

31 August 2022

Draft District Plan Feedback
Waitaki District Council
Private Bag 50058
Oamaru 9444

By e-mail: planreview@waitaki.govt.nz

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: DRAFT DISTRICT PLAN FEEDBACK – ŌAMARU HARBOUR PRECINCT

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the Draft District Plan.

Our client, Mr Nigel De Geest, owns two buildings at 7 & 8 Waterfront Road (Lots 1 & 2 DP 426950), which were historically used as wool stores. Whilst these are not heritage listed buildings they could be considered as being prominent features of the harbour area, Mr De Geest has aspirations to develop these buildings to connect with Ōamaru harbour's past and present.

The aspirations for these wool store buildings are to promote the viable re-use of buildings closely linked with Ōamaru harbour's history, in a manner which showcases the Ōamaru Harbour Historic Precinct area by creating a destination for locals and/or visitors to share in that history, whilst connecting in with the local reserve, wildlife and heritage tourism, and recreational opportunities.

Our client understands the importance of ensuring our urban areas are vibrant and supports the overall strategic direction of the Draft District Plan. In particular, our client supports SD-CHI-O2 '*Recognition, protection, and future opportunities for Waitaki's heritage*' which seeks to recognise the outstanding contribution that historic heritage makes to the Waitaki District's economy by protecting buildings, items, areas, and features, and providing opportunities for the ongoing use and adaptive re-use of our heritage buildings and areas. Our client also supports SD-NE-O2 '*Ōamaru Harbour being a harbour that contributes to the identity of Ōamaru*' and supports a mix of compatible activities balanced with recreational, and biodiversity values.

One potential future development option our client is looking at is the ability to undertake mixed-use development through the adaptive re-use of the wool store buildings. It is their vision to revitalise and re-use the buildings in a manner that is both economically sustainable and that is compatible with the surrounding environment, whilst connecting in with the local recreational and reserve amenities in the direct area.

Following recent investigations, our client has further considered the ability to undertake a mixed use development approach within the buildings, which would achieve this vision. The recent addition of the gym facility in one of the wool store buildings is a recent example of this aspiration. Whilst future plans are not confirmed, this mixed use development vision could include a mixture of commercial and service activities at the ground floor to create positive interactions with the heritage precinct and reserve area, combined with high-end residential activity above street level.

As background, resource consent was obtained for the conversion of the two wool store buildings to 15 residential apartments in 2008, where the Environment Court confirmed that '*granting of consent in this case would further the sustainable management of the natural and physical resources of the district and in particular the Ōamaru Harbour area, and would not be incompatible with the heritage values of the historic harbour area, provided there was a satisfactory landscape plan forthcoming and provided other*

conditions of consent were met'. As our client worked through giving effect to the consent, with the lapsing period being extended twice prior to 2015. Unfortunately, our client was met with major hurdles and delays during the consenting process. Additionally, engineering standards significantly changed after the Canterbury earthquakes and the fact the world was in the grips of the Global Financial Crisis made the viability of the project marginal. This all ultimately resulted in the consent lapsing in 2015, when a final application to extend the lapse period was declined by Council given that substantial works threshold could not be met. Our client still considers a similar type of development within these buildings could be undertaken in future and strongly believes development of this nature would be a premium addition to the overall revitalisation of Ōamaru's harbour precinct, as well as being compatible with the surrounding environment.

Under the Draft District Plan, this site will be zoned Mixed Use Zone - Ōamaru Harbour Precinct, Sub-Precinct B. The site also has been identified as being subject to Liquefaction – B, Coastal Inundation Hazard, and Tsunami Hazard Area overlays.

We have considered the proposed Ōamaru Harbour Precinct and Coastal Environment chapters that are available online at a high level. In general, we are concerned that the proposed provisions are too restrictive and may hinder opportunities for the re-use of historic buildings and could constrain achieving the strategic direction set out in the Draft District Plan.

