Boffa Miskell

Memorandum

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Attention:	Sarah Trinder
Company:	Far North District Council
Date:	8 December 2025
From:	Jane Rennie, Urban Designer / Partner
Message Ref:	Vision Kerikeri Submission - Hearing 14 – Urban Design Right of Reply HIRB
Project No:	BM250224

Introduction and Scope

1. My name is Jane Maree Rennie. I am an Urban Designer and Partner with Boffa Miskell Limited. I have set out my relevant qualifications and experience in previous evidence[1] and agree to comply with the Environment Court's Code of Conduct.

2. This Urban Design technical Memorandum has been prepared on behalf of Far North District Council ('Council'). It relates to the Vision Kerikeri ('VK') submission on the Far North District Proposed District Plan ('PDP') and discussed at Hearing 14. It outlines my high level Right of Reply in relation to a street frontage height in relation to boundary ('HIRB') provision in Kerikeri's commercial area.

3. Of specific relevance to this issue is my original Right of Reply to the Vision Kerikeri submission as part of Hearing 14[2]. Ms Dvorakova on behalf of VK outlined that she: "*…supports the mixed-use developments as long as they exhibit high quality street facing frontages and sensitively activate the public realm, avoiding inward facing developments that present inactive facades to the street.*[3]*"* To achieve this, Ms Dvorakova recommended amongst other things improved HIRB rules to reduce building bulk and retain a 'village character'. Specifically for facades facing a public street (frontage) within the MUZ Ms Dvorakova recommended *"a 60-degree recession plane at 8m above ground level – This would allow for taller buildings (noting a height limit of 12m) but requires upper levels to be set back, reducing perceived bulk at street level."* She seeks a similar approach for the TC Zone, albeit she has not set out if this would be the same provision.

4. In my original written Right of Reply I outlined that albeit an upper level setback can be influenced by building orientation and other layout factors, on further consideration of Ms Dvorakova's evidence, a upper level building setback within the TC zone would be beneficial in providing greater certainty of

[1] *Evidence in response to Kainga Ora, Turnstone Trust and Kiwi Fresh Orange on behalf of FNDC*
[2] *Urban Design response to Vision Kerikeri Evidence, Hearing 14, 8 September 2025*
[3] *Evidence of Ms Dvorakova, Page 11*

outcome in achieving a human scale environment, adequate access to sunlight within the public realm and in responding to the character of the township. I outlined that this could take the form of a recession plane approach as suggested by Ms Dvorakova, or a specific building setback at third floor level.

5. In relation to building heights, I have previously outlined that the majority of buildings in Kerikeri are one-storey in height, with a smaller number of two-storey buildings developed in more recent years, providing modern footprint buildings with larger footplates. There is a small number of three-storey buildings and some of the larger-scale buildings align with key corners within the town centre, with a significant number of redevelopment opportunities within the town centre. In response to submissions on building heights by VK (seeking a 12m height limit, i.e. three storey and roof form) and KO (seeking a 22m height limit), I have recommended a 16m height limit (i.e. a four storey and roof form).

6. Given the above, I have been requested to determine which street wall approach is most appropriate to the Kerikeri context. I have been advised that:

    a) The PDP-R will include a building height limit of 16 metres (which varies from the 12m sought by VK).

    b) A Town Centre Zone is recommended for Kerikeri, with a 'pedestrian frontage' rule applying to the core retail area. The street frontage HIRB would apply only to sites that are located in the Pedestrian Frontage area.

Analysis of HIRB Provisions

7. The purpose of a street frontage HIRB provision is to address the following factors:

    a) **Aesthetics and Streetscape:** Building setbacks at upper levels help to maintain a consistent and appealing street level, while allowing for variations in height above.

    b) **Sunlight and Daylight Access:** Requiring upper levels to be set back can allow more natural light and sunlight to reach the street and adjoining properties, improving overall amenity of the public realm.

    c) **Minimising Visual Dominance:** Achieving a step-like form reduces the perceived bulk and visual impact of taller buildings from the street level.

