacts of wind caused by tall buildings on the safety and comfort of people, whether stationary or moving, at street level and in other public open spaces including Cathedral Square, Victoria Square, the Ōtākaro Avon River Corridor, the Margaret Mahy Family Playground, any public open space zoned Open Space Community Park Zone, Central City Heritage Triangles and other parks, and any mitigation measures proposed, demonstrated through the use of wind modelling and analysis.

A wind report has been commissioned by Mr Blair. The modelling demonstrates that the impacts of wind will be acceptable though noticeable in some areas of the public realm. Mr Blair covers this aspect in his report and the matter is considered to be met.

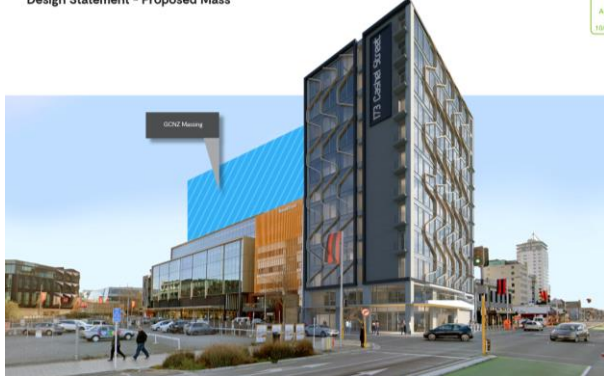
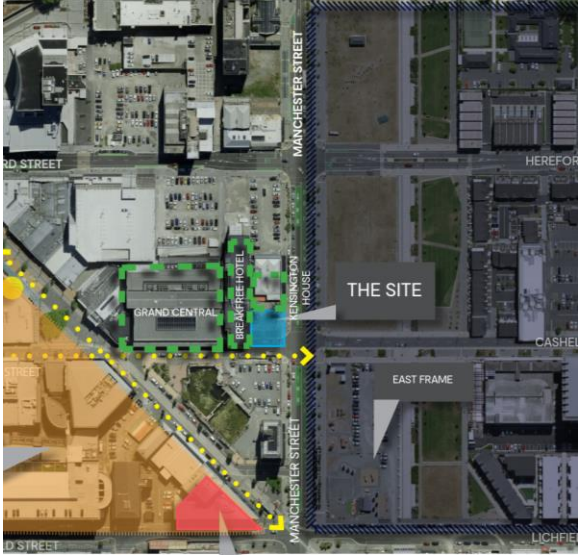
Precedence question

RMA/2022/524 Cashel Street Hotel

The applicant has asked about the difference in assessment with respect to a recent corner hotel building application without a lower road wall height.

- Manchester Street (still early in its post EQ recovery), doesn't have a legible built form observed along the street. I.e. the post-earthquake built context is not strongly defined.
- There are many missing corners on Manchester Street where greater height at corners can contribute to establishing a distinctive built form along Manchester street. This consented building therefore is not at odds with any established corner treatment (as distinct from the case along Cambridge St). Additionally, partly due to the missing corners, there is an orientation and legibility issue on Manchester St which the proposal would help reduce.
- Manchester St is a key public transport (bus) route. The corner site provides an opportunity to bookend the pedestrian priority Cashel St as it links to the public transport priority Manchester St. At Cambridge, we are mid-way along Cambridge Terrace and Worcester Street (i.e not a termination point for either of them). Cambridge Terrace is also a particularly high amenity location (due to the river corridor) and there are long views of the building which are affected by the coherence and consistency of the building line.
- No immediate heritage neighbours involved (including across the road) and the proposal does not seek to demolish and replace a heritage building (which currently balances Canterbury Club well with its low height, as a consistent corner).

"Where suitable" are the key words in the urban design assessment memo, under visual affects: "Where suitable, the occasional tall building will contribute to variety in scale. For this specific proposal, it has the potential to act like a bookend to the block and could become a landmark feature supporting legibility."

 Design statement - Proposed mass	 THE SITE
173 Cashel Street resource consent	

Conclusion

There are positive aspects to this proposal, including the architectural clarity of the building design concept and the activation of an underutilised high-profile location in the city. My assessment leads me to the conclusion that in this instance the architectural clarity is not sufficient to make the proposal fit to its context well, particularly because the location is in a complex visual and activity relationships with multiple significant public spaces, cultural and natural features and an established street scene character.

I consider that the domination of the street, particularly along Cambridge Terrace is not sufficiently addressed.

In absence of a stated and visible response to the context and a three-dimensional mitigation of the dominance of the building, I am unable to support the proposal against the urban design outcomes sought in the plan for Central city.

