

# **Downtown Carpark Site Development.**

**Precinct Properties New Zealand  
Ltd.**

**Landscape Assessment.**

November 2025

**Isthmus.**



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*Cover image: Sourced from the 'Resource Consent Document D – Architecture & Landscape Report (October 2025). Prepared by Warren and Mahoney.*

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<sup>1</sup> Quality Assurance review undertaken on previous draft report by Brad Coombs, Isthmus.

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### **Appendix A – Methodology**

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### **Appendix C – Relevant Statutory Provisions and Other Matters**

### **Appendix D – Visual Study (*refer separate document prepared by Warren and Mahoney Ltd*)**

## INTRODUCTION

### Background

- 1 This application is for a proposed mixed use building development by Precinct Properties New Zealand Ltd (**'Precinct'**) at 2 Lower Hobson Street, Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland (**'the site'**). The proposal provides an integrated design approach with a number of built elements, which includes two towers, a podium and public realm design, which will enable transformative outcomes to downtown Auckland.
- 2 Isthmus Group Ltd (**'IGL'**) has been engaged by Precinct (via the project management team at RCP) to undertake a landscape assessment of the proposal. The purpose of the report is to support a substantive application under the Fast-track Approvals Act (**'FTAA'**) process.
- 3 The key matters discussed within this report relate to the quality and amenity values of the proposal's built form and character in this central city urban landscape. This includes the design of the buildings and public realm (landscape) components, and assessment on any potential visual amenity effects of the proposal in relation to the localised streetscape and wider environment, including positive effects. It also assesses the design's appropriateness in relation to the site's location proximate to the Auckland waterfront and harbour edge.
- 4 The project has been designed by the Warren and Mahoney Ltd architecture and landscape architecture team, as part of a wider project team which includes McIndoe Urban and other technical specialists.
- 5 Previous design iterations of the proposal have been subject to review by Eke Panuku's<sup>2</sup> Technical Advisory Group (**'TAG'**) on four separate occasions, working through the refinement of the design and providing general support, overall<sup>3</sup>. Formal reviews were held on 14 April 2023 (TAG 01), 19 May 2023 (TAG 02), 28 July 2023 (TAG 03) and 10 May 2024 (TAG 04). Informal design workshops were also held on 26 January and 15 March 2024. The design principles applied to the proposal and the review commentary from TAG remains relevant to current design and this FTAA application.
- 6 This report is supported by a graphic attachments document which includes a series of panoramic photographs and visual simulations which provide site context (refer **Appendix B** to this report). A series of design documents

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<sup>2</sup> Now Auckland Urban Design Office.

<sup>3</sup> Within the TAG Review (04) Recommendations Note (dated 10<sup>th</sup> May 2024), the members stated that they consider *"...that the design process had reached a point where all of the major urban design issues have been convincingly addressed by the consultants, and that the design proposals now demonstrate a high level of urban design quality and resolution."*



prepared by Warren and Mahoney ('WAM') provide the relevant design drawings and rationale for the proposal. These documents are referred to as necessary throughout this report<sup>4</sup> and are included as part of this resource consent application.

- 7 Also included as part of this application is a separate **Urban Design Assessment** which has been prepared by McIndoe Urban. That assessment and this landscape assessment report are complementary and address similar issues when assessing the proposal. This is outlined further below.

## Qualifications and experience

- 8 This landscape assessment has been prepared by Matthew Jones.
- 9 I am a Principal landscape architect at Isthmus Group Ltd, based in Tāmaki Makaurau, Auckland. I have 20 years' experience working on a range of design, landscape planning and management, and urban design projects. I have a Bachelor of Landscape Architecture from Unitec, and am a registered landscape architect with Tuia Pito Ora, the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects ('NZILA'). I was a past member of the National NZILA Board and previously held the position as Chair of the Auckland Branch. I am also a member of the Resource Management Law Association and have been an appointed panellist on the Auckland Urban Design Panel (AUDP) since 2017.
- 10 My experience includes projects at varying scales that have required documentation to assist resource consent, structure plan and plan change applications, and district plan and policy review. My input has included design, masterplanning, and landscape and visual assessments. Project types I have been involved with include:
- (a) Resource consent for numerous building developments<sup>5</sup> across Auckland including within the city centre, Takapuna, Albany, Hobsonville Point, Parnell and Mt Eden;
  - (b) Town centre spatial plans, masterplanning and rejuvenation projects;
  - (c) Transport infrastructure projects, including NoR designations;
  - (d) Energy generation and transmission infrastructure of various scales;

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<sup>4</sup> Prepared by Warren & Mahoney, dated October 2025 (referenced within this report as *WAM Document x*, etc)

- Document A – Proposed Architectural Drawings,
- Document B – Proposed Landscape Drawings,
- Document C – Existing & Demolition Drawings,
- Document D – Architecture & Landscape Report,
- Document E – Shading Analysis.

<sup>5</sup> For a range of (i) mixed-use, (ii) residential (including apartment buildings and terrace housing), and (iii) commercial development typologies.

- (e) Subdivision design for residential, industrial and commercial development within both rural and urban environments;
  - (f) Projects which include integrated catchment management design and ecological enhancement; and
  - (g) Parks and open spaces.
- 11 Although this matter is not before the Environment Court, I confirm that I have read the Code of Conduct for expert witnesses as contained in section 9 of the Environment Court Practice Note 2023. I agree to comply with that Code. My qualifications as an expert are set out above. I am satisfied that the matters which are addressed in this report are within my area of expertise, except where I state that I am relying on information provided by another person or expert. I have not omitted to consider material facts known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions expressed.

## METHODOLOGY

- 12 This assessment is consistent with the concepts, principles, and assessment approaches outlined in *‘Te Tangi a te Manu: Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines’, Tuia Pito Ora New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects, 2022’*. The specific method is tailored to the nature of the project, landscape setting, and the regulatory context including the FTAA. A methodology statement is attached as **Appendix A**.
- 13 In summary, the method entails:
- (a) An outline and description of aspects of the **proposal**,
  - (b) Review of the relevant<sup>6</sup> **planning context** (including objectives and policies) to help frame the assessment,
  - (c) Description of relevant attributes of the **existing environment**,
  - (d) Identification of **key matters** with regard to the proposal, provisions, and context,
  - (e) Assessment of **effects** with respect to the key matters identified, including **visual amenity**, and
  - (f) Conclusion.
- 14 The method for preparing the visual simulations and the panoramic context photos is included within the A3 graphic attachments document (**Appendix B**). That method is consistent with the *NZILA Best Practice Guide 10.2, Visual Simulations*.

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<sup>6</sup> Related to landscape assessment matters.

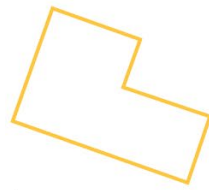
## THE PROPOSAL

- 15 The proposal is described in detail within the ‘project description’ section of the AEE prepared by Barker & Associates Ltd and depicted in the aforementioned *design documents*.
- 16 The proposal is for a comprehensive mixed-use development at 2 Lower Hobson Street in the ‘western CBD’, which will enable urban transformation in this part of Auckland city. The site has two primary street frontages, one to Lower Hobson Street to the west and the other fronting Customs Street West to the south. Through integration with existing pedestrian connections with the adjoining HSBC tower and AON House buildings to the east, the project establishes a secondary frontage and connection to Lower Albert Street.
- 17 The proposal will demolish and replace the existing Downtown Carpark ("DTC") building<sup>7</sup> and includes public realm design and modification to the podia which ‘wrap around’ the adjacent existing AON House and HSBC tower (refer **Image A** below).
- 18 The design includes two towers with commercial office, residential and hotel accommodation uses, set upon a podium which includes three separate buildings. These elements will define and activate the street edges. On the ground level is Te Urunga Hau (the Urban Room) which is a public space and includes a series of pedestrian laneways and gathering areas.
- 19 The design has been developed through collaboration with design partners Haumi and Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei.<sup>8</sup> This process has enabled a cultural narrative to be established which reflects Te Ao Māori principles, the importance of the site, its context in Tāmaki Makaurau, Auckland and the connection between the land and sea. The following statement (iho) forms part of the vision for the project:
- |                                      |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| <i>He mea whakairo, e te wai</i>     | <i>Formed by the tidal waters of the Waitematā</i> |
| <i>E te ringa</i>                    | <i>Embellished by the movements of the chisel,</i> |
| <i>E te rā, ā, ka ita i te taiao</i> | <i>Illuminated by the world of light, and</i>      |
|                                      | <i>galvanised by the natural world</i>             |
- 20 This is outlined and discussed further within Section ‘**1.4 Cultural Narrative & Hierarchy**’ of the WAM *Document D* and within the report prepared by Karl Johnstone, Director, Haumi (NZ) Ltd.

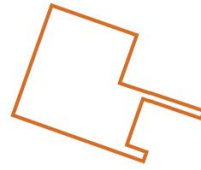
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<sup>7</sup> Together with the Lower Hobson Street pedestrian bridge and Customs Street West vehicle ramp located within part of the road reserve.

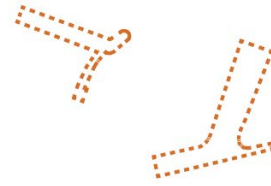
<sup>8</sup> The landscape assessment was prepared following review and understanding of the cultural narrative of the design process, documentation and outcomes sought.



Scope of Land Use consent application comprising 2 contiguous sites - Downtown Carpark & Aon House



Approximate scope of physical works / demolition scope within the site boundary



Additional demolition scope beyond the Land Use application boundary



**Image A:** Site extent (not to scale).  
(Sourced from the WAM Document D – Section 1.1).

- 21 The following aspects, in summary, are relevant to landscape assessment:

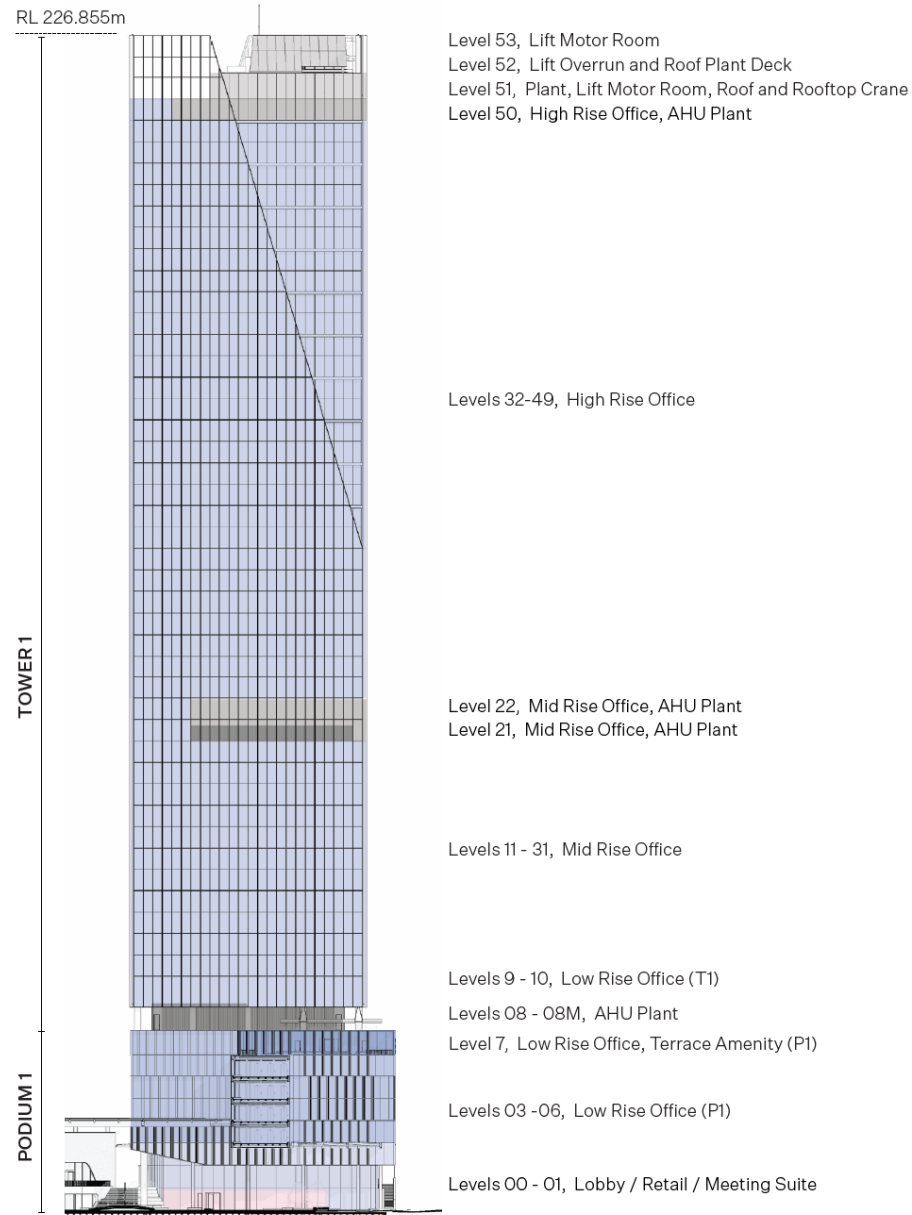
### Building elements

- 22 The design proposes two individual towers, namely T1 and T2 set upon the podium, and above four basement levels (plus a subfloor) which includes car parking, bicycle parking, loading docks, residential storage, generators, plant rooms and service areas. These buildings have different heights and are offset from each other (e.g. T1 is setback further than T2 from the harbour and M Social building to the north).

## Towers

### (a) T1 – Tower 1

Tower T1 is a 55 level (including the podium) office building which is RL226.855m in height (to the parapet) set upon the 7 level podium building P1. It has 42 floors of office space (levels 9 – 50) with Levels 50 – 53 containing Plant and Lift overrun. Refer **Image B** below.

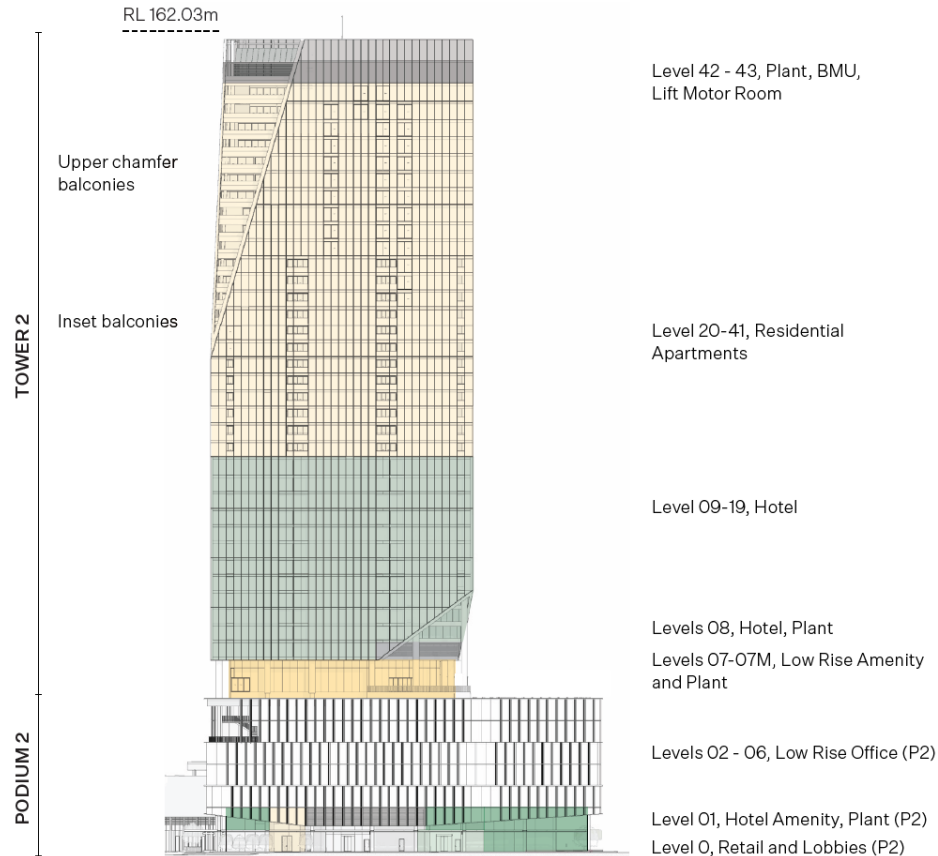


**Image B:** Tower 1 Elevation Diagram (not to scale).  
(Sourced from the WAM Document D – Section 3.2).

### (b) T2 – Tower 2

Tower T2 is a 45 level (including the podium) building configured as a mixed-use building with 12 levels of hotel and 22 levels of apartments. It is RL162.03m high (to the parapet). It is set upon the podium building P2. Residential amenity is located on the rooftop of P2 (Level 07) and hotel amenity is located on Level 01 and Level 08. Refer **Image C** below.





**Image C: Tower 2 Elevation Diagram (not to scale).**  
(Sourced from the WAM Document D – Section 3.3).

### (c) Building Form

The towers have a common architectural language with irregular shapes which have been designed as complementary, slender forms. The design strategy has been informed by the cultural narrative and iho which has shaped the towers. This includes the distinctive chiselled / chamfered form of the upper and lower floors and corners. They are treated differently so that they are not identical but have a 'family' likeness. This chamfered form provides a connection and 'carving' toward the respective harbours to the northwest, northeast and southwest, and stepping back of these parts of the building as if 'carved by light' in response to sunlight compliance matters. It also includes vertical extension of the façades which will screen the rooftop plant elements, and the lighting of the upper 'carved' elements sought to provide contribution to the city skyline.<sup>9</sup>

The skyline chamfers for T1 are glazed façades with horizontal protrusions at two floor intervals. The upper chamfer on T2 has balconies with floors expressed and setback glazing.

<sup>9</sup> Refer images in Section 3.1 City Skyline of WAM Document D.

(d) *Materiality – Tower Façades*

Similar to the building form the materiality is designed with similar, yet not identical, façades. Tower T1 has a glazed unitised curtain wall system with vertical fins which help subtly express the verticality of the building and provide depth and shadow. T2 has a mix of recessed glazing, flush glazing, aluminium-clad solid panels and balconies (at the lower levels). T2 has a matte bronze-like tone, differentiated from the neutral palette of T1.

These matters are outlined further within the *WAM architectural documents*.

### Podium

(e) The Podium includes three separate buildings across the site (P1, P2 and P3) which provide the base of the overall development. Building P1 is at the base of Tower 1, P2 at the base of Tower 2 and P3 is a separate component (collectively known as the Podium).

(f) The Podium buildings address the street frontages to Customs Street West and Lower Hobson Street and frame an internal network of lanes and public space (Te Urunga Hau), connecting with the podiums of the existing adjacent buildings within the block (discussed further below).

(g) *P1 + P2*

Podium P1 and P2 are 7 and 6 level building components located at the base of Tower T1 and T2, respectively. They include offices on levels 02 – 07 (T1) and levels 02 – 06 (T2) and retail tenancy spaces and lobbies on their ground floor. Their design includes a glazed curtain wall design system across their façades to the street and internally to the Te Urunga Hau (refer **Image D** below). On the upper level of these respective buildings are open roof terraces (refer Section 2.10 of *WAM Document D*). On level 05 on the northwestern corner of P2 is an outdoor terrace (refer **Image E** below).

(h) *P3*

Podium P3 is a separate building component on the northern boundary of the site. It is proposed to be two occupied levels and includes retail and F&B tenancy spaces on both the ground floor and Level 01. The façades of P3 include a brick module system which includes varying surface patterns and reflectivity treatment (refer **Image E** below).



**Image D:** Render of P1<sup>10</sup> (lower right) and P2 (lower left).  
(Sourced from the WAM Document D – Section 2.8).



**Image E:** Render of P3<sup>11</sup> (lower left) and P2 (lower right).  
(Sourced from the WAM Document D – Section 2.8).

<sup>10</sup> Note, this image is for illustrative purposes only and indicates the outcome envisaged upon the Lower Hobson Street flyover removal. The flyover removal forms part of a separate consent process, and this is outlined within the AEE document.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

**Public Realm.*****Te Urunga Hau (the Urban Room).***<sup>12</sup>

- (i) The public realm design for the proposal includes Te Urunga Hau (the Urban Room) (refer **Image F** below). Te Urunga Hau provides a sheltered space and connection between the public realm of the downtown area and the internal laneways. Its design intent is to provide a connection between the land and the harbour, forming an additional public space to complement those along the waterfront, within downtown and the central city.
- (j) Te Urunga Hau is split across two levels, ground and Level 1, which provides connection through the site and access to the respective buildings.
- (k) A vehicle pick up and drop off space for the hotel is proposed on the Customs Street West street frontage.
- (l) The design includes a number of gathering / 'dwell spaces' within the laneways through site. Primary pedestrian entrances are from the northwest (Lower Hobson St) and the southwest (Customs St West), with secondary access provided from the southeast (Customs Street West) and to the east to Lower Albert Street through an existing connection.
- (m) The materials proposed include stone paving and steps, concrete planters and timber seating elements<sup>13</sup>.
- (n) The planting proposed provides an organisational function and reflects the transition from the proximate coastal location to the whenua to the south.
- (o) The meaning behind the name of **Te Urunga Hau** builds on the vision for Te Pūmanawa o Tāmaki. Urunga is interpreted as an arrival place, landing or destination, while hau is both the winds, and a metaphor for communities<sup>14</sup>.

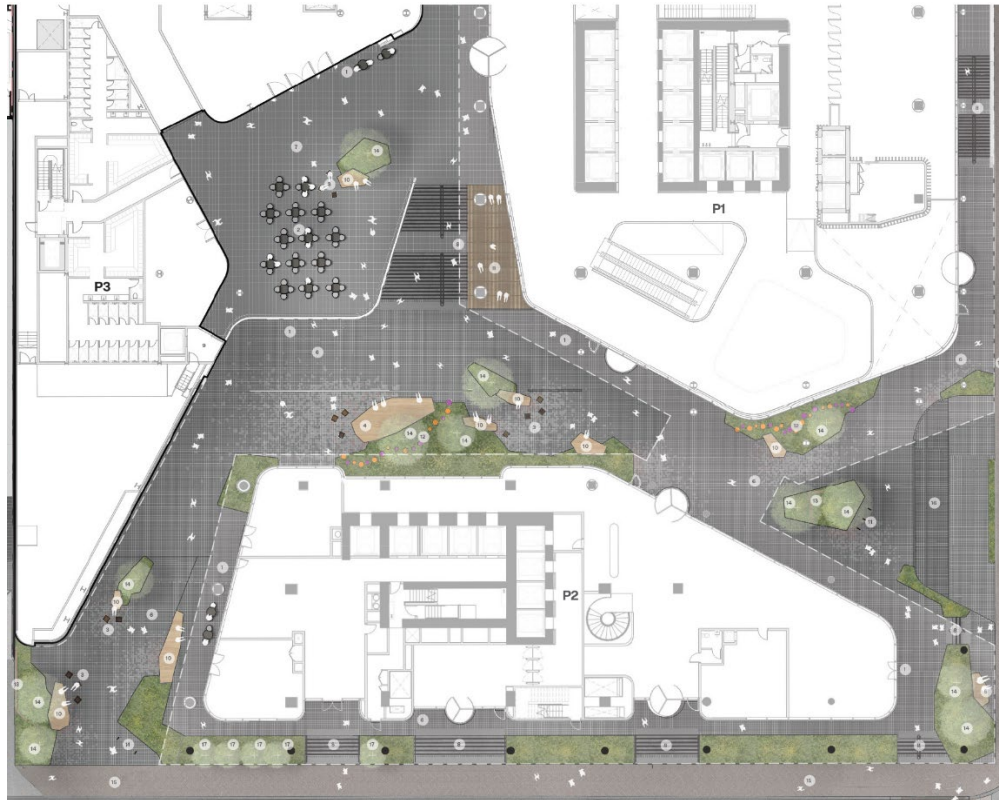
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<sup>12</sup> Refer Section 2.5 of the WAM *Document D*.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*





**Image F:** Indicative Landscape Plan of the Te Urunga Hau (not to scale, with north to left of page).  
(Sourced from the WAM Document D – Section 2.5).

- 23 Also included as part of this consent, the respective overbridges are to be demolished and removed. These are (i) pedestrian over Lower Hobson Street, and (ii) vehicular over Customs Street West (refer dashed outlines on **Image A** above).
- 24 The removal of Lower Hobson Street flyover and redesign of this area is not included as part of this consent application as it forms part of a separate consent process. The flyover is discussed further within the assessment of effects section below.
- 25 The design on this site across all components presents the opportunity to create a quality mixed use development within the western part of downtown Auckland, proximate to the waterfront and harbour edge.

