

To: Fast-track Team – Ministry for the Environment

From: Karl Cook / Steph Wilson – Barker & Associates Limited

Date: 26 March 2026

Re: Planning Memorandum for the University of Auckland Student Centre and Library FTAA Referral Application

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## 1.0 Introduction

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### 1.1 Overview

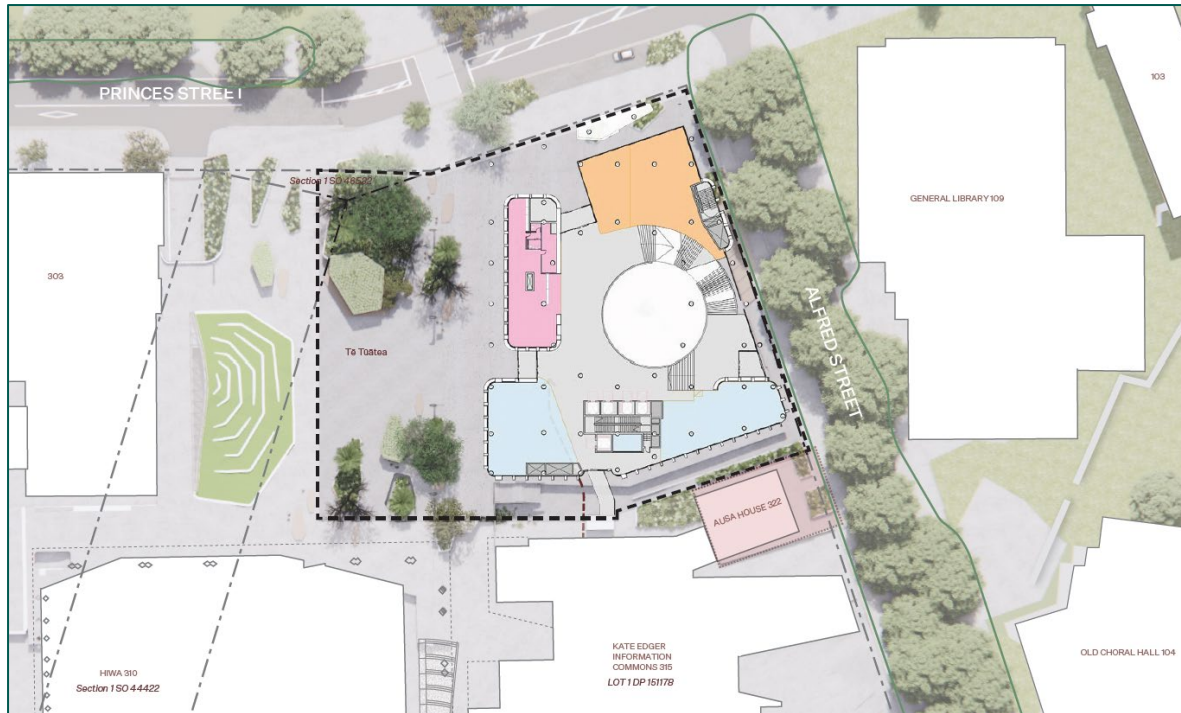
Waipapa Taumata Rau | The University of Auckland (**UoA** or **the University**) is applying under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (**FTAA**) for the referral of its new Student Centre and Library on the City Campus (the **Project**).

The land that is the subject of the application is located on the corner of Princes Street and Alfred Street (the **Site**). The Site provides an opportunity to deliver a purpose-built, world-class student facility and new library that will generate significant regional and national economic, social and environmental benefits, while creating a high-quality pedestrian environment and reinvigorated central hub for the City Campus.

Key components of the Project include:

- Demolition of the existing Student Union complex located at the Site, which is included on the Schedule of Historic Heritage under the Auckland Unitary Plan – Operative in Part 2016 (**AUP-OP**).
- Redevelopment of the Site to deliver a new building that will accommodate:
  - a range of high-quality student study, teaching and learning, social and event spaces, including student associations and clubs, support services, and food, beverage and retail and amenity offerings;
  - a new contemporary library; and
  - a visitor hub containing welcoming spaces and an exhibition space, creating a recognisable ‘front door’ to the campus.
- Landscaping, and a large-scale public plaza which will serve as a gathering and event space.
- Supporting infrastructure and associated works related to the demolition and construction of buildings, including earthworks and servicing. The Site is within a recorded archaeological site, being the Albert Barracks Wall, and an archaeological authority will be required for works in and around this area.

The Site Plan showing the extent of the Project area and ground floor plan is shown in **Figure 1** below.



**Figure 1: Student Centre and Library Site Plan. Source: Warren and Mahoney**

## 1.2 The Site

The Site falls across the following land parcels, all of which are currently contained in record of title NA90A/610:

- Lot 1 Deposited Plan 151178.
- Section 1 Survey Office Plan 46532.
- Section 1 Survey Office Plan 44422.

The registered owner of the Site is the University of Auckland.

## 1.3 Auckland Unitary Plan – Zoning, Overlays, Controls and Designations

The Site is located within the Business – City Centre zone under AUP-OP and is within Sub-Precinct A of the Learning Quarter Precinct. The following additional restrictions apply to the Site under the AUP-OP:

- Historic Heritage and Special Character: Historic Heritage Overlay Extent of Place [rcp/dp] – 1927, Student Union Building.
- Macroinvertebrate Community Index – Urban.

For completeness, it is noted that the Site also borders:

- The Historic Heritage Overlay Extent of Place [rcp/dp] of the Auckland University Student Association (**AUSA**) building (01926 – Residence (former)).
- Natural Heritage: Notable Group of Trees Overlay – 1, London Plane applying to the group of trees along Alfred Street.

The Council recently notified Plan Change 120 (**PC120**) to the AUP-OP. Under s86B of the Resource Management Act 1991 (**RMA**), the Natural Hazards provisions of PC120 have immediate legal effect. In this regard, the following applies:

- The Site is not subject to any coastal hazards or flood hazards under PC120.
- The Site is subject to:
  - Very Low to Low Large Scale Landslide Susceptibility; and
  - Very Low Shallow Landslide Susceptibility.

PC120 does not propose any changes to the zoning of the Site and the Site is not subject to any intensification proposed through PC120.

## 2.0 Background

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### 2.1 University of Auckland

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The University of Auckland Waipapa Taumata Rau is New Zealand's largest university, with approximately 47,000 students and more than 6,500 staff across its Auckland campuses.

The University holds a strong position in both national and international academic rankings. According to the QS World University Rankings, the University was ranked first in New Zealand and 65<sup>th</sup> internationally out of more than 1,500 institutions assessed in 2024. In terms of research performance, the University is New Zealand's largest research organisation, generating around \$230 million in annual research revenue.