8. In order to assess the two approaches against these factors and taking into consideration the original height limit sought by VK, 3D modelling analysis has been undertaken. For completeness, the modelling includes a 12m and 16m height limit. The modelling utilises Autodesk Forma[4] and has been undertaken at a high level. It covers the following scenarios:

[4] *Sunlight hours analysis undertaken in Autodesk Forma utilises a georeferenced model located on Kerikeri Road, Kerikeri.*

a) **Option 1** - A 60 degree recession plane at third floor level and a height limit of 12m.

b) **Option 2** – A third floor setback of 6m in depth and a height limit of 12m.

c) **Option 3** – A 60 degree recession plane at fourth floor level and a height limit of 16m.

d) **Option 4** - A fourth floor setback of 6m in depth and a height limit of 16m.

9. ***Figures 1 and 2*** include the analysis of the recession plane and setback approaches applying to a 16m height limit. These outline the potential sunlight hours over a 24-hour period at the winter solstice (June 21st i.e. worst case scenario) of a new building 16m in height (4 storey building and roof form) located on a town centre site.

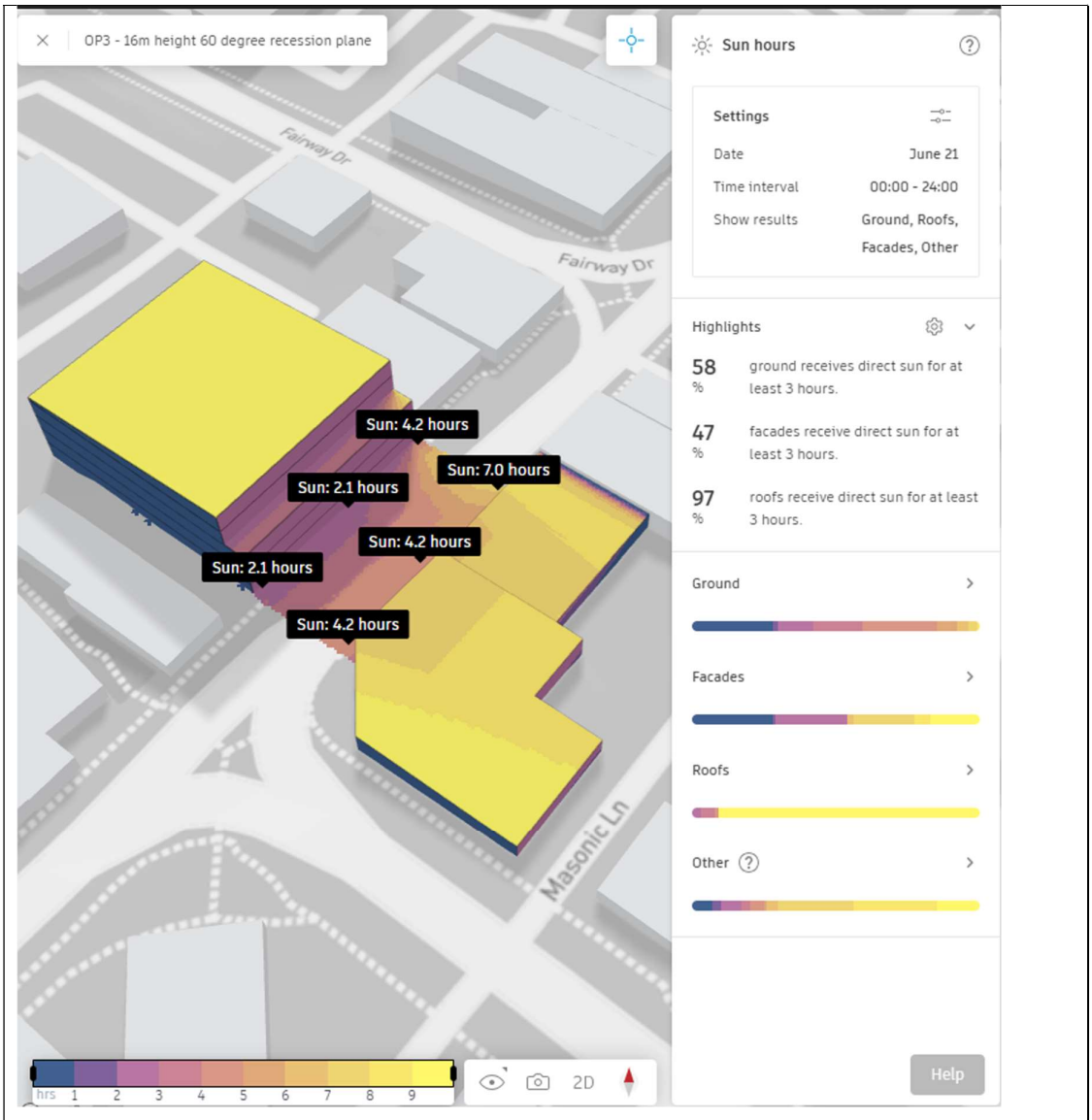


Figure 1 *– 60 degrees recession plane applying at fourth floor level resulting in a 3m setback (Option 3)*