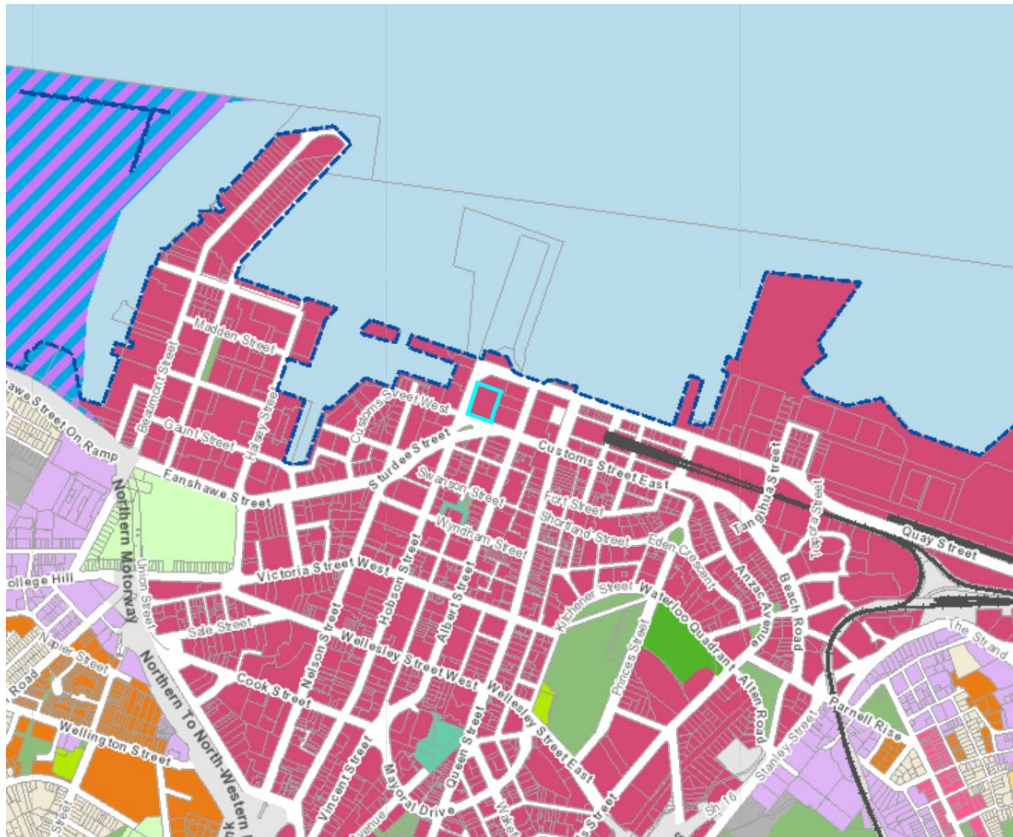
## PLANNING CONTEXT

- 26 This Project is being applied for under the FTAA. A detailed description of the application's planning context (including the relevant statutory and non-statutory provisions) that provides the framework for assessing the proposal is provided in the AEE by Barker & Associates Ltd.
- 27 Included in the planning evaluation under the FTAA are the relevant provisions of the Auckland Unitary Plan ('AUP'). The key provisions most relevant to



**landscape** matters are set out in **Appendix C** of this report for the purpose of framing the landscape assessment (for the avoidance of doubt, the appendix does not include all relevant provisions and the assessment of the proposal against the provisions is provided in the AEE report). In summary, relevant provisions include the following:

- 28 The site is zoned *Business – City Centre* (refer **Image G** below) and sits within the *Downtown West Precinct* under the AUP.



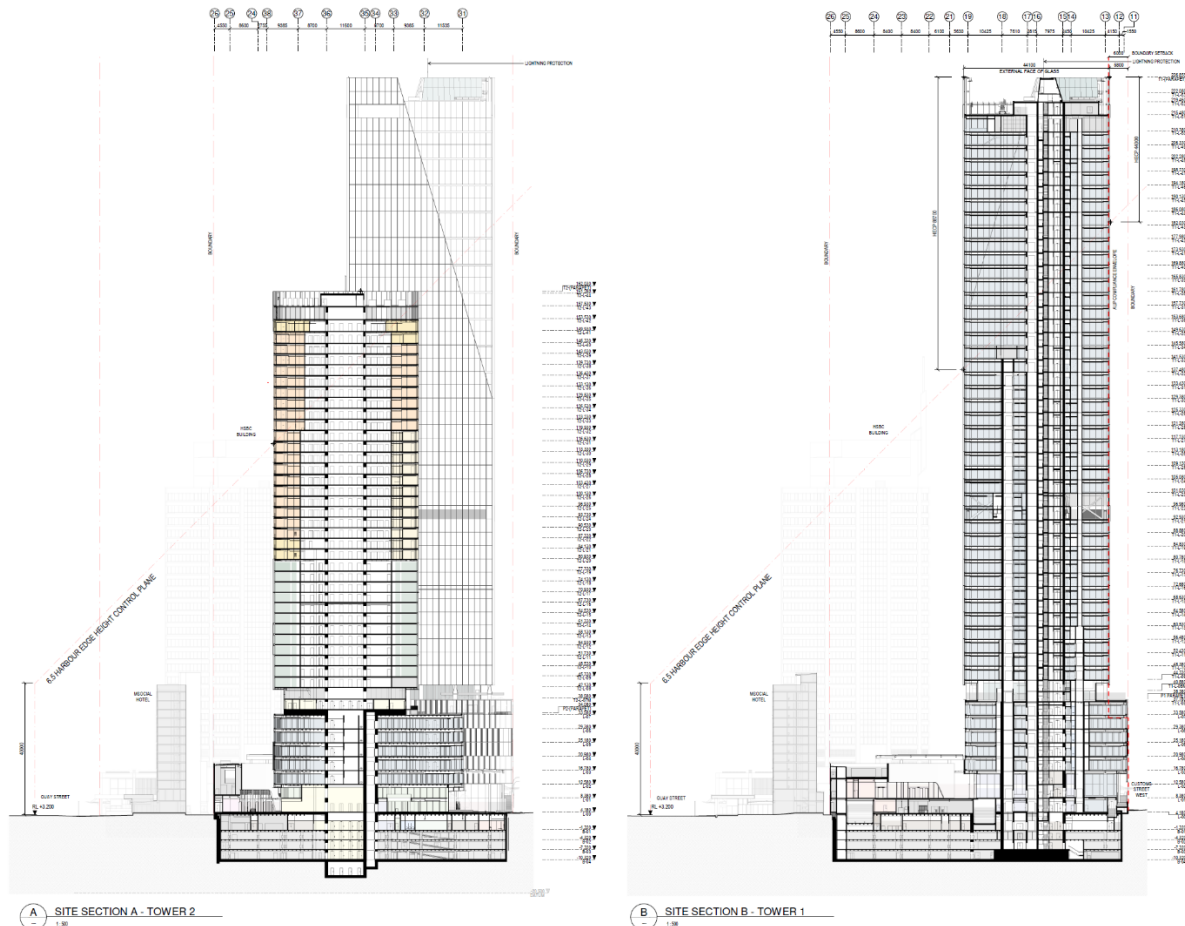
**Image G:** AUP zoning – approx. extent of site shown in light blue (not to scale).  
(Sourced from the Auckland Council Geomaps Unitary Plan Maps).

- 29 The *City Centre* zone and the *Precinct* include a series of objectives, policies and assessment criteria which are relevant to the assessment of effects related to this proposal.
- 30 The proposal is a *non-complying* activity<sup>15</sup>. In particular relation to landscape and visual effects, the proposal infringes<sup>16</sup> the provisions related to:
- a) *Harbour edge height control plane*. As illustrated on **Image H** below;
  - b) *Tower dimension, setbacks from the street and separation*;

<sup>15</sup> The infringement to the sunlight admission control to St Patricks square is a *non-complying* activity. The infringement to the *Harbour Edge Height Control Plane* is a *restricted discretionary* activity. This is discussed further within the AEE document prepared by Barker & Associates Ltd.

<sup>16</sup> An outline of the specific infringements to these provisions and other infringements / consent matters is provided within the AEE document prepared by Barker & Associates Ltd.

- c) East-west tower dimension;
- d) Building frontage alignment and height;
- e) Pedestrian connections; and
- f) Comprehensive development signage.



**Image H:** Indication of the AUP Harbour Edge Height Control Plane (not to scale).  
(Sourced from the WAM Document A FTA31-0001 Rev C).

31 **Objectives** of the *City Centre zone*<sup>17</sup> and *Downtown West Precinct*<sup>18</sup> relevant to the landscape assessment are summarised and paraphrased as follows, noting that the full provisions have been reviewed and are acknowledged in the assessment in the later sections of this report (emphasis added):

- A strong network of centres that are **attractive environments**,
- Development is integrated, contains a mix of uses and is of a **form, scale and design quality** so that centres are reinforced as focal points for the community,
- Positive contribution to the planned **future form and quality**,

<sup>17</sup> Refer *H8 Business – City Centre zone* of the AUP.

<sup>18</sup> Refer *I205 Downtown West Precinct* of the AUP.

- Development in the city centre is an attractive place to **live, work** and **visit**,
- **High quality** public open space is provided and **pedestrian connectivity**<sup>19</sup> is enhanced,
- Development managed to accommodate **growth** and **intensity** while respecting the built form and character and **waterfront setting**,
- Building heights are to realise **as much development capacity as possible**, unless qualifying matters apply, and
- Maintenance and enhancement of **built** and **streetscape character** and amenity.

32 The relevant **policies** are summarised as:

- Reinforce the **function of the city centre** as a primary location for commercial activity;
- Development of a quality and design which provides positive contribution to the **visual quality** and **interest** of streets and public open spaces and **pedestrian amenity**. An interconnected and **integrated** network of attractive streets, lanes and pedestrian connections to publicly accessible spaces are provided,
- Requirement for large scale development of a design **quality commensurate with** the **prominence** and **visual** effects,
- A range of activities that enhance the **vitality, vibrancy** and **amenity** of the city centre... including a diverse range of activities with commercial activities,
- Encourage specific outcomes in areas of the city centre that relate to **transformational development opportunities**,
- Enable **tall buildings** and the greatest **density** in the core of the city centre,
- Ensure **high quality building design** which recognises the city centre's role in reinforcing Auckland's **sense of place** and **identity**, including a thriving and authentic **mana whenua identity** that is genuinely visible throughout the city centre,
- Managing adverse effects associated with **building height** and **form** by **transitioning building height** and development densities down to neighbourhoods adjoining the city centre and harbour edge,
- Requiring the **height** and **form** of new buildings to be **complementary to existing or planned built form** and **character** of the zone and precincts;
- Manage building **scale, height, form** and **design** to avoid adverse **dominance** and/or **visual amenity** effects on streets and public open

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<sup>19</sup> This includes standard /205.6.2 in relation to pedestrian connections.

spaces and encourage **well-designed, human scale podiums** with **slender** towers above with **adequate separation** between the towers, and be complementary to the streetscape and skyline, and

- Require **highest quality** building and development in the city centre, and building frontages to streets.

### *Harbour Edge Height Control Plane (HEHCP)*

33 The purpose of the **harbour edge height control plane**<sup>20</sup> is to manage the scale of buildings at the western end of Quay Street to:

- Provide a city form which **transitions in building height** from the core of the city centre towards the waterfront;
- **Maximise visual connections** and **visual permeability** between the harbour and the city centre; and
- Reinforce the **Quay Street east west connection** running from the corner of The Strand and Quay Street to the east and Jellicoe Street in Wynyard Precinct to the west by the **alignment of tall building frontages**.

34 While the proposal is a *non-complying* activity, infringement of the HEHCP is a *restricted discretionary* activity with matters of discretion related to:<sup>21</sup>

a) The effects of **height, form** and **scale** on:

- (i) A city form which **transitions in building height** down towards the harbour edge;
- (ii) Maximising **visual connections** and **visual permeability** between the city centre and the Waitematā Harbour;

b) **Amenity effects** on the streetscape, and adjacent waterfront public open spaces.

### *Tower Dimension, Setback from the Street and Tower Separation*

35 Key provisions in relation to the maximum **tower dimension, setback from the street** and **tower separation**<sup>22</sup> are summarised as buildings which:

- are **not overly bulky** and are **slender in appearance**;
- provide adequate sunlight and daylight access to streets and public open spaces;
- provide a consistent **human-scaled edge to the street**;
- provide adequate sunlight, daylight and outlook around buildings;

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<sup>20</sup> Refer H8.6.5 of the AUP.

<sup>21</sup> Refer H8.8.1.(8A) of the AUP. These are expanded on within **Appendix C** and assessed within the *Assessment of Effects* section below.

<sup>22</sup> Refer H8.6.24 of the AUP.

- enable **visual connections** through the city centre; and
  - mitigate adverse wind effects.
- (1) On every site identified as **special height area** on Map H8.11.3 a new building or addition to an existing building must comply with the following:
- (a) the maximum plan dimension of that part of the building 28m (above mean street level) must **not exceed** and **average of 55m**; and
  - (b) the part of a building above 28m must be setback least **6m from all boundaries** of the site.

### *Maximum east-west tower dimension*

- 36 The purpose of this provision<sup>23</sup> is to ensure that high-rise buildings provide adequate physical, cultural and **visual connections** with, and **visual permeability** to, the Waitematā Harbour.

### *Building frontage alignment and height*

- 37 The purpose of this provision<sup>24</sup> is to ensure streets are well defined by **human-scaled** buildings and provide a **sense of enclosure** to enhance **pedestrian amenity**, while still providing adequate sunlight and daylight access to streets.
- 38 The **matters of discretion**<sup>25</sup> for new buildings include:
- Building **design** and **external appearance**,
  - Effects of **additional building scale** on neighbouring sites, streets and open spaces (sunlight access, **dominance**, **visual amenity** and **landscape character**), and
  - Consistency with **existing** and **planned future form** and **character**; including enabling **well-designed buildings** which have a **human scale podium** and **slender towers** above.
- 39 Relevant **assessment criteria**<sup>26</sup> within the AUP relate to:
- Building **design** and **external appearance**,
  - Contributing to a **sense of place**,
  - The **silhouette** of the building **contributing** positively to the city centre's **skyline** reinforcing the existing and planned built form and character of the city centre,

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<sup>23</sup> Refer H8.6.24A of the AUP.

<sup>24</sup> Refer H8.6.25 of the AUP.

<sup>25</sup> Refer H8.8.1 of the AUP.

<sup>26</sup> Refer H8.8.2 of the AUP.



- Creating a **positive frontage** to streets and pedestrian entrances,
- Providing **variation** in building form / visual interest,
- Integration of cultural identity,
- Managing effects due to the infringement of building height in relation to **scale, dominance, streetscape amenity, visual amenity** and **character**, and
- Consistency with existing and planned **future form** and **character**.

### *Pedestrian connections*<sup>27</sup>

40 On the subject site<sup>28</sup>, any new building is to provide north-south and east-west **pedestrian connections** across the block. The purpose of these provisions is to support (i) the transport interchange in the area and facilitate clear, unobstructed pedestrian movement, and (ii) pedestrian movement between the City Centre Core and the waterfront. Standards are summarised as:

- a) providing straight pedestrian routes between streets, with a clear pedestrian movement width of at least 5 metres;
- b) weather protection;
- c) natural daylight (glazed canopies);
- d) public access;
- e) active uses at ground floor level framing the pedestrian connection; and
- f) providing accessible, direct and unobstructed transitions between levels, including through ramps or lifts as required.

### *Comprehensive Signage*<sup>29</sup>

41 The relevant **objectives**<sup>30</sup> are summarised as (emphasis added):

- Billboards and comprehensive development signage are managed to maintain ... **visual amenity** values of buildings and the surrounding environment.

42 The relevant **policies** are summarised as:

- Enable billboards and comprehensive development signage while avoiding signs creating **clutter** or **dominating** the building or environment by controlling the size, number and location of signs; and
- Manage the effects of billboards and comprehensive development signage to maintain the values of scheduled historic heritage places and **visual amenity** values.

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<sup>27</sup> Refer I205.6.2 of the AUP and **Appendix C**.

<sup>28</sup> The block between Lower Queen Street and Lower Hobson Street.

<sup>29</sup> Refer E23 of the AUP and **Appendix C** which outlines the assessment criteria.

<sup>30</sup> In relation to landscape assessment matters.

## EXISTING ENVIRONMENT

- 43 The following section provides a description of the existing environment and attributes relevant to the landscape assessment. This is in relation to (i) the site and the localised streetscape environment, and (ii) the broader skyline (cityscape).
- 44 The site is located in downtown Auckland on part of the reclaimed land within the city seaward of Fanshawe Street. It is within a key waterfront block for the city which is proximate to the harbour edge but is setback by Hobson Street and buildings within Viaduct Harbour (west) and existing buildings fronting and along Quay Street and on Princes Wharf (north). The area has distinct characteristics including flat topography and a street grid which is interrupted on its inland side by Sturdee and Fanshawe Streets which loosely follows the alignment of the former shoreline.
- 45 Through recent improvements to the city centre, such as the Te Wānanga open space, the Quay Street cycleway and development of Commercial Bay there has been an increased connection and appreciation of Auckland's harbour.
- 46 The central city has two recognised axes:
- The harbour edge axis along Quay Street (east-west), and
  - The city-to-harbour axis along Queen Street (north-south), to which Hobson Street and Albert Street run parallel.
- 47 The site is located in a space between the two axes, west of Queen Street and between Quay Street (north) and Customs Street (south). The site's location is at the 'western corner' of the core central business district.

### The site and localised context<sup>31</sup>

#### *Subject site and city block*

- 48 The site is within the centre of a city block which is bounded by the wide streets of Lower Hobson Street to the west at 32m wide, Customs Street West to the south at 30+m wide (when considering the triangular street arrangement with Sturdee and Fanshawe Streets), Lower Albert Street to the east at 27m wide, and Quay Street to the north at 30+m. It is setback from the harbour by existing development within the Viaduct (west) and Princes Wharf and development to Quay Street (north).

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<sup>31</sup> Refer to the following sections of the WAM Document D: **1.1 Application Scope**, **2.1 City Connectivity & Context** and **2.2 Public Realm** which provide an outline (and diagrams) of the site and its central city context.

- 49 The site is currently occupied by the 8 storey DTC building which occupies the majority of the site. On its western frontage at street level are former food and beverage spaces which used to provide activation of the street edge. These spaces are no longer occupied which further exacerbates the low amenity setting and poor streetscape environment. There is also a row of dishevelled and overgrown trees which do little to add to the environment. On the building's southern side (again at street level) is a wide opening into the building which provides vehicle access into the DTC and also the service lane for this city block<sup>32</sup>. These openings also do little for the streetscape amenity and provide a poor pedestrian environment.
- 50 To the east within the same city block are the existing HSBC Tower and AON House high-rise buildings which front and define the street edge to Lower Albert Street<sup>33</sup>. On the northwestern side of the block (fronting Quay Street) is the 13 storey M Social hotel building. It is setback from Quay Street within the block to allow for vehicle movement and access to that building. The M Social is a 'slab' building with a single, north-facing frontage (corridors run along the southern side of the building) and it effectively 'sleeves' the DTC building on its northern side.

## *Streetscape environment*

- 51 The existing streetscape environment within the localised context of the site has very low amenity values. This is largely due to the vehicle dominated environment (connections through the area, complex road configuration, access to / from the DTC) and also the form and presence of the Lower Hobson Street flyover. The flyover provides vehicle connection from Quay Street to Hobson Street but creates a poor streetscape environment in the area. This is further exacerbated by the presence of the overhead vehicle 'exit' from level 3 of the DTC across to Fanshawe Street. There are however a number of established street trees at the junction of Sturdee Street and Customs Street West, but they are located within the 'pinch' between the retaining wall<sup>34</sup> and the DTC building. This retaining wall creates division and lack of connection to the south.
- 52 To the east, Lower Albert Street provides an interface and connection to the street and across to Commercial Bay and the greater city beyond. There is currently an indirect stair and walkway on this frontage which connects into the site.
- 53 While the Site's location is within a key waterfront block between the CBD and Viaduct Harbour, it suffers from:

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<sup>32</sup> This lane services all buildings within the city block and provides a north-south vehicle connection between Quay Street and Customs Street West.

<sup>33</sup> Their location is illustrated on **Image A**, earlier within this report.

<sup>34</sup> Which provides a level change between Fanshawe Street and Sturdee Street.

- Poor street frontages, with inactive edges around much of the block, poor pedestrian amenity on footpaths;
- Poor amenity resulting from the Hobson Street flyover / ramp on the western side of the block and the overhead car parking ramp over Customs Street West;
- Poor through-block connections;
- Interrupted connections to the south into the balance of the city because of the retaining wall which runs parallel with Fanshawe Street; and
- Undistinguished architecture (especially the DTC and M Social hotel).

### **City form and topography (and broader cityscape)**

- 54 Within the area, the city form has a mix of contemporary and heritage buildings which largely increase in height stepping back from the harbour edge and reflect their location and the underlying topography.
- 55 As previously outlined, the site is located proximate to the harbour edge on reclaimed land. It is aligned with the Federal Street ridge (north-south) to the north of a former headland between Commercial Bay and the large bay to the west now occupied by the Viaduct Harbour. It is opposite a former headland pā Ngā u Wera and was also formerly known as Point Stanley<sup>35</sup>.
- 56 Tall buildings on Auckland's skyline are predominantly located in the central city on either side of the Queen Street valley. In this context the site is located on the western side of the city and will therefore be more prominent from the west. The western edge of the Special Height Area of the AUP (which provides for the tallest buildings) is centred on the Federal Street ridge – as is the Sky Tower.
- 57 The site, and block within which it is located, is therefore relevant to north-south topography and urban form, and to the east-west waterfront connection between the CBD and Viaduct Harbour. The present buildings and conditions within the subject block are poor in both respects.
- 58 The building form within the city centre along Quay Street includes a number of larger buildings built to the street edge (the HSBC Tower and the Deloitte Centre) and also a series of mid-range scaled buildings such as the M Social Hotel, the ICBC Building and the buildings which span between Te Komititanga (Lower Queen Street) and Britomart Place<sup>36</sup>. Also along this extent there are smaller 2 – 3 storey buildings which front the street such as the Northern Steamship Building. The PwC Commercial Bay tower is one of the tallest

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<sup>35</sup> <https://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/arts-culture-heritage/heritage-walks-places/Documents/auckland-city-heritage-walks-original-shoreline.pdf>

<sup>36</sup> Some of which are 7 – 16 storeys.

buildings within the block that fronts Quay Street and it is setback from the northern Quay Street edge.

