

**UNDER** the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 ("**Act**")

**AND**

**IN THE MATTER** of an application for approvals by Westhaven Residential Limited Partnership ("**Applicant**") in relation to the proposed urban development at 188 Beaumont Street, Auckland ("**Application**")

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**URBAN DESIGN, LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL EFFECTS  
JOINT WITNESS STATEMENT**

**11 SEPTEMBER 2026**

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**1. ATTENDANCE**

1.1 The conference was attended by the following experts:

| <b>Name</b>       | <b>Qualifications and role</b>                                                                                         | <b>Initials</b> |
|-------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Rachel de Lambert | Landscape architect – Landscape and Visual Effects Assessment and Urban Design advice, Boffa Miskell for the Applicant | RdeL            |
| Blair Johnston    | Architect, Head of Design – architecture services, Warren & Mahoney for the Applicant                                  | BJ              |
| Rebecca Skidmore  | Urban designer / landscape architect, R.A. Skidmore Urban Design as the Panel appointed expert                         | RS              |
| Michelle Chan     | Principal Urban Design, Auckland Council                                                                               | MC              |
| Sheerin Samsudeen | Design Review Team Leader, Auckland Council                                                                            | SS              |
| Gabrielle Howdle  | Principal Landscape Architect, Auckland Council                                                                        | GH              |

1.2 Ian Munro acted as facilitator.

1.3 Alannah Thomas acted as scribe for the JWS.

## **2. CONFLICTS**

2.1 There are no apparent conflicts of interest by the experts.

## **3. BASIS OF ATTENDANCE**

3.1 All participants agree:

- (a) the Environment Court Practice Note 2023 provides relevant guidance and protocols for the expert conferencing session;
- (b) they will comply with the relevant provisions of the Environment Court Practice Note 2023 including the Code of Conduct for expert witnesses;
- (c) the matters addressed in this statement are within their area of expertise;
- (d) they have reviewed the relevant expert assessments and responses prepared for and on the Application by other experts in this conference; and
- (e) this statement is to be filed with the Panel and posted on the EPA's website.

## **4. ASSUMPTIONS AND LIMITATIONS**

4.1 The experts discussed any limitations or key assumptions underpinning their assessment and opinions to date.

- (a) The experts all agree that, while the focus of this conferencing is on the Tower building component of the Project and the effects associated with that building, overall, the various components of the Project have been designed as one scheme and need to be considered holistically. This means any changes that may come to be agreed for the Tower building may justify integrating design amendments for the other buildings.
- (b) RS notes her area of expertise relates to urban design and landscape architecture. While design amendments to address identified adverse effects have been explored in the conferencing, as directed, RS notes that she does not have architectural expertise and opinions expressed about design changes are limited to the way such changes could be introduced to address identified urban design and landscape associated effects.
- (c) MC notes that her area of expertise is urban design and she does not hold specialist expertise in architecture. Any comments regarding design changes are limited to how the resolution and design

refinement of the proposal may be undertaken to address identified urban design issues.

- (d) GH notes that her area of expertise is landscape architecture and she does not hold specialist expertise in architecture. Any comments regarding design changes are limited to how the resolution and design refinement of the proposal may be undertaken to address identified landscape effects.
- (e) BJ notes that his primary area of expertise is Architecture. He will contribute opinions related to site, context, and form from an architectural perspective.
- (f) SS notes that while her area of expertise is urban design and architecture, her opinions expressed about architecture are limited to address identified urban design effects.

## **5. MATTERS CONSIDERED AT CONFERENCING**

### **Analytical framework**

5.1 The experts discussed what urban design, landscape or visual qualities differentiate a "marker" building from a "non-marker" building, and why.

- (a) All experts agree that from the commencement of master planning for the Wynyard Precinct, a small number of sites were identified as what the experts have referred to in the evidence as the "marker building" sites. These five sites were spatially located to reinforce the three axes<sup>1</sup> that underpin the urban structure of the Precinct and identified with additional height provision. The experts agree that marker buildings are highly relevant to policy I214.3(3)(b) AUP.<sup>2</sup>
- (b) All experts agree that although not expressly referred to in the AUP provisions, the three axes relate to and are inherently important to the urban structure of the Precinct and have been central aspects to its planning since the original plan changes. The experts agree that where policy I214.3(3)(b) AUP references "public open space and waterfront connections" this implicitly includes these three axes.
- (c) The experts broadly agree on the importance and qualities of a successful marker building in the Precinct. With the following additional comments provided for the Panel.
  - (i) RS considers that in the context of the Wynyard Quarter marker buildings seek to reinforce the three axes through the Precinct. The purpose is to assist wayfinding within the precinct and contribute to a varied skyline in a way that reinforces these structuring axes. Marker buildings are distinguished from the general form of development around

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<sup>1</sup> Wynyard Precinct: Urban Design Framework February 2014 (Waterfront Auckland and Auckland City Council), as referenced in RDEL's UDLA report at page 7 (Figure 1) and at [https://www.audo.co.nz/media/h4cde5v4/wynyard\\_quarter\\_urban\\_design\\_framework.pdf](https://www.audo.co.nz/media/h4cde5v4/wynyard_quarter_urban_design_framework.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> The experts have read this policy comes from objective I214.2(2)(b) AUP.

them. Additional height is one method to differentiate a marker building. Other methods include distinctive architectural expression, the way the building form interfaces with the public realm axes, and creation of a distinctive roof form.