The University's footprint extends across multiple sites throughout Auckland. The City Campus, established in 1883, covers more than 20 hectares in the heart of Auckland's city centre and is the University's primary teaching hub, hosting the majority of students and faculties. It has undergone substantial development over its history, with recent additions including a 32,000 square-metre Engineering Building completed in 2019 and the Hiwa Recreation Centre, which opened in 2024. The City Campus is complemented by the Grafton Campus (Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences), the Newmarket Campus (Innovation, Engineering and Science research), and facilities further afield including outreach campuses in South Auckland (Te Papa Ako o Ta Tonga) and Whangarei (Tai Tokerau), Goldie Estate Wine Science centre on Waiheke Island and the Leigh Marine Laboratory north of the city.

### 2.2 City Campus Masterplan

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The University's City Campus has been subject to a long-term, sector-based master planning approach since the early 2000s, guided by successive Strategic Plans and a Long-Term Financial Plan. The University undertook a comprehensive strategic spatial planning exercise through 2024 and 2025 to prepare a new City Campus Masterplan (excerpts of the **City Campus Masterplan** included as **Attachment 2** to the Referral Application). The City Campus Masterplan replaces the previous 2008 Masterplan, which has been largely implemented. The new City Campus Masterplan is a living document which provides a cohesive spatial framework and strategic direction for the long-term development of the City Campus over the twenty-year period from 2025 to 2045.

The City Campus Masterplan is grounded in Māori values of connection and exchange, and is built around three unifying ideas reflecting the University's relationship with people, place, history, and the environment:

- *Mana tuku iho, mana tuku atu* – Bound to history, fit for future;
- *Tuku taiao, tuku tāngata* – A dynamic exchange between people and place; and
- *Tuku tairongo, tuku toiora* – A distinct essence, a thriving vitality.

These ideas inform fourteen guiding principles that shape the design response of future projects across the campus, applied at both the campus-wide and precinct-specific levels.

The City Campus Masterplan identifies five Transformational Initiatives for the campus. One of these – *Upgrading Student Experience - Creating a beating heart within the campus* – relates directly to the Project, identifying the need for a new Student Centre and Library to address challenges in capacity, accessibility and equity of the existing Student Union complex and General Library. The City Campus Masterplan identifies the Site as the preferred location for this new facility, recognising its potential to build on existing student-focused activity and establish a vibrant student hub, enlarge and activate surrounding open spaces, and create a recognisable gateway between the City Campus and the central city. The new Student Centre and Library is identified as a priority project to be delivered within the first ten years of the City Campus Masterplan, i.e. by 2035.

A number of specific spatial ambitions emerging from the Masterplan directly inform the Project and its wider setting, including:

- the enlargement of the existing campus plaza as a major new outdoor open space supported by indoor student amenity;
- the pedestrianisation of Alfred Street to unify campus sectors and support the vibrancy of the student hub;
- the re-imagining of Princes Street to strengthen the connections between the campus and Rangipuke Albert Park; and
- a more direct connection from Symonds Street drawing the campus eastward.

Collectively, these reflect the City Campus Masterplan’s recognition of the City Campus as an integral part of Auckland’s city centre, and its intent to strengthen the relationship between the campus and the surrounding urban environment.

## 3.0 Reasons for Consent

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### 3.1 Auckland Unitary Plan (Operative in Part)

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At this preliminary stage, we have identified that the Project may trigger resource consent under the AUP-OP for the following reasons:

#### D13 Notable Tree Overlay

- Trimming of the notable trees along Alfred Street that does not comply with Standard D13.6.1 may be required and is a **restricted discretionary activity** under D13.4.1(A6).
- Works within the protected root zone of notable trees along Alfred Street associated with the development may be required and is a **restricted discretionary activity** under D13.4.1(A9).

### D17 Historic Heritage Overlay

- Demolition or destruction of a primary feature of a Category B Historic Heritage Place (1927, Student Union Building) will be required and is a **discretionary activity** under D17.4.1(A1).

### E7 Taking, using and Diversion of Water and Drilling

- The diversion of groundwater caused by excavation that does not comply with the permitted activity standards may be required and is a **restricted discretionary activity** under Rule E7.4.1(A28).

### E12 Land Disturbance – District

- Earthworks exceeding 2,500m<sup>2</sup> within the City Centre Zone will be required and is a **restricted discretionary activity** under Rule E12.4.1(A6).
- Earthworks exceeding 2,500m<sup>3</sup> within the City Centre Zone will be required and is a **restricted discretionary activity** under Rule E12.4.1(A10).
- The Project may require earthworks exceeding 50m<sup>2</sup> within a Historic Heritage Overlay (including the extent of place for the Student Union Building) and is a **restricted discretionary activity** under Rule E12.4.2(A30).
- The Project may require earthworks exceeding 250m<sup>3</sup> within a Historic Heritage Overlay (including the extent of place for the Student Union Building) and is a **restricted discretionary activity** under Rule E12.4.2(A33).

### E17 Trees in Roads

- Trimming of trees within the road that does not comply with Standard E17.6.1 may be required to enable the development and is a **restricted discretionary activity** under Rule E17.4.1(A6).
- Works within the protected root zone of trees in the road that do not comply with permitted activity standards may be required and is a **restricted discretionary activity** under Rule E17.4.1(A8).

### E23 Signs

- Comprehensive development signage will be required and is a **restricted discretionary activity** under Rule E23.4.2(A53).

### E25 Noise and Vibration

- Construction works are anticipated to exceed the applicable maximum long-term construction noise limits under Standard E25.6.28 and is a **restricted discretionary activity** under E25.4.1(A2).
- Construction works may exceed the vibration standards under Standard E25.6.30 and is a **restricted discretionary activity** under E25.4.1(A2).

### E40 Temporary Activities

- The Project will involve temporary activities for construction that are not otherwise provided for as permitted activities in Rules A12 – A23, as they will have a duration of more than 24 months, and are a **restricted discretionary activity** under E40.4.1(A24).

### H8 Business – City Centre Zone

- The development of the new building is a **restricted discretionary activity** under Rule H8.4.1(A32).
- Demolition of buildings is a **controlled activity** under Rule H8.4.1(A32A).
- The construction of a building that does not comply with Standard H8.6.3 Admission of Sunlight to Public Places is a **non-complying activity** under Rule H8.4.1(A40), noting that the Project will not comply with the Admission of Sunlight to Albert Park.