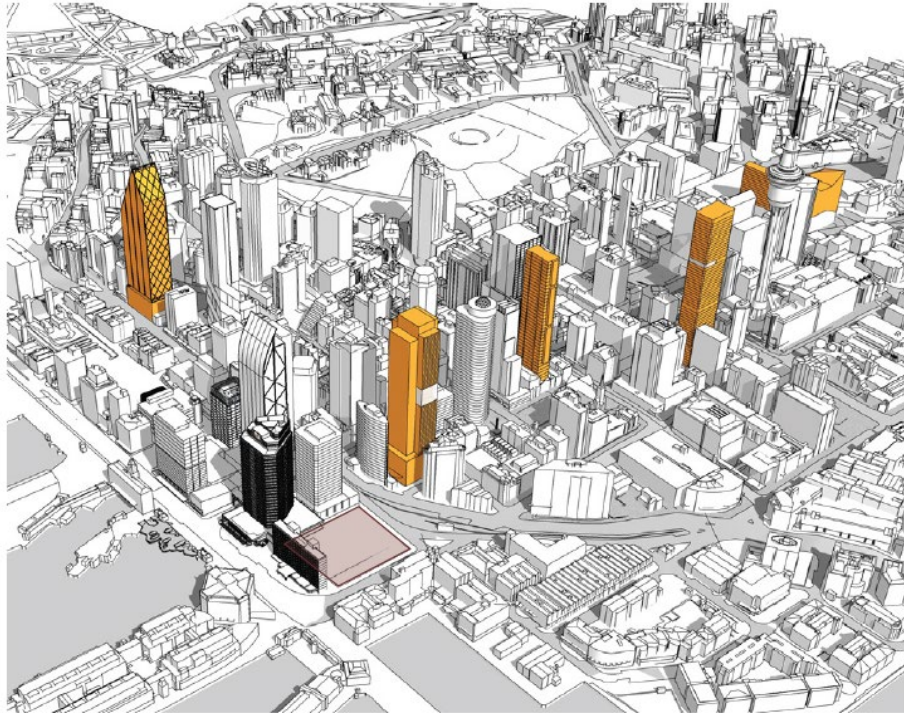
### *City connectivity*

59 Although on the north-western corner of the central city, the site is close to the city centre facilities (and the proposed development will contribute to the activities) including business, retail, entertainment, education and open space. These include:

- a) It is within a 2 – 10 minute walk to:
  - (i) Britomart Transport Centre,
  - (ii) Ferry Terminal,
  - (iii) The bus terminus on Lower Albert Street,
  - (iv) Two future CRL stations - Waitematā (Britomart) and Te Waihorotiu (Aotea) (under construction),
  - (v) The Fanshawe and Customs Street East-West *Transit Street* (as per CCMP,
  - (vi) Commercial Bay Precinct,
  - (vii) Queen Street retail and business area,
  - (viii) Quay Street Waterfront, Te Wananga (waterfront public space),
  - (ix) Viaduct Harbour, and
  - (x) Tepid Baths.
- b) Within a 10 – 20 minute walk to:
  - (i) A large portion of the balance of the central city,
  - (ii) Wynyard Quarter and Silo Park,
  - (iii) Victoria Park and Albert Park,
  - (iv) Auckland University and AUT,
  - (v) Auckland Art Gallery, Town Hall, the Civic and Aotea Centre,
  - (vi) The central city's pedestrian and shared streets network, including Fort Lane, Jean Batten Place and O'Connell Street, and
  - (vii) Spark Arena.
- c) There is ready access to the cycle network within the central city, including along Quay Street and Nelson Street.

60 There are also a number of consented buildings in the city, some of which are under construction. These are illustrated on **Image I** below and within the Visual Study document (refer **Appendix D** to this report).





**Image 1:** Illustration of the city model context (prepared by WAM) which includes buildings which are consented or under construction (orange). Note alignment to the Federal Street ridge which aligns with the site and Sky Tower.  
(Sourced from the WAM Visual Study Section 1.1 – refer **Appendix D** to this report).

## ASSESSMENT OF EFFECTS

61 The following section assesses the proposal and its level of potential effects and appropriateness in this setting related to landscape assessment matters. Matters to be addressed relate to the **urban landscape** context and **visual amenity**, and reflect the key provisions related to the *Downtown West Precinct* and *City Centre* zone. These are summarised and addressed related to following:

- a) Potential effects on the **streetscape** (podium scale and appearance, street-level circulation, and activation);
- b) Potential effects on the **broader cityscape** (scale, appearance and context of the towers on the skyline); and
- c) **Appropriateness** and effects of the proposal in its urban landscape context.

62 A series of panoramic photos and visual simulations<sup>37</sup> illustrating the proposal and its surrounding context are in **Appendix B** to this report. The viewpoints<sup>38</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Prepared to evidential standard.

<sup>38</sup> Viewpoint locations are consistent with those suggested by Auckland Council's landscape specialist. Refer visual simulations as **viewpoints 01 – 17 (Figures 2 - 33)**.

have been selected as they represent public views toward the site from a range of locations within the surrounding and broader landscape context<sup>39</sup>. They are referred to within this assessment of effects section of the report, as necessary.

- 63 The aforementioned **urban design assessment**<sup>40</sup> ('UD assessment') provides specificity on design matters from an urban design perspective. These reports are complementary and there is overlap across the matters assessed. The areas of overlap include assessment of:
- a) The streetscape environment and frontages in terms of urban and built form, connectivity and activation,
  - b) The scale, design and appearance of the Podium and Towers (including variation and differentiation),
  - c) Harbour Edge Height Control Plane (HEHCP) provisions,
  - d) City Centre Masterplan (CCMP) context,
  - e) Te Urunga Hau public space,
  - f) Public realm, lanes and circulation, and
  - g) Signage.
- 64 The key areas of difference between the assessments includes that the landscape report assesses the visual amenity from the broader cityscape context, and the UD assessment includes assessment on (i) the specificity of the maximum tower dimensions and setbacks, east-west dimension, and building frontage and alignment, (ii) shading (including sunlight access to St Patrick's Square), and (iii) parking.
- 65 A key matter related to this proposal is the scale of the towers in this location when assessed against the AUP provisions and standards, and the urban form context. This includes the HEHCP standard which this proposal breaches. However, the site is in the special (unlimited) height area where the tallest buildings are anticipated within the city centre. The assessment below takes this into account.
- 66 It is also key to outline that change itself is not an adverse effect. The city's planned urban form envisages change, and the key matter is whether the building will contribute to the city's planned urban form.
- 67 For the avoidance of doubt, this assessment is provided with the Lower Hobson Street flyover retained. Notwithstanding, assessment commentary is

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<sup>39</sup> Refer **Viewpoint Location Plan (Figure 1 within Appendix B)**.

<sup>40</sup> Written by McIndoe Urban included as part of this FTAA consent application.

provided in certain sections below where the flyover is removed where relevant.

**Potential effects on the streetscape (podium scale and appearance, street-level circulation)**

- 68 The proposal will provide a new element within Auckland's wider cityscape and skyline and will also have influence on the streetscape environment. It will contribute to and provide a positive streetscape interface with an appropriate scale and appearance, and enhance the character of the area<sup>41</sup>, particularly with Lower Hobson Street and Customs Street West.

*Podium form*

- 69 The proposed podium buildings (P1, P2 and P3) will have an attractive appearance to the street frontage. Their design will define this corner site and help rejuvenate a dilapidated area.
- a) The podium buildings being seven (P1), six (P2) and two (P3) levels will present an appropriate street frontage which has a human scale and is proportionate to the scale of the surrounding streetscape environment;
  - b) The façades across P1 and P2 have been designed to present an architecturally coherent scheme through their form, scale and materiality;
  - c) The buildings have variation to their form in both elevation and plan which provides interest to the street, but also generous pedestrian access and space;
  - d) The buildings occupy the majority of the street frontages and provide activities on their ground floors and glazing to provide passive surveillance to the respective streets;
  - e) The materials are of a high-quality and provide visual interest to the respective façades. This is achieved through their horizontal and vertical proportions and the subtlety to the setback of the glazing components, which helps break up the mass and provides shadow and depth;
  - f) The patterning on the façades is consistent but slightly varied across each respective level of P1 and P2 through the spacing and offset of the vertical elements. This provides depth and rhythm and differentiation to the towers above;
  - g) P3 has a different façade treatment to P1 and P2 with the use of brick. It does not have the same extent of street frontage as P1 and P2 and its façades predominantly face internal to Te Urunga Hau. The use of brick on P3 will complement the façade treatment of P1 and P2;

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<sup>41</sup> Refer to the plans, elevations and 3D rendered views of the proposed streetscape environment within Section **2.8 Streetscapes** within the WAM *Document D* included as part of the application.

- h) The terrace on level 05 of P2 will add interest and reduce the perceived mass of the corner of the podium at the entrance to Te Urunga Hau from the northwest (refer **Image J** below); and
- i) The setbacks of the façades on the ground level of P1 and P2, and the different façade typology (to the balance of the Podium buildings) will assist with legibility and help draw pedestrians into the site's laneway network.



***Image J:** Render of the streetscape and entrance to Te Urunga Hau from Lower Hobson Street  
(for illustrative purposes only)<sup>42</sup>.*

*(Sourced from the WAM Document D – Section 2.8).*

- 70 In terms of materials, the podiums use a mix of glass and brick. The brick used on P3 will also be applied to the stairs and vehicle access into the site on Customs Street West which creates consistency and assists with legibility.
- 71 The lower height and different treatment of P3 (compared to P1 and P2) will contribute to the organic character of Te Urunga Hau and will allow greater levels of sunlight into the space.
- 72 The podiums will be differentiated by the towers above by:
  - a) The setbacks provided to the street edge above their respective upper levels. Although this is less than the AUP standard, the setback will reduce potential adverse dominance effects within the streetscape environment;
  - b) The chamfer at the base of the T2 will give strong shadow between the podium and tower and result in visually interesting buildings;
  - c) The rooftop terraces / open space on the podium roofs will provide a visual 'break' and separation to the towers above; and

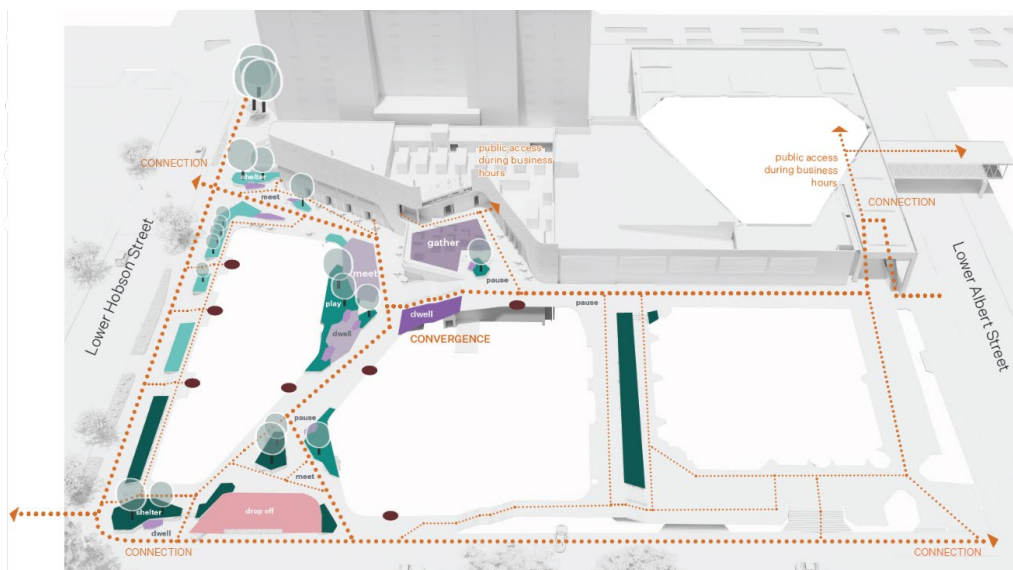
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<sup>42</sup> Note, this image is for illustrative purposes only and indicates the outcome envisaged upon the Lower Hobson Street flyover removal. The flyover removal forms part of a separate consent process, and this is outlined within the AEE document.

- d) The different façade treatment across the podiums and towers, although there is enough commonality that they are aesthetically coherent.

#### *Street Activation and Circulation*

- 73 The proposal will increase activation of the street edges, providing connections into the site with the wider cityscape. This is achieved through the ground level occupation of the buildings which includes retail and food and beverage spaces and also lobby entrances providing access into the offices, residential apartments and hotel.
- 74 The wide openings on both Customs Street West and Lower Hobson Street provide legible connections and access into the site and the public space of Te Urunga Hau. The enhancement of the existing connection through to Lower Albert Street provides a legible east-west connection into the site and the wider city. The activities proposed will assist with supporting circulation to and through the site in the following ways:
- a) Retail and lobbies located to these frontages or within the site (within Te Urunga Hau) to provide activation and draw people into the site;
  - b) The consistency and coherency of the materials and design language used across the respective spaces (such as street edge, buildings, canopies, and within Te Urunga Hau). This is consistent and provides a visual cue that will contribute to legibility of the through block connections;
  - c) Pedestrian connections are legible and offered through the site to connect with other parts of the city and also to the HSBC tower (during business hours) and Aon House. To this end, north-south and east-west connections are provided between the AON House and T1 (refer **Image K** below); and
  - d) The location of the service lane (from Customs Street West) is logical as it utilises an existing access way.



**Image K:** Image of the Public Realm interfaces and connectivity through Te Urunga Hau (not to scale).  
(Sourced from the WAM Document D – Section 2.2).



- 75 Per the *Downtown West Precinct* provisions within the AUP<sup>43</sup>, pedestrian connections are sought east-west and north-south through this development block.
- 76 While the proposal provides internal lanes and connections to Customs Street West and Lower Hobson Street, it also includes measures to connect with the existing 1<sup>st</sup> floor circulation around the HSBC and Aon buildings in east-west and north-south directions. The design includes measures to enhance those existing podia (paths around those buildings) using consistent materials which contributes to legibility of circulation, canopies and activation of the lanes with retail use and activities. This will enhance the experience and connections, and improvement in amenity and activation of the site will also improve circulation around the perimeter streets.
- 77 The connections across the change in level within the site is successfully achieved by the stairs in combination with the other open space qualities within Te Urunga Hau. The necessary change in level results in a positive feature of this internal public space.
- 78 The dimension of the pedestrian connections provided is in excess of the minimum 5m width sought within the AUP provisions. The connections at the street edge are splayed which provides generous, legible and obvious connection, and allows for direct pedestrian movement into and through the site. The glass canopy above Te Urunga Hau will provide weather protection and a feature of the design.
- 79 Although a north-south connection is provided through the site (between T1 and Aon House), a major constraint to providing a better connection from the site through to Federal Street (to the south) is the level difference and the existing retaining wall between Fanshawe Street and Customs Street West (south of the site).
- 80 **Images L + M** below illustrate the proposed street edges to Lower Hobson Street and Customs Street West.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Refer I205.6.2 of the AUP.

<sup>44</sup> Additional images are provided on pages 35, 37 – 39 within **Section 2.8 Streetscapes** of the WAM Document D.



**Image L:** Render of the proposed activation of the Lower Hobson Street and Customs Street West frontage. (Sourced from the WAM Document D – Section 2.8).



**Image M:** Render of the Custom Street West frontage, including access to the residential lobby and service lane into of T1. (Sourced from the WAM Document D – Section 2.8).

#### *Public Space / Te Urunga Hau (Urban Room)*

- 81 The Te Urunga Hau (Urban Room) will provide an attractive and inviting public space as part of the wider development. It includes a series of covered gathering and meeting places in its centre which are framed and defined by buildings P1, P2 and P3. These edges are activated with the inclusion of retail and lobby entrances into the respective buildings. Refer **Image N** below.
- 82 On the street edges there are legible pedestrian entrances and connections into this internal space. This is achieved through their openness, visual permeability and consistency of materials. The inclusion of larger tree species will also help define the space.
- 83 The design of Te Urunga Hau, overall, is coherent and generous in size and will include a series of smaller spaces which have been arranged to enable places to meet, gather, rest or play.



- 84 Through site connections are achieved with access provided to / from Customs Street West, Lower Hobson Street and through to Lower Albert Street. The connections allow movement into and through the site into the centre where there is a 'convergence' zone where the meeting and gathering spaces are located.
- 85 A complete north-south connection is not possible across the block due to the location of the M Social building (north of the site). However, an improved link is provided with the northern reaches of Lower Hobson Street and also to and across the podium of the HSBC Tower (during business hours) which, in turn, connects to Quay Street.
- 86 The proposed connectivity through the site is a significant improvement on the existing environment as there is no real connection, or one that is easily attained, through the DTC building. The east-west link with Lower Albert Street provides an enhancement to the existing laneway allowing a connection between the site and Commercial Bay to the east.
- 87 A change of level on the through-block lanes is unavoidable given the existing constraints of the HSBC and Aon buildings, and the servicing and car parking associated with those buildings at ground level. The proposal will tie in with the existing conditions to provide a coherent network of internal lanes and public space. The stairs are used to enclose the eastern side of Te Urunga Hau and also provide an overlook of the public space. It turns the necessary change in level into a feature that will contribute to the character of Te Urunga Hau.



*Image N: Render of the Te Urunga Hau The Urban Room.  
(Sourced from the WAM Document D – Section 2.5).*

### *Nearby Street Views*

- 88 The proposed development of the podium, public realm space and towers will present a significant landmark for the lower downtown area and for the city as a whole. As outlined earlier it will revitalise and transform this part of the city whilst also providing a significant public realm design with activation of edges and streets connections to pedestrian laneways.
- 89 **Images D, E, J, L and M** above illustrate the proposal from locations in close proximity to the site on Lower Hobson Street and Customs Street West<sup>45</sup>. They show the proposal from the respective streets, at intersections and key junctions and access points into the site.
- 90 These images illustrate:
- a) The street interface and human scale of the street frontages and podium;
  - b) The design of the podium buildings and the interest and variety of the respective façades;
  - c) The height and variety of the ground floor and how it addresses the street and ‘opens up’ to the pedestrian connections into the site;
  - d) The legibility of entrances such as lobbies and into Te Uranga Hau; and
  - e) The distinction between the podium and the towers. Although they have a coherent and complementary design, the respective towers are setback from the podium edge to provide visual separation. There is also differentiation between the podium and towers due to the design of the respective façades.

### *Relationship to Quay Street*

- 91 The localised streetscape environment on Quay Street (north of the site) is fronted by the 13 storey M Social Hotel and the 29 storey HSBC tower, which front and define the street edge within the block between Lower Albert Street and Lower Hobson Street. Proposed tower T1 is setback from the Quay Street boundary by 74.8m and T2 by 47.8m, which provides (a) separation between the proposed buildings and Quay Street, and (b) a step / difference in the setback distance from Quay Street to the respective buildings.
- 92 From Quay Street the lower parts of the respective towers will be screened with only the taller elements visible when one was to look up, with the main focus of the view being of the localised streetscape environment which includes the carriageway, cycleway infrastructure, buildings which front the street, Te Wānanga open space, and across to the waters of the harbour. There are also buildings on Princes Wharf further to the north of Quay Street.

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<sup>45</sup> Additional images can be found within **Section 2.8** of the WAM Document D.

- 93 The setback and stepped nature of the proposal (from T2 up to T1 in the context of the other aforementioned buildings) will reduce any perceived adverse dominance effects. This has also been appropriately mitigated through the design of the buildings (such as their form, placement, façade treatment and differentiation). The proposed buildings will be tall in this localised context, as would a compliant building under the HEHCP. However, they will not appear dominant from this location for the reasons outlined above and when compared the existing, tall buildings in the area within the wider city setting. They will be complementary.
- 94 Where the proposal is experienced from the intersection of Quay Street, Lower Hobson Street and the Viaduct Esplanade (refer render as **Image O** below) it will be seen set back from the Quay Street frontage behind the M-Social building with its streetscape interface visible along Lower Hobson Street. In this context the scale and form of M Social Building, and podiums P2 and P3 will be the prominent elements at street level, with the towers visible above. The podiums will provide a human scale to the street edge, ground the development, and set the towers apart from the immediate streetscape environment.
- 95 Although tall buildings are proposed, the design outlined above will minimise any dominance effects and the design will not 'loom over' the streetscape. This is also achieved through the form and façade treatment of the buildings, and the clear differentiation between the podium and towers above. This will avoid an inappropriate bulk and form in this location.



**Image O:** Render of the streetscape environment along Quay Street. The site is visible to the right of the image. (Prepared by the WAM)



### *Signage*

- 96 In relation to **signage**<sup>46</sup>, the proposal includes ‘signage zones’ which indicate the location of future signs (which will be refined post resource consent). The signage includes shopfront signage for the respective tenancies, and Precinct, Podium and Tower naming rights and locations<sup>47</sup>.
- 97 From a landscape assessment perspective the ‘signage zones’ indicated are appropriate as they are located in logical, defined and contained locations which are integrated into the respective façades of the buildings. Potential visual clutter and cumulative effects are avoided to the streetscape environment given the limited number of ‘zones’ and the consistent and defined locations indicated for signage. They will not detract from the form and appearance of the buildings and will not be dominant elements.

### *Summary of Streetscape*

- 98 The proposal will revitalise and transform this part of downtown Auckland. It will replace the car parking building with an attractive and architecturally cohesive development. The design presents a significant improvement to the streetscape environment and would have moderate – high positive effects through enhancement and activation of the streetscape environment, contributing positively to the Auckland city’s downtown.
- 99 It provides a mix of activities to the street and within the Te Urunga Hau (Urban Room) which will also activate the street and site, proximate to the waterfront, providing pedestrian connections into and through the site’s lanes which supports movement between the city centre and the waterfront.
- 100 Any potential adverse effects on the streetscape environment in relation to dominance will at most be low-moderate. This is due to the proposal’s setback from Quay Street, the form and façade treatment of the proposal which differentiates the podium and upper tower levels, and the human scale to the street and qualities which provide visual interest.
- 101 The removal of the Lower Hobson Street flyover would further help to fully realise the positive effects of the proposal on streetscape amenity, activation, and pedestrian circulation. However, even if the flyover is retained (which is the basis on which this assessment has been carried out), the proposal will present a significant improvement to the streetscape environment.

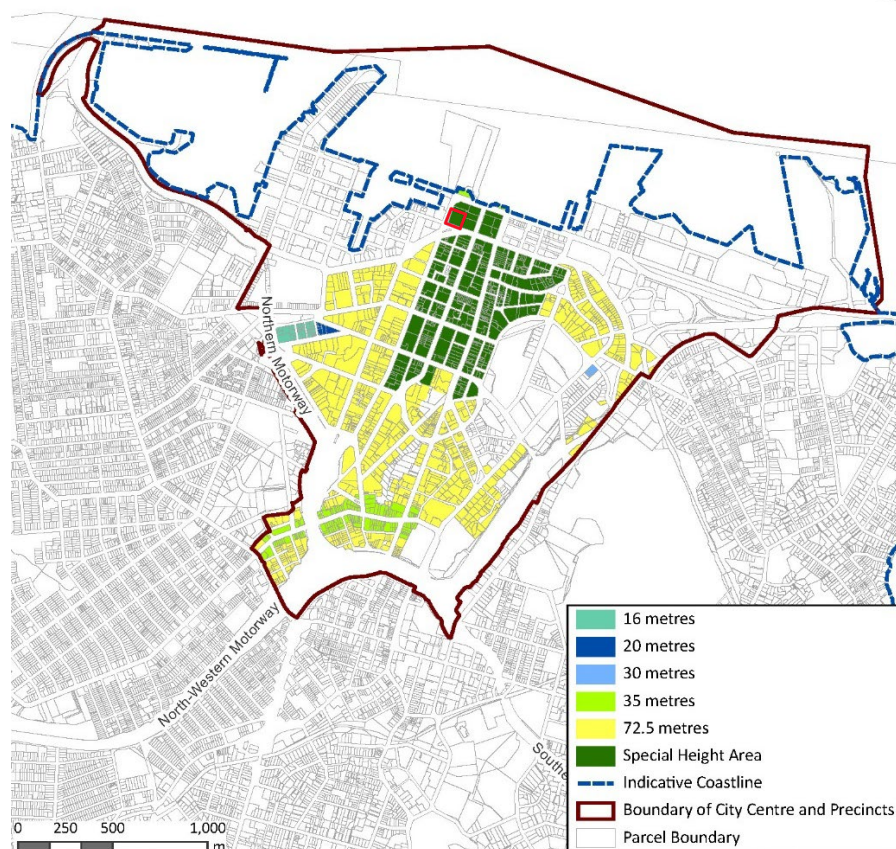
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<sup>46</sup> Refer **Appendix C** and E23 of the AUP.

<sup>47</sup> Refer **Section 2.11** of the WAM *Document D*.

**Potential effects on the broader cityscape (scale, appearance and context of the towers on the skyline)**

- 102 The proposed towers within the development will provide new elements to Auckland's cityscape and skyline. This section of the report discusses the design of the towers and the wider views of the proposal. They will contribute to the cityscape and the site's location proximate to the harbour in the ways as outlined below.
- 103 The proposal will continue the tradition in central Auckland city with buildings built along ridgelines. The site is located proximate to the harbour edge on reclaimed land, aligned with the Federal Street ridge (north-south) where larger buildings are located and have been consented. The site is just to the north of a former headland and to the west of the catchment of Te Wai Horotiu awa (which aligns to Queen Street). The towers will be seen in the context of the emerging built form (some consented and under construction) within this part of the city with greater height centred on the Federal Street ridge and rises beyond the Sky Tower to Cook Street, as enabled through the AUP provisions in the downtown and central city area<sup>48</sup>. The consented buildings are illustrated on **Image I** above and within the Visual Study document which form **Appendix D** to this report.



**Image P:** Map H8.11.3 – AUP General height controls (cropped to city centre extent). Illustrates the site (red) and Special Height Area's western alignment centred to the Federal St ridgeline.

<sup>48</sup> Refer Map H8.11.3 – General height controls of the AUP, which forms **Image P** below.