Recommendations should revision be considered

I understand that the constraints used in the proposal and why the design has evolved into its current form. In particular, the vehicle entry arrangement and the setback to the western boundary as well as a desire for a simple built form. However, these are in part self-imposed rather than part of a brief informed by the District Plan and context.

Recommended Option 1

It appears possible to include a relatively shallow set back of a few meters at the three-storey level where the material differentiation is proposed. This could be achieved by shifting the west half of the ground floor towards west while still retaining vehicle access, albeit narrower adjacent the building, so that core continuity can be achieved and the ground floor plan becomes slightly more generous, likely also further supporting an opportunity for another entrance from Cambridge Terrace.

On the upper floors, the setback from Worcester street would mean there are two large corner rooms on each floor instead of four standard rooms. I note that the four standard rooms layout at the edge is only achievable through the presumed use of the public road airspace.

There are existing and proposed hotel building which include setbacks which suggests that a continuous block building is not absolutely necessary for a hotel use.

Recommendation 1 Massing images

Massing of proposal (Modelling as part of urban design assessment)	Massing of urban design recommendation (Modelling as part of urban design assessment)
 Image Landfall / CoreLogic Data: SIO, NOAA, U.S. Navy, NGA, GEBCO Image © 2024 Airbus Image © 2024 TerraMetrics History: 0861, 2/28/2024, 4/12/2024	 Image Landfall / CoreLogic Data: SIO, NOAA, U.S. Navy, NGA, GEBCO Image © 2024 Airbus Image © 2024 TerraMetrics History: 0861, 2/28/2024, 4/12/2024
Proposed massing viewed from south, showing the disrupted continuity of the street edge on Cambridge Terrace.	Recommended massing viewed from south, showing the top 14m of the (i.e. the part above a 28m building base) set back in this image is 4.2m from the road boundaries.
 Image Landfall / CoreLogic Data: SIO, NOAA, U.S. Navy, NGA, GEBCO Image © 2024 Airbus Image © 2024 TerraMetrics History: 0861, 2/28/2024, 4/12/2024	 Image Landfall / CoreLogic Data: SIO, NOAA, U.S. Navy, NGA, GEBCO Image © 2024 Airbus Image © 2024 TerraMetrics History: 0861, 2/28/2024, 4/12/2024
Presents a singular tall mass above the treeline.	Moderates the building height by differentiating the building base and the tower, not dominating the treeline when viewed from the Square. The tower part of the building reads as a building in the distance. The building base sets a relationship to the street edge that is more similar to the other taller buildings nearby, the Civic Offices and the Anthony Harper building.