### I207 Learning Precinct

- Demolition of buildings is a **controlled activity** under Rule I207.4.1(A25).
- The development of new building is a **restricted discretionary activity** under Rule I207.4.1(A26).
- The Project involves development that is not anticipated to comply with the following standards and is a **restricted discretionary activity** under Rule C1.9(2):
  - I207.6.3 Building Height: The Site is subject to a 30m height control. The proposed building will exceed the height control.
  - I207.6.4 Frontage Height and Setback: The Site is subject to Frontage Control C. The proposed building will not comply with the frontage control.

## 3.2 National Environmental Standards for Assessing and Managing Contaminants in Soil to Protect Human Health

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The Resource Management (National Environmental Standard for Assessing and Managing Contaminants in Soil to Protect Human Health) Regulations 2011 (**NES-CS**) sets a nationally consistent set of planning controls and soil contaminant values.

It is likely that provisions of the NES-CS will apply to development of the Site, as activities on the Hazardous Substances Activities and Industries List (**HAIL**) are likely to have historically occurred on the Site. A detailed site investigation will be undertaken at the Site in support of the substantive application. This will ascertain whether NES-CS and/or AUP-OP contaminated land resource consents are required to be sought in support of the Project. This will likely be a **controlled activity** pursuant to Regulation 9 of the NES-CS.

## 3.3 Overall Activity Status

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Overall, under the AUP-OP and the relevant National Environmental Standards, the Project would require consent as a **non-complying activity**.

## 3.4 Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014

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The Project will involve works in and around the Albert Barracks Wall which is a recorded archaeological site. In accordance with Section 42(4)(i) of the FTAA, the Project will require an archaeological authority as described in Section 44(a) or (b) of the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014 (**HNZPTA**), along with approval of a suitably qualified archaeologist to undertake any archaeological investigation, that would otherwise be applied for under the HNZPTA.

## 4.0 Statutory Framework

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Schedule 5, clause 2(1)(a)(i) – (ii) of the FTAA requires referral applications to include an assessment of the activity against the relevant provisions and requirements of the following statutory documents:

- (a) any relevant national policy statements; and
- (b) any relevant national environmental standards; and
- (c) if relevant, the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement.

These documents are assessed below. The New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement is not assessed as the Site is not adjacent to the coastal environment, and this document is therefore not relevant.

This section also addresses the extent to which the Project is consistent with local or regional planning documents, including spatial strategies in accordance with section 22(2)(a)(x) of the FTAA.

### 4.1 National Policy Statement for Urban Development 2020

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The National Policy Statement for Urban Development (**NPS-UD**) came into effect on 20 August 2020 and was substantially amended in May 2022. The objectives of the NPS-UD seek to achieve well-functioning urban environments and promote intensification within urban environments, particularly where development will be highly accessible, is in an area of high demand, will support reductions in greenhouse gases, and will be resilient to the likely current and future effects of climate change.

In particular, the following provisions of the NPS-UD are considered relevant to the Project:

- Provide for well-functioning urban environments with a key focus on providing for social, economic, and cultural wellbeing of all people and communities, by enabling a variety of sites that are suitable for different sectors in terms of location and size and provide good accessibility for all people (Objective 1, Policy 1).
- Enabling more community services to be located in areas of urban environments that are well-serviced by existing or planned public transport, and that is in or near a centre zone (Objective 3).
- Providing for urban environments that develop and change over time in response to the diverse and changing needs of people and communities, including future generations (Objective 4).
- Urban environments support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and are resilient to the current and future effects of climate change (Objective 8, Policy 1(e)).
- Urban development is strategic over the medium and long term, and decision-makers are responsive to plan changes that would contribute to well-functioning urban environments even if unanticipated by RMA planning documents (Objective 6, Policy 8).

It is considered that the Project is consistent with the NPS-UD for the following reasons:

- The Project will contribute to a well-functioning urban environment through provision of a new building that is well located and adequately sized to meet the current and future needs of the University, including catering to the current student population of approximately 47,000 students while providing sufficient size for future growth.
- The Site is highly accessible to existing and planned public transport links, including the Waihorotiu Station which is being developed through the City Rail Link (**CRL**) and is expected to be operational in

2026. The Waihorotiu Station is anticipated to be the busiest station in the CRL network and will offer more accessible rail connections to the City Campus. The Site is additionally well-located to key bus routes, Waitemata Station, and the Downtown Ferry Terminal, along with existing cycleways and shared paths, as illustrated within the Referral Design Report. Secure end-of-trip facilities will be provided within the new building to further encourage active and sustainable transport.

- While the Project represents a change in the urban environment, the new building will provide for the current and future needs of the University, enabling the removal of a building that was designed for a significantly smaller student population, and providing a purpose-built facility for current and future generations of students.
- The Project will likely contribute to an overall reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and will assist the University in meeting its sustainability goals. The existing Student Union and General Library buildings on site are old and perform poorly from an environmental perspective, lacking modern environmental controls and resulting in inefficient energy use and poor thermal comfort. The new building is intended to be designed targeting the current 6 Star Greenstar Rating requirements, representing a significant improvement in the environmental performance of the building compared to the existing Student Union complex and General Library.
- The Project is informed by and will give effect to the City Campus Masterplan. While this is not a Plan Change, the Project nevertheless presents the opportunity for the Government to be responsive to development that would significantly contribute to a well-functioning urban environment and is strategic over the mid to long term.

Based on the assessment above, it is considered that the Project is **consistent** with the NPS-UD.

## 4.2 National Policy Statement for Infrastructure 2025

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The National Policy Statement for Infrastructure (**NPS-I**) came into effect on 15 January 2026 and established a consistent, nationally applicable framework for infrastructure across New Zealand. Universities fall within the definition of ‘additional infrastructure’ (and therefore ‘infrastructure’) under the NPS-I,<sup>1</sup> and the NPS-I therefore applies to the Project.

Of relevance to the Project, the NPS-I seeks to:

- Ensure that the national, regional, and local benefits of infrastructure are provided for, including by enabling infrastructure to support the development and change of urban environments to meet the changing needs of present and future generations (Objective 1(a), 1(c)).
- Ensure that the national, regional, or local benefits of infrastructure relative to any localised adverse effects on the environment, are recognised, and that the benefits of infrastructure, including providing for the social, cultural, and economic wellbeing of present and future generations and through creating and enhancing well-functioning urban environments, are recognised (Policy 1).
- Recognise that infrastructure may have an operational need or functional need to be located in a particular location, and that this need can include providing services to people and communities in an

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<sup>1</sup> Universities are captured under the definition for “additional infrastructure” as “a relevant school or institution under the Education and Training Act 2020”.

effective and efficient manner, and the need to be located where the infrastructure can connect to particular physical resources, including other infrastructure (Policy 2).