- 104 It is worth noting that change in itself is not an adverse effect. The city's skyline has changed considerably over the years and the AUP anticipates such change will continue, including those buildings already consented but not yet built. In fact, an evolving skyline can be seen as a mark of a vibrant city.
- 105 The site is located in the north-west corner of the 'core' city centre, the north-west corner of the AUP 'Special Height Area', and the western end of Quay Street (refer **Image P** above). Its location and the proposed buildings reinforce the alignment of taller buildings adjacent to or behind Quay Street (to the north) and its location at the western end of this frontage. The buildings provide something of a 'bookend' form for the western part of the city and provides a step and transition to the harbour edge and the Viaduct to the west (which can be seen on **Image Q** below).<sup>49</sup> Noting also that where the towers will sit on the city skyline is dependent on the location and direction of view.



**Image Q:** Viewpoint 7 (thumbnail) Isthmus. Stanley Point  
(Refer to Appendix B)

### *Tower design and appearance*

- 106 This section of the report discusses the appearance of the towers from a landscape assessment perspective. It provides context to the viewpoint assessment provided below. The following comments are made in relation to the design:

#### *Slenderness*

- a) The towers will be tall and **slender**. This is achieved through their overall form and their proportions; height helps with the appearance of slenderness. T2 has a greater width on its eastern/western façades which is attributed to its location on the site, and its frontage to Lower Hobson Street;
- b) Although T1 breaches the AUP maximum diagonal dimensions standard<sup>50</sup>, the chamfers on the upper levels reduce the 'diagonal' at those upper

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<sup>49</sup> Note, 'bookend' is not a concept anticipated by the AUP, however it provides a clear description of the how the proposal will sit within the city.

<sup>50</sup> H8.6.24.(1)(a).

levels and helps with the appearance, reducing bulk and emphasising the slenderness;<sup>51</sup>

- c) The narrower dimension of the respective towers is the northern and southern façades which face the central city and harbour, whereas the wider eastern and western façades of T1 and T2 are partly internalised to the block;
- d) With regard to the eastern and western façades of the respective towers, these elements also have slenderness relative to those to the north and south. Although wider than the northern and southern façades, the slenderness is emphasised given the height and proportions of the respective buildings, their chamfered / chiselled form and the façade treatment. This includes the vertical glazing elements which expresses their verticality and provides depth and shadow, breaking up any apparent massing. It also varies dependent on the location and direction of the view toward the proposal;
- e) In combination with the chamfers on the upper levels, the material treatment of the tower façades helps emphasize the vertical lines and elements. This is achieved through the curtain wall with aluminium fins and glazing elements;
- f) The vertical elements and fins also provide depth and shadow to the façades, and provide differentiation between the towers themselves.

### *Differences but likeness*

- g) The towers have the same architectural language with irregular shapes and there is differentiation to the respective façade treatment which provides variety. However, they have been designed as complementary, slender forms which read as a pair or 'siblings within a family';
- h) Their form, materiality and façade treatment has been purposefully designed to read as similar forms within the city, avoiding a monolithic appearance. They will be complementary and visually interesting buildings on the city's skyline;
- i) Although similar, the colour of T2 includes a matte bronze-like tone, differentiated from the neutral palette of T1;
- j) The differences include their footprint, the size and orientation of the chamfers, the façade treatment and their staggered arrangement on the site. They are purposely offset from each other.

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<sup>51</sup> The maximum tower dimension is also addressed within the UD Assessment by McIndoe Urban.

### *Sculpted form*

- k) As well as contributing to slenderness, the chamfers on the respective towers will give each of the upper levels an asymmetrical form. This will contribute to a distinctive and 'crafted' skyline (i.e. as a form crafted by hand, water or light and giving an 'organic' quality). This is reflective of the design intent of the iho / design statement<sup>52</sup>;
- l) The 'edges' of the chamfered form of the upper levels are anticipated to be lit at night. This will strongly contribute to the skyline of the city emphasising the carved form of the respective towers.

### *Tower relationship to the other*

- m) The buildings will 'move' relative to each other as people move and view them from around the city. The family likeness, building offset, their slenderness and asymmetrical design will draw attention to this characteristic. Also, the space between the buildings will open and close depending on viewing angle.

### *Tower relationship with the podium*

- n) The design of the towers will complement the podium. The material composition and language used on the towers is similar to that of the podium. Although having different building forms (the podium buildings being lower and wider, and the towers taller and slender) the materials and their arrangement ensures they read together as a coherent development. Both the towers and the podium components utilise the glazed unitised curtain wall system and in combination with the glazing provides verticality, interest and similarity. This is illustrated on the visual simulations (refer **Appendix B**) and on **Image R** below;
- o) The narrative of the design has informed the lighter form of the upper levels through the chamfered edges, lighter colours and materials, and glazing. This is subtly contrasted by the composition of the lower levels of the towers and podium elements which are more 'grounded' with a chamfered edge, and darker colours and materials.

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<sup>52</sup> Refer Section 1.4 Cultural Narrative & Hierarchy within WAM Document D.





*Image R: Render of P1 (right) and P2 (left) and the protruding T1 and T2.  
(Sourced from the WAM Document A FTA-00-208 Rev B).*

### *Height Transition*

- p) The existing transition in height of buildings within the city centre is an important consideration when assessing new buildings and development on the site. However, one of the matters within the purpose of the HEHCP (H8.6.5) is to “*manage the scale of buildings at the western end of Quay Street... **provide a city form which transitions in building height** from the core of the city centre down toward the waterfront*” (emphasis added). As such, although the existing transition is important the scale of the proposal needs to be taken into account and to demonstrate a transition is provided. Further to this, AUP provisions also outline that the design of new buildings is to “***successfully integrate** with the city centre’s existing and planned built form*”<sup>53</sup> and to be “***complementary to existing or planned built form and character of the zone and precincts***”<sup>54</sup> (emphasis added);

<sup>53</sup> Refer H8. City Centre Zone description of the AUP.

<sup>54</sup> Refer H8.3.(30)(c) of the AUP.



- q) The design proposes a transition in height between the core central city and the harbour edge as the two towers step to one another and are set back from Quay Street behind other buildings. Both T1 and T2 are located behind the M Social building, with T1 also positioned further inland, to the south of the HSBC tower. The HSBC tower will remain prominent along the Quay Street edge and frontage;
- r) The proposed transition in height is evident (this is discussed further in relation to viewpoints below) and will complement both the existing and planned built form and character. Although a steeper transition between the two respective towers than anticipated by the AUP and HEHCP, it is not abrupt or inappropriate in the context of the city. There is not a radical departure from the planned built form in the city as the transition is provided through interesting buildings on Auckland skyline. The slender form and chamfered corners on the upper levels of the building will also assist with providing this transition between the towers and to the harbour edge;
- s) The stepped height transition between the towers is presented to both the north to the Waitematā Harbour and also the west to the Viaduct Harbour neighbourhood. To the west of the site this is achieved through the step down in height from T1 to T2, the separation distance of Lower Hobson Street and the buildings on the eastern edge of Viaduct Harbour. Noting, however that the HEHCP provision does not affect the western boundary of the site;
- t) Due to the HEHCP being only one block deep (back from Quay Street), further to the south of the site, beyond Customs Street West, the Special Height Area of the AUP enables and anticipates the tallest buildings in the city with unlimited height standards;
- u) The proposal's height transition in relation to potential effects on the *Streetscape* environment has been addressed earlier in this report.

107 These qualities in combination will enhance the contribution of the two towers to the cityscape and present an interesting profile on the Auckland skyline. The form and stepping of the towers between T1 and T2 serve to define the western edge of the central city and provide a transition between the core city centre and the harbour edge.

108 In terms of the relationship of the proposal to existing buildings along the Quay Street frontage and harbour edge of the city, a transition in height is provided to the south and west. Although a departure from the existing height transition along the harbour edge, the proposal is appropriate and provides a step in building height between T2 and T1, and is setback from the Quay Street frontage (behind the M-Social and HBSBC buildings) providing a transition which is complementary to and integrates with the existing step in building form along the Quay Street east-west alignment.

109 As illustrated on the 'East-West Quay Street (South)' cross section<sup>55</sup> the existing built form along the Quay Street edge is predominantly low-midrise buildings, with development potential not realised. The site and proposed buildings are located within a cluster of tall buildings within the western reaches of the city centre (this is discussed further in relation to viewpoints). In terms of the relationship and potential effects on the PwC Commercial Bay tower, the proposal will complement that building in terms of design and also their respective place within the city on the harbour edge.

## *Visual Amenity (views from the wider cityscape)*

110 A series of viewpoint images and visual simulations<sup>56</sup> are provided within **Appendix B** to this report which illustrate the proposal and views of the Auckland city centre from various locations around the broader cityscape. These locations include:

a) Within the city centre.

- St Patrick's Square, Queens Wharf, Quay Street, the Hobson Street / Fanshawe Street intersection, the Viaduct Esplanade, Karanga Plaza, Brigham Street (Wynyard Point) and from the Sky Tower.

b) Wider city context.

- **North:** Stanley Point (Cyril Bassett VC Lookout), Takarunga Mt Victoria;
- **East:** Ōkahu Bay Wharf (Ōrākei) and The Strand, Parnell;
- **South:** Maungawhau (Mt Eden), Ponsonby Road; and
- **West:** Shelley Beach Road overbridge, St Mary's Bay Beach, Sulphur Beach Reserve and Harbour View Beach Reserve, Te Atatu Peninsula.

111 Below commentary related to these wider representative views of the proposal is provided.<sup>57</sup> These locations are consistent with those suggested by Auckland Council's landscape specialist and include a viewpoint from Maungawhau, Mt Eden to the south. As well as being supported by the visual simulations, 3D visualisation renders are also provided within the *WAM design documents*, and also the Visual Study document (**Appendix D**) which illustrates consented buildings within the city centre (some of which are yet to be constructed).

112 The assessment provides commentary related to each respective viewpoint and a summary of effects section with overall assessment ratings<sup>58</sup> for both the 'City Centre' and 'Wider City Context' collection of viewpoints. This

<sup>55</sup> Refer Section 4.1 'City Form Sections' on page 61 of WAM Document D.

<sup>56</sup> Prepared by Isthmus to evidential standard. Refer **Figures 1 – 35** within **Appendix B**.

<sup>57</sup> Taking into account the existing and emerging / consented buildings (including the WAM – Visual Study as **Appendix D** to this report).

<sup>58</sup> Refer **Appendix A** for the Methodology and 7-point assessment scale consistent with Te Tangi a te Manu.

provides a holistic and spatial approach for the effects assessment overall related to the viewpoints, as opposed to individual assessment ratings for each viewpoint.

- 113 The visual simulations have been prepared to evidential standard, consistent with the NZILA's Best Practice Guidelines (BPG) 10.2. Using these guidelines, in some images the upper levels of the proposal are cropped and this is due to the representative angle of the view and the scale of the proposal in the context of the viewpoint. This is not an uncommon happening in the preparation of visual simulations, often due to the proximity of viewpoints. The viewpoint photography was captured across a timeframe between July 2024 and October 2025. The photographs illustrate the proposal in city's urban context and in a variety of weather conditions.
- 114 Dependent on the location of the viewpoint, and therefore the angle of the view toward the proposal, the towers take on varied form and appearance. This is in relation to the chamfered edges, the relationship between the respective towers and the podium and the other buildings in the city centre, the separation between the towers and the treatment of the respective façades. The design creates visually interesting buildings in the cityscape and on the Auckland skyline. This is discussed further below.

### ***City Centre***

#### ***St Patricks Square<sup>59</sup>***

- 115 This viewpoint provides a representative view from St Patrick's Square where a portion of the P1 podium building and the eastern part of the lower levels of T1 will be visible<sup>60</sup>, seen along Federal Street (to the north).
- 116 The immediate streetscape environment is the main focus of the view from this location, however Tower T1 will also be a focal point (approximately 210m to the north) and will draw the viewers eye up, and along toward the Federal Street and Fanshawe Street intersection.
- 117 The patterning and material treatment on the southern façades of both P1 and T1 will be evident, showing complementary, yet contrasting buildings that extend the eye upwards. The form and more horizontal nature of the podium will help ground the buildings and provide a relationship to the streetscape below.
- 118 From this location, the existing view toward the site includes an existing established Sheoak tree (*Casurina* sp.) (between Customs Street West and

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<sup>59</sup> Refer **Figures 2 and 3** within **Appendix B**.

<sup>60</sup> This is illustrated on the visual simulation (**Figure 3**). To see the upper levels of the towers, the viewer would need to sharply look up.

Fanshawe Street), the existing DTC building and the rear of the M Social building which sits on the northern (farthest) side of the subject site. Only a glimpse view of the harbour is afforded, through the tree and between the HSBC Tower and M Social buildings. There is also a shaft view of the sky and openness beyond these buildings (which implies the harbour) which contributes in a small way to the connection between the central city and harbour. The introduction of T1 to this view will close down that viewshaft to a sliver. Although the view was already impeded, this will result in a further visual disconnection between the harbour and the central city and will affect the legibility of the south to north laneway circulation along Federal Street. However, a small visual connection is still retained and there will not be a loss of orientation between the city and the harbour. It is also worth noting that an HEHCP compliant building on the site will also limit the visual connection to the harbour from this location.

- 119 As mentioned, the main focus of the view in this area will be at street level, within the public open space, or along Federal Street. Given the scale of the respective towers, and although the eye will be drawn up the proposed buildings, only the lower levels will be 'naturally' seen, e.g. a limited field of view and one would need to draw their angle of view up to see the upper levels. The towers will be viewed in the context of the existing buildings in the city which form part of the immediate context and intervening components in the view, providing separation distance and minimising any potential dominance effects. The development potential in this part of the city is also greatest being located within the AUP City Centre zone Special Height Area. The proposal will positively contribute to the skyline and cityscape.



**Viewpoint 1** (thumbnail) Isthmus. St Patrick's Square / Federal Street  
(Refer to Appendix B)

### *Queens Wharf*<sup>61</sup>

- 120 The view from Queens Wharf is representative of people who visit this public space, those who use the Ferry Basin gates (part of the ferry terminal) along the wharf and the approach to the Ferry Basin within the city centre from the water. It is approximately 450m to the northeast of the site.

<sup>61</sup> Refer **Figures 4** and **5** within **Appendix B**.

## Isthmus.

- 121 From this location the upper levels of both T1 and T2 will be visible above and behind the ferry terminal infrastructure, the HSBC tower and the M Social building. From the southern third of Queens Wharf, T1 will be seen behind the HSBC tower. From this direction, the chamfer on the upper levels of T1 will be front on, while that on the upper levels of T2 will be in silhouette.
- 122 The towers will be seen in the context of a cluster of existing taller buildings on this western side of the city centre which includes the HSBC tower, the Deloitte Centre building and the PwC Commercial Bay tower proximate to Quay Street, with the Sky Tower forming the backdrop set upon the Federal Street ridge. The form of the Ferry Basin infrastructure, the 'Cloud' and activity within the harbour form the dominant elements in the foreground.
- 123 From this location the towers will be the tallest buildings but will integrate into the skyline and cityscape, which includes buildings of varying heights and forms. The towers will 'bookend' the western end of Quay Street with the Sky Tower remaining a central landmark, left of the towers.
- 124 There is clear separation between the two towers and their slender form is obvious from this location. This is accentuated by the façade treatment and the verticality of the glazing elements. The chamfered form of the corners on the upper levels is also evident which adds to their slender nature.
- 125 From this location, there is a step in the heights of existing buildings toward the north, such as from the PwC Commercial Bay tower toward the Deloitte Centre and HSBC tower. The proposal will be complementary with this pattern with a clear step and transition in height between the towers toward the harbour edge to the north and west. Although a steeper transition than anticipated by the AUP, it is not abrupt or inappropriate in the context of the city. The slender form and chamfered corners of the upper levels of the buildings provide a visually interesting skyline and assist with providing the transition to the harbour edge.



**Viewpoint 2** (thumbnail) Isthmus. Queens Wharf  
(Refer to Appendix B)



*Quay Street*<sup>62</sup>

- 126 The viewpoint location on Quay Street is approximately 750m to the east of the site. It is representative of people travelling along Quay Street from the east into the central city.
- 127 From this location the main focus of the view is the immediate streetscape environment. Views are channelled along Quay Street and are framed by the existing buildings (south / left of view) and alignment of Pohutukawa street trees (north / right). The upper levels of proposed towers T1 and T2 will be visible at the 'back' of the view beyond the PwC Commercial Bay tower and HSBC tower which form intervening elements.
- 128 The chamfered form of the upper level of T1 can be seen in the 'front' (northeastern side) of the building from this location, as can the varied treatment of the façades, and the glazed vertical extension of the roof form which creates interest to the buildings and skyline.
- 129 When viewing the city from this location the existing transition in building height down toward the harbour edge to the north can be seen. This is most evident from the PwC Commercial Bay tower to the HSBC tower and Deloitte Centre. As shown on Viewpoint 3 (Proposed) the transition between the two proposed towers is evident and will complement and integrate with the existing transition in building height, which continues to step down to the HSBC tower, the Deloitte Centre and the harbour edge beyond.
- 130 The towers will read as a coherent part of the city skyline and any dominance effects will be moderated by the step back in heights from existing buildings and as part of the proposal, the physical setback from Quay Street, the form and façade treatment to the buildings, and the towers being seen behind existing buildings in this part of the city.
- 131 As one travels along Quay Street, the proposed towers will remain seen behind the buildings which front Quay Street and also the PwC Commercial Bay tower. Although taller, they will be secondary to the view but will also provide interesting buildings on the skyline.
- 132 Although the buildings do not immediately front Quay Street, they are located within the waterfront block which fronts this street (between Customs Street and Quay Street). The height and form of the proposed towers is consistent with the AUP provision seeking taller buildings which reinforce the Quay Street east-west connection, integrating well into the visual profile of the skyline and they will not take away from the intention of the HEHCP.

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<sup>62</sup> Refer **Figures 6 and 7** within **Appendix B**.





**Viewpoint 3** (thumbnail) Isthmus. Quay Street  
(Refer to Appendix B)

## *Sky Tower*<sup>63</sup>

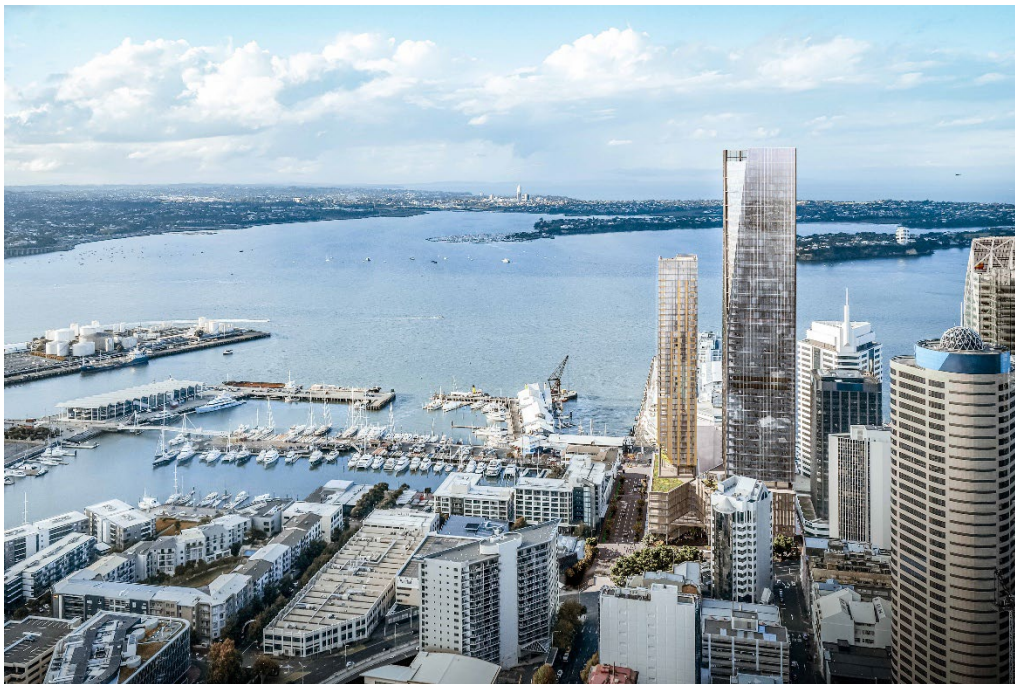
- 133 Although the Sky Tower is a privately owned operation views from its viewing platforms and observation decks are accessible to the public and have been assessed as a viewpoint as part of this assessment report.
- 134 The site is located approximately 520m to the north of the Sky Tower. The proposed towers will form part of the midground views from the main observation deck, set amongst other buildings located in downtown Auckland.
- 135 Towers 1 and 2 are proposed to be RL226.855m and 162.03m, some 13.95m above and 50.87m below the height of the main observation deck<sup>64</sup>, respectively. Although higher than the main observation deck, T1 sits well below the top of Sky Tower's spire (at 328m high above ground level<sup>65</sup>) and its upper viewing decks.
- 136 From the Sky Tower the towers will be obvious elements when looking north with the chamfered upper southwestern edge of T1, the variety of materials proposed (and their vertical arrangement) and the nature of the glazed elements evident. The towers will read as integrated, complementary buildings and will add interest to the view. They have a slender form and there is also clear separation between the towers which allows views through to the harbour.
- 137 The towers will interrupt views to the waterfront, the Waitematā Harbour, Stanley Point and to a lesser extent Bayswater, and the wider Hauraki Gulf. However, Tower T2 will sit well below the 'landform' of the North Shore. When viewed in this context, other towers such as the PwC Commercial Bay tower (and other consented building projects aligned to the Fanshawe ridgeline and yet to be constructed) also interrupt views of this part of the city and harbour.

<sup>63</sup> Refer **Image S** below.

<sup>64</sup> The main observation deck is at RL212.9m.

<sup>65</sup> Ground level at the Sky Tower is approximately 227m, so the top of the spire is approximately RL355m.

- 138 Notably, when viewing from this location the proposed towers are slender in their form and occupy only a small portion of the view. Tower T1 will not interrupt the view out to Rangitoto, the Rangitoto Channel, the balance of the Devonport peninsula (to the east), and the harbour entrance. From the Sky Tower the proposed towers are located to the west of the landmarks of Rangitoto, Takurunga (Mt Victoria) and Maungauika (North Head). The towers will interrupt less of the views from the 360° restaurant and the upper-level viewing deck ('Skydeck') which are higher.
- 139 The view from this location is north along the Federal Street ridge between the Sky Tower and the site of the proposed development where the AUP 'Special Height Area' envisages the city's tallest buildings (and where there are a number of consented buildings<sup>66</sup>). It is therefore reasonable to anticipate other tall buildings in the future between the Sky Tower and the site. The design of the proposed development is consistent with AUP policy H8.3.(30)(d)(ii) which encourages '*...well-designed... slender towers... with adequate separation between towers... which complement the streetscape and skyline*'. The proposal is consistent with this policy.



**Image 5:** Render of the proposal from the equivalent of the main observation deck of Sky Tower.  
(Sourced from the WAM Document A – FTA-00-205 Rev B).

## Hobson Street / Fanshawe Street Intersection<sup>67</sup>

- 140 This viewpoint is located approximately 115m to the southwest of the site at the intersection of Fanshawe Street with Lower Hobson Street. It represents close street views of the proposal from the elevated section of Fanshawe

<sup>66</sup> Refer **Image I**, above.

<sup>67</sup> Refer **Figures 8 and 9** within **Appendix B**.

Street across the Lower Hobson Street flyover, in the context of the streetscape, other buildings and established trees within the localised area.

- 141 From this location views are afforded of the southern façades of podiums P1 and P2, the lower levels of towers T1 and T2 and to a lesser extent the western façades of these buildings. The respective towers will be seen set upon the lower podiums which front Lower Hobson Street and Customs Street West. Existing established trees along Sturdee Street and Customs Street West provide partial screening of these lower levels.
- 142 The chamfered / chiselled form of the lower part of T2 will be evident, as will the vertical glazing treatment to the façades of each tower which adds visual interest. The view is of the slenderer southern tower façades and there are clear views and visual permeability provided between the buildings.
- 143 Although a reduced setback on the upper levels, there is an obvious and defined differentiation between the podium and towers. This is successfully achieved through the physical form of the buildings (including chamfers) and the material and façade treatment of these respective elements and will minimise any potential dominance effects.
- 144 Similar to other close locations, the focus of views will be on the localised streetscape environment (including vegetation) and from this location will include the podium buildings and lower levels of the towers. There is only a limited 'natural' field of view afforded<sup>68</sup> and one would need to draw their angle of view up to see the upper levels. When one was to draw their eye up the towers, the transition between them will be evident. Although steeper than anticipated the design is appropriate in this context and is achieved through the step in height and the chamfered corner of the upper levels of T2.
- 145 The proposal will integrate well into this part of the city and will be viewed in the context of existing buildings in the area, positively contributing to the city and skyline.



