

Memorandum

23 October 2024

Attention
Phil Doole – Tasman District
Council

Issued by
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RMM Landscape Architects

RMM Job No.
24177

Audit of the Amended Design for a Proposed Digital Billboard at 332 Queen St, Richmond- Urban Design and Visual Assessment

Introduction

This memo provides a review of the Evidence prepared by Mr. David Compton-Moen and Mr. Ian Munro regarding the urban design and visual effects of the digital billboard proposed by the applicant at 332 Queen Street, Richmond.

My first peer review of the Urban Design and Visual Assessment (**UDVIA**) undertaken by DCM Urban concluded that overall, the UDVIA was considered and balanced in its approach. However, I highlighted reasons which in my opinion the potential adverse effects had not been thoroughly assessed. I considered that the design of the proposed digital billboard accompanying the original application was not acceptable, primarily due to its poor visual integration with the existing building.

As such I concluded the proposed billboard would have potential visual and amenity effects that were not less than minor. This was a different conclusion than that reached by DCM Urban and in effect I could not support the granting of consent to the proposal as lodged. I note Mr Munro reaches this same conclusion at [6.3] of his evidence¹.

A series of informal discussions for the design of the digital billboard were had between me, Mr Compton-Moen and Mr Munro (who has been engaged to peer review and add a second opinion on urban design and visual impact matters). I have contributed to the discussions that has led to the amended proposal that has been lodged with the Evidence.

Assessment of Alternative Design

Half Parapet Option

An initial design response was provided by the applicant in the form of a 'half parapet' (*refer to the Evidence of both Mr*

¹ Statement of Evidence Ian Munro, pg 16

Compton-Moen and Mr Munro for a full description of this) along with a repositioned digital billboard along the southwestern face of the façade parapet to face away from directly being viewed from SH6.

While I understood the reasons for the 'half parapet' approach and acknowledge that architecturally it is typical of buildings on corners, in my opinion it did very little to further mitigate the original visual effects concerns. This option in my opinion, due to it physically and visually being stepped down, presented more edge and corner to the skyline. As such, the 'half parapet' response did not satisfactorily address the shortcomings of the lodged proposal, and I did not find favour with it.

The Amended Proposal ('full height parapet')

The amended proposal (*as lodged with the evidence and fully described in both the Evidence of Mr Compton-Moen and Mr Munro*) is an alternative design for an extended parapet onto which the digital billboard would be enclosed. As per the 'half parapet' option, the digital billboard will be reoriented to face the southwestern direction away from the direct view for SH6 facing northwest in the original application.

In my opinion, this is a well-considered design solution that results in the billboard being visually integrated into the form and shape of the extend parapet of the building. It now no longer appears as a 'tack – on' sitting atop a one storey building.

The amended proposal provides a visual anchor for the digital billboard, while at the same time providing a stronger built form at the street corner. In my opinion rather than simply appearing as a billboard above a building, the proposal now effectively defines the intersection edge with a legible corner structure. This is also more in keeping with the current urban fabric of the locale.

In principle I support this approach. However, a matter of detail that could be further explored, is a greater articulation of the appearance of the parapet. This is not a fundamental concern, rather an opportunity for further design consideration that

would potentially result a more visually pleasing outcome.

Conclusion

Overall, and having reviewed the Evidence of both Mr Compton-Moen and Mr Munro and considered this against the relevant provisions of the TRMP, I am satisfied my original concerns regarding the lack of integration and the ensuing level of adverse effects have generally been addressed by the amended proposal.

Tony Milne (Fellow) NZILA

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