- Direct decision-makers to consider relevant master plans prepared by the infrastructure provider and enable the upgrading of infrastructure where it will improve the level of infrastructure service, including to meet increasing demand (Policy 3, Policy 4).
- Recognise and provide for Māori interests, including by taking into account the outcome of any engagement with tangata whenua (Policy 6).
- When assessing and managing effects of infrastructure activities, have regard to the technical and operational requirements and constraints of infrastructure activities (Policy 7).
- Enable major upgrades of existing infrastructure activities, and where these are likely to have adverse effects on environments or values provided for in Section 6 of the RMA (which includes the protection of historic heritage from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development) the provisions of this policy must be considered alongside relevant national direction, regional policy statements, and regional and district plans (Policy 9).
- Manage the interface between infrastructure and other activities to ensure compatibility and protect infrastructure from reverse sensitivity effects, including through the use of buffers, design standards and special purpose zoning (Policy 10).
- Recognise that changes in amenity values from infrastructure activities can be necessary to achieve well-functioning urban environments, and that primary responsibility for managing adverse effects rests with the new activity (Policy 11).

A preliminary Economic Impact Assessment has been prepared by Property Economics in support of this Referral Application and is included as **Attachment 1** to the Referral Application. The Economic Impact Assessment concludes that:

- The Project will deliver quantified economic benefits to the Auckland regional economy associated with the construction of the Project and quantifies the regional and national economic benefits arising from the University's ongoing operations.
- Additionally, the Economic Impact Assessment considers that there are several non-monetised regional and national benefits of the Project, including:
  - Enabling efficient utilisation of education infrastructure as a result of replacing the existing Student Union complex, which was designed for approximately 7,000 students and is now functionally obsolete and unable to appropriately serve a student population of approximately 47,000 students.
  - Improving the University's student facilities, which has the potential to strengthen the University's attractiveness to international students, directly supporting the Government's International Education Going for Growth Plan 2025 target to double the value of international education from \$3.6b to \$7.2b by 2034. By supporting the recruitment and retention of international students, the Project has the potential to sustain foreign exchange inflows and demand across accommodation, retail, hospitality, and transport in the city centre.
  - Improving learning outcomes and completion rates by delivering modern study spaces, digital infrastructure and improved student services, which, in turn, has the potential to deliver long-term productivity gains to the regional and national economy through a more skilled workforce.

- Increasing daily student presence through improved new facilities, which will support retail, hospitality and service businesses, reinforce the city centre's role as a nationally and regionally significant economic and knowledge hub, and strengthen linkages between education, employment, innovation and cultural amenities.
- Reducing long-term maintenance and operational costs through the replacement of an ageing and structurally constrained building with a modern facility, representing a more economically efficient use of the University's resources, improving long-term asset resilience.

Relying on this advice, the Project is considered to be consistent with the NPS-I for the following reasons:

- The Project represents the most efficient and effective use of the Site and is located centrally within the City Campus to provide for the operational and functional needs of the University. The new Student Centre and Library building will ensure that infrastructure continues to operate and provide services in a way that provides meaningful connectivity between the remainder of the City Campus and provides for the changing needs and demands of current and future populations.
- Further, and as discussed elsewhere in the Referral Application, the Project will contribute to a well-functioning urban environment through provision of a building that is well located and adequately sized to meet the current and future needs of the University, the opportunity to promote accessibility between the Project, the wider campus, and the central city, and provide resilience to the effects of climate change.
- The NPS-I directs decision makers to consider relevant master plans prepared by the infrastructure provider. As discussed within this Planning Memorandum, the Project is a direct response to the increased demand resulting from student numbers at the University. The Campus strategy is informed by the City Campus Masterplan, a masterplan document prepared by the University in consultation with key stakeholders, including mana whenua.
- As set out above and in the Economic Impact Assessment, the Project will generate significant regional and national benefits through the construction and development period and through the ongoing operation of the building. The University represents a key educational facility within the context of New Zealand, and providing for upgrades that improve the level of infrastructure service is a key objective of the NPS-I.
- Adverse effects on historic heritage will occur through the proposed demolition of the existing Student Union complex. In accordance with the NPS-I directions, those adverse effects will be assessed in detail as part of the substantive application in the context of the technical and operational requirements of the University and in the context of all relevant national direction, regional policy statements, and regional and district plans.
- The University has committed to working with mana whenua throughout the design and development of the Project. This engagement has been guided by the Kōtuitanga (a partnership agreement or memorandum of understanding) signed with Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei in 2022 and builds on the 2003 partnership established by then Vice Chancellor John Hood and Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei rangatira Sir Hugh Kāwharu. The Project has also taken into consideration the high-level cultural framework prepared by Haumi and Eighty included as **Attachment 11**. A letter of support from Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei is included as **Attachment 12**.
- As set out within the NPS-I, responsibility for managing adverse effects falls primarily on the new activity. A comprehensive suite of technical assessments, management plans, and supporting

information will be provided with the substantive application which will address the adverse effects of the Project and how those adverse effects are proposed to be managed.

For the reasons set out above, it is considered that the Project is **consistent** with the NPS-I.

#### 4.3 National Environmental Standards for Air Quality 2004

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The Resource Management (National Environmental Standards for Air Quality) Regulations 2004 (**NES-AQ**) sets standards to guarantee a minimum level of health protection for people living in New Zealand.

No specific consents relating to this standard are required for the Project. The management of dust and odour will be addressed in the Construction Management Plan and an Erosion and Sediment Control Plan which will be provided for as part of the substantive application. As such, ambient air quality will be maintained once the development is constructed.

Based on the assessment above, it is considered that the Project is **consistent** with the NES-AQ.

#### 4.4 National Environmental Standards for Assessing and Managing Contaminants in Soil to Protect Human Health 2011

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The NES-CS sets a nationally consistent set of planning controls and soil contaminant values. Resource consent will be sought where required under the NES-CS and will be subject to conditions (where appropriate) which will ensure that any contaminated soil is managed to protect human health.

Based on the assessment above, it is considered that the Project is **consistent** with the NES-CS.

#### 4.5 Auckland Regional Policy Statement

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##### 4.5.1 B2 Urban Growth and Form

The Urban Growth and Form objectives and policies are the heart of the Regional Policy Statement (**RPS**) and set out the policy framework for managing Auckland's growth. The RPS seeks to achieve a quality compact urban form by:

- Promoting a well-functioning urban environment that provides for social, economic, and cultural wellbeing now and into the future (B2.2.1(1A)).
- Providing for a well-functioning urban environment with a quality compact urban form that enables greater productivity and economic growth, better use of existing infrastructure, good accessibility for all people, greater social and cultural vitality, and improved resilience to the effects of climate change (B2.2.1(1)).
- Ensuring that use and development respond to the intrinsic qualities and physical characteristics of the site and area, including its setting, maximise resource and infrastructure efficiency, and are capable of adapting to changing needs (B2.3.1(1)).
- Encouraging innovative design to address environmental effects (B2.3.1(2)).
- Managing form and design of development to support the planned future environment, contribute to the safety of the site, street, and neighbourhood, develop street networks and block patterns that provide good access, and meet the functional and operational needs of the intended use (B2.3.2(1)).