**Viewpoint 4:** (thumbnail) Isthmus. Hobson Street / Fanshawe Street intersection.  
(Refer to Appendix B)

<sup>68</sup> As illustrated in the visual simulation (refer **Figure 9** within **Appendix B**).



*The Viaduct Esplanade*<sup>69</sup>

- 146 The viewpoint and visual simulation prepared from the Viaduct Esplanade is close at approximately 200m to the west of the site and represents views of users of the Viaduct Harbour. The view is framed by existing development (south, right of image) which forms part of the Viaduct and vegetation in the foreground, and the harbour to the north (left). This makes up the main focus of the view from this location.
- 147 In this context the proposal will be viewed above existing buildings and development in the midground and in the context of the HSBC Tower, AON building and PwC Commercial Bay tower. From this location the view of the proposal is predominantly of the western façade of Tower T2 (which sits in front (to the west) of T1) and to a lesser extent T1 behind.
- 148 The existing transition in building height toward the harbour edge (as anticipated by the HEHCP) is more difficult to ascertain from this location and is largely limited to the step between the aforementioned buildings and to the M Social building which illustrates a clear step down toward the harbour. The proposed towers will be seen in this context and if the viewer were to look up there will be a step and transition in height from T1 to T2, down to the HSBC and M Social buildings. Although a steeper transition than anticipated by the AUP, it is not abrupt or inappropriate in the context of the city. The form and chamfered corners of the upper levels of the buildings assist with providing the transition to the harbour edge. Views along Quay Street<sup>70</sup> cannot be afforded due to the angle of the view.
- 149 Given the proximity of the view and the height of the respective towers, the main focus of the view in this area is within the Viaduct Harbour at ground / sea level. Similar to the view from St Patrick's Square, although the eye will be drawn up to the proposed buildings, only the lower levels will be 'naturally' seen, e.g. one would need to draw their angle of view up to see the upper levels.
- 150 The experience of people within this part of the city is often by moving through the Viaduct Harbour. When traveling east through the Viaduct (approaching the site from the location of the viewpoint) T2 will be visible above and beyond but will be viewed in the context of the existing buildings which form part of the immediate context in the Viaduct Harbour.<sup>71</sup> The proposal is also further setback from the Viaduct Harbour by the width of

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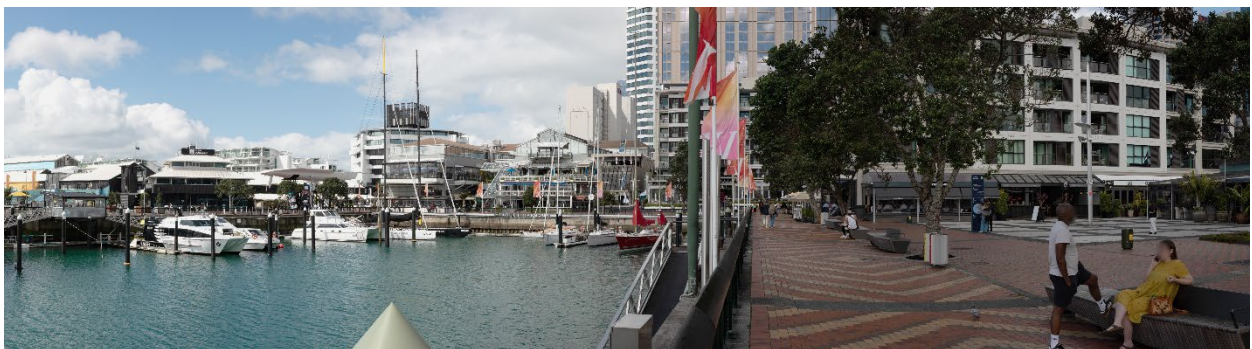
<sup>69</sup> Refer **Figures 10 and 11** within **Appendix B**.

<sup>70</sup> To equate to the assessment of the Quay Street alignment with taller buildings frontages.

<sup>71</sup> Refer to the Views G.1 – G.4 'Viaduct Esplanade Sequence' *white card* images prepared by WAM which illustrate views as one travels west to east through the Viaduct harbour and the extent of the proposal which is visible (refer Section 4.2, pages 70 – 70 of the WAM **Document D**).

Lower Hobson Street which provides separation distance and perspective depth.

- 151 Although the proposal will be visible, the main focus of the view when travelling through the area will remain at ground level and the activity within the Viaduct Harbour. The towers will form secondary elements where, when one is to look up, T1 will be seen behind T2 and will illustrate the transition in height between the forms toward the harbour edge. These factors and the form (including chamfers on T2) and the façade treatment break up the perceived mass of the building and will reduce any potential dominance effects on the Viaduct Harbour. The differentiation on the materiality and façade treatment between the towers will also ensure they read as separate building elements.
- 152 Although viewing the western façade of T2 directly from this location, the patterning, form and material treatment on the façade (including the arrangement of the glazing elements and chamfered edge of the lowest level) will be evident, showing an interesting building that extends the eye upwards and emphasising the tower's verticality above the podium P2. The roof terrace proposed on top of P2 can be partially seen protruding above the existing residential apartments within the Viaduct Harbour development. This helps break up the form and scale of the development overall, differentiating between the podium and tower, and providing a horizontal element upon the podium's roof terrace.
- 153 The scale, form and design of the proposal will not reduce the waterfront amenity which is appreciated by visitors within the Viaduct Harbour. The design proposes large buildings within downtown Auckland and, for the reasons outlined above, the design will minimise potential dominance effects. People within the Viaduct Harbour will appreciate the qualities of the waterfront environment, set in the context of buildings within the city centre.



**Viewpoint 5** (thumbnail) Isthmus. Viaduct Esplanade  
(Refer to Appendix B)



*Karanga Plaza Steps*<sup>72</sup>

- 154 The view from this location is also reasonably close at approximately 480m to the west of the site. It is a popular tourist location and common for where photographs of the Auckland skyline are captured across the Viaduct Basin.
- 155 From this location the proposed towers will be viewed in the context of the existing pattern and arrangement of buildings on Auckland's skyline which transitions to the harbour edge from the Sky Tower aligned to the Federal Street ridge. This is further emphasised by the consented buildings which span along this ridge.<sup>73</sup>
- 156 The site is located in an area within the western part of the city centre which has a visual cluster of taller buildings located along or proximate to Quay Street. These include the HSBC Tower, the PwC Commercial Bay tower and to a lesser extent the Deloitte building. The proposal will complement this pattern of larger buildings in the city centre. Although setback from Quay Street itself, the towers are located within the block which fronts Quay Street and assist with providing taller buildings along the Quay Street east-west frontage and a transition in height between the two towers and the harbour edge.
- 157 When viewed from this location there is a clear existing transition in height to the harbour edge. This is most clearly illustrated by step from the PwC Commercial Bay tower to the HSBC tower and Deloitte Centre buildings (which front Quay Street). The transition in height is retained by the proposal which steps from T1 to T2 down to the HSBC tower, Deloitte building and to the harbour edge. The angle of the chamfer on the northwestern corner of T2 also assists with emphasising the transition.
- 158 The proposed towers will define this part of downtown within the city centre, seen as part of the wider visual profile of the skyline. The Sky Tower will be a dominant landmark higher on the ridge at RL355m. The proposed towers will be the prominent landmarks aligned to the ridgeline at the lower end of the city, proximate to the harbour edge (on reclaimed land).
- 159 The towers will be tall but will be relatively slender<sup>74</sup> when viewed from this angle. Their chamfered form and the visual interest to their façades is evident

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<sup>72</sup> Refer **Figures 12 and 13** within **Appendix B**.

<sup>73</sup> Refer **Viewpoint 6 'Wynyard Crossing Proposed Scheme'** within **Appendix D** to this report (WAM Visual Study) which illustrates the consented building at 5-15 Albert Street.

<sup>74</sup> As outlined within paragraph 106(d) the slenderness of the western façades of the proposal relates to how the eastern and western façades of the respective towers, although wider than the northern and southern façades, also have slenderness in terms of the overall building form. This is due to the height and proportions of the respective buildings and façades, their chamfered / chiselled form and the façade treatment which includes the vertical glazing elements that expresses their verticality and provides depth and shadow, breaking up any apparent massing.

## Isthmus.

– emphasising their verticality. The towers will read as similar yet separate buildings avoiding reading as one form or having a monolithic appearance. There is also clear differentiation and a horizontal break between the podium and upper levels of T2. This breaks up the overall mass with the podium ‘grounding’ the building.

- 160 The proposal presents attractive buildings and will contribute well and integrate to Auckland’s skyline.



**Viewpoint 6** (thumbnail) Isthmus. Karanga Plaza Steps  
(Refer to Appendix B)

### *Brigham Street / Hamer Street (Wynyard Point)<sup>75</sup>*

- 161 The view from Brigham Street / Hamer Street on Wynyard Point is approximately 800m to the northwest of the site. This view is back toward the central city across Auckland’s Viaduct Harbour. The viewpoint is on the former ‘tank farm’ site and landform which protrudes north into the harbour. It is set for future development as a public open space so will become a more popular visitor location in time. It is representative of people using Wynyard Point and also the approach to the city centre and Wynyard Quarter / Viaduct Harbour via the water from the west.
- 162 Similar to the view from Karanga Plaza, from this location the proposed towers will be viewed in the context of the existing pattern of tall buildings on Auckland’s skyline which transition from the harbour edge up toward the Sky Tower (including those consented buildings<sup>76</sup>). The existing transition is evident in the photo on **figure 14 (Appendix B)** with the step from the Deloitte Centre building and HSBC tower up to the PwC Commercial Bay tower.
- 163 Again, from this location, the site is located in an area which has a visual cluster of taller buildings located along or proximate to Quay Street. The proposal will complement and integrate with this pattern, presenting taller buildings toward Quay Street and providing a ‘bookend’ to the western corner of the city.

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<sup>75</sup> Refer **Figures 14 and 15** within **Appendix B**.

<sup>76</sup> Refer **Viewpoint 5 ‘Wynyard Point Proposed Scheme’** within **Appendix D** to this report (WAM Visual Study).

- 164 From this angle the chamfered corners and façades are evident with a slender form to the view of T1 (which tapers at its upper levels). This adds interest to the towers and avoids an arbitrary truncation of the building at its upper levels. It will contribute well to the city's visual profile and skyline. Although taller, the towers will not dominate or present a visual block to the other building forms in the city. Their façade treatment will be similar, yet differentiated which will avoid the buildings reading as one element. The step between them will be obvious providing the transition to Quay Street and the harbour edge complementary with the existing building form and the purpose of the HEHCP. The towers will also be seen one behind the other.



**Viewpoint 7** (thumbnail) Isthmus. *Brigham Street / Hamer Street (Wynyard Point)*  
(Refer to Appendix B)

## City Centre Viewpoint Summary

- 165 In my opinion, and for the reasons outlined above the proposal will result in moderate positive effects for the city when viewed from the city centre. Although the design proposes a steeper transition in building form and height to the harbour edge than anticipated by the AUP, the proposal, overall, will provide an integrated development within the city centre which is not a radical departure from the planned built form. The transition is evident and will complement the existing built form, provided through interesting building design which will positively contribute to Auckland's skyline.
- 166 Although tall towers, they are located within the city centre where tall buildings are anticipated. Any adverse dominance effects will at most be low-moderate, from locations proximate to the site. However, these effects are minimised through:
- a) the scale, form, façade treatment overall,
  - b) the complementary architecture of the respective towers and podium,
  - c) the site's location in the city centre including in the context of other existing buildings,
  - d) the towers being the setback from the harbour edge, set behind existing buildings, and
  - e) the existing and anticipated development within this part of Auckland city.

## Wider City Context

### Stanley Point<sup>77</sup>

- 167 The Cyril Bassett VC Lookout is a key viewpoint because it is one of the only public viewpoints of the central city from Stanley Point and it represents the closest view across the water from the north. It is also representative of views experienced by boats and people on the water from the north of the city centre.
- 168 From this location the ‘ridge-valley’ pattern of the Auckland skyline which helped frame the form of Auckland’s skyline is evident.<sup>78</sup> The proposed towers will complement and add to the existing cluster of towers west of Queen Street and aligned with the Federal Street ridge. A number of the consented buildings<sup>79</sup> will also form part of this cluster. The proposed towers will integrate well with these buildings and the cityscape.
- 169 Similar to other viewpoints, the proposed towers will define and ‘bookend’ the western edge of the city providing buildings of scale. The step down from T1 to T2 and the space between them, which is obvious from this viewing angle, is consistent with the criterion to provide visual permeability and a transition in height from the city centre to the waterfront and neighbourhoods. The stepped transition and chamfered upper levels of both towers is evident, with a strong chiselled, slender silhouette of T2 visible.
- 170 The proposal will not be viewed out of context from this location and presents a considered and integrated design response for this part of the city and a positive contribution to the city’s skyline.



**Viewpoint 8** (thumbnail) Isthmus. Stanley Point  
(Refer to Appendix B)

<sup>77</sup> Refer **Figures 16 and 17** within **Appendix B**.

<sup>78</sup> Noting this provision within the AUP is now removed.

<sup>79</sup> Refer **Viewpoint 9 ‘Stanley Point Proposed Scheme’** within **Appendix D** to this report (WAM Visual Study).



## *Takurunga / Mt Victoria, Devonport*<sup>80</sup>

- 171 This location represents a view from the summit (tihi) of Takurunga / Mt Victoria in Devonport on Auckland's North Shore. The view is toward the central city from the north-east upon the maunga which is a popular location due to the views afforded to the wider city, and to the Waitematā Harbour (west) and Hauraki Gulf (north). From this location the city is framed by the harbour (foreground), Maungawhau (east) and Harbour Bridge (west). The Waitakere Ranges can be seen in the distance.
- 172 From this location buildings in the central city are seen in a cluster and concentrated toward the waterfront. The Sky Tower forms the tallest building in the cityscape upon the ridgeline. There are also a number of tall, consented buildings<sup>81</sup> within the city centre which would also be visible from this location. The transition in building height toward the harbour edge and the alignment of buildings along Quay Street is not immediately obvious from this location, (especially when compared to the viewpoints from the east and west). However, there is a step from the PwC Commercial Bay tower to the HSBC tower.
- 173 The proposed towers will appear on the western edge of the cluster and will provide a clear step and transition in height to the harbour. This is further emphasised by the proposed tower T1 being viewed behind the HSBC tower. From this angle the verticality of the materials proposed on the façades and the chamfered form of the respective towers is evident, front on to T1 and a silhouette to T2. This provides visual interest to the skyline and also assists with the transition to the harbour edge.



**Viewpoint 9** (thumbnail) Isthmus. *Takurunga / Mt Victoria Devonport*  
(Refer to Appendix B)

<sup>80</sup> Refer **Figures 18 and 19** within **Appendix B**.

<sup>81</sup> Refer **Viewpoint 11 'Devonport Proposed Scheme'** within **Appendix D** to this report (WAM Visual Study) provides a view from Devonport from a similar, representative viewpoint to Isthmus **Viewpoint 7**.



## *Ōkahu Bay Wharf (Ōrākei)<sup>82</sup>*

- 174 This viewpoint represents a view toward the city across the harbour from the end of the Ōkahu Bay Wharf, in Ōrākei. The viewpoint location is approximately 4.5km to the east of the site and provides a distant view.
- 175 The city's skyline rises from north to south (right to left) along the alignment and up the respective ridgelines toward the Sky Tower, which forms the highest building on the skyline. Viewpoint 12 – Okahu Bay of **Appendix D** illustrates the existing and consented buildings<sup>83</sup> within the city centre. The consented buildings will provide additional tall buildings to the city's skyline between the Sky Tower and harbour and the proposal will not be seen as being out of context in relation to their location and scale.
- 176 The existing transition in height from the harbour edge is evident from this location between the HSBC tower and the PwC Commercial Bay tower. The proposed towers will add new elements into this view, proximate to the harbour edge, set behind existing buildings such as the PwC and HSBC towers (at the 'back of the city').
- 177 From this angle, again, the chamfered form and the variety and vertical façade treatment of the upper reaches of the towers will be evident. The chamfer on T1 is front to the view and that of T2 forms a silhouette. The stepping and transition down in height from T1 to T2 toward the harbour is clear from this location. Although set back from Quay Street, the towers will also help visually reinforce the east-west connection and alignment of tall buildings along the Quay Street frontage, providing the 'bookend' to the western part of the city.



**Viewpoint 10** (thumbnail) Isthmus. *Ōkahu Bay Wharf (Ōrākei)*  
(Refer to Appendix B)

## *Tamaki Drive at The Strand<sup>84</sup>*

- 178 This location provides a view approximately 1.7km to the east of the site representative of people looking toward the city from Tamaki Drive at the junction with the Strand. From this location the city appears as a single

<sup>82</sup> Refer **Figures 20** and **21** within **Appendix B**.

<sup>83</sup> Some yet to be constructed.

<sup>84</sup> Refer **Figures 22** and **23** within **Appendix B**.

clustered arrangement of buildings which align north to south up toward the Sky Tower. The transition of height from the harbour edge can be seen stepping from the Deloitte Centre, up to the HSBC tower and the PwC Commercial Bay tower. There are also taller buildings further to the south within the city including those which are consented.

- 179 The dominant elements in this view include the immediate railway, the streetscape environment and the operations within the Ports of Auckland (north, right of image). The buildings within the central city form the background view.
- 180 The proposed towers will be viewed as the furthest away of the tall buildings from this location with numerous other buildings forming part of the intervening landscape (again, seen at the 'back of the city'). These buildings include PwC Commercial Bay tower and HSBC tower. Although proposed towers T1 will be taller, those in the intervening landscape and closer to the viewpoint appear either taller or equivalent in height due to visual perspective. In particular this includes the Seascapes building (under construction<sup>85</sup>) and the Pacifica building. This will assist the proposed towers to visually integrate into the cityscape.
- 181 The chamfer on the upper level of T1 will be evident from this location, providing visual interest to the building, particularly at its upper reaches.
- 182 This east-west view along Tamaki Drive follows the alignment of Quay Street. Although the towers are setback from the immediate frontage to Quay Street, their scale and form complements the intention of the east-west alignment of taller building along this edge. The step in height between the buildings and the transition to the harbour edge is evident from this location. It is complementary with the existing and planned form of the city, and there is a clear transition from T1 down to T2 and then to the HSBC tower and Deloitte Centre toward Quay Street and the harbour edge.



**Viewpoint 11** (thumbnail) Isthmus. *Tamaki Drive at The Strand*  
(Refer to Appendix B)

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<sup>85</sup> At the time of writing.

## *Maungawhau, Mt Eden<sup>86</sup>*

- 183 The view from the Maungawhau tihi (summit) is approximately 3.6km away and toward the southern side of the central city. Maungawhau is a popular tourist destination and offers extensive, panoramic views around the city to both harbours, the Waitakere Ranges and to other maunga.
- 184 From this location from the southeast the city centre is viewed as a single cluster of buildings with the Sky Tower framing the city's western built edge.
- 185 Only the upper reaches of T1 will be visible from this location, with T2 screened by existing buildings. Although it will appear as one of the taller buildings in the city, it will be an integrated element as part of the skyline (including the consented buildings which align to the Federal Street ridgeline proximate to the site and Sky Tower<sup>87</sup>). The chamfered edges (particularly on its southwestern corner) emphasise its slender form creating interest to the building and will add a distinctive element to the skyline.
- 186 The roofline of T1 will sit largely aligned with the height of the Sky Tower's 'ring'. T1 will not appear dominant or out of place with the Sky Tower remaining as the most prominent element on the skyline.
- 187 There will not be any additional effect on views toward key natural elements such as the Waitematā Harbour, Rangitoto Island, the Rangitoto Channel, and any other volcanic cones or maunga. The views to the harbour are already compromised from this location by existing buildings in the city.



**Viewpoint 12** (thumbnail) Isthmus. *Maungawhau (Mt Eden)*  
(Refer to Appendix B)

## *Anglesea Street / Ponsonby Road<sup>88</sup>*

- 188 This location represents a view from Ponsonby Road at the intersection with Anglesea Street, approximately 2km to the southwest. The view is channelled down the street toward the central city, flanked by street trees and houses.

<sup>86</sup> Refer **Figures 24 and 25** within **Appendix B**.

<sup>87</sup> Refer **Viewpoint 13 'Maungawhau / Mount Eden Proposed Scheme'** within **Appendix D** to this report (WAM Visual Study).

<sup>88</sup> Refer **Figures 26 and 27** within **Appendix B**.

- 189 From this location the central city again appears as a cluster of tall buildings. The Sky Tower forms a central component of the skyline (with the Auckland Council Building and other larger buildings to the south obscured from view by the trees). A number of the tall, consented buildings<sup>89</sup> are located between the Sky Tower and proposal, aligned to the Federal Street ridgeline. The proposal would be seen in this context.
- 190 The existing transition in height toward the harbour edge is evident with the step between the PwC Commercial Bay and HSBC towers. The proposed towers will be prominent in this view, providing tall buildings at the northwestern edge of the city, however the Sky Tower remains the tallest and dominant element.
- 191 The chamfered form of the respective towers is evident, being viewed front on for T1 and as a silhouette for T2. The subtlety of the arrangement of materials proposed across the respective building façades is also evident. These design features help emphasise the verticality and form of the towers and will contribute well to the city's skyline.
- 192 The step in height from T1 down to T2 is evident and provides a clear transition toward the harbour edge and this is further emphasised by the chamfered edge of the upper part of T2 when viewed from this angle toward the city. The separation gap between the towers can also be seen which provides visual permeability.



**Viewpoint 13** (thumbnail) Isthmus. Angelsea Street / Ponsonby Road  
(Refer to Appendix B)

## Shelly Beach Road overbridge<sup>90</sup>

- 193 This viewpoint represents 'side angle' views of the central city skyline from the motorway overbridge (offramp), approximately 2km from the west of the site.

<sup>89</sup> These are illustrated on **Viewpoint 23 'Franklin Road Proposed Scheme'** within **Appendix D** to this report (WAM Visual Study). It is acknowledged that viewpoint 6 is from Franklin Road not Angelsea Street (as per visual simulation viewpoint 12 - **Appendix B**). However, the purpose is representative to show the consented buildings which span between the Sky Tower and the proposal when viewing from the southwest.

<sup>90</sup> Refer **Figures 28 and 29** within **Appendix B**.



Viewers from this location are those using the offramp when approaching the city from the North Shore or walking / cycling across this bridge.

- 194 The dominant components of the view are the motorway and Westhaven marina, with the city's skyline forming the backdrop.
- 195 The broad transition in building height (aligned to the Federal Street ridgeline) is evident between the harbour edge and the Sky Tower (which forms the tallest element on the skyline to the south). The transition in height of existing buildings to the harbour edge is evident from the PwC Commercial Bay tower, HSBC tower down to the Deloitte Centre and other smaller buildings aligned to Quay Street.
- 196 The stepping down between T1 and T2 is evident from this angle and provides an obvious transition of scale and height to the harbour edge. It is complementary to the existing transition and, as can be seen on the visual simulation, T1 steps down to T2 and then to the HSBC tower and Deloitte Centre.
- 197 The chamfered form on T1 will be viewed front on from this location with that of T2 forming a slight silhouette. These elements provide visually interesting buildings to the skyline. The design and form of the respective towers are complementary, and they will not be viewed out of scale or context and will form integrated buildings on the city's skyline. The site is located within the city centre's clustered arrangement where buildings of the greatest scale are anticipated. The differentiated façade treatment on each tower will be evident from this angle which ensures they do not read as a single mass and form. They will be visually interesting buildings which will positively contribute to the city's skyline.



**Viewpoint 14** (thumbnail) Isthmus. Shelley Beach Road overbridge  
(Refer to Appendix B)

### *St Mary's Bay Beach*<sup>91</sup>

- 198 This viewpoint also represents 'side angle' views of the central city skyline, in this instance from sea level at St Mary's Bay Beach. It is approximately 1.6km

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<sup>91</sup> Refer **Figures 30** and **31** within **Appendix B**.



west of the site. Viewers from this location are predominantly those using the bay for recreational purposes such as water sports, walking and cycling along the Westhaven boardwalk, travelling along Westhaven Drive or the motorway.

