File ref: 26-BRF-01545/ FTAA-2603-1193

16 June 2026

Simon Neale
University of Auckland (the applicant)
Email: [redacted]

C/o Francelle Lupis
Greenwood Roche (the agent)
Email: [redacted]

Dear Simon

Section 28 – Notice of Decisions on the referral application for the University of Auckland Student Centre and Library project under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024

This notice of decisions is for a referral application received from the University of Auckland (the applicant) for the University of Auckland Student Centre and Library project (the project) under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (the Act).

Project details

The project involves the construction of a new student centre and library within the existing University of Auckland campus. The project area is located on the corner of Princes Street and Alfred Street, Auckland City. The project area includes a recorded archaeological site, being the Albert Barracks Wall.

Key components of the project include:

a. the demolition of the existing Student Union complex
b. construction of a new building that will accommodate:
    i. a range of high-quality student study, teaching and learning, social and event spaces and food, beverage and retail
    ii. a new library; and
    iii. a visitor hub containing welcoming spaces and an exhibition space
c. landscaping, and a large-scale public plaza which will serve as a gathering and event space
d. supporting infrastructure and associated works including earthworks and servicing.

The applicant seeks the following approvals via the fast-track approvals process for the project:

a. resource consents under the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) as described in section 42(4)(a) of the Act
b. archaeological authority under the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014 as described in section 42(4)(i) of the Act.

Statutory framework for referral applications
The purpose of the Act is to facilitate the delivery of infrastructure and development projects with significant regional or national benefits.

The project can only be accepted if the Minister for Infrastructure (the Minister) is satisfied the criteria in section 22 are met, which includes being satisfied the project is an infrastructure or development project that would have significant regional or national benefits and referring the project to the fast-track approvals process would facilitate the project, including by enabling it to be processed in a more timely and cost effective way than under normal processes, and is unlikely to materially affect the efficient operation of the fast-track approvals process.

Under section 21(3) of the Act, the Minister must decline a referral application if:

- the Minister is satisfied that the project does not meet the criteria in section 22
- the Minister is satisfied that the project involves an ineligible activity
- the Minister considers they do not have adequate information to inform the decision.

Additionally, the Minister has the discretion to decline a referral application for any other reason, even if the project meets the criteria outlined in section 22 of the Act.

Decision on referral application
The Minister has decided to accept the referral application under section 21(1)(c) and refer the whole project to the fast-track approvals process under section 26(2)(a). The Minister is satisfied that the project meets the criteria in section 22 of the Act, for the reasons detailed below.

Reasons for accepting referral application
The Minister is satisfied the project:

a. is an infrastructure or development project that would have significant regional or national benefits; and
b. referring the project to the fast-track approvals process –
    i. would facilitate the project, including by enabling it to be processed in a more timely and cost-effective way than under normal processes; and
    ii. is unlikely to materially affect the efficient operation of the fast-track approvals process.

Specifically, the Minister is satisfied the project meets the criteria in section 22 of the Act because:

a. the project is an infrastructure or development project that would have significant regional or national benefits because it:
    i. will enable the continued functioning of existing regionally or nationally significant infrastructure [s22(2)(a)(ii)] as it:
        - will ensure the University can continue to operate and provide services and provide for the changing needs and demands of current and future populations
        - can enable the continued functioning of existing regionally or nationally significant infrastructure, noting that Universities fall within the definition of ‘additional infrastructure’ within the National Policy Statement for Infrastructure

- is considered critical to accommodate current student demand and future growth and will play a key role in enhancing the student experience, fostering academic success, and supporting research and collaboration, thereby contributing to the University's regional and national impact.

ii. will contribute to a well-functioning urban environment (within the meaning of policy 1 of the National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020) [s22(2)(a)(iii)] as it:

- will be highly accessible to existing and planned public transport links, along with existing cycleways and shared paths
- will deliver positive public realm, street activation, and campus connectivity outcomes

iii. will deliver significant economic benefits [s22(2)(a)(iv)] as it:

- will contribute approximately $463.3 million in GDP for the Auckland region over the five-year development timeframe, supporting a total of 3,471 full-time equivalent (FTE) years over that period
- will help sustain and potentially expand the University's already significant contribution to the Auckland regional economy and New Zealand's national education and knowledge economy

iv. is consistent with local or regional planning documents, including spatial strategies [s22(2)(a)(x)] as it:

