



HAMILTON URBAN DESIGN ADVISORY PANEL

Meeting Date	30 July 2025
Project	New Central City Reservoir
Client	HCC
Architects	Edwards White
Client Team	Brian White, Herman Haringa (EW); Georgina Hailwood (bhwstudio); Chris Dawson (BBO)
UDP Members	Michael Graham (Chair and NZILA); Steve King (NZIA); Margi Moore (Wintec); Tim Young (Accessibility); Bernie Milne (ENZ)
Others Present	Linley Herbert, Nathanael Savage, Colin Hattingh (HCC)

Background:

Council are looking to build two 25 million litre water reservoirs next to the existing reservoir at Hamilton Lake. The first reservoir is planned to be constructed by 2028, while the second is expected to be needed from 2040. The project is funded by the Government through the Infrastructure Acceleration Fund.

GENERAL COMMENTS

- The panel thanks the applicant and design team for bringing this project, noting that the site is in a unique position within a prominent location on the edge of the CBD - potentially commanding a strong presence and influence over the immediate locale.
- The panel also commends the applicant for a well prepared and comprehensive submission, which explained the design rationale, expressed the intent of the design and clearly demonstrated the components of the design. While most key Vista design elements were touched on during the presentation, it is helpful if specific analyses against these elements (Design Quality, Sense of Place, Access, Public Space, Lifestyle, and Sustainable Environments) are included in the presentation – this may not have been communicated to the team.
- The panel applauds the design teams efforts to develop a design that addresses the challenges that come with infrastructure developments that of necessity prioritise function above all else, while dealing with such immense pre-determined structures, constructed over two time periods, while also attending to the sensitivities of the adjacent Heritage tower.
- Overall, based on the level of resolution of the development able to be achieved at this time, the result has been sensitively and well thought out and covers all the major elements to be considered - including adjacencies, security, accessibility, CPTED issues, outlook, landscaping and general mitigation of the bulk of the structures. The panel considers that the design team have been successful in their endeavours to imbue a design quality that demonstrates a sense of place and appropriateness through the selection of materials and design.
- The team are to be commended for their work in relation to this and for their considered approach and their answers to the Panel's questions.



- The use of a vertical corten screen wall, with its echoes of the new bridge crossing and existing sculptures, is welcomed, helping to merge the reservoir into the landscape.
- Many of the subsequent comments reflect the stage of design which is developed but preliminary and awaiting further consultation and input from mana whenua.

SPECIFIC COMMENTARY

- Given the scale and extent of the corten panels which address the street and are utilised elsewhere throughout the development, it is important to consider the level of visual interest. In discussion, it is understood this would be addressed in further detailed design. Considerations may include additional materials, or further discussion regarding the finish of the reservoirs.
- The development is identified as encroaching on an SNA which requires the removal and or relocation of several trees. While the health of some of the trees will reduce their viability and make them unsuitable for retention, it is important to understand the reasoning and which trees will be impacted, as their loss may be more appropriately mitigated through species replacement.
- Accessibility is an important consideration for the development. While the proposed pathway offers an accessible gradient, the finish needs to maintain ease of access. Most wheelchair users prefer smooth concrete, large pavers with small gaps or large boardwalk planks with small gaps. Loose aggregates are unsuitable, although the design team did indicate that this option will not be considered.
- Where views are afforded and /or interpretative signage used, the Panel suggest that audio descriptions could be added for the visually impaired.
- Similarly, where emergency alarm systems are required in publicly accessible locations, ensure a visual alarm is included.
- It is understood lighting is to be considered as part of the CPTED details with the further refinement of the development.

MATTERS FOR HCC

- When considered in isolation, the design team have had to deal with several constraints, detailed in the brief, over which they have no control - in particular the minimum elevation that the reservoir must be set at to function and that the bottom of the reservoir has been set at approximately road level.
- These constraints result in a structure(s) that present a 6m wall to the street and a retaining wall plus walkway and corten screen up to 13m above the ground level on the lake side at completion. This impacts visual amenity and shading and requires considerably more structure, materials and fill to build.
- It is the Panel's understanding that the design team queried this element of the brief from the beginning, but were told it was not negotiable. The Panel do, however, understand that alternative options had been explored by Council prior to the finalisation of the brief.
- The Panel believes its early participation in the project, once the engineering investigations and design of the reservoirs had been completed, would have been beneficial and this could be a consideration in the future.

CONCLUSIONS



- The Panel again thanks the design team for their time and efforts and provide support for the proposal – in particular the panel were pleased with the way the team addressed the key design challenges associated with the development. The team should be commended for a development that will make a positive contribution to the city's urban fabric.

Please note that the above comments are advisory only and do not constitute a decision by Council.

Recommendations from the panel will be incorporated into the officer's planning report, where applicable. All information before the panel is deemed to be confidential unless it is already part of the resource consent process.