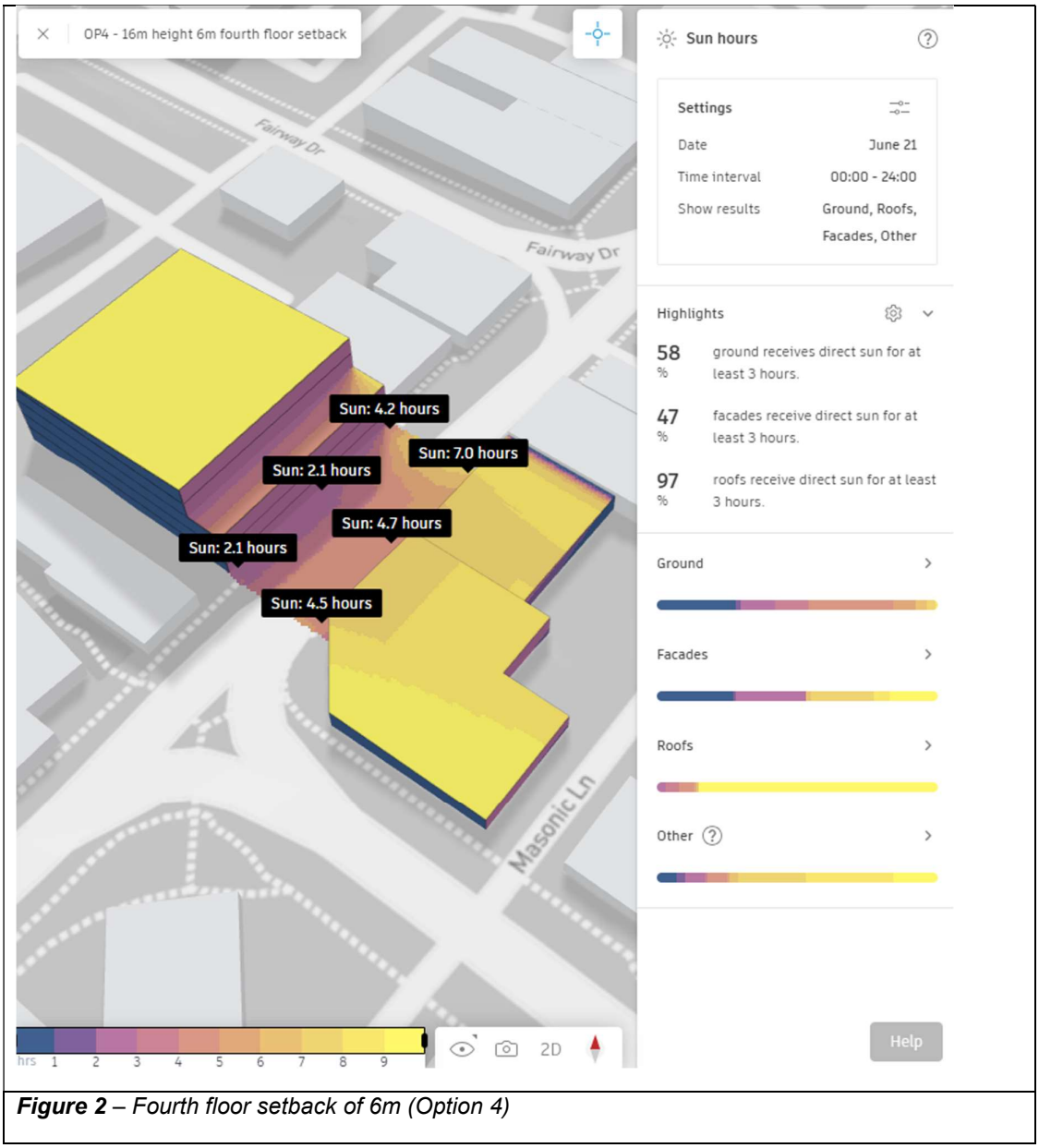


Figure 2 *– Fourth floor setback of 6m (Option 4)*

10. In relation to sunlight hours, the difference between the two approaches is minimal. ***Figure 2*** outlines that there will be 20 minutes of additional sunlight hours within the southeast area of the public realm as a result of a fourth floor setback approach (the winter soliste). For reference, the 12m height limit modelling and a third floor setback (included at **Appendix 1)** would result in between 48 and 54 minutes of additional sunlight within the southeast area of the public realm. As such, the difference in sunlight hours reaching the street of the two approaches is therefore largely influenced by the overall height limit. However, requiring a greater upper level setback will allow slightly more natural light and sunlight to reach the street and adjoining properties, improving overall amenity. This could be further increased depending on the overall form of the building, in particular the roof profile.

