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**WILLIAMS & CO.**

PLANNING / URBAN DESIGN / DEVELOPMENT

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# URBAN DESIGN REPORT.



80-82 Barry Avenue, Cromwell

## PREAMBLE

This report has been prepared by Paula Costello of Williams & Co. a planning and urban design consultancy. The experience and qualifications relied upon are 20 years planning expertise and over 10 years as a qualified urban designer (BRS Hons, MUDD).

Williams & Co. have extensive experience in the assessment, advice and reporting on applications for development in a variety of areas in New Zealand but primarily in the Queenstown Lakes District where our urban design services are utilised by applicants and by the QLDC to provide urban design review, reporting and advice.

## 1: INTRODUCTION

### 1A] Proposal

The proposal comprises the development of 8 attached townhouse units and associated subdivision on a 1011m<sup>2</sup> site at 80-82 Barry Avenue, Cromwell.

The townhouses are each 2 bed/2 bath two-storey units, designed to front Barry Avenue and with vehicular access provided to ground floor garaging at the rear of the buildings. Vehicular access is provided via a rear access lane running from Mayo Place to Barry Avenue in a one-way formation.

The townhouses are made up of two different typologies and are arranged in alternating placement between each of the two townhouse types (see **Figure 1**), with units 1,3,5 and 7 including a balcony to the street frontage on the above ground (living/dining) level, and a patio below. The external walls of these units are set back on this western elevation providing space for this outdoor living and when compared to the front façade of units 2,4,6 and 8.

While the roofline of each townhouse is of the same form (a simple gable), the external claddings for each typology differ on the street elevation, as illustrated in Figure 1. Units 1,3,5 and 7 are clad utilising Abodo Vulcan timber with the frontage of Units 2,4,6 and 8 illustrating a contrasting lighter cladding comprised of Hebel block.



**Figure 1:** Townhouses Street (Western) Elevation

The overall height of the townhouses is shown at 6.8m to the gable, with the built form occupying 44.7% of the 1011m<sup>2</sup> site. The remainder of the site will be made up of the rear access lane and landscaping, with private outdoor living space associated with each unit located to the front of the townhouses (and in the case of unit 1 extending to the side yard). The built form will be set back from Barry Avenue at a range of 3.3-4.3m. Provision for space for rubbish & recycling bins has been made near the entry to the site and within the lane exit.

Landscaping proposed with respect to the streetscape frontage and the interface with the private outdoor spaces to the front of the townhouses comprises a streetfront grey block wall of 1.4m, this wall has been set back from the street boundary in order to also provide for planting (native tussock/grasses) and a griselinia hedge is proposed to sit behind the wall (**Figure 2**). Between the private spaces a dividing fence of 1.8m is proposed. The plans illustrate that gates within the streetfront wall will provide direct access into each private garden space from the street (Barry Avenue). Landscaping in the lane will continue the theme of native tussocks/grasses where planting space exists and the use of screening block walls around the bin storage matches the streetfront wall.



**Figure 2:** Imagery – Streetfront Wall & Planting

## **1B] Site & Context**

The subject site is rectangular lot which holds a corner position at the Barry Avenue/Mayo Place intersection. The long frontage of the site is along Barry Avenue, with the secondary street frontage to Mayo Place and the remaining two boundaries being shared residential lot boundaries. The existing uses on the site will be removed in order to make way for the proposed development.

Barry Avenue is a key road within the street hierarchy of Cromwell running generally north-south through the urban area of Cromwell (urban arterial), and linking the town centre to areas south. The road has a width of 25m with two-way traffic and footpath within grass verge on either side of the road. Street trees are in existence (including to the front of the subject site) but do not have a regular established pattern. Barry Avenue has a number of connecting east-west roads, Mayo Place being one of these, forming the northern

boundary of the site. Mayo Place is a no-exit street with a cul-de-sac head after 145m and a footpath on the southern side of the street. Pedestrian access provides through-linkage from Mayo Place to the east (Kerry Court) and also to the north and south.

Mayo Place is residential in character whilst Barry Avenue is a mixed environment with a number of uses and its function as an arterial contributing to its character, including the open space, large buildings set back from the street and parking and other facilities on the western side of the Avenue associated with the College, and other non-residential activities, increasing particularly as moving south.

The site is located in reasonable proximity to the Cromwell Town Centre (under 1km) and additionally is positioned centrally in relation to other amenities, services and employment land within Cromwell including green space, educational facilities, industrial zoning and the amenities associated with the 'Old Cromwell' node. The site is well connected being positioned on Barry Avenue as a key north-south connector and nearby the Gair Avenue east-west connection. The site has easy access to the off-street 'green' north south connection which runs mid-block through residential areas at the end of Mayo Place.

