

NEW ZEALAND CONSTRUCTION NEWS

Big boost for Tamaki regeneration programme

By Lynne Richardson



Construction of 21 terraced and stand-alone houses is well underway on Sunnymead Road in Glen Innes – a site from which four older houses were removed

Housing Minister Dr Nick Smith's announcement in April – that ownership and management of around 2800 state houses in Tamaki will be transferred to the Tamaki Redevelopment Company next year – is set to accelerate regeneration of the area.

Established by the Crown and Auckland Council in 2012, the Tamaki Redevelopment Company (TRC) is leading a long-term programme of regeneration initiatives within the Tamaki area in Auckland's east, comprising the suburbs of Glen Innes, Pt England and Panmure. Tamaki is one of eight key areas identified within the Auckland Plan which have been prioritised for growth.

Initiatives include planning housing and infrastructure, and facilitating and coordinating the design and delivery of social and economic programmes to lift prosperity and well-being over the next 10–15 years.

NEW HOMES

So far, 11 new houses have been built in partnership with Housing New Zealand Corporation (HNZC) in the Glen Innes neighbourhood of Fenchurch. It is expected that these houses will be ready for

tenants by early July.

As per the TRC's 'Tamaki Commitment' – which says that those who are impacted by redevelopment and who want to stay in Tamaki will have the opportunity to do so – ten of the houses will be tenanted by families who have moved from older homes in Tamaki, and one new family from Orakei will move into the area.

Around the corner, construction of 21 terraced and stand-alone houses – a mixture of two-, three- and four-bedroom homes – is well underway on a block off Sunnymead Road (a site from which four older houses were removed), and new homes will soon get underway in Panmure.

Other houses on potential redevelopment sites within Tamaki are now vacant and are waiting to be relocated or demolished, depending on their condition.

EDUCATION

Additionally, a new early childhood education (ECE) centre, located next to the Glenbrae Primary School and built by Keith Hay Homes, opened its doors in late April, with 30 pre-schoolers now enrolled. The facility has the capacity for 60 children and is run by the Totara Seed Trust.

Director Glen Tuala says they are very excited to be partnering

with the TRC, the Glenbrae Primary School and the Ministry of Education (MoE) to deliver ECE for the Tamaki community. "We would like to make it as easy as possible for our whanau in Tamaki to participate in early learning, and look forward to the future fruition of each child's potential within our community," he says.

Better-quality ECE and increased participation rates are two of the goals outlined in the Tamaki Early Learning Strategy five-year plan adopted by the TRC and the MoE, and the new ECE facility is one of a series of initiatives being undertaken to meet the needs of the current and growing local community.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Another community initiative well underway is the redevelopment of the old Scout Hall on Fenchurch Street. The design approach has been to maintain the hall's original character, but with new larger windows to provide greater presence towards Fenchurch Street.

The hall has been re-clad, re-roofed and fully insulated, and a wrap-around timber deck is about to be installed with the help of students from the neighbouring Tamaki College's trades academy.

The academy delivers trades and technology programmes to Year 12 and 13 students through partnerships with the Manukau

Story continues page 4 >

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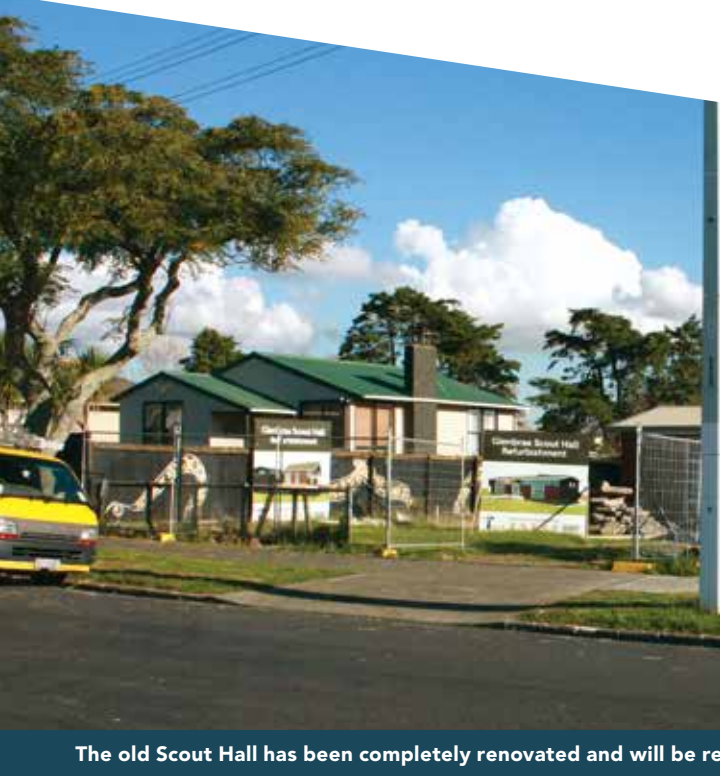
Continued from page 1 >

Institute of Technology, industry training organisations and local employers.

