



29 May 2019

Mt Cook Mobilised Submission on Arlington Redevelopment (10 Year Plan Change)

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed Arlington Redevelopment (10 Year Plan Change). Thanks also to Build Wellington's John McDonald for facilitating a meeting with members of Mt Cook Mobilised and Housing NZ.

Mt Cook Mobilised is the residents' and community group in the inner suburb of Mt Cook. Wellington City Council and Housing New Zealand both have sizeable social housing holdings in Mt Cook. Social housing makes up in the order of 25% of Mt Cook's residents.

1. We are in favour of a **125 year lease** of the Arlington 1 & 3 sites to Housing NZ, having become aware that Wellington City Council is not in a position to undertake the redevelopment of the Arlington sites 1 & 3.
2. **Affordable housing.** We reiterate the view stated in our submission on the 10 Year Plan in 2018. We are not in favour of Wellington City Council's social housing land being privatised. The inclusion of the condition which would allow for up to 30% of the site to be transferred to Housing NZ to be sold as affordable housing, amounts to privatisation of that portion. We believe this because we also believe that the affordability of sold land could not be maintained in future sales.
3. **We ask that other options be explored for satisfying the affordable housing quota at this site,** such as leasehold for 125 years rather than freehold land, or rentals on the open market which would provide some return to Housing NZ. We understand that the affordable housing provision is part of the negotiation with Housing NZ, but we are most concerned that once this extremely valuable inner city land changes into private ownership it is unlikely that it could ever be reclaimed into public ownership.
4. **Mixed tenant base.** We support and encourage having a mixed income and socially diverse community living at the redeveloped Arlington. Housing NZ allocates tenancies by using the MSD Housing Register. To enable a wide cross-section of people to live at the redeveloped Arlington, we suggest that a mix of up to 30% of tenants should be drawn more widely to include others who are finding it increasingly difficult to secure accommodation in this tight rental accommodation market. The experience of those living closest to the site has been that mixing the various tenant groups across the site will provide a more integrated social outcome for the redeveloped Arlington. There was no appetite for putting all the "affordable" housing together, away from a preponderance of social housing.
5. A group of residents living near the Arlington site favoured **mixed tenure** (i.e. a mix of owned and rented properties) as a reasonable way of diversifying the new Arlington population, while other near neighbours disagreed with selling a sizeable portion of the site.
6. We strongly believe that this site must have **robust urban design.** The site will house 400 – 500 people. The urban design and landscape of the overall development takes on the important role of enabling social integration and enhancing social cohesion within the redeveloped site. The development must include green spaces for recreation, and for people to meet casually. We suggest that including a children's play area will bring families together. A basketball hoop is

always a useful recreational addition. Setting aside some space for community gardening will appeal to others. We look forward to the green space contributing to a sense of community for the new Arlington residents.

7. **Integration of the site to the wider neighbourhood.** We would like to see the roadways within the site become popular walking and cycling routes, away from trucks and cars on the main routes.
8. We consider the **park at the corner of Arlington Street and Torrens Terrace** to be a separate public open space, which is not part of this site. This park is an asset used by visitors to the area, and local residents, many of whom live in apartments. The park is cared for and enjoyed by people not living at Arlington 1 & 3.
9. **Consultation on the new design.** Housing NZ (Will Pennington) has advised that there will be public consultation on the design, however the intended design is not available at this time, meaning that we must take a leap of faith that agreeing to this 125 year lease will yield strong urban form on the Arlington sites.
10. We value the foundation work that has been done on the Arlington Masterplan by Wellington City Council and the Isthmus Group, and we underscore Council's agreement that the proposed **Masterplan be used to set the direction for future development decisions** for the Arlington sites (page 8 of the consultation document). Adherence to the high level direction of the Masterplan will provide a level of assurance that the new Arlington's urban form will enhance the neighbourhood aesthetic.
11. **40 Supported Living Units.** "Wrap around support" was widely discussed with Housing NZ during consultation on the Rolleston Street redevelopment. We expect this same level of care to be in place for the supported living units at the new Arlington.
12. The Athfield-designed **George Porter Tower** was not mentioned in the consultation document, nor in the option released from the Arlington Masterplan. The majority of us who have commented on the question of the George Porter Tower are in favour of demolition because this building is not fit for purpose and would require extensive seismic strengthening. That said, we acknowledge that for some in our suburb the architectural heritage value of the Tower and surrounding Athfield-designed townhouses is significant.

Thanks, again, for the opportunity to comment on the redevelopment of Arlington 1 & 3, in the suburb of Mt Cook.

We wish to speak to Council during the oral hearings for this proposal.

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