Our initial feedback can be summarised as follows:

- We partially disagree with the characterisation of the Ōamaru Harbour Precinct Sub-Precinct B, which notes that 'Sub-precinct B extends from Cape Wanbrow, along the waterfront, to Ōamaru Creek. This area includes the wharves, woolstores, red sheds and the Ōamaru Blue Penguin Colony. Limited new development is anticipated in this area, with the focus being on providing improved public access and improved community facilities and recreational opportunities'. We consider that this sub-precinct, whilst limited in area, provides a unique opportunity to revitalise this portion of the harbour area and encourage private development which is compatible with the surrounding environment. In turn, this would also support the aspirations for the improvement of community facilities and recreational opportunities, as well as increasing the vibrancy of this specific part of the harbour area.
- Removing options for the potential re-use of heritage buildings and heritage areas makes it likely that the harbour area will remain or become derelict with negative effects on the heritage and amenity values of the area. It should be recognised that, on a case-by-case basis, the most appropriate and viable outcome for heritage buildings and heritage areas may be residential activities, depending on aspects such as scale and existing design.
- Encourage compatible mixed-use activities in the Ōamaru Harbour Precinct to support a vibrant and visitor-friendly urban area while maintaining the working port and marine-related activities, as has been achieved along urban waterfronts throughout New Zealand and internationally. A narrow focus on industrial marine activities within the precinct may negatively affect its character as an attractive public waterfront area, particularly given the limited nature of port activities in the area at present and anticipated into the future.
- We consider that residential activities can support the purpose, character and qualities of the Ōamaru Harbour Precinct identified in the Draft District Plan without being incompatible with the role, function, character and amenity values of the area as a working port and location for marine-related activities.
- The policy direction within the Coastal Environment chapter may constrain the use and development within existing buildings and development should be encouraged where this does not increase the risk of social, economic or environmental harm from natural hazards. In particular, CE-P8 seeks to avoid buildings or structures within the coastal margin unless they have a functional need or operational need for their location. This policy may unduly inhibit potential future use and development of existing buildings, even where coastal hazards have been taken into account.

We request the following changes:

- The Draft District Plan provisions should be revised to support residential and mixed use development on the site at 7 & 8 Waterfront Road and throughout the Ōamaru Harbour Precinct Sub-Precinct B, where appropriate.
- Provide for compatible residential activities in the area drafted as Ōamaru Harbour Sub-Precinct B, especially where this can contribute to the re-use, regeneration, and revitalisation of heritage buildings either by either:
 - removing the eastern area of sub-precinct B from the Proposed District Plan, which extends from our client’s buildings to the headland, and retain the Mixed Use Zone only within this area; or
 - create a new sub-precinct (Sub-precinct C) for this area with provisions that allow a wider range of uses including residential use; or
 - amending the sub-precinct’s values to give effect to the strategic direction of the Proposed District Plan and allow for residential use.

This feedback relates specifically to the eastern area of Sub-Precinct B that would include the following ‘pink’ area shown in Figure 1 below.



Figure 1: Ōamaru Harbour Precinct Sub-Precinct B which could be rezoned or characterised through a separate precinct area

- Through well-considered design and/or performance standards, compatible mixed-use outcomes could be achieved, i.e., requirement for acoustic insulation standards for residential activities or residential activities being permitted above ground floor level. Whilst we recognise the potential of reverse sensitivity effects in harbour areas, the area identified in Figure 1 above is not in close proximity to activities which could be incompatible.
- Revise Policy CE-P8 to enable development within the coastal hazard area where development has been designed to adequately manage hazard risks and/or has a functional need or operational need for their location.

The final activity status of residential activities in the area drafted as Ōamaru Harbour Precinct – Sub-Precinct B is critical for future opportunities at 7 & 8 Waterfront Road. Given this, we consider that our client has an interest greater than the general public and welcome the opportunity to be involved in any future discussions in regard to this.

If you have any questions on the above, please do not hesitate to contact Morgan Ramsay, on behalf of Nigel de Geest, via email morganr@4sight.co.nz or on 027 8411 501.

Kind Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "MRamsay". The letters are cursive and somewhat stylized, with the "M" and "R" being particularly prominent.

Morgan Ramsay
Senior Planning and Policy Consultant
4Sight Consulting Ltd