11. Introducing a setback at third floor (instead at fourth floor) as a result of a recession plane applying above 8m as indicated by VK, would further increase the sunlight hours within the public realm. However, this would not likely support a well-proportioned built form associated with a 16m height limit (discussed further below) and would only be logical for a building of a lesser height.

12. In relation to street scene and building dominance (noting that the buildings within the model are largely single storey in height), ***Figures 3 and 4*** outline the street level view resulting from the two approaches. The recession plane approach results in a fourth floor/roof level setback of approximately 3 metres in comparison to the 6 metre requirement proposed with a setback approach.

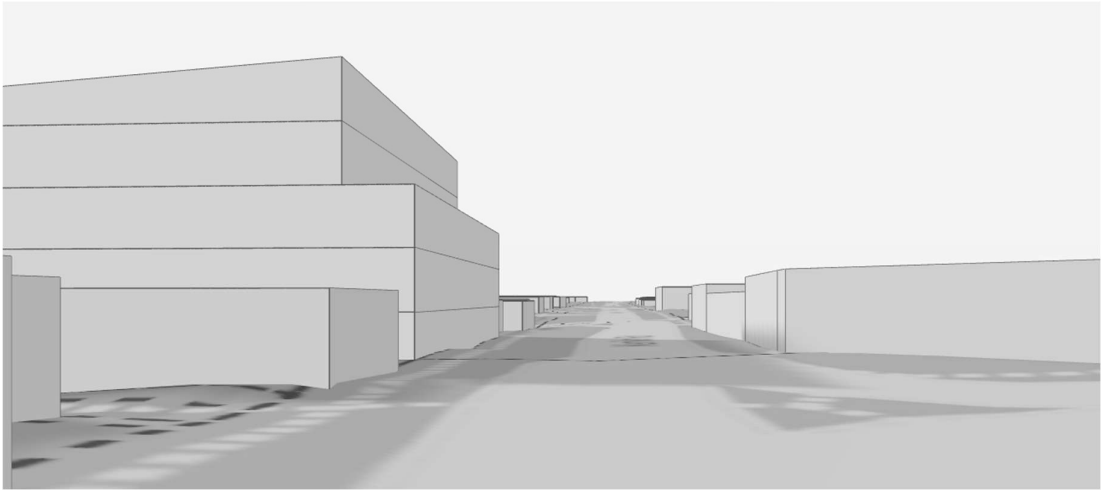


Figure 3 *– Street level view of recession plane approach with a 16m height limit and resulting in a 3m setback distance*