In addition, the Maungakiekie-Tamaki Local Board worked with the community, local iwi, performing arts groups and Auckland Council to develop Te Oro, a multi-purpose arts and culture centre for young people. Located on Line Road in the Glen Innes town



These 11 new homes on Fenchurch Street for HNZN will be ready for tenants by early July



The old Scout Hall has been completely renovated and will be repurposed as a community hall

centre, the two-storey building was built by Hawkins Construction and was officially opened to the public on 9 May.

ACCELERATING REDEVELOPMENT

So while progress has been made, change has been slow – a point acknowledged by the housing minister on a recent visit to Tamaki. And so the government’s announcement in late April – that ownership and management of around 2800 HNZN properties in Tamaki will be handed over to the TRC next year – has been welcomed.

New chief executive John Holyoake says the announcement heralds an exciting time for the area. “After two-and-a-half years, residents want us to move faster on rejuvenating this community. The people of Tamaki are at the heart of everything we do, and we will continue to listen and partner with the community to help make their vision for a thriving community a reality,” he says.

“This announcement gives us what we need to accelerate current neighbourhood redevelopments, start new regeneration initiatives, maintain momentum in the long-term programme, and ensure that the company and its partners tackle the intergenerational challenges and provide the opportunities the community needs.”

On 31 March 2016, all HNZN tenants who live within the TRC catchment area will have a new landlord. Existing tenancy agreements will transfer to the TRC with no change.

BETTER OUTCOMES FOR SOCIAL HOUSING

Over the next 10–15 years, the TRC plans to build about 7500 new houses in place of some 2500 existing ones.

“Over half of the new houses will be sold to private owners to help offset construction costs, and the remainder will be retained as either social or affordable housing,” Mr Holyoake says. “Our assurance to the Tamaki community is that there will be at least as many social houses in Tamaki at the end of that period as the 2800 there are now.”

The TRC is currently working closely with government agencies, community housing providers (CHPs) and other organisations to explore improved service models for tenancy management and property maintenance in the longer term. “There might also be an opportunity for local Tamaki groups to put up their hand,” says Mr Holyoake. “At the end of the day, our aim is to provide a high-quality service and we want to see tangible, better outcomes for tenants and for Tamaki.”

Community Housing Aotearoa (CHA), the national umbrella group for New Zealand’s CHPs, says the change of ownership is a positive step forward in the bid to achieve better outcomes in Tamaki. “We applaud this announcement for providing some clarity and certainty in this otherwise fraught space – we value this forward-focused announcement,” says CHA’s director Scott Figenshow.

“Community must be at the centre of any partnership, and community housing organisations can play an important role in supporting that. Across New Zealand, we want to see the sector growing from roughly 5000 homes now to say 60,000 homes – to bring it to a similar size to HNZN, but with a whole range of tenure choices and fit-for-purpose, quality homes. This approach in Tamaki is one of the ways to get there.”

LOAN FACILITY

In addition to the transfer of HNZN housing stock to the TRC, the government has also approved a \$200 million loan facility for the TRC as another key lever to accelerate the regeneration work at Tamaki. The loan facility is to be made available ahead of the transfer of the homes in order to allow the TRC to progress its own development and planning.

“This is about giving the TRC the tools it needs to make a difference to people with high housing needs,” Dr Smith says. “The loan facility will mean more houses being brought on-stream faster, giving more people the chance of home ownership sooner than they would have had otherwise. Making more houses available as efficiently as possible is also essential to ensuring there are enough houses available to re-home tenants in the area as redevelopment gets underway.”

Auckland Mayor Len Brown has also welcomed the announcements, calling them ‘a positive step towards the strategic long-term vision for the area’. He says: “Our aim is to create liveable communities and affording housing options for people right across the region, and the Tamaki area will be a testament to what we can achieve when central and local government work together.”

“It is more than just about building houses – it’s about building strong, healthy, connected and resilient communities. The redevelopment of Tamaki is an ideal opportunity to cater for Auckland’s growing population and demand for housing by increasing supply, quality, choice and affordability,” Mr Browns adds.

GETTING THINGS DONE

Stephen Selwood, CEO of the New Zealand Council for Infrastructure Development (NZCID) says the transfer of state houses to the TRC will result in the biggest investment in the Tamaki community since the 1950s.

“As an independent redevelopment company, the TRC will be less fettered by public policy processes and departmental silos which slow down decision-making and impede engagement with communities, investors and the development sector,” Mr Selwood notes.

“The TRC will be able to get things done – and it will be able to do this more efficiently than in the past. In owning all the stock and having capital at the ready, the company will be able to implement a masterplan for Tamaki, aggregate public and, where possible, private properties, redevelop at scale, and maximise land value in what is a very desirable part of the city,” he says.