The site is zoned *Residential Resource Area* in the CODC District Plan and is identified as within the area planned for medium-high density residential development within the CODC Spatial Plan.

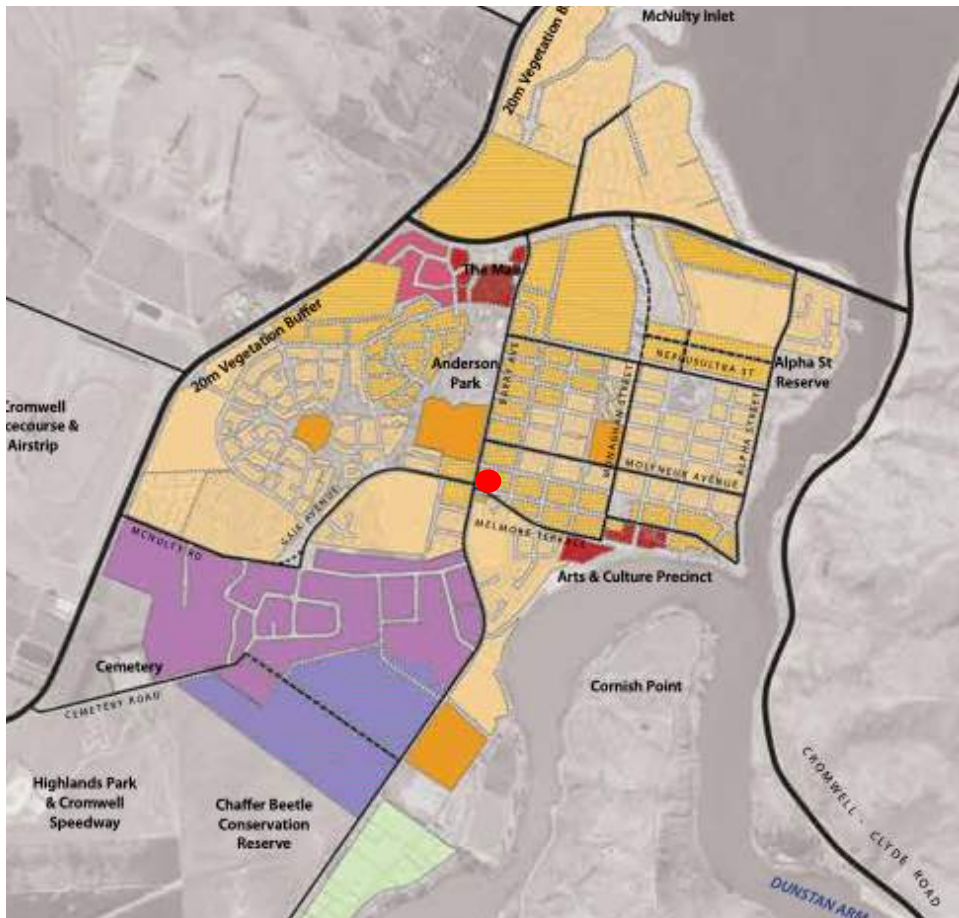


Figure 3: Site Location - ● CODC Spatial Plan

## 1D] Considerations

This report will address the proposal in respect to urban design in general terms, in regard to the proposed Spatial Plan for the urban form of Cromwell, the wider framework for urban development as established by the NPS-UD and with reference to the specific matters requested in the CODC RFI<sup>1</sup>.

The assessment below has been made taking into account the context of the site as detailed.

## 2: ASSESSMENT - URBAN DESIGN

### 2A] Assessment

The proposal is overall considered to represent a successful urban design response for development of the site when considering general urban design principles. This is given the positive impacts that will arise from the input of density in this location which is central, connected and close to amenities and services, and where this density will be achieved in a built form which is of appropriate quality.

A number of techniques have been adopted which result in the design of the townhouses being visually suitable and appropriate to context. The position of the site on the corner of a side street allows for the primary design decision to provide vehicle access to the rear of the units via lane. This allows for the street frontage of the development to be free of vehicle entry or parking needs and results in the positive interaction with the street.

The street relationship to Barry Avenue is well approached with detailing of the façade (alternate townhouse designs, recesses in the façade, permeable and solid materials) and emphasis to the entry and good interaction to the street provided by balconies, glazing and gates to front yards. The hard and soft landscaping provide an appropriate focus on the street entry of the townhouses and assist with legibility and a positive street environment.

The materials and colours of the building have been considered (and alternated) to provide successful variation in the western (street) façade and the built form characteristics (gable roof, timber and solid forms) will remain in keeping with the local vernacular.