- 199 The dominant components of the view are the bay itself, the eastern side of Westhaven marina and Wynyard Quarter (which is constantly changing with emerging development) with the city's skyline forming the backdrop. The Sky Tower forms the dominant building in the city.
- 200 Similar to the views from the Shelley Beach Road overbridge, the broad transition in building height aligned to the Federal Street ridgeline is evident. This is also shown in relation to the existing and consented buildings illustrated on Viewpoint 3 within **Appendix D**<sup>92</sup>, which will add taller buildings to the city's skyline.
- 201 Again, from this location the existing transition in height to the harbour edge between the PwC Commercial Bay and HSBC towers is evident. The proposed towers will complement this existing transition and pattern of development and, although steeper, will provide an obvious step in height between T1 and T2, and down to the HSBC tower toward the harbour edge. From this location and angle of view, the existing buildings within Wynyard Quarter also complement the height transition.
- 202 The chamfered form on the towers provides visual interest on multiple sides / corners. That on the upper reaches of T1 will be viewed front on from this location with that of T2 forming a slight silhouette, providing visually interesting buildings. The design and form of the respective towers are complementary, and they will not be viewed out of context or scale as part of the city's skyline. The materials on the respective façades add interest to the buildings and they are sufficiently differentiated to ensure they do not read as a single mass and form. They will positively contribute to the city skyline.



**Viewpoint 15** (thumbnail) Isthmus. *St Mary's Bay Beach*  
(Refer to Appendix B)

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<sup>92</sup> Refer **Viewpoint 3 'St Mary's Bay Proposed Scheme'** within **Appendix D** to this report (WAM Visual Study).

## *Sulphur Beach Reserve*<sup>93</sup>

- 203 This viewpoint represents a view of the city's skyline across the Waitematā harbour from the motorway (when travelling south). It is from Sulphur Beach Reserve which is located approximately 2.5km to the northwest of the city adjacent to the motorway and harbour bridge.
- 204 From this location the city forms a small part of a wider view. The most dominant elements, aside from the harbour, are the Sky Tower, and the cluster of buildings east on the eastern edge of the city which includes the PwC Commercial Bay tower, the Pacifica building, and the Seascope building (under construction). The consented buildings will also add tall elements to the city's skyline (as illustrated within the **Appendix D**<sup>94</sup>).
- 205 From this location the alignment of buildings spanning east-west along Quay street is difficult to ascertain. The transition in building height back from the harbour edge is also difficult to ascertain, however buildings can be seen located behind the other, such as the HSBC tower can be seen in front of the PwC Commercial Bay tower.
- 206 The proposed towers will provide additional buildings on the skyline, viewed in the context of this emerging and developing cityscape, located proximate to the harbour edge. They will be viewed as two complementary, yet subtly different buildings. They have similar architectural style, form and material composition and read as a pair or 'siblings' in a family. The material treatment of the façades is evident which differentiates from one another and expresses the verticality of the towers. The chamfered form of T1 forms a silhouette and that on T2 is front on in this view.
- 207 The towers will present visually interesting buildings and will contribute recognisable elements to the skyline. The stepping and transition in height to the harbour edge is evident from this location, with T1 located behind T2, and the difference in height is clear where T2 protrudes further west when viewed from this angle.

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<sup>93</sup> Refer **Figures 32 and 33** within **Appendix B**.

<sup>94</sup> Refer **Viewpoint 1 'Northern Motorway Proposed Scheme'** within **Appendix D** to this report (WAM Visual Study).



**Viewpoint 16** (thumbnail) Isthmus. *Sulphur Beach Reserve*  
(Refer to Appendix B)

*Harbour View Beach Reserve, Te Atatu Peninsula*<sup>95</sup>

- 208 This viewpoint represents views from the Te Atatu peninsula, some 9km to the west of the site. From this location the cityscape forms the background to an expansive view which includes the upper Waitematā Harbour and extends from the North Shore (north) across the harbour bridge, central city, Pt Chevalier and Mt Albert to Rosebank. Numerous maunga across Auckland's landscape can also be seen.
- 209 From this location the built form of the city appears as a clustered arrangement predominantly to the north of the Sky Tower, which is the most evident and obvious component of the view of the city. The existing transition in building height is apparent.
- 210 From this location the proposed towers will be visible, however they will be viewed as small parts of the city centre's built form, which in turn forms a small part of the expansive view of the wider Auckland city context. Although at a great distance, the stepped form and transition in height to the harbour edge between tower T1 and T2 will be evident. The towers will add visually interesting buildings to the city's skyline.



**Viewpoint 17** (thumbnail) Isthmus. *Harbour View Beach Reserve, Te Atatu Peninsula*  
(Refer to Appendix B)

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<sup>95</sup> Refer **Figures 34 and 35** within **Appendix B**.

*Signage*<sup>96</sup>

- 211 From the broader cityscape, the 'signage zones' on the upper levels of the towers will likely be visible (dependent on location and angle of view). Where these 'zones' are visible they will be viewed as integrated elements on the respective façades which will not detract from the building's profile or appearance. The 'zones' are of a small scale (relative to the balance of the building) on the upper and middle parts of the northern and southern façades of tower T1 only. Being only two locations of relatively small scale, this avoids any potential adverse visual amenity, dominance or cumulative effects.

*Wider City Context Viewpoint Summary*

- 212 For the reasons outlined above, the proposed design will contribute positively to the cityscape and skyline of Auckland and will result in moderate positive effects. The towers will provide interesting building forms into the city centre, proximate to the waterfront, with façade treatment which provides visual interest, including when viewing from distance.
- 213 The step and transition in building height to the harbour edge is evident, provided by the step between T1 and T2 down to the adjacent buildings – to the north to the Waitematā Harbour and the west to the Viaduct Harbour neighbourhood. Although a steeper transition is provided than that anticipated by the HEHCP, it is appropriate in the context of the city and does not present a radical departure from the planned built form. The tower height and form will be complementary to existing and the planned built form and character. The slender form and chamfered corners on the upper levels of the buildings assist with providing an interesting skyline and the transition (not abrupt) between the towers and to the harbour edge.
- 214 Depending on the viewing location, the towers will 'move' relative to each other as people move and view them from around the city. This will be accentuated by the separation distance between them. Their 'family likeness', building offset, slenderness and asymmetrical design will draw attention to this characteristic. They have been designed to be similar and complementary, however they have sufficient differentiation (particularly to their facade treatment) to read as separate elements.
- 215 Although the scale of the proposal is greater than that anticipated by the AUP on this site, it has a design quality which is commensurate with the prominence of the towers and any associated visual effects. It will positively contribute to the city's skyline. Any adverse effects from the wider landscape are assessed to be low-moderate, at most, and these effects are assessed to have been sufficiently mitigated and managed through the design.

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<sup>96</sup> Refer **Appendix C** and E23 of the AUP.

***Assessment from the broader cityscape summary***

- 216 In summary, the proposed development will provide a significant and positive contribution to the cityscape and skyline of Auckland from locations both near and in the broader landscape. Any potential adverse effects on the wider cityscape have been addressed through the design of the respective buildings and how they sit as part of the city. The towers will define the northern end of the development pattern along Federal Street ridgeline and the western end of the city centre. The siting and height of the towers will also integrate positively into the composition and arrangement of buildings in the city.
- 217 The form of the towers and their façade composition provides visually interesting buildings which have been designed to reflect a strong mana whenua and cultural narrative and read as a pair or ‘siblings’ through their similarities, yet subtle differences.
- 218 The site (and therefore the towers) is also setback from the harbour edge, with the Viaduct (west) and development fronting Quay Street (north) providing a buffer. Notwithstanding, the proposed towers will provide tall buildings in this context with a design which has an appropriate scale and will add to the visual profile of the city, and the aforementioned development pattern aligned with the Federal Street ridge.
- 219 The slender form, the chamfered edges and the stepped nature between the two towers provide an obvious and sound transition in height toward the waterfront and harbour edge.

***Appropriateness and the effects of the proposal in its urban landscape context***

- 220 From a landscape assessment perspective, the site is appropriate for the proposed mixed-use development.
- 221 The site is strategically located proximate to the waterfront which can provide connection between the central city and harbour edge, including the Viaduct Harbour (and Wynyard Quarter beyond). The proposal will help transform and rejuvenate this part of lower downtown Auckland.
- 222 The site and these connections are currently hindered by the current drawbacks of the use of the site which includes the poor streetscape amenity, poor activation at the street level, the lack of internal connections and the undistinguished architecture. For these reasons, it is a blighted part of the city. However, the proposed design will resolve these shortcomings and will provide a positive transformation of the site and this part of downtown Auckland. The reasons for this have been discussed earlier in relation to the assessment of the *streetscape* effects.



- 223 The proposal will contribute a mix of activities onto a site that has access and proximity to all of the facilities of the central city as well as those of the Viaduct Harbour and Wynyard Quarter. It is also located in the midst of the downtown public transport facilities.
- 224 For the reasons outlined above in relation to the *broader cityscape*, the proposed design will provide a positive contribution to the Auckland city skyline. The site is an appropriate location for development of this type in relation to the underlying topography, and the city's urban form. The towers will 'bookend' this corner of the city, providing an appropriate transition to the harbour edge whilst located within the city block which is to reinforce the alignment of tall buildings along the 'Quay Street east west connection'.<sup>97</sup>

### *Harbour Edge Height Control Plane (HEHCP)*<sup>98</sup>

- 225 In relation to the infringement of the HEHCP the site is an appropriate location for development of this scale in terms of the underlying topography and urban form of the city. It is aligned with the aforementioned Federal Street ridge, the axis of the Special Height Area from the Sky Tower to Princes Wharf.
- 226 The proposed towers are also not 'over height' per se (in a zoning sense) because the Site is located within the AUP's Special Height Area. However, they infringe the localised HEHCP standard which applies to the blocks between Quay Street and Customs Street. The proposal achieves the purpose of the HEHCP through other means as follows:

### *Transition*

- a) Although a breach of the HEHCP standard the proposal still forms and achieves a clear transition between the core city centre and the harbour edge, albeit steeper than that anticipated by the AUP. This is due to the two towers being set back from Quay Street behind other buildings, with both T1 and T2 located behind M Social. T1 is also inland of the HSBC tower and is opposite Princes Wharf which also provides part of the transition to the harbour. This is evident in many views of the proposal from around the city particularly from the east and west as illustrated on the visual simulations<sup>99</sup> (refer **Appendix B**) and the Visual Study (refer **Appendix D**);
- b) The proposal also forms a transition from the Viaduct Harbour neighbourhood to the west through the step down in height from T1 to T2, and the separation of Lower Hobson Street and the buildings on the eastern edge of Viaduct Harbour;

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<sup>97</sup> Refer H8.6.5 of the AUP.

<sup>98</sup> These matters are also assessed within the *UD Assessment* prepared by McIndoe Urban.

<sup>99</sup> Refer viewpoints 3, 5, 6, 11, 14, and 15 within Appendix B.

- c) The transition between the towers to the harbour edge has been outlined previously within this report.

*Visual connections and visual permeability between the harbour and city centre*

- d) The purpose of this provision is achieved as it is to 'maximise' visual connection and visual permeability between the harbour and the city centre. Views between Federal Street and the harbour will be reduced due to the proposal, but not completely lost. It is worth noting that an HEHCP 'compliant' building on the site would also reduce the views from Federal Street. Views toward the north from the Sky Tower also illustrate that visual permeability is provided through the site between T1 and T2 (refer **Image S** above). As such, a 'wall effect' per se which does not provide visual connection / permeability for potential future development to the south of the site is avoided.

*Quay Street east-west connection*

- e) While the towers are set back from Quay Street (those frontages are set by the M Social and HSBC buildings), they are located within the city block which fronts Quay Street. T1 and T2 will nevertheless provide 'tall buildings' to the western end of Quay Street and the north-west corner of the core city centre which reinforces the Quay Street east-west connection.

- 227 In relation to the assessment criteria<sup>100</sup> for infringement to the HEHCP standards the following comments are made. Noting, these matters have been addressed previously within the balance of this assessment report.

*Height, form and scale*

- 228 As outlined within the assessment of the *broader cityscape* section earlier in this report, the proposed towers will be of a height, form and scale which have been designed to which is complementary and will also reinforce the planned built form of the city centre and the waterfront. Although steeper than anticipated, the design presents a transition and step in building height down to the harbour edge and adjacent neighbourhood through visually interesting buildings. This has been assessed in relation to locations within the city centre<sup>101</sup>, main approaches to the city centre from land and water<sup>102</sup> and from public open spaces<sup>103</sup>.

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<sup>100</sup> Refer H8.8.2(8A) *infringement of the harbour edge control plane standard* of the AUP.

<sup>101</sup> Refer *City Centre* viewpoint assessment previously within this report – Viewpoints 1 – 7 within **Appendix B**.

<sup>102</sup> Refer Viewpoints 2, 7 and 8 as assessed above and illustrated within **Appendix B**.

<sup>103</sup> Notably, St Patricks Square (VP1), Queens Wharf (VP2), Karanga Plaza (VP5), the Cyril Basset VC Lookout (VP08), Takuranga / Mt Victoria (VP9), Maungawhau (VP12) and Harbour View Beach Reserve (VP17) within **Appendix B**.

- 229 In relation to the extent that the proposal protrudes through the HEHCP:
- a) The design of the towers will avoid an ‘abrupt and arbitrary truncation’ of the upper part of the buildings. Each of the buildings have been carefully designed to be visually interesting with sculpted and chamfered forms, materiality and roof forms to provide a positive contribution to the Auckland skyline. As well as contributing to slenderness this will give each of the upper levels an asymmetrical form and will contribute to a distinctive skyline reflective of the design intent of the iho / design statement. The extension of the glazed façades on each tower also add to the visual interest on the skyline. This is also described within the *broader cityscape* section of this assessment.
  - b) As also outlined within the assessment of the *broader cityscape* earlier in this report, the proposed towers will be of a scale, bulk and appearance which represents a visually compatible addition to the city centre proximate to the Waitematā Harbour. This is achieved through the design of the towers, their visual interest and variation, and their location proximate to other buildings within the city (as part of a cluster) and the transition of building height down to the waterfront. In relation to ‘sense of place’, as outlined earlier the site is an appropriate location for development of this type in relation to the underlying topography, and the city’s urban form. The towers will ‘bookend’ this corner of the city, adding to the city’s skyline and identity, providing an appropriate transition to the harbour edge whilst replacing an existing ‘blighted’ part of the city.
  - c) As outlined throughout this report and within paragraph 226(d) the proposal will maintain visual and physical connections and visual permeability to the Waitematā Harbour through the city centre.

*Amenity effects on the streetscape and adjacent public open spaces along the waterfront*<sup>104</sup>

- 230 Although the proposed towers penetrate the HEHCP, their bulk will not result in a significant loss of amenity to the adjacent public areas on the waterfront (in this case such as Te Wānanga and Queens Wharf on Quay Street). The towers will be setback and step up from the harbour edge behind the HSBC and M Social buildings beyond Quay Street to the north, and from the existing buildings on the western side of Lower Hobson Street within the Viaduct Harbour. As such, this setback will provide a degree of screening, physical separation and a transition to the proposal. For these reasons and those outlined earlier in the report in relation to potential effects on Quay Street, any potential adverse dominance effects and effects on amenity will be minimised.

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<sup>104</sup> Sunlight admission and potential shading effects on these locations is addressed within the *UD Assessment* prepared by McIndoe Urban.

- 231 From Queen Street, the proposal will be largely screened by existing buildings within the city centre. Where it is visible, which is limited to the intersection with Customs Street, it will be seen in the context of existing large buildings such as the PwC Commercial Bay tower and behind the AON building. It will be complementary on the skyline and will not appear visually dominant in this context.
- 232 From Customs Street West, potential dominance effects have been addressed within the *streetscape* assessment section earlier within this report. The design of the podium and its relationship to the towers above will minimise any visual dominance effects.
- 233 The towers will be visible from the public open spaces along the waterfront to the west of the site. These locations have been assessed earlier within this report in relation to the Quay waterfront (extending to Te Wananga) and Karanga Plaza and Wynyard Point (site of a future planned public open space).
- 234 For the reasons outlined above the proposal will also not result in a loss of amenity to the streetscape and adjacent public open spaces along the waterfront, and potential dominance effects have been minimised through the design. The proposal will present a coherent and compatible development for the site.

### *Particular constraints*

- 235 From a landscape assessment perspective there are no particular site development characteristics which constrained the form of development proposed.

### *Natural Character of the Coastal Environment*

- 236 The site is located on reclaimed land proximate to the Waitematā Harbour coastal edge in the urban centre of Auckland city. It is highly modified environment and subsequently has little to no abiotic or biotic aspects. Its location proximate but setback from the harbour edge does result in there being experiential attributes of the coast (such as the smell of the sea and the appreciation of the harbour).
- 237 The site anticipates development as enabled by the AUP and the proposed development is appropriate and will not result in 'significant adverse effects' on the coastal environment.<sup>105</sup> The experiential attributes of the site will not be adversely affected by the proposal.
- 238 In relation to potential effects on *amenity values* (per NZCPS Policy 6(1)(i)), as outlined under paragraphs 230 - 234 above, the proposal will not result in a

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<sup>105</sup> Refer Policy 13.1 of the NZ Coastal Policy Statement 2010 (NZCPS).

significant loss of amenity to the adjacent waterfront public areas on the waterfront. It will also not result in adverse visual effects on the *headlands* or *prominent ridgelines* within Auckland's highly modified urban city centre (per NZCPS Policy 6(1)(h)).

- 239 Although the design proposes a development which breaches provisions within the AUP, any effects on natural character are assessed to be very low, at most.

### *Auckland Plan and City Centre Masterplan*

- 240 The proposal helps give effect to the strategy of a 'quality, compact urban form' as defined in the Auckland Plan 2050:

- Development occurs in areas that are easily accessible by public transport, walking and cycling;
- Development is within reasonable walking distance of services and facilities including centres, community facilities, employment opportunities, the waterfront and open space; and
- Development maximises efficient use of land.

- 241 The proposal also gives effect to and is consistent with the more concrete moves sought in the City Centre Masterplan 2020:

- Enlivening and rejuvenating a run-down corner of the city's streetscape – helping to enhance the neighbourhood as a residential address (visitor accommodation);
- Providing a link in the identified laneways network – (sense of place);
- Promoting transit-oriented development, realising the potential of the investment especially of the City Rail Link (CRL);
- Improving the quality of pedestrian connections in the vicinity of Britomart, the waterfront and ferry terminal, and the CRL stations under construction;
- Complementing moves such as the reinforcement of the Quay Street east-west connection, the Waterfront Stitch Streets, the development of this site as identified as part of 'Future Development' under the CCMP, Transit Streets (Fanshawe Street), Hobson and Nelson Street green boulevards, the east-west stitch, and the cycle network;
- Adding to the city's skyline and identity (sense of place);
- Using land efficiently; and
- Reinforcing central Auckland's economic activity which in turn is a significant contributor to the New Zealand GDP.



**CONCLUSION**

- 242 The proposal will positively transform and rejuvenate a blighted part of downtown Auckland, proximate to the waterfront and harbour edge. It will replace the existing DTC building with a development which will (i) positively contribute to streetscape, and street level circulation and activity, (ii) positively contribute to the cityscape by introducing a pair of towers with a family likeness to the skyline, and (iii) be an appropriate development in terms of the site's urban landscape context. There will be considerable positive effects resulting from the proposal. Any adverse effects are assessed to be low-moderate, at most, and they have been sufficiently mitigated and managed through the design.
- 243 Although the towers infringe the HEHCP, the proposal achieves the purpose by the following means:
- a) Providing a form which transitions in building height from the core of the city centre to the waterfront,
  - b) The visual profile of the towers and the design of their 'upper parts' avoids abrupt truncation and represents a visually compatible addition to the city centre, proximate to the Waitematā Harbour,
  - c) Although reduced, will maximise visual connections and visual permeability between the city centre and the Waitematā Harbour,
  - d) Addressing potential amenity effects on the streetscape and adjacent public open space along the waterfront, and
  - e) It will also provide a marker building at the western end of Quay Street and reinforcing this east-west connection with tall buildings.

**Matthew Jones**

Principal

**Isthmus.**

## Appendix A

## METHODOLOGY

The assessment is consistent with the methodology (the high-level system of concepts, principles, and approaches) of *‘Te Tangi a te Manu: Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines’*, Tuia Pito Ora New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects, July 2022.

## Method

The following summarises the specific method tailored to the landscape context, issues, and purpose of this assessment.

*Definition of landscape*

The following definition of landscape is adopted:

*An area as perceived by people, including how the area is experienced, understood, interpreted, and regarded.*

Particularly relevant to this assessment given its urban context is that an **urban landscape** is a type of landscape which falls within the same “conceptual framework as all other landscapes”. Furthermore, “...‘urban landscapes’ do not just mean the natural or green parts of cities. Urban landscapes comprise the physical urban environment (its topography, streets, buildings, open spaces, and their related processes and activities), how people perceive it (its legibility, memorability, aesthetics), and what it means (its identity, history, sense of place)”.<sup>106</sup>

*Spatial extent of relevant landscape*

The relevant context has three nested scales:

- (a) The immediate context is the streetscape of Lower Hobson Street (west), Customs Street West (south), Lower Albert Street (east) and Quay Street (north);
- (b) The mid-scale context is the proposal’s urban context with respect to the core CBD, the waterfront, and Viaduct Harbour. This includes:
  - i. **North.** Along the waterfront, on Princes Wharf and Queens Wharf and to a lesser extent the Port;
  - ii. **East:** Along Quay Street, Customs Streets and Queen Street and the development / land uses along these routes. These areas are zoned *Business – City Centre* and include a variety of different commercial, retail and residential land uses;

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<sup>106</sup> Refer Te Tangi a Te Manu, paragraphs 4.46 – 4.48.

- iii. **South:** Within the city centre along streets (such as Federal Street), existing development and open spaces (such St Patricks Square); and
  - iv. **West:** Along Fanshawe Street, within the Viaduct Harbour, at Wynyard Quarter and on Wynyard Point.
- (c) The wider context is the proposal's place in the city skyline beyond the immediate surroundings, including from Devonport and the North Shore (north), Parnell and Okahu Bay (east), Maungawhau and other maunga (south) and Ponsonby, St Mary's Bay and Te Atatu (west).

### *Site visits*

Site visits were undertaken to gain an appreciation of the site and its wider context. During the site visits, photographs were taken which are illustrated within **Appendix B**.

### *Proposal*

The assessment relies on the AEE Project Description and summarises some of the project's aspects most relevant to assessing landscape and visual effects.

### *Relevant statutory and non-statutory provisions*

Review of statutory planning provisions most relevant to assessing the landscape (including visual) matters related to the FTAA application process (**Appendix C**). The purpose of the review is to frame the landscape assessment, rather than to undertake a planning appraisal.

### *Existing landscape attributes and values*

The assessment describes and interprets the character of the area and evaluates its landscape values. It canvasses relevant physical characteristics, and perceptual and associative qualities. The assessment entailed desk-top review and field work. The report focuses on those matters considered relevant to the assessment of effects.

### *Issues*

The assessment of effects is structured around the following key matters having regard to the nature of the proposal, the relevant provisions, and the urban landscape context.

- a) Potential effects on the **streetscape** (podium scale and appearance, street-level circulation, and activation);
- b) Potential effects on the **broader cityscape** (scale, appearance and context of the towers on the skyline); and
- c) **Appropriateness** and effects of the proposal in its urban landscape context.

### Effects

Effects are assessed under each heading. Such effects are assessed against the context of the existing environment and planned urban form, and the outcomes sought in the relevant provisions.

Effects are a consequence on landscape values. Change or visibility themselves are not adverse effects.

The primary focus is on analysing the nature of the effect. Where relevant the nature of effect is also qualified by describing its magnitude using the following 7-point scale against RMA terminology<sup>107</sup>.

						SIGNIFICANT	
LESS THAN MINOR		MINOR		MORE THAN MINOR			
VERY LOW	LOW	LOW-MOD	MODERATE	MOD-HIGH	HIGH	VERY HIGH	

The nature of effects can be **Adverse** (negative) or **Beneficial** (positive). An assessment of effects combines both value ratings (Very Low – Very High) and nature of effects (Adverse, Positive).

### Conclusion

An overall conclusion is made in terms of landscape and visual matters, having regard to all the effects in the context of the nature of the proposal, the landscape values of the locality, and the outcomes sought by the provisions.

### Visual simulations

Panoramic photography and the visual simulations have prepared consistent with the *NZILA Best Practice Guide 10.2*. They are provided within **Appendix B** and the method is explained on the last page of that document.

