

02 July 2014

Avondale Community Action
1881 Great North Road
Avondale
Auckland 1026

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I refer to your letter addressed to Mayor Brown and dated 26 June 2014. Auckland Council Property Limited (ACPL) has been asked by the Mayor's office to reply to you directly.

In your letter you request that the Council does not proceed with the sale of 24-26 Racecourse Parade and that it also acquires properties on Great North Road to help facilitate town centre development.

In 2013 a study was undertaken by Auckland Council to review the Avondale town centre and identify opportunities that may assist urban regeneration in the town. The study resulted in a report, the Avondale Town Centre Action Plan (ATCAP), which was endorsed by Auckland Council. The Avondale Town Centre Action Plan identified three priority areas that required further work – Avondale Jockey Club, Highbury Triangle and Racecourse Parade.

ACPL is particularly interested in Racecourse Parade as it forms a significant 3.7 hectare block within the town centre that is held by four land owners including Auckland Council, Housing New Zealand (HNZC) and the private owners of the former 3 Guys site and 1907 Great North Road.

The ATCAP identified this block as having the potential to create an urban renewal development opportunity that could have a significant positive impact on Avondale town centre. Such development could include medium to high density residential and some retail. It also identified the Avondale Central Reserve that formed a substantial part of the block, as a possible location to centralize council services into a single hub providing library, community services and recreation facilities.

As this would involve negotiations with adjoining landowners, ACPL were tasked to undertake further investigation. Working in conjunction with HNZC, ACPL instructed architects to develop a master plan for the block. The focus of the master plan was on introducing higher density residential to the town centre, with an emphasis on place shaping and community living.

We would be happy to meet with you to discuss our findings and show you some of the designs that resulted from the master plan exercise.

Council's current land ownership includes the old netball club house and courts that occupy land that is subject to the Reserves Act which imposes significant restrictions on the type of development that can occur on such land. Council's land ownership also includes, 24-26 Racecourse Parade (the ex-Suburbs Rugby Football Club) which is currently zoned Open Space and has less development controls.

It should be noted that the entire 3.7 hectare block has been zoned Town Centre under the proposed Auckland Unitary Plan (PAUP). This will enable mixed-use development except within those areas subject to the Reserves Act.

From ACPL's discussions with HNZC and the owners of the 3-Guys site, it became apparent that they were reluctant to commit to development for a variety of reasons. ACPL decided that Council may be able to

help initiate development by testing the market through inviting developers to put forward proposals for the development of 24-26 Racecourse Parade. ACPL would then guide developers to ensure their proposals took into consideration the master planning work already undertaken and the planning guidelines within the PAUP.

For the property to be available to respond to development proposals and eventually be sold ACPL followed a comprehensive review process to ascertain if there was a need for Auckland Council to retain the property for Council service purposes. The results of this process indicated that the property was not required for its current use or any future service requirements.

As part of the review process for this site, ACPL engaged with the Whau Local Board to get its views. The Whau Local Board did not wish this site to be considered for potential disposal before it had an opportunity to understand how 24-26 Racecourse Parade fitted in with the development of the larger block identified within the ATCAP report. Both the ATCAP and the subsequent master planning exercise helped to provide this clarity and identified 24-26 Racecourse Parade as being better suited to higher density housing and not for service needs such as community centres and libraries.

When this site was presented to the Council committee the views of the Whau Local Board were presented along with information about the ATCAP and the master planning work. The Whau Local Board also presented to their views of this property to the committee in respect. The committee then voted to dispose of the properties. Scarcity of funding was not identified as a reason why this site was not retained. Furthermore, alternative areas had been identified for service purposes.

ACPL share your views that this is an important property particularly in the role it may have in helping to initiate urban regeneration in Avondale. ACPL's development manager, Mike Bush (michael.bush@acpl.co.nz), would therefore like to arrange to meet you at your earliest convenience to discuss your concerns and explain the work that we have done so far.

Regards



Clive Fuhr
Acting CEO
Auckland Council Property Ltd