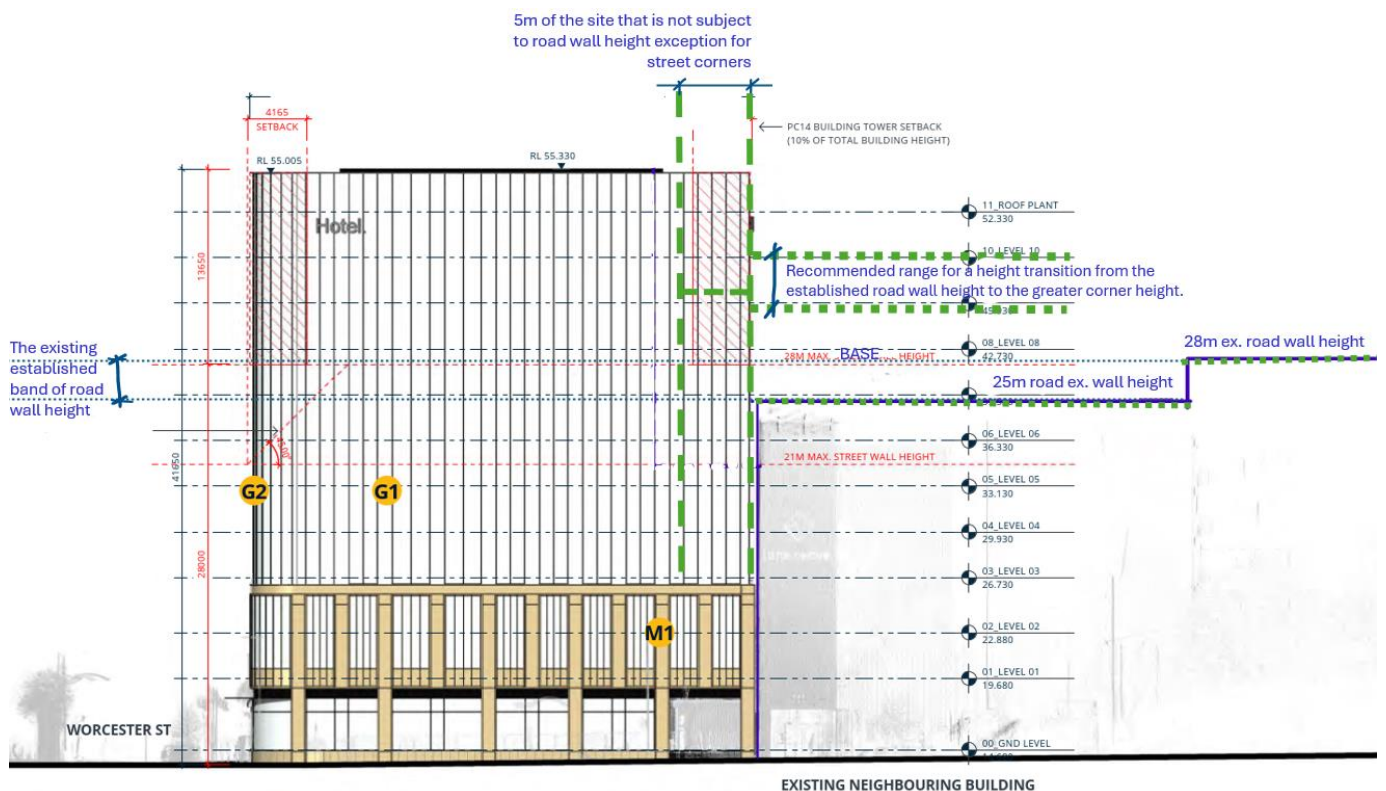
Recommended Option 2

The 5m of the site that is not covered by the maximum road wall height exemption presents a visual and physical opportunity to reconcile the height difference between the proposal and the adjacent buildings on Cambridge Terrace.

For this specific location and its context, I would support a total height for the northern 5m section to be between 32m and 35m without the need for a road wall height. This is because a total height in the vicinity of nine-storeys would introduce an intermediate height between the six to seven-storey high road wall and the 11-storey proposed corner building, providing a transition that moderates the abruptness of the height jump.

The 5m section also appears to align with the building structural axes and could represent the identified need (in the assessment) to break up the horizontal bulk with a vertical design treatment.

Optional possibilities would include a north facing outdoor area on this shorter section.