The visual simulations are presented across two A3 pages to provide a field of view of approximately 110°, at correct scale for a 400mm reading distance. Each visual simulation is printed to the same scale for consistency. From some close locations this means that the top of the building is cropped. From those locations architectural renderings are also included as part of the resource consent application documentation to illustrate the building at full height.

The viewpoints were selected to be representative of a range of places in the area and are consistent with those suggested by the Auckland Council landscape specialist.

<sup>107</sup>

As per 'Te Tangi a te Manu: Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines', Tuia Pito Ora New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects, July 2022.



## **Isthmus.**

While visual simulations are useful tools, it is important to note their inherent limitations. Photos are static, have a limited field of view, and tend to flatten perspective. People typically experience landscapes by moving through them in a range of conditions – somewhat differently from photos that are taken in one set of conditions, from fixed viewpoints, and that do not depict wider context. The before-and-after format can focus attention on change rather than the effects on landscape / cityscape values. The format discussed above seeks to reduce these inherent limitations.

The visual simulations are also intended to be used in conjunction with other tools including the plan sets and architectural renderings, with the latter being more useful in particular for close street views.

*Appendix B*

**GRAPHIC ATTACHMENTS – Visual Simulations** *(refer separate document).*

## Appendix C

### RELEVANT STATUTORY PROVISIONS AND OTHER MATTERS

This section outlines the relevant provisions related to landscape assessment matters for the site and underlying zone and precinct as per the Auckland Unitary Plan.

#### Resource Management Act (1991)

In relation to the RMA, the following sections are relevant:

*Section 5(1) - The purpose of this Act is to promote the sustainable management of natural and physical resources,*

*Section 7(c) - the maintenance and enhancement of amenity values, and*

*Section 7(f) - maintenance and enhancement of the quality of the environment.*

#### Fast-track Approvals Act

Section 43 of the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (FTAA) outlines the matters that must be addressed as part of a substantive application, including the specific information required for an assessment of effects (as per sub-clause (3)).

Sub-clause 3 requires that the relevant matters of Schedule 5 of the FTAA be addressed for approvals under the RMA, with clauses 5 to 9 of Schedule 5 applying to resource consents. The assessment provided in this report has been prepared to meet the requirements of the FTAA.

#### Auckland Unitary Plan – Regional Policy Statement section

Chapter B2 of the AUP is relevant to appraising the landscape and urban design effects of the proposal.

##### *B2 Tāhuhu whakaruruhau ā-taone – Urban growth and form*

Objectives and policies are organised under topics. Those relevant to the proposal include:

##### *Quality compact urban form*

B2.2.1.(1A) A **well-functioning urban environment** that enables all people and communities to provide for their social, economic, and cultural wellbeing, and for their health and safety, now and into the future.

B2.2.1.(1) A **well-functioning urban environment** that enables all people and communities to provide for their social, economic, and cultural wellbeing, and for their health and safety, now and into the future: (a) a **higher-quality**

**urban environment;** (b) greater productivity and economic growth; (c) better use of existing infrastructure and efficient provision of new infrastructure; (d) good accessibility for all people, including by improved and more efficient public or active transport; (e) greater **social and cultural vitality;** (f) better maintenance of rural character and rural productivity; and (g) reduced adverse environmental effects; and (h) improved resilience to the effects of climate change.

### *Quality built environment*

B2.3.1.(1) A **well-functioning urban environment** with a quality built environment where subdivision, use and development do all of the following: (a) respond to the **intrinsic qualities and physical characteristics of the site and area, including its setting;** (b) reinforce the **hierarchy of centres** and corridors; (c) contribute to a diverse mix of **choice** and opportunity for people and communities; (d) maximise resource and **infrastructure efficiency;** (e) are capable of adapting to changing needs; and (f) respond and adapt to the effects of climate change.

B2.3.2.(1) Manage the **form and design** of subdivision, use and **development** so that it does all of the following: (a) supports the planned future environment, including its shape, landform, outlook, location and relationship to its surroundings, including landscape and heritage; (b) contributes to the safety of the site, street and neighbourhood; (c) develops street networks and block patterns that provide good access and enable a range of travel options; (d) achieves a high level of amenity and safety for pedestrians and cyclists; (e) meets the functional, and operational needs of the intended use; and (f) allows for change and enables innovative design and adaptive re-use; and (h) improved resilience to the effects of climate change.

## **Auckland Unitary Plan – District Plan section**

### *H8. City Centre Zone*

The site falls within the 'H8 Business – City Centre Zone'. The Zone description seeks to ensure the city centre is an international centre for business and learning, innovation, entertainment, culture and urban living. The **greatest** intensity of development in terms of height and floor area is provided for within this zone. The Zone description refers to the contribution of the city centre to Auckland's sense of identity. It notes that "*the **significant height and scale of buildings in the city centre increases their visibility from many places, affecting the quality of both public and private views at local and city-wide scales.**...*" "*In addition to managing the scale of development, the zone manages the **quality of building design** to ensure new buildings successfully integrate with the city centre's **existing and planned built form** and **public realm** to create an **attractive and recognisable skyline.***"

The site is located within the **Downtown West Precinct.**



*General objectives for all centres, Business – Mixed Use Zone, Business – General Business Zone and Business – Business Park Zone include:*

- H.8.2.(1) A strong network of centres that are **attractive environments** and attract ongoing investment, promote commercial activity, and provide employment, housing and goods and services, all at a variety of scales.
- H.8.2.(2) Development is of a **form, scale** and **design quality** so that centres are reinforced as focal points for the community.
- H.8.2.(3) Development positively contributes towards **planned future form and quality**, creating a **sense of place**.
- H.8.2.(4) Business activity is distributed in locations, and is of a **scale** and **form**, that:
  - (a) Provides for the community's social and economic needs;
  - (b) Improves community access to goods, services, community facilities and opportunities for social interaction;
  - (c) Manages adverse effects on the environment, including effects on infrastructure and residential amenity; and
  - (d) Accommodates qualifying matters.
- H.8.2.(5) A network of centres that provides:
  - (a) A framework and context to the functioning of the urban area and its transport network, recognising:
    - (i) The regional role and function of the city centre, metropolitan centres and town centres as commercial, cultural and social focal points for the region, sub-regions and local areas;
    - (ii) Local centres and neighbourhood centres in their role to provide for a range of convenience activities to support and serve as focal points for their local communities;
  - (b) A clear framework within which public and private investment can be prioritised and made; and
  - (c) A basis for regeneration and intensification initiatives.

*Business – City Centre zone objectives include:*

- H.8.2.(6) The city centre is an internationally **significant centre for business**.
- H.8.2.(7) 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.
- H.8.2.(8) Development in the city centre is managed to **accommodate** growth and the **greatest intensity of development** in Auckland and New Zealand while respecting its existing and planned built form and character and **waterfront setting**.
- H.8.2.(9) The distinctive **built form, identified special character** and functions of particular areas within and adjoining the city centre are maintained and enhanced.

...

- H.8.2.(11) The city centre is **accessible** by a range of transport modes with an increasing percentage of residents, visitors, students and workers choosing walking, cycling and public transport.
- H.8.2.(12) Development maintains and enhances the city's physical, cultural and **visual connections with the waterfront** as a public space and with the Waitematā Harbour and maunga.
- H.8.2.(13) **Building heights are enabled** to realise **as much development capacity as possible**, unless qualifying matters apply which modify the relevant **building height** and/or **density of urban form**.

*General policies for all centres, Business – Mixed Use Zone, Business – General Business Zone and Business – Business Park Zone include:*

- H.8.3.(1) Reinforce the **function of the city centre**, metropolitan centres and town centres as the primary location for commercial activity, according to their role in the hierarchy of centres.
- H.8.3.(2) **Enable an increase in the density**, diversity and quality of housing in the centres zones and Business – Mixed Use Zone while managing any reverse sensitivity effects including from the higher levels of ambient noise and reduced **privacy** that may result from non-residential activities.
- H.8.3.(3) Require development to be of a **quality** and **design that positively contributes** to:
  - (a) Planning and design outcomes identified in this Plan for the relevant zone;
  - (b) The **visual quality** and **interest of streets** and other public open spaces; and
  - (c) **Pedestrian amenity**, movement, safety and convenience for people of all ages and abilities.
- H.8.3.(4) Encourage **universal access** for all development, particularly medium to large scale development.
- H.8.3.(5) Require large-scale development to be of a **design quality** that is commensurate with the **prominence** and **visual effects** of the development.
- H.8.3.(6) Encourage buildings at the **ground floor to be adaptable** to a range of uses to allow activities to change over time.
- H.8.3.(7) Require at grade parking to be located and designed in such a manner as to avoid or mitigate adverse impact on pedestrian amenity and the streetscape.

...

- H.8.3.(11) Require development to avoid, remedy or mitigate adverse wind and glare effects on public open spaces, including streets, and shading effects on open space zoned land.
- H.8.3.(12) Recognise the functional and operational requirements of activities and development.
- H.8.3.(12A) Enable building height of at least six storeys within mapped walkable catchments unless a qualifying matter applies that reduces height.
- H.8.3.(13) Enable **greater building height** than the standard height in locations identified within the Height Variation Control, having regard to whether the greater height:
  - (za) is commensurate with the level of commercial activities and community services;
  - (zb) is compatible with a qualifying matter that requires reduced height and/or density;
  - (a) Is an **efficient use of land**;
  - (b) Supports **public transport, community infrastructure** and contributes to centre **vitality** and **vibrancy**;
  - (c) Considering the size and depth of the area, can be accommodated without significant adverse effects on adjacent residential zones; and
  - (d) Is supported by the status of the centre in the centres hierarchy, or is adjacent to such a centre.
- H.8.3.(14) Reduce building height below the standard zone height in locations identified within the Height Variation Control, where the standard zone height would have significant adverse effects on identified special character, identified landscape features, amenity or other qualifying matters.

*Business – City Centre zone policies include:*

- H.8.3.(15) Provide for a wide range and diverse mix of activities that enhance the **vitality, vibrancy** and **amenity** of the city centre including:
  - (a) **Commercial** and **residential** activities;
  - (b) Arts, entertainment, events, civic and community functions;
  - (c) High-quality **visitor experiences**, visitor accommodation and associated services; and
  - (d) Learning, teaching and research activities, with a particular concentration in the learning precinct.
- H.8.3.(16) Enable a significant and diverse **residential population** to be established and maintained within a range of living environments and housing sizes.
- H.8.3.(17) Enable the most significant **concentration of office activity** in Auckland to locate in the city centre by providing an environment attractive to office workers, with a focus on the core of the city centre.

- H.8.3.(18) Provide for a wide **range of retail activities** throughout the city centre while maintaining and enhancing the vitality, vibrancy and amenity of core retail areas within the city centre and centres outside of the city centre. In particular:
- (a) Enable smaller scale retail activities to occur throughout the city centre;
  - (b) Encourage large department stores and integrated retail developments to locate within the core retail area; and
  - (c) Avoid large department stores and integrated retail developments locating outside the core retail area where they would adversely affect the amenity, vitality and viability of core retail areas within the city centre and/or centres outside of the city centre.
- H.8.3.(19) Provide for a **wide range of activities** along the waterfront, while continuing to provide for those activities requiring a harbour location.
- H.8.3.(20) **Enhance the waterfront as a major gateway to the city centre** and Auckland.
- ...
- H.8.3.(22) Support the development of **public transport, pedestrian** and cycle **networks** and the ability to efficiently change transport modes.

### *Precincts*

- H.8.3.(23) Identify and encourage specific outcomes in areas of the city centre that relate to:
- (a) a distinctive **built character**; and/or
  - (b) a concentration of particular activities; and/or
  - (c) activities that have specific functional requirements; and/or
  - (d) significant **transformational development opportunities**.
- H.8.3.(24) Encourage comprehensive and **integrated development** of key development sites or precincts in the city centre.
- ...

### *City Form*

- H.8.3.(29) Enable the **tallest buildings** and the greatest density of development to occur **in the core of the city centre**.
- H.8.3.(29A) Ensure **high quality building design** which recognises the city centre's role in reinforcing Auckland's **sense of place** and **identity**, including a thriving and authentic **mana whenua identity** that is genuinely visible throughout the city centre.
- H.8.3.(30) Manage adverse effects associated with **building height and form** by:
- (a) **Transitioning building height** and development densities down to neighbourhoods adjoining the city centre and to the **harbour edge**;
  - (b) Protecting sunlight to identified public open spaces and view shafts;



- (c) Requiring the height and form of new buildings to be complementary to existing or planned built form and character of the zone and precincts; and
- (d) Managing the **scale, form and design** of buildings to:
  - (i) Avoid **adverse dominance** and/or **amenity effects** on streets and public open space; and
  - (ii) Encourage well-designed, **human scale podiums** with **slender towers** above with **adequate separation** between towers; or on sites where towers are not possible, encourage well-designed buildings which complement the streetscape and skyline.

H8.3.(30A) In identified locations, modify building height and/or density of urban form to provide for qualifying matters.

H8.3.(31) Ensure adequate **sunlight, daylight** and **outlook** around buildings.

H8.3.(31A) Ensure **adequate separation** between buildings to avoid adverse effects on the physical, cultural and visual connections between the city centre and the Waitematā Harbour and maunga.

H8.3.(32) Encourage **public amenities** to be provided within developments, including publicly accessible open space, works of art and through site links.

H8.3.(32A) Require that existing public amenities within developments be retained, including publicly accessible open space, artworks and through site links.

### *Public Realm*

H8.3.(33) Require building and development of the **highest quality** that contributes to the city centre's role as an international centre for business, learning, innovation, entertainment, culture and urban living.

H8.3.(34) Require building frontages along identified public open spaces and streets to be designed in a way that provides a sense of **intimacy, character, interest** and **variation**, and **enclosure at street level**.

H8.3.(35) Require the demolition of buildings and structures to avoid, remedy or mitigate significant adverse effects on the **pedestrian amenity** of the city centre and the safety and efficiency of the road network.

H8.3.(36) Protect identified sightlines along streets and public open spaces from the city centre to the Waitematā Harbour, Rangitoto Island, the North Shore and identified sightlines along roads and public open spaces within the city centre to natural features and landmarks.

H8.3.(37) Enable **high-quality public open spaces** along the waterfront that are accessible and provide spaces for recreational opportunities, facilities and events.

H8.3.(38) Ensure adequate sunlight and daylight to public open spaces and streets.

*Development standards relevant to the assessment include:*

H.8.6.2. **General building height.** Purpose: manage the height of buildings within the city centre to:

- enable the tallest buildings within the core of the city centre;
- transition heights down to neighbourhoods adjoining the city centre and to the harbour edge;
- consolidate the city centre as the top of the centres hierarchy in Auckland;
- respect the existing and planned built form and character of the zone and precincts; and
- avoid **adverse dominance**, shading and/or **visual amenity effects** of building height on **streets** and **public open spaces**.
- provide for variations to building height to recognise the character and amenity of particular areas, including heritage places.

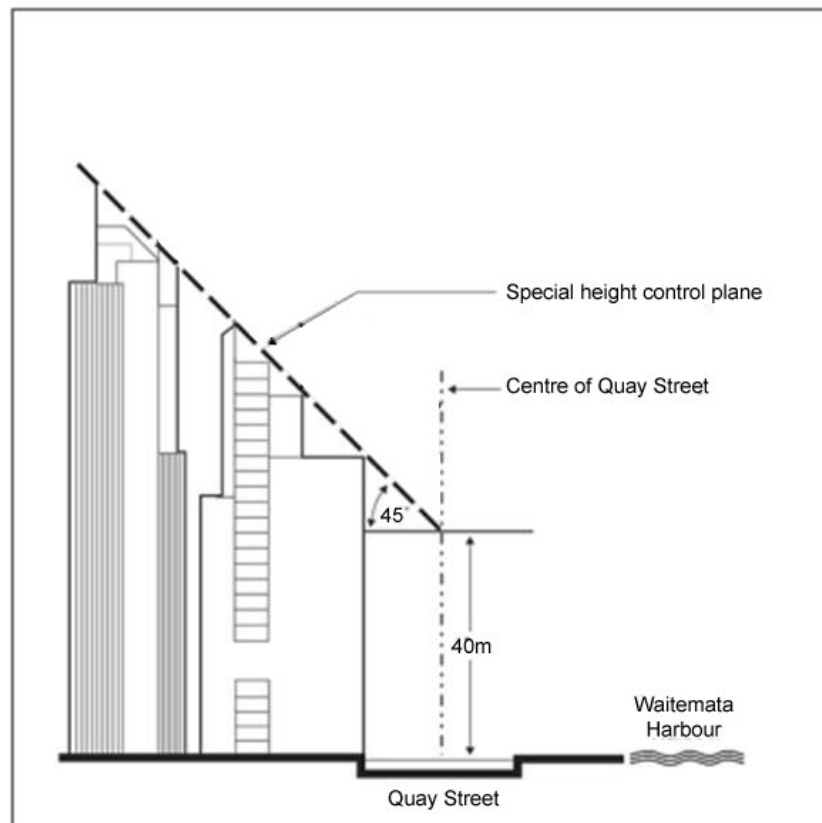
### *H8.6.5. Harbour edge height control plane*

Purpose: **manage the scale of buildings** at the western end of Quay Street to:

- provide a city form which **transitions in building height** from the core of the city centre towards the waterfront;
- **maximise visual connections** and **visual permeability** between the harbour and the city centre; and
- reinforce the **Quay Street east west connection** running from the corner of The Strand and Quay Street to the east and Jellicoe Street in Wynyard Precinct to the west by the **alignment of tall building frontages**.

- (1) The height of a building subject to this standard must not exceed the height plane shown in Figure H8.6.5.1 Harbour edge height control plane. The height plane starts at a line 40m above the centre line of Quay Street and continues as a tilted plane at 45 degrees to the horizontal from that line in a southerly direction.
- (2) For the purpose of this standard, the centre line of Quay Street extends between the eastern boundary of Britomart Place and the western boundary of Lower Hobson Street and is defined by a straight line passing through the coordinates specified in Figure H8.6.5.2 Harbour edge height control co-ordinates.

Figure H8.6.5.1 Harbour edge height control plane



H8.6.9 **Rooftops.** Purpose: ensure the roofs of buildings are **uncluttered** when viewed from the street and surrounding buildings.

- (1) Rooftop projections including turrets, chimneys, lift towers, machinery rooms and water towers that exceed the height of all parts of a parapet surrounding the roof on which the projections are located, must be **enclosed** in a maximum of three structures and **integrated within the overall roof design**.

H8.6.24 **Maximum tower dimension, setback from the street and tower separation.** Purpose: ensure that high-rise buildings:

- are **not overly bulky** and are **slender in appearance**;
- provide adequate sunlight and daylight access to streets and public spaces;
- provide a consistent **human-scaled edge to the street**;
- provide adequate sunlight, daylight and outlook around buildings;
- enable visual connections through the city centre; and
- mitigate adverse wind effects.

- (1) On every site identified as **special height area** on Map H8.11.3 a new building or addition to an existing building must comply with the following:

- (a) the maximum plan dimension of that part of the building 28m (above mean street level) must **not exceed** an average of **55m**; and

- (b) the part of a building above 28m must be setback at least **6m** from all boundaries of the site.
- (2) The maximum plan dimension is the horizontal dimension between exterior faces of the two most separate points of **the** building (refer Figure H8.6.24.1).
- (3) If there is more than one tower on a site, a tower separation distance of at least 12m must be provided between the **parts** of the buildings above 28m.

H8.6.24A **Maximum east-west tower dimension.** Purpose: ensure that high-rise buildings provide adequate physical, cultural and visual connections with, and visual permeability to, the Waitematā Harbour.

- (1) On every site identified as subject to the east-west tower dimension standard on Map H8.11.10 a new building or addition to an existing building must comply with the following:
  - (a) the maximum plan dimension of any part of a building in the east-west direction must not exceed 45m for that part of the building above:
    - (i) 28m, for sites identified as special height area on Map H8.11.3.
    - (ii) 32.5m for all other sites.
- (2) This standard applies in addition to the maximum plan dimension stated in H8.6.24 and H8.6.25A.

H8.6.25 **Building frontage alignment and height.** Purpose: ensure streets are well defined by human-scaled buildings and provide a sense of enclosure to enhance pedestrian amenity, while still providing adequate sunlight and daylight access to streets.

- (1) On every frontage identified on Map H8.11.5, a new building or addition to an existing building must comply with the following:
  - (a) the building must adjoin the entire length of the frontage excluding vehicle and pedestrian access and public open spaces for the minimum frontage height specified in H8.6.25(1)(a)(i) and (ii) below:
    - (i) for frontages identified as '19m', the building must have minimum contiguous height of 19m for a minimum depth of 6m from the frontage; and
    - (ii) for frontages identified as '13m', the building must have minimum contiguous height of 13m for a minimum depth of 6m from the frontage.
- (2) On every frontage identified on Map H8.11.5A, a new building or addition to an existing building must comply with the following:

## Isthmus.

- (a) for frontages identified as “28m”, the maximum frontage height must not exceed 28m for a minimum depth of 6m from the frontage;
- (b) for frontages identified as “1:1 to street width” the maximum frontage height must not exceed the lesser of:
  - (i) a 1:1 ratio to the width of the street which that frontage is on, for a minimum depth of 6m from the frontage, or
  - (ii) 32.5m, for a minimum depth of 6m from the frontage.
- (c) where the street width referenced in H8.6.25(2)(b)(i) is less than the minimum frontage height requirement on Map H8.11.5, then the maximum frontage height is equal to the minimum frontage height.

### *H8.8.1 Matters of Discretion*

For **new buildings** (under H8.8.1.(1)) Council reserves its discretion to matters including:

- H8.8.1(1) (a) building design and external appearance;
- (b) form and design of buildings adjoining historic heritage places;
  - (c) the design of parking, access and servicing;
  - (d) the design and layout of visitor accommodation;
  - (e) functional requirements; and
  - (f) layout and design of through-site links.

...

H8.8.1(6) Infringement of general building height, streetscape improvement and landscaping, maximum tower dimension, setback from street and tower separation in special height area, and building setback from boundaries standards:

- (a) effects of **additional building bulk** and **scale** on neighbouring sites, streets and public open spaces (sunlight and daylight access, **dominance, visual amenity, and landscape character**);
- (b) consistency with the **existing** and **planned future form** and **character** of the zone; including enabling **well-designed buildings** which have a **human scale podium** and **slender towers** above to maximise sunlight, daylight and outlook, or where towers are not possible, buildings should be well-designed and complement the streetscape and skyline;
- (c) site specific characteristics;

...

H8.8.1(8A) Infringement of the **harbour edge height control plane** standard



- (a) The effects of **height, form** and **scale** on:
  - (i) A city form which transitions in building height down towards the harbour edge
  - (ii) Maximising visual connections and visual permeability between the city centre and the Waitematā Harbour;
- (b) Amenity effects on the streetscape, and adjacent waterfront public open spaces.

*Relevant Assessment Criteria include:*

H8.8.2.(1) new buildings ...:

- (a) building **design and external appearance**:

*Contributing to a sense of place*

- (i) The extent to which the design of buildings **contribute to the local streetscape and sense of place** by responding positively to the existing and planned **form** and **character** of the zone and surrounding area and significant natural landforms and landscape features including the Waitematā Harbour;
- (ii) The extent to which the **silhouette of the building** as viewed from areas surrounding the city centre positively **contributes to the city centre's skyline** while reinforcing the existing and planned built form and character of the city centre;
- (iia) the extent to which **buildings are designed** to create **human scale podiums** at street level and **slender towers** above which allow daylight and sunlight into buildings and daylight and sky views to filter down to streets and public places, while respecting the relationship of the city centre with the Waitematā Harbour.
- (iib) the extent to which buildings are designed to ensure adequate sunlight and daylight access to streets, public places and nearby sites.
- (iic) The extent to which sunlight, daylight and outlook is provided around buildings at all levels above the podium, to enable light to filter to streets and complimenting the relationship between the city.

*Creating a positive frontage*

- (iii) The extent to which buildings have **clearly defined public frontages** that **address the street** and public open spaces to positively contribute to the **public realm and pedestrian safety**;
- (iv) Whether the ground floor of a new building is at the same level as the adjoining street;
- (v) The extent to which **pedestrian entrances** are located on the street frontage and are clearly identifiable and level with the adjoining frontage;

...