The landscaping of the site in particular the street frontage has been given particular attention and the proposed planting in association with the lower (1.4m) street wall broken up with individual gates to each of the townhouses will contribute to amenity for users, legibility of entrances a positive street environment and softening of the building when viewed externally.

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<sup>1</sup> RC210409 RFI dated 18 November 2021

The height of the built form is considered appropriate in this location. Taking into account the width and function of Barry Avenue it is considered that the introduction of higher edge buildings along this street can be absorbed and will contribute to the (eventual) enclosure of the street environment. Landscape treatment to the street boundary will be continued around onto Mayo Place and is a suitable response to this corner.

The design includes minor breaches of the applicable recession planes taken from the southern and eastern boundaries as illustrated on the plans comprised of roof edge and gable ends respectively. In terms of the wider appreciation of the built form on the site as part of the urban development of the area these elements are likely to be indiscernible, and overall, in this context the building height is appropriate.

The design has considered provision for rubbish/recycling storage as an externality that is associated with residential development at increased density, and screened areas have been provided in two locations for bin storage.

Overall, it is considered that the design solution to provide for 8 townhouses on this site represents successful urban design. The design responds to context, establishing increased residential density in a central location in the Cromwell urban area and does this while providing a high amenity living option for residents and a built form with an appropriate form and mass and positive street relationship for its position fronting Barry Avenue.

## **2B] Spatial Plan**

The proposal has been considered with reference to the Spatial Plan for Cromwell<sup>2</sup>.

As mentioned above when considering the site in terms of the Spatial Plan it can be identified that the site is located centrally within 800-900m of both the Cromwell Town Centre and the area described as the 'Arts & Culture Precinct' and is within close proximity to employment land, educational facilities and green space (refer **Figure 3**).

With respect to proposed 'Future Land' use plans as part of the Spatial Plan, the site is identified as being within the *Medium-High Density* planned areas which run along the key road networks. This is logical given the nature of the street environments (e.g., Barry Avenue) and the proximity to amenities as discussed above.

The identification of these areas for residential growth is described as a 'Key Move' in the Spatial Plan framework (Section 3.3) and the proposal for the subject site can be reviewed against the associated objectives:

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<sup>2</sup> Cromwell 'Eye to the Future' Masterplan Spatial Framework – Stage 1: Spatial Plan (NM Associates Ltd + Tract Consultants Pty Ltd) dated May 2019

### 3.3.5 Accommodating New Residential Growth

- *An appropriate mix of dwelling size, type and affordability to meet the changing composition of housing needs and lifestyles.*

The proposal will contribute to a mix by providing a different (townhouse) type of a smaller size than generally existing suburban development.

- *'Growth focused within existing Cromwell' and a 'mixed use town centre' enables new development, redevelopment and infill to areas that are substantially within or nearby an 800m radius from the town centre.*

The subject site is located within existing Cromwell and can be considered in fill development in a location that is very near the 800m radius from the town centre.

- *The Spatial Framework: Spatial Plan correlates with:*
  - *An increased density of development /more efficient use of land per dwelling unit and site-by- site.*
  - *Typologies would include town houses, terrace housing and apartments including visitor accommodation and 'top shop' dwelling units, converted premises and/or multi-use development.*

The proposal will represent an increased density of development and a significant increase in the efficient use of this land when compared to its existing state. The typology will be townhouses as anticipated by the Spatial Plan in this location.

- *This will enable more people to live within easy walking distance of shops, services and community facilities, add 'critical mass' to the town centre, support employment (including office employment) and tourism opportunities, assist in achieving more activity and diversity within the wider town centre.*

As above the proposal will enable options for more people to live within an existing walking distance of shops (including neighbourhood corner store), services including education, community facilities and green space along with employment land. The proposal will assist in achieving the listed goals in terms of diversity and activity.

- *A combination of zoning measures and design guidelines would address built form, residential amenity and privacy factors (per dwelling unit and one to another) in terms of sunlight, shadow, overlook, setbacks, avoiding frontages dominated by garaging and so on.*

There are no known Design Guidelines yet applicable to residential development in the Residential Resource zone which applies to the site. Notwithstanding this it is considered that the matters of built form, residential amenity and privacy and shading have been appropriately addressed so that no adverse effects result. In particular the design is successful in avoiding a frontage to Barry Avenue which is dominated by garaging.

- *Higher quality urban design and architecture, as well as a mix of uses will provide desirable locations for those that do not require substantial properties.*

The proposal is considered to represent quality urban design and will certainly contribute to a mix of housing typology in this area which is a desirable location for those future residents who do not require substantial properties (e.g. smaller scale and low maintenance townhouse options).