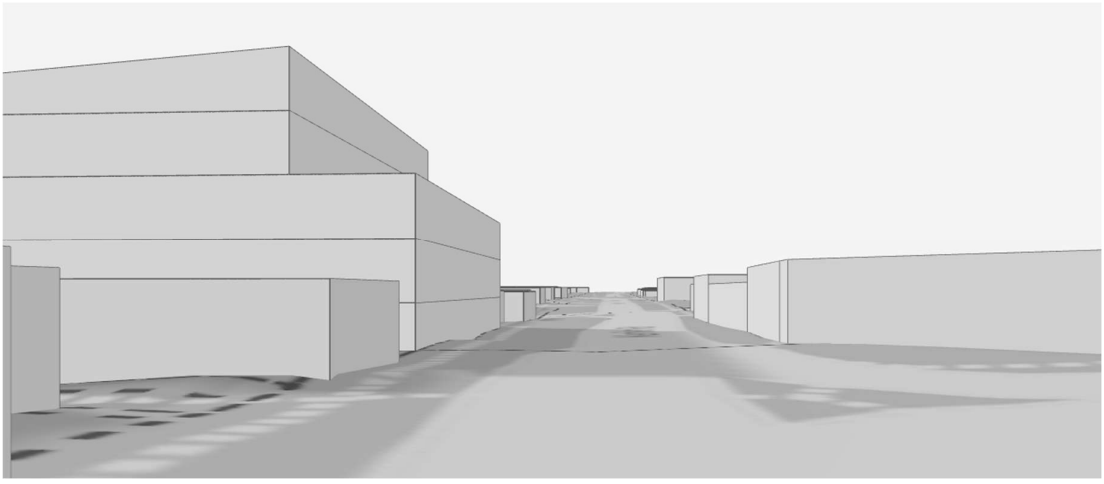


Figure 4 *- Street level view of fourth floor setback approach with 16m height limit*

13. In terms of aesthetics and streetscape a recession plane approach may encourage a more complex ziggurat built form, with this form exaggerated if a 5 storey building is proposed which could potentially fit within the 16m height limit depending on floor to floor heights and roof profiles (albeit would require consideration as part of an Urban Design Assessment). As such, it could result in a

building that is not as well proportioned in comparison to a building that incorporates a greater setback including taking into consideration the built form character of the town. Having said that, as the town grows and buildings increase in scale, both approaches would assist to maintain a consistent and appealing street level environment (i.e. a street wall of largely two and three storey buildings over time), while allowing for variations in height above the street wall. As outlined earlier, a setback of the third floor within the context of a 16m height would likely result in a poorly proportioned building with the form appearing 'top heavy', with this approach only considered relevant to a 12 metre height limit.

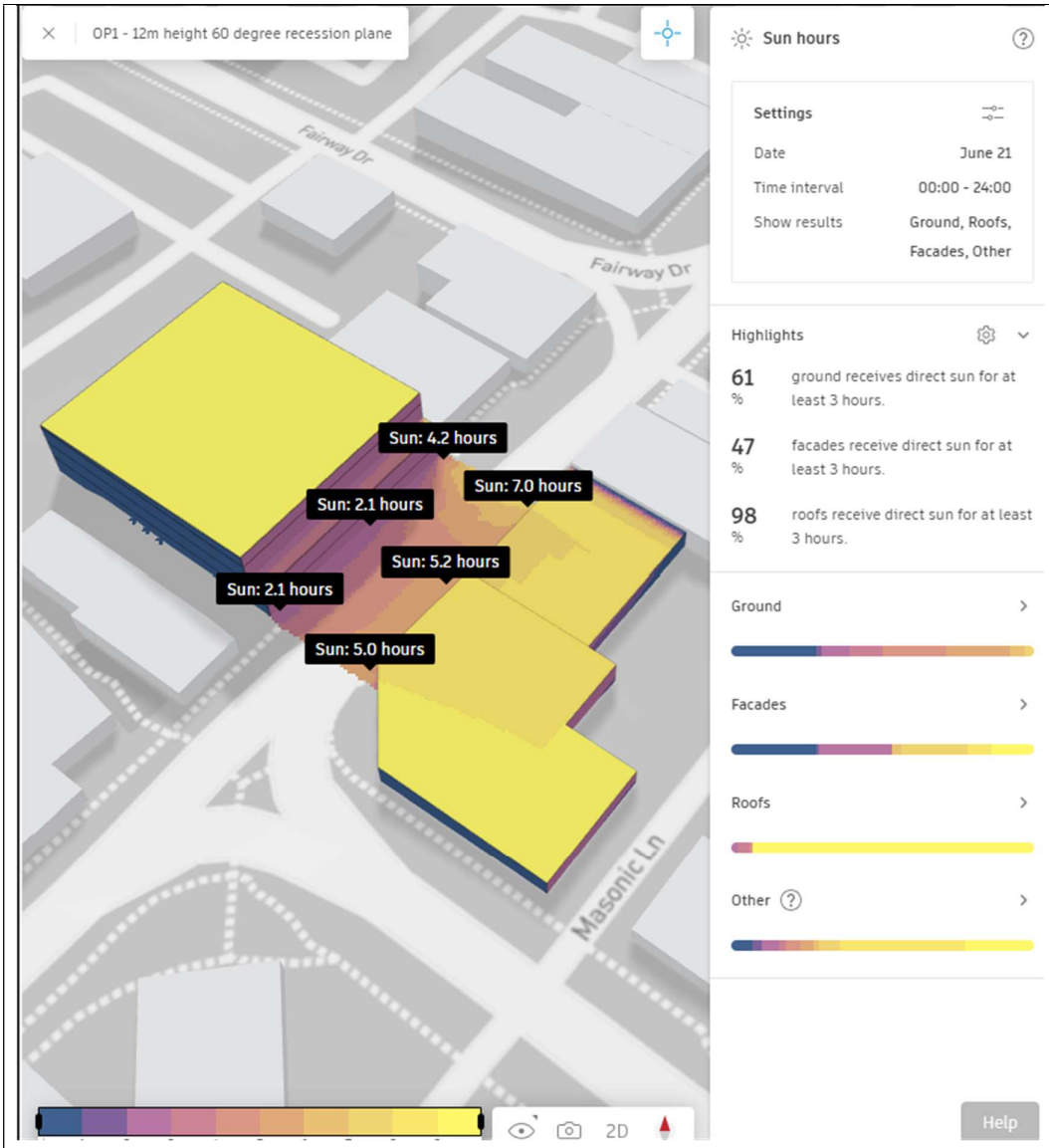
14. Albeit there is some variation in the width of Kerikeri Road, the building height to street width ratio of approximately 0.8:1 will result in an 'sense of enclosure' of the street that will feel comfortable for users (i.e. the height to width ratio will mean the street will retain a relatively open feel and a 'human scale'.

