

4 August 2014

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Re: Road Stopping - Manners St, Te Aro

This submission is from the Architectural Centre, an incorporated society dating from 1946, which represents both professionals and non-professionals interested in the promotion of good design. Members of companies involved in this project (and hence having a potential or actual Conflict of Interest), have not been involved in any aspect of this submission.

The Centre neither supports nor opposes this proposal. We consider that the consequences of this proposal are potentially very positive, including for Denton Park and Bond Street, but we can equally see a number of issues that we consider need to be raised and addressed at an early design stage.

This Victoria, Manners, Lombard Streets quarter is an important idiosyncratic space within the inner city, and one which contributes to the depth of Wellington's urban experiences (e.g. Cuba Mall vs Courtenay Place vs Lambton Quay) because of its unique sense of place.

1. We caution against the bland gentrification of the inner city, and urge the council to ensure that the character of any new development reflects the character of this part of the city. This is not Lambton Quay, and careful consideration of the qualities of this location as a transitional one between the Lambton Quay and Courtenay Place precincts will be critical to retaining depth in the urban experience of Wellington's CBD.
2. We are unsure about the need for the formal pedestrianisation of Lombard Street. We believe that it is important that the city has a hierarchy of streets and other public spaces. Lombard St should be different to Manners and Victoria Streets and retain something of its existing secondary lane character and use for service vehicles. Lombard Street currently operates as a very good shared space at the moment, suggesting that formal pedestrianisation could be meaningless, and so - if pedestrianisation is to occur - it will require careful design.
3. We stress the need to ensure that the building grain and characters of Lombard, Manners and Victoria Streets are retained (c.f. the tendency of mall developments to become singular, monolithic, and monoaesthetic), to ensure that this part of the city continues to be distinguishable from other inner city quarters such as Lambton Quay, Willis Street, Cuba St and Courtenay Place.

We are anxious that a new development might cause this space to become stereotypically corporate and commercial; a quality more typical of the Lambton Quay precinct. Eva Street is a good example of how development has supported existing site qualities, and we encourage the developers and



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architects of this project to be especially responsive this site's different street edge contexts - that is to say, to acknowledge the different qualities of each of the streets which surround this site.

This must not be an "island" building, oblivious to the nuanced and idiosyncratic qualities of its location. It must not be the result of an uncritical application of active edges, which, for example, would undermine the solidity that the existing Lombard Street elevation contributes to its street. We challenge the developers and their designers to be more sensitive, intelligent, and less generic than the Central Area Design Guide process often encourages.

4. While we understand that none of the buildings likely to be affected by redevelopment are listed in the District Plan, we are aware that Heritage New Zealand has a project to document the archaeology of the CBD. This development could provide valuable archaeological and historical knowledge of this part of the city if consultation with NHZ and appropriate professionals occurs.

5. Finally, we consider that this site is a pivotal one in the city, and believe that any development will require thorough design and urban design assessment. We would like to be further involved in the urban design review that will be undertaken in the Resource Consent process, if the application for the proposal is not publicly notified.

Conclusion

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on this consultation regarding Road stopping.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully

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