With respect to the above and considering both the elements (proximity to key pedestrian/cycle links, open space reserves, key amenities) and the 'places for people' goals of the Spatial Plan, the proposal is well aligned with this plan and will contribute to achieving the outcomes signalled by the Spatial plan for Cromwell.

## **2C] NPS-UD**

Based on existing population and growth, Cromwell is likely to be in the near future (if not already based upon housing + labour market) an urban area of 10,000+ persons as set out in the NPS-UD. The proposal as sought is aligned with and supported by the NPS-UD given that it represents intensification that will enable more people to live in an area which is near a centre zone and employment land and will produce variation in the type of homes available.

## **2D] RFI Matters**

Specific comment has been requested in terms of:

- *The effect on amenity values of the neighbourhood in particular the character of the streetscape.*

The proposal will have a positive effect on the amenity values of the Barry Avenue streetscape in this location in moving towards a future urban environment associated with this key road within Cromwell. The nature of the road and its position linking key areas means that it is ideally suited for (and identified within the Spatial Plan as a future location of) higher density residential development. This development will ideally form a strong edge to Barry Avenue, with high quality architecture and a positive street environment. The proposal is successful in providing this and while it may represent a change from current character, this is not an adverse impact in light of the goals for Cromwell. It is important the amenity values of the streetscape including the pedestrian environment are well considered and in this case the proposal has adopted design choices which ensure this. In particular garaging has been located at the rear, entrances to the townhouses are individually legible, and streetfront fencing is designed to be low whilst providing privacy to front yards. Further, the street frontage of the built form has been alternated to avoid repetition and balconies provide oversight of the street.

- *The effect on the amenity values of the future owners and/or occupiers of the proposed dwellings as a result of the breaches to the District Plan standards.*

The proposed breaches of the District Plan standards are not considered to result in any effects on amenity values of the future owners/occupiers of the townhouses. In particular the townhouses will provide a small-scale but suitable option for residents as signalled in the Spatial Plan, with all necessary elements in order to provide for successful compact living, these including provision for rubbish/recycling and provision of outdoor



living space for each townhouse. While not critical, covered vehicular parking is also provided in a garage. Should occupants choose not to have a vehicle due to the proximity of the site to local amenities, this space can be utilised for storage for alternative transport options (such as bikes) or other flexible uses.

Beyond density, the breaches of the District Plan standards are understood to be recession plane, front yard setback and site coverage. Recession plane breaches have no impact on the internal amenity of the site and generally allow for the more positive gable height formation which contributes to the building in the wider environment. The front yard and site coverage breaches are not considered to have any particular adverse effect on the owners and occupiers of the townhouses given that each will retain sufficient outdoor living space, including (for some units) upstairs balcony areas.

*- How the proposal impacts the amenity value of open space within the District's residential environments.*

With the exception of considering Barry Avenue an open space (the impact on Barry Avenue is discussed above) the proposal is not considered to have any adverse impact on the amenity value of the open spaces within the District's residential environments. The proposal is likely to increase to a small degree the use and therefore safety of some nearby open spaces including the pedestrian/cycle green way to the east of the site.

*- The effect on amenity values of neighbouring properties in particular access to sunlight and maintenance of privacy.*

Given that the site is located on a corner it has two public boundaries assisting to limit the impact on neighbouring residential properties. With respect to the two neighbouring properties which share a boundary with the site (to the east and south) it is noted that the layout of the site includes the location of the access land adjacent these boundaries, this has the effect of setting the proposed building back from these properties into the site.

It is understood (refer planning assessment) that the impact of the proposed built form on these properties in terms of shading will be no more than anticipated for the site (permitted baseline). In particular it is noted that the built form sits below the maximum height for the site and in this respect is not dominant.

With respect to privacy the proposal will have no significant impact on neighbouring properties given the elements of the built form which breach the framework for expected built form on the site do not contain any openings or windows. In terms of design elements providing mitigation, there are limited windows or openings facing towards neighbouring properties, and the rear lane will be bound by noise insulated fencing which will contribute to maintenance of privacy from people and vehicle movement in this area of the site.

### 3: CONCLUSIONS

When considered with respect to urban design principles and against the framework established by both local Spatial Plan and the National Policy direction, the proposal is a suitable and successful response for development of this site. The built form design and location on the site along with design details for streetfront articulation and entry emphasis have been utilised to achieve this, whilst providing density in an appropriate location.

The relationship of the building to the public realm on Barry Avenue is well considered including balconies and landscaping and will have positive effects in terms of activation along with contributing to the sense of place and custodianship for users.

Given the planning framework and the position of the site within Cromwell it is considered that the proposal will be an appropriate and encouraged development in this location providing 8 townhouse residences of a quality compact nature in proximity to the town centre and connections, while responding well to context.



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