1. aligns with the Auckland Regional Policy Statement and Auckland Unitary Plan aim to shape a city centre that is more connected, liveable, sustainable, and economically prosperous and seeks to improve the physical connections between the university, the city centre, and the city fringe
- aligns with The Auckland Plan 2050 Spatial Plan which directs growth toward a quality compact urban form, concentrating intensification within the existing urban area.

b. the fast-track approvals process would facilitate the project, including by enabling it to be processed in a more timely and cost-effective way than under normal processes because:

i. securing the requisite approvals through fast-track instead of through the standard RMA and HNZPTA processes will enable the project to be progressed in a more timely and cost-effective way

ii. given the scale of the project, the applicant anticipates that an application for resource consent would be notified under the RMA, at least on a limited basis – notification of the application would substantially increase the potential for delays to the commencement of the project

iii. obtaining approvals under the Act could result in the project being approved up to three years earlier than it might otherwise be under the RMA.

c. it is unlikely to materially affect the efficient operation of the fast-track approvals process because:

i. the only approvals being sought are resource consent and an archaeological authority reducing the complexity of the project

ii. the substantive application for the project will be supported by comprehensive technical assessments.

The Minister is satisfied there is no reason they must decline the project under section 21(3) of the Act. The Minister is also satisfied there is no reason to decline the project under section 21(4) of the Act.

Specified matters for accepted referral application

1. University of Auckland, who lodged the referral application, as the person who is authorised to lodge a substantive application for the project under section 27(2) of the Act.

2. Under section 27(3)(b)(i) of the Act, a deadline of two years from the date of issue of this letter applies for lodging the substantive application.

3. Pursuant to section 27(3)(b)(ii), the following information must be submitted with the substantive application lodged for the project:
    a. a built heritage assessment that identifies and assesses the effects of the project and the demolition of the existing Student Union Building. Specifically, the assessment shall include:
        i. consideration of the objectives and policies of the Auckland Unitary Plan and the identification of any effects on the amenity, character and historic fabric of the City Centre.
        ii. identification of any effects, including shading, by new buildings on adjacent scheduled historic heritage places, including their settings, and their historic heritage values.

Under section 28 of the Act, the Ministry for the Environment must also give written notice of decisions made by the Minister on an accepted referral application to the parties specified in Appendix 1 of this letter.

If you have any queries about this notice of decisions, please email *referral@fasttrack.govt.nz* and include the name of the lead contact – Rebecca Burton.

If you have any queries about the substantive process, please email *contact@fasttrack.govt.nz* or phone 0800 FASTRK (0800 225 537).

Yours sincerely



Stephanie Frame
Manager – Fast-track Operations

Appendix 1: Section 28 – Notice of Minister's decision on accepted referral application

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Section 28(1)(a) – The applicant	University of Auckland

Section 28(1)(ii) – Anyone invited to comment on the application	
Relevant local authorities	Auckland Council
Relevant portfolio Ministers	Minister for the Environment Minister for Māori Crown Relations: Te Arawhiti Minister for Māori Development Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage Minister of Education Minister for Tertiary Education
Relevant administering agencies	Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga
The Māori groups under s17(d)	Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Whātua Ngāti Whātua o Ōrākei Trust Ngāi Tai ki Tāmaki Trust Te Kawerau Iwi Settlement Trust Ngāti Tamaoho Settlement Trust Ngāti Maru Rūnanga Trust Ngāti Pāoa Iwi Trust Te Patukirikiri Iwi Trust Ngāti Tamaterā Treaty Settlement Trust Te Ākitai Waiohua Waka Taua Inc Te Ākitai Waiohua Settlement Trust Ngāti Te Ata Claims Support Whānau Trust Hako Tūpuna Trust Tūpuna Taonga o Tāmaki Makaurau Trust/ Whenua Haumi Roroa o Tāmaki Makaurau Limited Partnership Taonga o Marutūāhu Trustee Limited/ Marutūāhu Rōpū Limited Partnership Ngāti Koheriki Claims Committee Te Ahiwaru Waiohua
Any other persons under s17(5)	N/A

Section 28(2) – Other parties for an accepted referral application	
The Panel Convener	Including all the information received by the Minister as required by section 28(4).
Any iwi authorities or Treaty settlement entities (other than those that must be notified as identified above) that the Minister considers have an interest in the matter	No additional iwi authorities or Treaty settlement entities have been identified beyond those listed above.
Environmental Protection Authority (EPA)	Including all the information received by the Minister as required by section 28(4).
Relevant administering agencies	As identified above.