- Encouraging development to be designed to promote the health, safety, and well-being of all people and communities by providing access for people of all ages and abilities and enabling active transport and minimising vehicle movements (B2.3.2(2)).
- Ensuring that recreational needs of people and communities are met through the provision of a range of quality open spaces, providing for a variety of activities, experiences and functions and which contribute to a well-functioning urban environment (B2.7.1(1), B2.7.2(1)).
- Enabling social facilities that meet the needs of people and communities, and which contribute to a well-functioning urban environment, including locating social facilities where they are accessible by an appropriate range of transport modes (B2.8.1(1), B2.8.1(2)).

The Project will be consistent with the objectives and policies of Chapter B2 of the RPS. As set out in Section 4.1 above, the Project will contribute to a well-functioning urban environment. Further, the Site is well-located to active transport modes, including existing cycleways and shared paths, and existing and planned public transport, including proximity to key CRL stations.

Chapter B2 encourages innovative design to address environmental effects, with a key focus on ensuring that new developments feature good design which responds to the site and surrounding area and contribute to a well-functioning urban environment. In this regard, an Urban Design and Landscape Preliminary Assessment and Graphic Supplement has been prepared as **Attachment 3** to the Referral Application, which concludes that the Project avoids significant adverse effects and delivers positive outcomes across urban form, landscape, visual amenity, and pedestrian connectivity, through a high-quality architectural response that activates surrounding streets and public spaces.

The Project represents a significant milestone in the realisation of the University's City Campus Masterplan, creating a central hub to the City Campus and significant improved pedestrian amenity and accessibility. The indicative design has been developed with regard to the intrinsic qualities and physical characteristics of the Site and its immediate surroundings, including its relationship to Rangipuke Albert Park.

Further, and as set out elsewhere in this assessment, the Project meets a functional and operational need of the University, providing for the social and economic wellbeing of staff and students of the University now and into the future, improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the campus, and improving the ability for the University to meet its sustainability targets by decommissioning an inefficient building. The proposed new Student Centre and Library building will be capable of adapting to changing needs, with flexibility provided in the built form to adapt to the changing expectations of a modern learning environment. The Student Centre and Library building will additionally provide facilities for student clubs, thereby promoting inclusivity and improving access to social facilities on the campus.

Based on the assessment above, it is considered that the Project is **consistent** with Chapter B2 of the RPS.

#### 4.5.2 B5 Historic Heritage and Special Character

The Historic Heritage and Special Character objectives and policies set the policy framework for managing Auckland's historic heritage by:

- Identifying significant historic heritage places and protecting them from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development (B5.2.1(1)).
- Ensuring the appropriate use of significant historic heritage places, and encourage their protection, management and conservation, including through retention, maintenance, and adaptation (B5.2.1(2)).

- Avoiding where practicable significant adverse effects on significant historic heritage places. Where significant adverse effects cannot be avoided, remedying or mitigating these such that they no longer constitute a significant adverse effect (B5.2.2(7)).
- Encouraging new development to have regard to the protection and conservation of the historic heritage values of any adjacent significant historic heritage places (B5.2.2(8)).
- Providing for the development, restoration and adaptation of significant historic heritage places where this will support the retention of, and will not detract from, the historic heritage values of the place (B5.2.2(9)).

The existing Student Union complex is classified as a Category B heritage place, defined as “historic heritage places that are of considerable significance to the locality and beyond” by the RPS. Notably, Policy B5.2.2(6), which requires the avoidance of significant adverse effects (without the “where practicable” qualifier) applies only to heritage places which have “outstanding significance well beyond their immediate environs”, being the definition of Category A places. Policy B5.2.2(6) therefore does not apply to the Project.

Demolition of the existing Student Union complex will have a significant adverse effect on a historic heritage place within the fabric of Auckland City. The RPS requires the avoidance of significant adverse effects on historic heritage places *where practicable* (B5.2.2(7)). In this instance, it is not considered practicable to avoid demolition of the existing Student Union complex for the following reasons:

- Replacement of the existing library and student facilities is necessary to support the ongoing functioning and operation of the University. Given the importance of those facilities to the University, their positioning within the City Campus has been a matter of particular consideration by the University. As outlined earlier in this assessment and in the Referral Application, the Site’s position at the entry to the City Campus, its connectivity to Rangipuke Albert Park and the city centre, and its accessibility to public transport makes it an optimal location for the Project.
- As described in the Referral Application, the existing Student Union complex is in poor condition and is no longer fit for purpose. Consideration has been given to the remediation and upgrade of the existing complex; however, those investigations have confirmed that that work would be extremely complex and costly, would result in significant ongoing maintenance, and would not extend the life of the complex for the period required for the University’s needs. With the geometric limitations of the existing complex, an upgrade would also not provide for the operational and functional needs of the University.
- The design of the Project has had regard to the historic heritage and character of the surrounding area, including by responding to the heritage values of the adjacent AUSA building, and exploring façade treatments that include contemporary re-interpretations of historic heritage buildings within the City Campus.

A comprehensive assessment of historic heritage effects will be provided with the substantive application, which will include a detailed assessment of the Project against the Auckland RPS heritage provisions.

Based on the above assessment however, it is considered that the Project is **partially consistent** with Chapter B5 of the RPS.

## 4.6 Auckland Unitary Plan (Operative in Part) 2016

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### 4.6.1 D13 Notable Trees Overlay

The objective of Chapter D13 of the AUP-OP is to retain and protect notable trees and notable groups of trees from inappropriate subdivision, use and development. The policies reinforce this objective, requiring consideration of the attributes and values of the trees, the likelihood of significant adverse effects, and the degree to which the development can accommodate the protection of the trees.

The Project may require consent for trimming and works within the protected root zone of adjacent notable trees on Alfred Street. Tree protection methodologies will be provided and adopted as necessary, and works are anticipated to be limited in scope.

Therefore, it is anticipated that the Project will be **consistent** with the objectives and policies of Chapter D13.

### 4.6.2 D17 Historic Heritage Overlay

The objectives of Historic Heritage Overlay seek to protect, maintain, restore, and conserve scheduled historic heritage places, and that such places are protected from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development, including demolition or destruction. The policies reinforce these objectives by supporting and enabling opportunities for modification and restoration where it avoids significant adverse effects on heritage values.