- (vii) for mixed use buildings, whether separate pedestrian entrances are provided for residential uses;
- (viii) where not required by a standard, **activities that engage and activate streets** and public spaces are encouraged at ground and first floor levels;
- (ix) the extent to which **internal space** at all levels within buildings is designed to **maximise outlook onto street** and public open spaces;

...

### *Variation in building form/visual interest*

- (xii) the extent to which buildings, including alterations and additions, are designed as a **coherent scheme** and demonstrate an **overall design strategy** that **contributes positively to the visual quality** of the development;

...

- (xiv) the extent to which buildings are designed to:
  - **avoid long, unrelieved frontages** and **excessive bulk and scale** when viewed from streets and public open spaces;
  - **visually break up their mass** into distinct elements to reflect a human scale and the typical pattern of development in the area; and
  - differentiate ground, middle and upper level;

techniques to achieve this include the use of recesses, variation in building height and roof form, horizontal and vertical rhythms and facade modulation and articulation;

- (xv) whether **blank walls are avoided** on all levels of building frontages **to streets** and public open spaces;
- (xvi) whether side or rear walls without windows or access points are used as an opportunity to introduce creative architectural solutions that **provide interest** in the facade including **modulation**, relief or surface detailing;
- (xvii) the extent to which buildings provide a variety of **architectural detail** at ground and middle levels including maximising doors, windows and balconies overlooking the streets and public open spaces;
- (xviii) the extent to which **roof profiles** are designed as part of the overall building form and contribute to the **architectural quality of the skyline** as viewed from **both ground level** and the **surrounding area**. This includes **integrating plant**, exhaust and intake units and other mechanical and electrical equipment into the overall rooftop design;
- (xix) the extent to which **colour variation** and landscaping are used. Noting they should not be used to mitigate a lack of building articulation or design quality;

(xixa) the extent to which **glazing is provided on street** and public open space frontages and the benefits it provides in terms of (i) the attractiveness and pleasantness of the street and public open space and the amenity for people using or passing through that street or space; (ii) the degree of visibility that it provides between the street and public open space and the building interior; and (iii) the opportunities for passive surveillance of the street and public open space from the ground floor of buildings.

(xixb) the extent to which adequate separation between buildings is provided to (i) ensure sunlight and/or daylight reaches the street. (ii) ensure streetscape amenity, (iii) avoid a sense of dominance to the street and neighbouring sites, (iv) ensure gaps are created between buildings which allow physical, cultural and visual connections to the Waitematā Harbour and maunga.

...

### *Cultural identity*

(xxiii) the extent to which development integrates mātauranga, tikanga and Māori design principles into the design of new buildings and public open spaces.

...

H8.8.2.(6) infringement of **building height**, streetscape improvement and landscaping, maximum tower dimension and tower separation in special height area, and building setback from boundaries standards:

(a) effects of additional building **bulk** and **scale** on neighbouring sites and streets and public open spaces (sunlight and daylight access, **dominance, streetscape amenity, visual amenity** and landscape **character**):

(i) whether minor height infringements may be appropriate where it would provide an attractive and integrated roof form that also meets the purpose of the standard;

(ii) whether height or setback infringements may be appropriate on corner sites to reinforce the prominence of the corner where it meets the relevant standard infringement criteria and makes a positive contribution to the streetscape.

(b) consistency with the existing and **planned future form and character** of the zone/area:

(i) where building height or maximum tower dimension, setback from the street and tower separation in special height area, and building setback from boundaries standards is infringed whether the proposal demonstrates that Policies H8.3(29), H8.3(29A),

H8.3(30), H8.3(31) and H8.3(38) of the Business – City Centre Zone are met.

(c) site specific characteristics:

- (i) whether there are particular site specific characteristics in terms of narrow site size, unusual site size, shape or orientation, or the location and nature of existing buildings which have constrained the form of the development proposed;
- (ii) where towers are not possible, the extent to which buildings are well-designed and complement the streetscape and skyline;

H8.8.2.(8A) infringement of the **harbour edge height control plane** standard:

(a) Height, form and scale:

- (i) The extent to which the building (including roof structures) are designed to reinforce the **planned built form** of the city centre and the waterfront when viewed from:
  - within the city centre and main approaches to the city centre by land and water; and
  - public spaces which offer comprehensive views.
- (ii) The extent to which the part of the building which protrudes through the harbour edge height control plane:
  - Avoids **abrupt or arbitrary truncation** of the upper parts of the building or structure.
  - Is **visually compatible** with its proximity to the Waitematā Harbour, taking into account:
    - Whether the expression of the building provides **visual interest and variation**;
    - Whether the design visually **reinforces the building's sense of place** on the waterfront; and
    - The **clustering of building heights** to reinforce **transitioning** to a lower density waterfront setting.
  - Maintains **visual and physical connections** and visual permeability to the Waitematā Harbour through the city centre by providing adequate airspace, sunlight, daylight and amenity around towers.

(b) **Amenity effects** on the **streetscape** and **adjacent public open spaces** along the waterfront:

- (i) The extent to which **building bulk** above the harbour edge height control plane results in **loss of amenity** to adjacent public open spaces along the waterfront, including:

- Sunlight admission.
- Shading and **dominance** at **street level** and **public spaces**, in particular Quay St, Queen St, and Customs St.

(c) Particular constraints:

- (i) Whether there are particular site development characteristics in terms of unusual site size, shape or orientation, or the location and nature of existing buildings which have constrained the form of the development.

H8.8.2.(8A) infringement of maximum east-west tower dimension standard:

- (a) The effects of building **form**, **scale** and **bulk** on providing adequate physical, cultural and **visual connections**, and **visual permeability** between the city centre and the Waitematā Harbour:
- (i) The extent to which towers have spaces between and around them providing north-south views of the harbour.
- (ii) the extent to which towers have a square or north-south alignment.
- (iii) the extent to which buildings avoid creation of a wall of built form which reduces views to the harbour from the city centre.

*I205. Downtown West Precinct.*

**I205.1. Precinct description**

*“The Downtown West Precinct is located within the heart of the city centre waterfront, between the established Viaduct Harbour Precinct and regenerating Britomart Precinct. The precinct has a mix of commercial and residential land uses including a major hotel and open spaces.*

*The block bounded by lower Queen Street, Customs Street West, lower Albert Street and Quay Street is generally held in single ownership and has significant redevelopment potential. Queen Elizabeth Square is legally recognized as a road with pedestrian mall status under the Local Government Act 1974. As such, no zone has been applied to the square. As part of any future development proposal, alternative locations for the square should be investigated and identified, potentially including a combination of both publicly provided open spaces, pedestrian and cycle connections and enhanced through site links within the block.*

*Council has confirmed approval to sell or lease part of Queen Elizabeth Square to ensure that redevelopment of the block is of the highest ‘world class’ design quality and the proceeds from the sale of Queen Elizabeth Square are reinvested in new or enhanced downtown public space/s and collectively, these alternative spaces should achieve a better street and open space network than is presently offered within or*



*immediately adjoining the precinct. If the road stop process is approved, the square can be closed and the precinct provisions together with the Business – City Centre Zone objectives, policies and rules will apply.*

*The land in the Downtown West Precinct is zoned Business – City Centre Zone and Open Space – Informal Recreation Zone.”*

The objectives are:

- I205.2(1) The precinct contains a **mix of uses** and the **form** and **scale** of development is **integrated** with the core central business district and the waterfront.
- I205.2(2) **High quality public open space** is provided and **pedestrian connectivity** from the core central business district to the waterfront and from Britomart to the west is enhanced.
- I205.2(3) Development recognises the precinct's location as part of Auckland's primary transport centre and supports the transport facilities within and around the precinct.

The policies are:

- I205.3(1) Enable and encourage a **diverse range of activities** within the precinct including residential (including visitor accommodation), **commercial**, recreational, temporary activities and events.
- I205.3(2) Encourage an **integrated network of attractive streets, lanes and pedestrian connections** to improve **pedestrian permeability** and accessibility through the precinct and supports the transport interchange function of the area.
- I205.3(3) Provide for an **interconnected network of high quality public open spaces** and **publicly accessible spaces** which vary in form and function in highly accessible locations within the precinct that are activated by uses around their periphery.

The overlay, Auckland-wide and Business – City Centre Zone objective and policies apply in this precinct in addition to those specified above.

### I205.6 Standards

#### I205.6.2 Pedestrian connections

- (1) Upon the erection of any new building on either of the blocks between Lower Queen Street and Lower Hobson Street, and unless already provided, an **east-west pedestrian connection across the block** must be provided, and must achieve the following:
  - (a) provide straight pedestrian routes between streets, with a clear pedestrian movement width of at least 5 metres;
  - (b) protect pedestrians from the weather;

- (c) incorporate natural daylight through glazed canopies of glazed roof structures;
- (d) be publicly accessible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week; and
- (e) incorporate active uses at ground floor level framing the pedestrian connection;
- (f) provide accessible, direct and unobstructed transitions between levels, including through ramps or lifts as required.

*Purpose:* To support the transport interchange function of the area by facilitating **clear** and **unobstructed pedestrian movement** through the precinct at-grade.

*Note:* The above requirement applies only to the development site, and accordingly it is acknowledged that the laneway may be developed incrementally, particularly across the block bounded by Lower Albert Street, Customs Street West, Lower Hobson Street and Quay Street.

- (2) Redevelopment of the block between Lower Queen Street and Lower Albert Street must include an at-grade, north-south pedestrian laneway connection between Customs Street West and Quay Street.

*Purpose:* To support pedestrian movement between the City Centre Core and the waterfront.

- (3) Redevelopment of the block between Lower Albert Street and Lower Hobson Street must include an **at-grade, north-south pedestrian laneway connection between Customs Street West and Quay Street, being generally aligned with Federal Street.**

*Purpose:* To support pedestrian movement between the City Centre Core and the waterfront.

### *I205.8.1 Matters of Discretion*

I205.8.1(1) **new buildings**, and alterations and additions to buildings:

- (a) the matters of discretion in H8.8.1(1) for new buildings and external alterations and additions to buildings not otherwise provided for; and
- (b) the **location, bulk** and **scale** of buildings relative to overall development, including the layout and design of roads, pedestrian linkages, open spaces, earthworks areas and land contours, and infrastructure location; and
- (c) **design, bulk** and **location** of buildings;

...

I205.8.1(4) infringing the **pedestrian connections** standard:

- (a) **functional, safe, and convenient pedestrian access** between Lower Queen Street and Lower Hobson Street, and between Customs Street West and Quay Street.

*Relevant **Assessment Criteria** include:*

I205.8.2(1) **new buildings ...:**

- (b) the assessment criteria in H8.8.2(1) of the Business - City Centre zone rules for new buildings and/or alterations and additions to buildings apply.
- (c) the **proposed building**, alteration or addition relative to the location of infrastructure servicing the area and open space should result in **an integrated network** that is adequate to meet the needs of the overall development area;

...

I205.8.2(4) **infringing the pedestrian connections standard:**

- (a) whether development that infringes the pedestrian connection standard demonstrates that:
  - (i) there is a **safe, legible and direct link** through the block;
  - (ii) the width of the lane or link is sufficient to provide a **functional connection** between the adjoining streets;
  - (iii) there is adequate provision for pedestrian movement in **support of existing east-west options**, and in support of the transport interchange function of the area; and
  - (iv) **north-south pedestrian movement options are increased** through blocks in support of pedestrian flows between the City Centre core and the waterfront, with a focus on the quality and interest provided through and along those routes.
- (b) consistency with the **planned future form and character** of the Downtown Precinct:
  - (i) where the pedestrian connection standard is infringed, whether the proposal demonstrates that Policies I205.3(2) and I205.3(3) above are met.

### **E23 Signs**

#### *E23.2. Objectives*

...

- (2) Billboards and comprehensive development signage are managed to maintain traffic and pedestrian safety, historic heritage values and the **visual amenity values** of buildings and the surrounding environment.

*E23.3. Policies [rcp/dp]*

...

- (2) Require the placement, location and size of billboards and comprehensive development signage on buildings to not significantly **detract from the profile or appearance** of a building, or cover any significant architectural features on the façade of a building.
- (3) Enable billboards and comprehensive development signage while avoiding signs creating **clutter** or **dominating** the building or environment by controlling the size, number and location of signs.

...

- (5) Manage the effects of billboards and comprehensive development signage to maintain the values of scheduled historic heritage places and **visual amenity values**.

*E23.8.2. Assessment criteria*

The Council will consider the relevant assessment criteria for restricted discretionary activities in Activity Table E23.4.1 Billboards in zones and Activity Table E23.4.2 Billboards on street furniture in road reserves, existing lawfully established billboards and comprehensive development signage from the list below:

- (1) **visual amenity, scale and location:**
  - (a) the extent to which comprehensive development signage, free-standing billboards, or billboards on a side, rear or street facing building façade are appropriate in terms of the zone they are located in taking into account all of the following:
    - (i) the **scale, form** and type of signs or billboard;
    - (ii) the location of the signs or billboard in relation to other signs and billboards and adjacent structures and buildings;
    - (iii) the size of the site in which the signs or billboard will be located;
    - (iv) the relationship with the **streetscape, landscape** and **open space** areas in the vicinity of the proposed signs or billboard; and
    - (v) the length of time the signs or billboard will be in place.
  - (b) the extent to which the signs or billboard, when attached to a building, will appear to be an **integrated element** of the building and positively relate to structural bays, structural elements, architectural features, building proportions and the overall design of the building;
  - (c) the extent to which the signs or billboard structure **are visually integrated** with the existing built and/or natural environment;

- (d) whether the signs or billboard structures are **simple** and **visually recessive** in terms of form and colour, and are designed to discourage access for graffiti on the image displayed;
  - (e) whether the signs or billboard detracts from the **visual amenity** of any **public open space** from which it can be seen, including the characteristics of the streetscape, natural environment, landscaping and open space;
  - (f) whether the signs or billboard, if located in close proximity to a scheduled historic heritage place, adversely affects the **visual amenity** or detracts from the **visual qualities** that are fundamental to the historic heritage values of the scheduled historic heritage place;
  - (g) whether a sign or billboard that will replace an existing sign or billboard on a building integrates with the building's form, shape and architectural features; and
  - (h) whether the sign or billboard will **dominate** the outlook from any dwelling or public open space.
- ...
- (4) cumulative effects:
    - (a) whether the signs or billboard, in conjunction with existing signs nearby, will create **visual clutter** or other adverse **cumulative** effects.

### Other matters (non-statutory documents)

#### *The City Centre Masterplan 2020*

The City Centre Masterplan (CCMP) is a guiding document that sets a vision for the city centre over the 20 years. It sets out ten strategic outcomes.

Outcome 1: **Tāmaki Makaurau - Our place in the world.** Our vision is for a city centre that actively recognises and celebrates Auckland's historic heritage as a driver of positive change and placemaking.

Outcome 2: **Connected city centre.** We aim to enable safe, healthy and sustainable travel options to improve people's access and choice of transport modes into and around the city centre.

Outcome 3: **Accessible and inclusive city centre.** We want to achieve a city centre that is inclusive and welcoming to all in Tāmaki Makaurau.

Outcome 4: **Green city centre.** By restoring our biodiversity and ecological systems (Mauri Tu) we will deliver a healthy and happy city centre.



- Outcome 5: **Public life. Public space** or realm is the **glue that holds the city centre together**. It is the canvas for public life. It needs to work well for all Aucklanders and visitors to Tāmaki Makaurau.
- Outcome 6: **Residential city centre neighbourhoods**. Auckland’s city centre is an increasingly popular place to live. As the city centre population grows and matures, this outcome shapes the city centre’s **public realm, housing supply** and **social infrastructure** to deliver a highly **liveable city centre**.
- Outcome 7: **Quality built form**. We want to deliver a well-designed and planned city centre.
- Outcome 8: **Heritage defined city centre**. Our vision is for a city centre that actively recognises and celebrates Auckland’s historic heritage as a driver of positive change and place-making.
- Outcome 9: **Sustainable city centre**. Auckland city centre will address the challenges of global climate change and urban growth via urban design. This part of the CCMP is shaped by targets and direction from the Auckland Climate Action Framework.
- Outcome 10: **Prosperous city centre**. We want to set out practical ways to develop the city centre so it can continue to thrive as an economic centre and cater for the needs of our diverse population.

Appraising the proposal against these strategic outcomes includes its contributions to a **residential city centre neighbourhood, quality design, public space, identity, and proximity** to transport, active modes, and city centre activities.

The CCMP also outlines eight transformational moves.

- TM1: **Māori outcomes**. This transformational move anticipates a range of interventions and systemic changes to bring mana whenua presence, Māori identity and life into the city centre and waterfront.
- TM2: **The east and west stitch**. Land at both the east and west edges of the city centre is under-used and under-valued and cut off by major roads. This move proposes to stitch the city centre together.
- TM3: **Waihorotiu/Queen Street Valley**. This move proposes to make the area more accessible, more attractive and more prosperous, with pedestrian-friendly streets and better connections to the rest of the city centre.
- TM4: **The Learning Quarter**. This move will integrate Auckland’s city centre universities into city centre life.

- TM5: **Transit oriented development.** This move will shape planning and development in the best-connected areas of Auckland, maximising the benefits of investment in public transport and associated public realm.
- TM6: **The Green Link.** We want to unite some of our most important and historic parks and open spaces through a network of tee-line linear park spaces along the Victoria Street corridor.
- TM7: **City to villages.** This move will improve the links to areas surrounding the city centre.
- TM8: **Harbour edge stitch.** This move provides a consistent vision for the continued development of Auckland's city centre waterfront.

The CCMP includes proposals to give effect to the transformational moves and outcomes. The following are relevant to appraising the proposal.

- (a) **Māori outcomes** includes **responding architecturally** to the natural and cultural context of Tāmaki Makaurau, including Māori **place names** and **te reo** (e.g. bi-lingual signage), **contributing to thematic approaches** to narrative and presence between the waterfront and Karangahape, promoting **Māori enterprise**, and applying **Te Aranga Design Principles**.
- (b) **Transforming Hobson and Nelson Streets into more liveable green twin boulevards.** It is intended to improve pedestrian amenity and connectivity as part of the east-west stitch.
- (c) **Widening the central city** from its traditional focus on a single main street by developing a parallel network including **Albert Street** as a complementary main business street, and a **laneway network** including Federal Street ridge laneway and the **east-west lanes** connecting the ridge with Queen Street (echoing the Tarapounamu path).
- (d) Promoting **development in proximity to public transport** (to maximise the benefits of investment in such transport). Areas promoted for such development includes those in proximity to the **Britomart Station** and **Ferry Terminal** and **'transit streets'** which includes Fanshawe Street.
- (e) Improving street and **laneway connections** between the central city and **public transport**.
- (f) **Public amenity improvements** and **connection** along **Quay Street**.

### *Auckland Plan 2050*

The Auckland Plan is a long-term spatial plan to ensure Auckland grows in a way that will meet the opportunities and challenges of the future. While it is required by legislation, with a purpose of contributing to Auckland's social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being, the Auckland Plan is not a statutory planning provision and is an 'other matter'. It does not contain detailed actions (such as those

in the City Centre Masterplan 2020) but it provides a high-level framework that can help interpret such details.

The Auckland Plan promotes the following six **outcomes**.

- Outcome 1: **Belonging and Participation.** All Aucklanders will be part of and contribute to society, access opportunities, and have the chance to develop to their full potential.
- Outcome 2: **Māori identity and wellbeing:** Thriving Māori identity is Auckland's point of difference in the world – it advances prosperity for Māori and benefits all Aucklanders.
- Outcome 3: **Homes and places.** Aucklanders live in secure, healthy, and affordable homes, and have access to a range of inclusive public places.
- Outcome 4: **Transport and access.** Aucklanders will be able to get where they want to go more easily, safely and sustainably.
- Outcome 5: **Environment and cultural heritage.** Aucklanders preserve, protect and care for the natural environment as our shared cultural heritage, for its intrinsic value and for the benefit of present and future generations.
- Outcome 6: **Opportunity and prosperity.** Auckland is prosperous with many opportunities and delivers a better standard of living for everyone.

Directions and focus points are set out to give effect to each Outcome. Relevant directions for 'Homes and places' include:

- Direction 1: Develop a **quality compact urban form** to accommodate Auckland's growth
- Direction 2: **Accelerate the construction of homes** that meet Aucklanders' changing needs and preferences.

The Plan includes a 'Development Strategy' and 'Future Auckland' section that explains what is meant by '*a quality compact Auckland*', the benefits of such an approach, and how it is to be achieved:

(a) '*Quality*' in this context means:

- most development occurs in areas that are **easily accessible by public transport, walking and cycling**
- most development is within reasonable **walking distance of services and facilities** including **centres, community facilities, employment opportunities and open space**
- future development maximises **efficient use of land**

- delivery of **necessary infrastructure is coordinated** to support growth in the right place at the right time.

(b) *'Compact'* means:

- future development will be focused within Auckland's urban footprint, with **most of that growth occurring in existing urban areas**
- by 2050, most growth will have occurred within this urban footprint, limiting both expansion into the rural hinterland and rural land fragmentation.

(c) The **benefits** of a quality compact approach to growth and development are:

- greater **productivity and economic growth** – a compact urban form increases economic productivity from the greater proximity between firms, workers and consumers
- better **use of existing infrastructure** – growing within existing urban areas makes more efficient use of existing assets. Providing physical and social infrastructure costs less per household, which results in a higher overall level of service
- improved **transport outcomes** – a compact urban form brings more people closer to their place of work. Greater population density supports **faster, more frequent public transport** services. Both reduce congestion on the road network and create a **more efficient transport network overall**
- **rural productivity and character** can be maintained – encouraging growth within urban areas helps to protect rural environments from urban encroachment, and maintain the productive capability of the land and its rural character
- enhanced **environmental outcomes** – adverse effects of urban activities are concentrated into fewer receiving environments. Growth creates more opportunities for environmental enhancement, particularly as part of infrastructure upgrades
- greater **social and cultural vitality** – concentrating activity into urban centres and neighbourhoods provides a wider variety of activities to meet the full range of people's needs. This brings diversity and vibrancy into the urban environment which in turn enhances interaction and social cohesion.

(d) A *'quality compact Auckland'* is to be achieved by:

- ensuring **sufficient capacity for growth** across Auckland
- embedding **good design** in all development
- **sequencing** what gets delivered
- aligning the **timing of infrastructure provision with development**
- supporting rural production.

- (e) **Good design** is characterised as including the attributes of **functionality, attractiveness, longevity, innovation, and legibility**. It is to be **integrated at all scales** from city structure, to streets, to individual buildings. Design quality is integral to how the city functions which affects **overall wellbeing**. *“Good design can contribute to making Auckland a **sustainable, attractive, equitable and desirable place**.”* The Auckland Plan goes on to explain that *“the quality and characteristics of successful places make them **memorable**. They result in people going there more often, staying longer, or **choosing to live and work there**.”*
- (f) The Plan notes that, by 2050, growth will be particularly focused around identified locations including the **city centre**. It points to the **City Centre Masterplan** for a more specific vision for this area.

The Plan explains **Direction 2** (*accelerate the construction of homes that meet Aucklanders’ changing needs and preferences*) by noting that current construction falls well below demand. It says, *“we need to be **building more apartments, including for individuals and large families, and townhouses, of different sizes and at different price points**.”* It goes on to note that new construction will *“reflect the fact that Aucklanders’ **lifestyles and housing preferences are changing**. For example, there has been positive take-up of terraced housing and **apartments that are close to transport corridors and nodes**...”*

### *Te Aranga Principles*

Te Aranga Māori Design Principles are practical design guidance based on Māori principles with the desire to enhance mana whenua presence, visibility, and participation in the design of the city. The principles include:

- Mana / Rangatiratanga - Authority; The status of iwi and hapū as mana whenua is **recognised and respected**
- Whakapapa - **Names & Naming**; mana whenua names are celebrated
- Tohu - The wider cultural landscape; Mana whenua **significant sites** and cultural landmarks are acknowledged
- Taiao - The **natural environment**; The natural environment is protected, restored and / or enhanced
- Mauri Tu - Environmental Health; Environmental health of water, land and air is protected, maintained and / or enhanced
- Mahi Toi - **Creative Expression**; Iwi/hapū narratives are captured and expressed creatively and appropriately in the physical environment
- Ahi Kā - **The Living Presence**; mana whenua are able to rekindle and strengthen their presence within the environment.

**AUP Plan Change 120** matters are outlined and addressed within the AEE, prepared by *Barker & Associates Ltd.*



*Appendix D*

**VISUAL STUDY** *(refer separate document prepared by Warren and Mahoney Ltd).*