Appendices

1. Cambridge Terrace- Durham Street elevation



Street wall along cambridge terrace north of proposal site

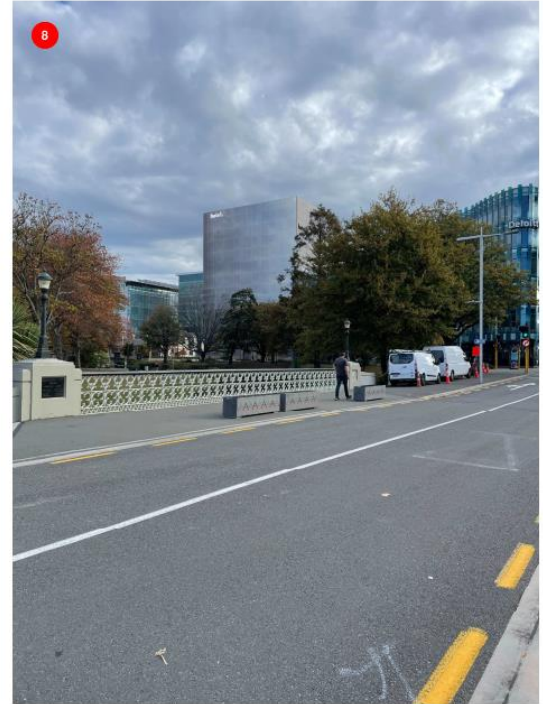


Street wall along Cambridge Terrace south of proposal site

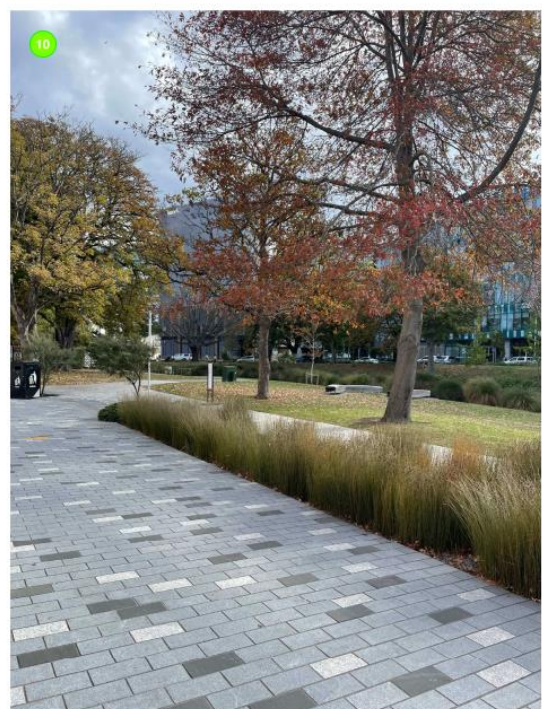
2. View shafts

Selected photos from the application showing the potential disruption to the continuity along Cambridge Terrace showing the impact of the broken street wall continuity

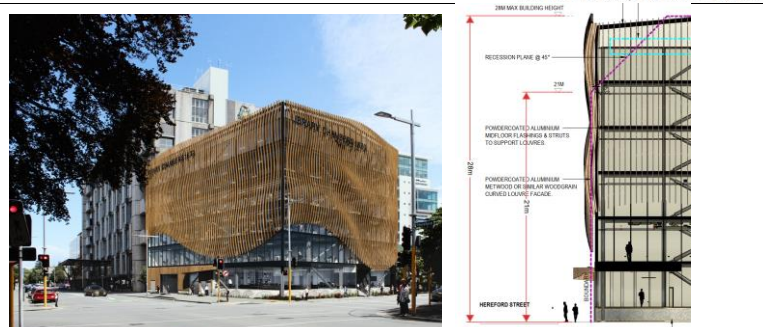
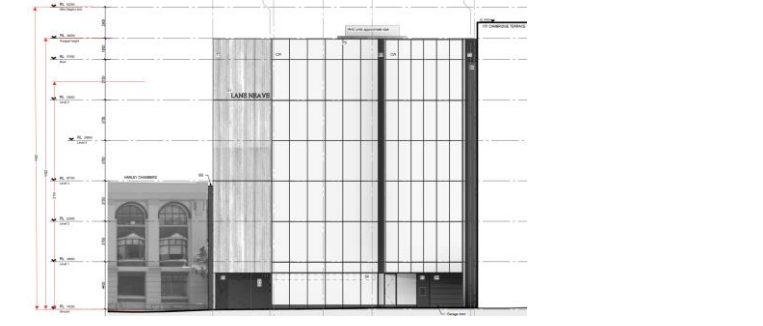
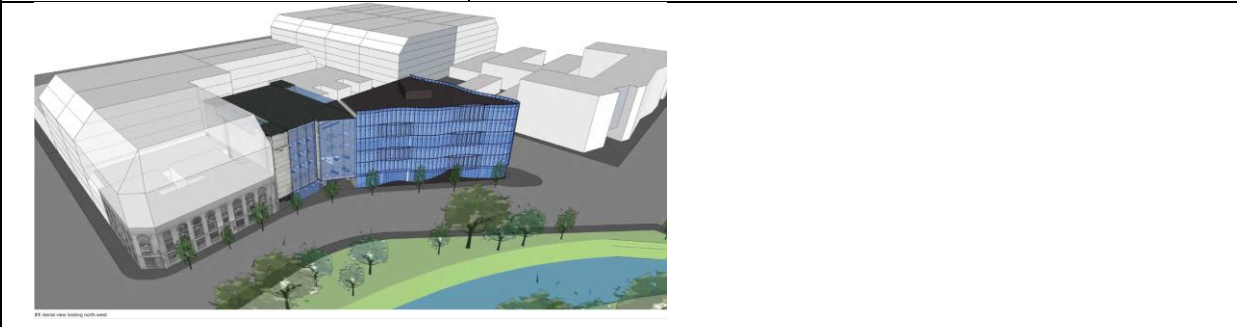
Northern View Shaft Analysis Showing 137 Cambridge Massing



Northern View Shaft Analysis Showing 137 Cambridge Massing



3. Existing buildings and heights on Cambridge Terrace

	
	
48 Hereford St 22m	107 Cambridge Terrace 28m to street edge (higher at roof apex, not visible on the image)
	
Canterbury club building 12 m	Lane Neave building 25m
	
Deloitte building 28m	

4. Hotel design examples

Liz McDonald | THE PRESS

July 31, 2024

Comment (3) Share



An artist's impression of the new hotel planned for 48 Peterborough St, Christchurch. SUPPLIED



Hotel building proposal with graduation of height to better fit context

Hotel building in Auckland with a lower street wall