Policy D17.3.13 seeks to “avoid” the total or substantial demolition or destruction of features within scheduled historic heritage places where it will result in adverse effects on the overall significance of the historic heritage to the extent that the place would no longer meet the threshold for significance. Further, Policy D17.3.14 seeks to “avoid” the total or substantial demolition or destruction of the primary features of Category B scheduled historic heritage places, unless the demolition or destruction is required to allow for significant public benefit that could not otherwise be achieved, and the significant public benefit outweighs the retention of the feature or place.

The Project will result in the total demolition of the existing Student Union building such that it will no longer meet the significance thresholds for a Category B historic heritage place. In that regard, the Project is not consistent with Policy D13.3.13. However, as outlined in the Economic Impact Assessment and the Referral Application, the Project provides for significant regional and national benefits through the construction of a purpose-built Student Centre and Library building that will meet the current and future needs of the University. Those significant public benefits outweigh the retention of the historic heritage place.

At this stage, it is considered that the Project is **partially consistent** with Chapter D17.

### 4.6.3 E7 Taking, Using, Damming and Diversion of Water and drilling

Policy E.2.3(23) in ‘Chapter E2 Water Quantity, Allocation and Use’ contains the relevant policy direction for the diversion of groundwater.

In reference to this policy, there are no flood hazards present on site, as set out in the Civil Engineering Services and Natural Hazard Risk Memorandum prepared by Beca and included as **Attachment 9** to the Referral Application. As such, any potential diversion of groundwater required during basement excavation will not exacerbate flooding effects as none exist. Appropriate assessment from a suitably qualified geotechnical engineer, along with a Groundwater and Settlement Monitoring and Contingency Plan will be

prepared in support of the substantive application as required. Assessment will be supported by a heritage specialist to confirm that any effects on the adjacent historic heritage place (AUSA building) are addressed.

Overall, it is considered that the Project is **consistent** with Chapter E7.

#### 4.6.4 E12 Land Disturbance – District

The objectives and policies for land disturbance seek to ensure that land disturbance is undertaken in a manner where the safety of people is protected and adverse effects on the environment are avoided, remedied or mitigated.

Input from Civil and Geotechnical Engineers will be provided in support of the substantive application, including assessment of mitigation methodologies to be implemented during the construction phase to manage effects of construction. Draft management plans will also be prepared and submitted, including but not limited to Construction Management Plans and Erosion and Sediment Control Management Plans.

Overall, it is anticipated that the Project will be **consistent** with Chapter E12.

#### 4.6.5 E17 Trees in Roads

The objectives and policies for trees in roads seek to protect specimens that contribute to the cultural, amenity, landscape and ecological values and ensure there is an increase in the quality and extent of tree cover in roads.

Works may be required within the protected root zone of trees in the road, including the potential for trimming of trees that does not meet permitted activity standards. If works near trees in roads are required, input from an arborist including tree protection methodologies, will be provided in support of the substantive application. It is not anticipated that removal of any street trees will be required to enable the Project.

Overall, it is anticipated that the Project will be **consistent** with Chapter E17.

#### 4.6.6 E23 Signs

The objectives and policies of this Chapter seek to manage the appropriateness of comprehensive development signage, including maintaining traffic and pedestrian safety, historic heritage values, and the visual amenity values of buildings and the surrounding environment.

Comprehensive development signage will likely be required as part of the Project, and further details will be provided with the substantive application, including assessment in relation to traffic and pedestrian safety, visual amenity, and historic heritage values of the surrounding area.

Overall, it is anticipated that the Project will be **consistent** with Chapter E23.

#### 4.6.7 E25 Noise and Vibration

The objectives and policies for noise and vibration seek to ensure that people are protected from unreasonable levels of noise and vibration. Construction activities that cannot meet noise and vibration standards are enabled, while controlling duration, frequency and timing to manage adverse effects.

A comprehensive noise and vibration assessment will be provided in support of the application, including provision of a draft Construction Noise and Vibration Management Plan (**CNVMP**). If required, mitigation measures will be proposed to minimise and manage adverse effects arising from construction noise and

vibration. Heritage effects will also be addressed in this regard, including assessment of vibration having regard to the adjacent historic heritage place (AUSA building).

Overall, it is anticipated that the Project will be **consistent** with Chapter E25.

#### 4.6.8 E40 Temporary Activities

The objectives and policies for temporary activities are enabling for such activities to occur but seek to ensure that adverse effects on the environment are minimised, managed and mitigated.

In the context of this Project, the temporary construction activities will enable the construction of the proposed Student Union and Library building, providing for the social wellbeing of students and staff on campus, and the wider community. The Project will also reinforce the University as a leading tertiary education provider offering high quality student amenity facilities and will ultimately contribute to the vibrancy of the City Campus. As set out in this assessment and the Referral Application, temporary construction activities will be managed with best practicable measures in response to, and in recognition of, surrounding site conditions, including through the implementation of a CNVMP and other construction management plans. Further details on management measures will be provided with the substantive application.

Overall, it is anticipated that the Project will be **consistent** with Chapter E40.

#### 4.6.9 H8 Business – City Centre Zone

The objectives of the Business – City Centre Zone provide for development that is of a form, scale and design quality so that centres are reinforced as focal points for the community, with development positively contributing towards planned future form and quality, creating well-functioning urban environments and a sense of place. The objectives also seek to ensure that the city centre is an attractive place to live, learn, work and visit with 24-hour vibrant and vital business, education, entertainment and retail areas. The policy framework reinforces these objectives.

The Project is considered to be consistent with the policy framework as the Project provides for a high-quality built form that positively contributes to the visual quality and interest of the surrounding streets and public open spaces, representing an emerging distinctive built character of the City Campus with the indicative building design drawing on design cues from the Hiwa Recreation Centre while maintaining a distinctive form. The Project is located in a strategic position to meet a functional need of the University, and manages the height and form of the building through a terraced response, and human level street design with a permeable floor plate promoting pedestrian connectivity and improving the overall pedestrian experience on the City Campus. While there is anticipated to be a minor non-compliance to the sunlight access standards to Rangipuke Albert Park, these will be minor in scale and duration.

A comprehensive assessment against the objectives and policies of Chapter H8 will be provided in support of the substantive application. At this preliminary stage, it is considered that the Project will be **consistent** with Chapter H8.

#### 4.6.10 I207 Learning Precinct

The Learning Precinct provisions apply to the tertiary education hub in the City Centre and guide the form and qualities of development associated with tertiary education and related activities. These provisions are, in our view, of most relevance to the consideration of this Project under the AUP-OP.