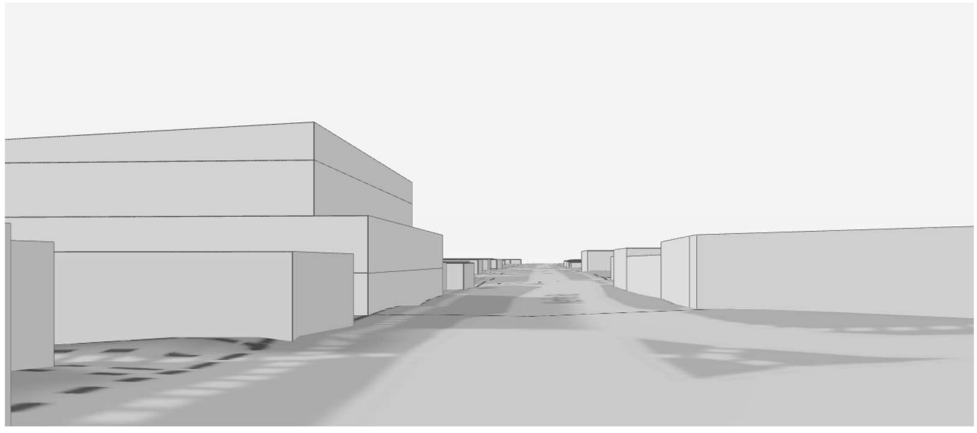
15. From a functionality point of view, a 6m setback of the fourth floor would enable better utilisation of the space, for example as a roof terrace for a residential or commercial tenancy.

16. In relation to minimising visual dominance, the recession plane approach (and a setback of approximately 3 metres) is considered to be less effective in managing building dominance impacts. A 6m setback at fourth floor is considered to be more effective in reducing the perceived bulk and visual impact of a taller building, particularly from the street level given the fourth floor (and roof form) will be less visible in views along the street.