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The Glenbrae ECE Centre – the facility has the capacity for 60 children and is run by the Totara Seed Trust



Photo courtesy of Image Lounge Photography



Missing in action – the plan for social and affordable housing

By Scott Figenshow

Scott Figenshow is the director of Community Housing Aotearoa (CHA), the representative body that binds New Zealand's community housing sector together

communityhousing.org.nz



"The solution is not simply building houses – it is about creating communities that prosper with affordable and quality homes. Housing is the centre of the jigsaw. If we can fix this, it may also fix a host of other social issues."

No one in their right mind would build a house without a plan. And Community Housing Aotearoa's Scott Figenshow argues that it's long overdue for the same logic to be applied to the social and affordable housing crisis facing New Zealand.

One of the most frequently asked questions I get from colleagues is, 'Why isn't there a strategy in place to address our country's social and affordable housing issues?' It is a very fair and valid question, and it is time that we stop asking that question. If the government won't come up with a strategy, is it time to take matters into our own hands?

In fairness, there are bits and pieces trying to address the growing issues, such as the Ministry of Social Development's social housing purchasing intentions release (www.socialhousing.govt.nz), and of course the recent announcements from the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) on the release of Crown land in Auckland and the announcement of state housing transfers in Tamaki, Invercargill and Tauranga.

But where we are woefully lacking is a strategy which coordinates between the high-level objectives set out by the government, initiatives across multiple ministries, and on-the-ground delivery by the commercial sector and community housing sectors – in short, a game plan.

So it's hardly surprising that we are not seeing a major shift in new affordable supply. It is just too hard to connect the pieces. The housing continuum that everyone calls for needs to see a whole lot more movement before things improve substantially.

MOVING FORWARD

Here at Community Housing Aotearoa (CHA), we have taken

matters into our own hands in a bid to help produce this strategy with the release of our draft document, 'Our Place – All New Zealanders Well-Housed'.

Here we set a proposed direction for the community housing sector because we are conscious that, to move forward with any impact, there needs to be a plan. The solution is not simply building houses – it is about creating communities that prosper with affordable and quality homes. Housing is the centre of the jigsaw. If we can fix this, it may also fix a host of other social issues. That is why this document is so important.

So what do we want? In five years we want to be able to provide homes for 50,000 more people. We see a community housing sector that is the same size as Housing New Zealand. And we are not talking about this growth being achieved by reshuffling old stock into different hands – we are talking about new homes and addressing the shocking quality of much of our existing rental stock.

STRONG FOUNDATIONS

The community housing sector has proven it is a safe pair of hands. As a group we are reliable and strong, and have partnered to build strong, vibrant communities. Take a look at the profiles of the community housing sector working across New Zealand at www.communityhousing.org.nz and a group of Auckland-based members at www.achpn.net.nz, and an example of a 280-unit development being led by a group of community housing providers and partners at Waimahia Inlet (www.waimahialet.co.nz).

The sector is also financially sound, collectively generating annual revenues of more than \$1.3 billion, with equity of more than \$2.1 billion against debt of \$500 million. We argue that the not-for-dividend community housing sector is the perfect place to hold onto the value uplift created through regeneration – for

use in delivering a full range of housing options that meet family needs, from emergency housing and affordable rentals all the way through to affordable equity and shared ownership. Any dividends are held in trust and reinvested for future generations.

Let's build on this foundation. However, barriers to growth need to be addressed for maximum impact. For example, uncertainty around the tax and charitable status of community housing organisations needs to be addressed, while the lack of a fully developed and properly implemented regulatory framework is also causing concern. And of course, a greater financial commitment from the NZ government is needed. We are talking about new investment, not simply reshuffling the decks.

DIVERSE APPROACHES

We are convinced the sector can drive this and produce what is needed and that is to ensure all New Zealanders are well housed. The draft document is an excellent starting point, and the question we are asking the wider sector now – including our commercial partners – is whether or not they think the plan is there.

The challenges are too great to go it alone, and we're thrilled to be working with the NZ Council for Infrastructure Development (NZCID), PrefabNZ and the NZ Council of Christian Social Services (NZCCSS) on diverse approaches. The full document can be found at www.communityhousing.org.nz and we asking for comment by the end of August.

We are happy to talk to groups about the strategy, so if you have any upcoming meetings in your regions, let us know. The end goal is launching a final cross-sector strategy at our upcoming CHA Impact Conference on 21–23 October in Wellington.

It would be great if we could all focus on this together so that, in the foreseeable future, when someone asks 'What's the plan?' we have a much more satisfactory answer.

Advertising Index

ACO	25	Equiptec	28	Rapid Metal Developments	1, 23
Battley	14	Industrial Air Systems	19	Sika	27
Canterbury Foam Concrete	10	JLG	IFC	Torrent Flood Protection	4
CB Norwood Distributors	5	Kerrick	17	Total Access	7
Conferenz & Bright*Star Training	11, 31	Oil Imports	15	Total Site Supplies	9
Cover Solutions (Shelter Station)	20	Plan A	13	Vanguard Group	18
Duncan Ag	29	Porter Equipment	22	Youngman Richardson & Co	21, 26