The Project is considered to accord with the objectives and policies of the Precinct by providing for the efficient operation of the existing campus, by respecting the built form and amenity that contributes to the character of the precinct. Notably, the policies seek to protect historic heritage *where appropriate* (I207.3(2)). In this instance, and for the reasons set out within this assessment and the Referral Application, it is considered that the protection of historic heritage is outweighed by the significant benefits of the Project, and protection of the historic heritage of the existing Student Union building is not appropriate.

The Project provides for a high-quality built form that interfaces appropriately with the public realm with a permeable ground plate allowing for interaction with the street and providing for an improved and well-designed pedestrian experience with a variety of pedestrian connections and improved plaza area. The design of the building will also be sympathetic to, and respect, the historic heritage value of the adjacent AUSA building.

At this stage, it is considered that the Project will be **consistent** with Chapter I207.

#### 4.7 Auckland Plan 2050

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The Auckland Plan 2050 is Auckland's long-term spatial plan, required by legislation to contribute to the region's social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing. The Plan directs growth toward a quality compact urban form, concentrating intensification within the existing urban area, particularly in locations with good access to public transport, walking and cycling, and within reasonable proximity to services, employment and open space. The city centre is identified as the region's primary employment hub, accommodating nearly 40% of all advanced sector jobs in Auckland. Good design integrated across all scales of development is identified as integral to how the city functions and to the overall wellbeing of Aucklanders.

It is considered that the Project will assist in meeting the aims of the Auckland Plan, creating an attractive and well-functioning facility that responds to the changing needs of the University, including the ability to provide attractive learning facilities that can utilise modern technological changes to attract and retain talent within Auckland. The Project will contribute to a compact urban form and is well-located for active and public transport modes, including integration with the new CRL with its proximity to Te Waihorotiu Station. For these reasons, it is considered that the Project will assist with the overall vision of the Auckland Plan 2050.

#### 4.8 Auckland City Centre Masterplan 2020

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The City Centre Masterplan (**CCMP**) is a key guiding document for the Auckland Council, setting the strategic direction for the city over the next 20 years. It applies the Auckland Plan to the city centre through ten key outcomes, to be delivered through eight transformational moves and Access for Everyone. The overarching aim is to shape a city centre that is more connected, liveable, sustainable, and economically prosperous by using urban design interventions to improve public life, movement, and built form.

The Learning Quarter is one of the eight transformational moves and seeks to improve the physical connections between the universities, the city centre, and the city fringe by fully integrating the Learning Quarter into the heart of the city. The vision includes creating a more attractive environment for students, Aucklanders, and visitors, with better connections between university facilities, improved accessibility by active and public transport modes.

It is considered that the Project assists in the overall vision of the CCMP.

## 5.0 Assessment of Effects

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This section is provided in accordance with Section 13(4)(h) of the FTAA. This requires that applications include a description of the anticipated and known effects of the project on the environment, and the significance of any adverse effects.

The key potential adverse effects of the Project (and their significance) are summarised below and should be reviewed in conjunction with the supporting technical expert memoranda accompanying this application.

### 5.1 Economics

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The Economic Impact Assessment confirms that the Student Centre and Library Project will generate substantial regional economic benefits, both during construction and once the development is fully established, with potential for benefits to extend to a national level. The one-time construction and development activity is estimated to contribute approximately \$463 million in GDP for the Auckland region over the life of the five-year development timeframe, supporting a total of 3,471 FTE years over the five-year development period. These effects represent a significant stimulus to Auckland's construction, engineering and professional services sectors.

In addition to the direct quantitative benefits outlined above, the Project is also considered to give rise to several qualitative economic benefits, including direct and flow-on operational economic benefits. These include enabling efficient utilisation of existing education infrastructure, supporting international education growth in alignment with the International Education Going for Growth Plan 2025, supporting student productivity, retention, and academic outcomes, and enhancing international education exports and associated expenditure.

As addressed in Section 4.1 above, the Project will also contribute to a well-functioning urban environment and represents a major upgrade of existing infrastructure for the Auckland region, improving long-term asset resilience and reducing future economic costs through replacement of the ageing and structurally constrained Student Union complex. Investment in the Project reduces the risk of escalating future capital and operational costs and represents a more efficient use of the University's resources over the long term.

Relying on the Economic Impact Assessment, the Project is considered to deliver significant economic benefits, with strong positive effects for employment and regional growth.

### 5.2 Historic Heritage

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The Project includes the demolition of the existing Student Union complex (Category B Historic Heritage Place).

As noted above, demolition of the existing Student Union complex will generate a significant adverse effect on the complex (as a Category B Historic Heritage Place) that cannot be avoided. Nevertheless, the significant regional and national benefits of the Project as addressed in the Referral Application are considered to outweigh the loss of that complex and its heritage values.

Should the Project be referred, measures will be proposed in the substantive application which acknowledge the heritage values of the existing Student Union complex, including appropriate documentation. A comprehensive heritage assessment of the effects of the Project on the Student Union complex's heritage values will be included with the substantive application.

### 5.3 Landscape and Visual Amenity

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A preliminary Urban Design and Landscape Preliminary Assessment and Graphic Supplement has been prepared by Boffa Miskell in support of this Referral Application. This assessment concludes that the Project will avoid significant adverse effects and result in positive effects on the built form character of the Learning Precinct and the wider city centre. With reference to the preliminary Urban Design and Landscape Preliminary Assessment:

- The new Student Centre and Library building's indicative bulk and massing has been carefully managed to sit comfortably alongside surrounding buildings while creating strong frontage relationships to Princes Street, Alfred Street, and the expanded plaza. Pedestrian amenity and vitality are achieved through active ground floor uses including food and beverage and student focussed retail and amenity, with a highly porous building base providing multiple entries and a generous atrium. Together with the expanded public spaces, the Project creates a high-quality pedestrian environment on all four sides of the Site.
- The medium-rise scale and architecturally distinctive form of the new Student Centre and Library are considered to contribute positively to the urban landscape of the campus and city centre, complementing both the built environment and open space qualities of the area, including Rangipuke Albert Park.
- The new building may shade a small portion of Rangipuke Albert Park, and the admission of sunlight to this area is protected under the AUP-OP. A comprehensive set of shading diagrams will be provided with the substantive application, and it is noted that preliminary shading indicates that the non-compliance is minor in both scale and length of time.

Overall, and relying on the conclusions of the preliminary Urban Design and Landscape Preliminary Assessment, the Project's adverse effects on visual amenity and landscape are considered to be less than minor. Additionally, a number of positive visual and landscape effects will arise as further outlined in **Section 5.8**.