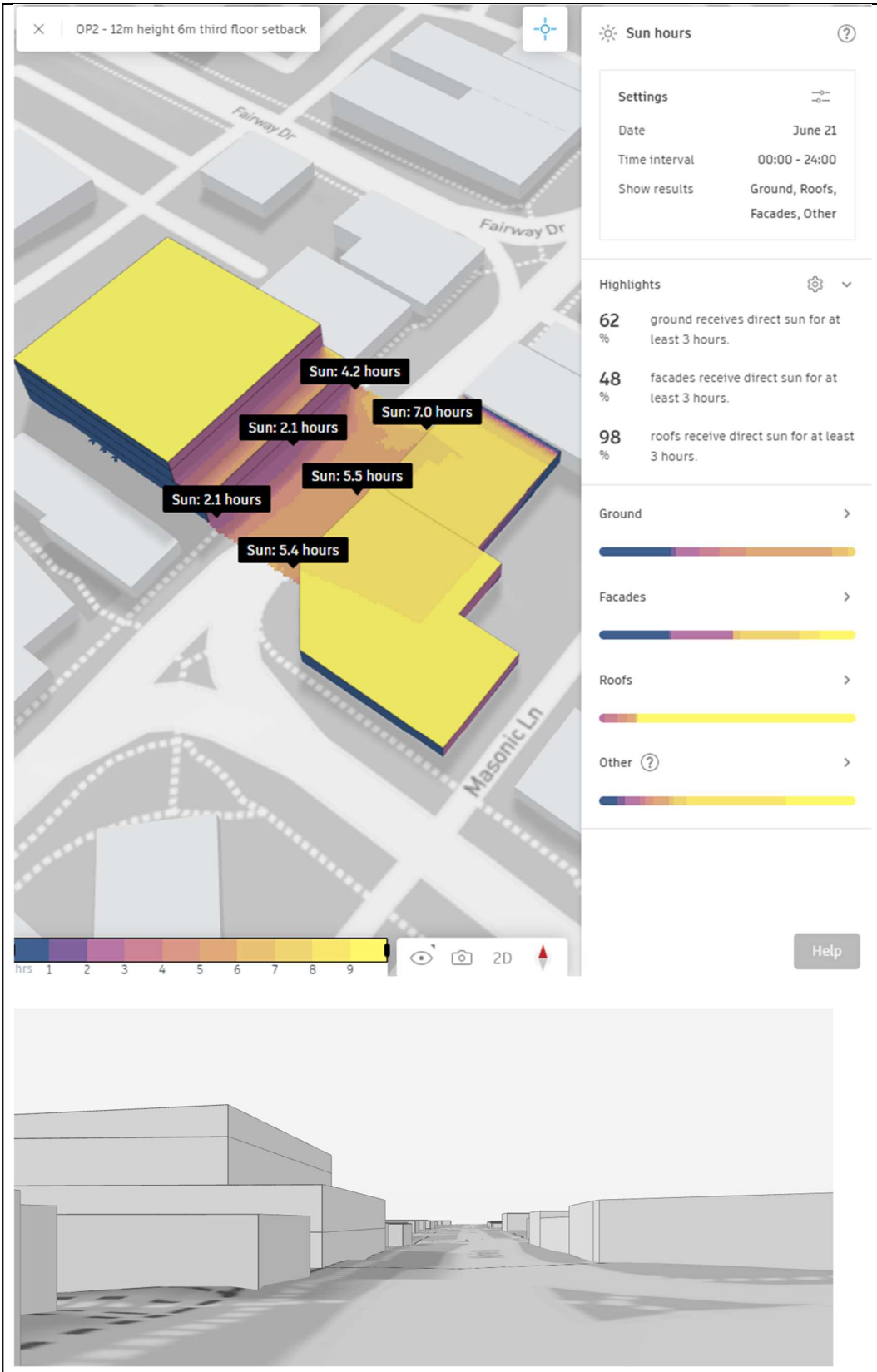
17. In conclusion, I consider that a 6m setback requirement at fourth floor level and above rather than a recession plane approach will assist with limiting the impacts of a 16m building height on the public realm within the pedestrian frontage area of Kerikeri. I consider the provision will be an effective way to enable simple building forms while creating a more comfortable human scale at street level and managing sunlight effects on the public realm.

Appendix 1 – Modelling Results for 12 height limit





Option 1 – 60 degree recession plane and 12m height analysis with third floor setback



Option 2 – Third floor setback and 12m height analysis