### 5.4 Construction Effects

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Earthworks will be required to form the sub-basement level of the new Student Centre and Library and to form topography suitable for building platforms. During construction, erosion and sediment control measures will be utilised to minimise any adverse environmental effects. All proposed sediment and erosion control measures will be designed in accordance with the Auckland Council's GD05 Erosion and Sediment Control Guide. Any adverse construction effects, including dust, noise and vibration, and traffic effects can be appropriately managed through the implementation of management plans and standard conditions of consent, which will be included as part of the substantive application.

On this basis, it is considered that any adverse effects associated with construction effects can be managed such that they will be less than minor.

### 5.5 Infrastructure and Natural Hazards

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A preliminary review of the serviceability of the Project along with natural hazard risks has been undertaken by Beca.

The assessment makes the following key conclusions:

- A review of the Site's serviceability indicates that existing stormwater, wastewater, water, power, communications, and gas infrastructure is already in place, with no evident constraints that would limit the Project. Available services appear adequate to support the proposed works without requiring significant upgrades.
- Assessment of natural hazards risk, which covered coastal erosion and inundation, flooding, and slope instability, indicates that the Site is not exposed to any coastal-related hazards, and the likelihood of flooding or landslides is considered low. Accordingly, no natural hazard constraints are expected to affect the Project.

Relying on the conclusions of the Civil Engineering Services and Natural Hazard Risk Memorandum, it is considered that effects in relation to infrastructure and natural hazard risk will be less than minor.

## 5.6 Cultural Values

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A summary of consultation undertaken with iwi on this Project to date is included at **Attachment 7** to the Referral Application. Engagement with Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei and Ngāti Tamaterā is ongoing, and the University is committed to working with mana whenua on an ongoing basis.

In addition, a Cultural Concept Direction has been prepared in partnership with Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei. The Cultural Concept Direction will continue to inform the detailed design of the Project.

A letter of support for the Project from Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei has also been obtained.

## 5.7 Archaeology

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A memorandum addressing the archaeology effects of the Project has been prepared by Clough and Associates and is included at **Attachment 10** to the Referral Application. The Memorandum notes that the proposed works for the Project will fall within the recorded extent of the Albert Barracks (R11/833). The Memorandum concludes that effects on the archaeological site will likely be minor given that:

- Some excavation of the Albert Barracks has already occurred during the demolition of the Maidment Theatre and works within the basement level of the existing Student Union. In Clough and Associates opinion, further excavation works resulting from the Project are unlikely to impact any archaeological deposits.
- The requirement for archaeological investigations to be undertaken by a suitably qualified expert will be proposed as part of the application for archaeological authority. This will appropriately manage any effects of the Project on the archaeological site.

A detailed archaeology assessment will be submitted with the substantive application. At this stage, it is considered that effects in relation to archaeology will be minor.

## 5.8 Positive Effects

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The Project will deliver a number of positive effects as outlined throughout this assessment. These are summarised as follows:

- **Significant economic stimulus during construction and development**, which is anticipated to contribute approximately \$463 million in GDP to the Auckland regional economy over the five-year development

timeframe, supporting 3,471 FTE years of employment across the construction, engineering, and professional services sectors.

- **Contribution to a well-functioning urban environment** with the Site being well-located relative to existing and planned public transport, including proximity to the Waihorotiu CRL Station. The Project additionally provides positive urban design outcomes, with architecturally distinctive form contributing positively to the urban landscape of the campus and city centre, complementing both the built environment and open space qualities of the area, including Rangipuke Albert Park.
- **Enhanced pedestrian amenity and connectivity** with active ground floor uses and a highly porous building base creating a high-quality pedestrian environment across the Site and providing a natural connection through the Site and beyond.
- **Efficient utilisation of key infrastructure**, with the Project replacing the existing Student Union complex which was designed for approximately 7,000 students and is now functionally obsolete, with a current student population of approximately 47,000 students. A new, purpose-built facility will efficiently and effectively provide a facility able to meet the needs of the current and future student population.
- **Increase in attractiveness to international students**, directly supporting the Government's International Going for Growth Plan 2025 target to double the value of international education from \$3.6b to \$7.2b by 2034, and thereby sustaining foreign exchange inflows and demand across accommodation, retail and amenity, hospitality, and transport in the city centre.
- **Improve student outcomes and long-term productivity** through the creation of modern study spaces, digital infrastructure, and improved student services. The Project has the potential to improve learning outcomes and completion rates, delivering long-term productivity gains to the regional and national economy through a more skilled workforce.
- **Contribution to a 'sticky' campus**, increasing the number of students remaining on campus throughout the day, supporting retail and amenity, hospitality, and service businesses in the city centre, and reinforcing its role as a nationally and regionally significant hub and strengthening linkages between education, employment, innovation, and cultural amenities.
- **Long-term asset resilience** through the replacement of an ageing building with a modern facility, reducing potential long-term maintenance and operational costs and representing a more economically efficient use of the University's resources over the long-term.
- **Improved environmental performance** with the new building proposed to be designed to a standard that does not preclude achieving a 6 Star Greenstar Rating. The existing building performs poorly from an environmental perspective. Further, the Project will provide modern end-of-trip facilities aiming to encourage active and sustainable transport modes.
- **Alignment with cultural values**, with a Concept Direction having been developed in partnership with Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei informing the detailed design and reflecting the cultural and physical context of the Site.

## 5.9 Mitigation

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This memorandum, and the supporting assessments from technical experts, identify a range of measures to address potential adverse effects of the Project and ensure that, as far as practicable, those adverse effects are avoided, remedied or mitigated. This includes the application of standard and well-established

mitigation measures to manage the effects of this Project, such as the preparation and implementation of management plans to address the effects of construction including noise and vibration, traffic and pedestrian safety, and dust generation. It is considered that mitigation measures recommended to address the effects of the Project can be incorporated into the design of the Project, or through conditions of consent and monitoring proposed as part of the substantive application.

## 6.0 Conclusion

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At this stage, it is considered that there are no planning related reasons why the Project could not proceed under the FTAA. Through strong design and technical input, the Project can achieve a built form and function that positively impacts existing and future members of the University community, and the wider Auckland region, while ensuring that, as far as practicable, any adverse effects of the Project on the environment are appropriately avoided, remedied, or mitigated. The adverse effect of demolishing the existing Student Union complex cannot be avoided; however, the significant regional and national benefits of the Project are considered to outweigh that adverse effect, such that referral of the Project (and ultimately, granting of a substantive application) under the FTAA is warranted.

A full and comprehensive Assessment of Environmental Effects will be undertaken as part of the substantive application.