- (ii) Similar to the comment above expressed by RS, RdeL considers that, in the context of the Wynyard Quarter, marker buildings have been positioned to reinforce the three defining axes of the Precinct. They are intended to assist wayfinding at two scales - both within the Precinct and at a City scale. In terms of the Precinct provisions the way in which the marker building sites have been differentiated is through additional height. Distinctive, high quality, architectural expression that is responsive to location is a further aspect in respect of the qualities of a marker building.
- (iii) SS and MC consider the primary role of marker buildings is to reinforce one or more of the three key axes and to support legibility and wayfinding within the Precinct. As a general approach, marker building is distinguished from its surroundings through higher and more prominent built form and visual identity. Non-marker buildings within the Precinct are characterised by lower-scale and street-based buildings that contribute to the finer grain and human-scale of the surrounding urban fabric.
- (iv) GH considers marker buildings are reference points and function as a strong organiser for someone's mental map of a place or area. They often create a hierarchy to built elements within a place through creating a 'frame' or 'end point' to a space or place such as the axes of Wynyard Quarter.
- (v) GH considers marker buildings, generally, are to be designed to be identifiable, through variety of techniques such as prominence, building form, height, site qualities (e.g., coastal frontage), positive interface with public realm, achieve visual coherence and integrated into its surrounds.
- (vi) Although BJ has not provided a separate statement of evidence, he confirmed that as far as it informed the architectural design, he placed reliance on the earlier 2014 UDF framing – *“the 52m sites will also provide variation to building form and scale. These sites have been chosen to reinforce the principal site axes and to assist in establishing a legible urban structure”*. Like RdeL, BJ considers that this role of assisting 'legibility' applies at multiple scales both from within the Quarter and from more distant vantage points. Given these dual scales, height is the primary differentiator supported by 'macro' architectural expression. 'Non-marker' built form has an important,

localised role in delivering quality streetscape outcomes, but only a secondary role in the wider visual catchment.

5.2 The experts discussed the key urban design, landscape or visual qualities / outcomes that marker buildings in the Precinct should do / achieve or not do / achieve, and why.

- (a) All experts are broadly aware of various plan changes and consented buildings that have occurred over time within the Precinct, including that on many sites the enabled or consented height differs from what may have been originally envisaged in the Precinct. Of note, only one of the identified marker buildings sites has been developed, the ASB Building at 10-26 Jellicoe Street, Auckland.
- (b) The experts discussed what spatial scale of analysis marker buildings are primarily relevant to (distinct from the general question of building height, which the experts all agree is relevant at all scales). MC, RS, GH and SS see the marker buildings as a neighbourhood / Precinct consideration based on their reading of policy I214.3(3)(b) AUP.<sup>3</sup> These experts consider that this inherently refers to a localised area as you cannot appreciate this at scale of wider city. RdeL and BJ (in relation to the architectural development of the proposal) in addition see the marker buildings contributing to the wider scale of the central city's form based on their reading of objective I214.2(2)(b) AUP and the Precinct's location within the City Centre Zone.<sup>4</sup> RdeL records that in her opinion this distinction of approach and interpretation is a significant factor in the difference of opinions that have been reached. RdeL considers, based on her experience in PC78, that the marker buildings have been considered at both scales.
- (c) The experts also record the following individual comments.
  - (i) As noted above, RS considers marker buildings should create some differentiation from the general pattern of surrounding development (existing or enabled). However, they should also integrate with the overall planned character of the Precinct.
  - (ii) As noted above RdeL considers marker buildings to be primarily differentiated by their height, as signalled by the Precinct provisions in the specific locations identified within the Precinct reinforcing the axes which underpin the urban structure of the Precinct (Precinct plan 5). Consideration of architectural form that assists place based wayfinding and the underlying axes of the Precinct are in her opinion important and complementary. As a part of the overall urban form of the Precinct marker buildings are anticipated

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<sup>3</sup> Noting the following particular language, "site specific opportunities for taller buildings located and designed to reinforce key public open space and waterfront connections".

<sup>4</sup> Noting the following particular language, "has appropriate building heights that enhance its prominent location, and which complements the central city area and wider city landforms skyline and views".

to comprise the tallest building elements whilst forming part of the integrated urban form of the Wynyard Precinct component of the City centre.

- (iii) SS and MC note that in the recent PC78, the marker buildings have an enabled height of up to 62m, which is approximately up to 30m higher than the surrounding plan enabled building heights. This is to achieve a higher form that marks the location of key axes on approach without pushing the overall height to an extent where it negatively affects the scale, form and the existing pattern of development; as well as manage potential adverse shading of the surrounding public realm and residential developments. A marker building is not intended to be a landmark building that contributes to wider views or identity.
- (iv) GH notes that marker buildings can enhance visual amenity and strengthen a sense of place through high-quality design that is readily identifiable from key local and mid-distance viewpoints (the journey into the Precinct). When appropriately scaled (height, floorplate, form) and integrated into the surrounding built environment, marker buildings can contribute positively to the landscape character, visual composition and skyline.
- (v) BJ (as far as it informed the architectural design) considered that marker buildings are primarily differentiated by height. He also notes that marker building sites within the Quarter are governed by varied floorplate standards ranging from 30x30m (sub-precincts C&E); to 45x45m (sub-precinct B). This framing within the Wynyard Precinct provisions reinforces height as the primary driver of intended built form diversity.

5.3 The experts discussed what terms such as "slender" and "proportion" mean, with reference to existing building examples with reference dimensions and form-qualities.

- (a) The experts discussed the broad relationship between building heights, widths, depth and overall perceived mass and scale. The experts agree that the overall effects of the building including considerations of proportions, perceived slenderness or bulkiness can be regarded as secondary considerations to fundamental determinations of height, width and depth. This includes building form and architectural detailing as well as the proposal as a whole (including the Marina and Beaumont buildings). For this reason, although various experts have referred to concepts related to proportions and slenderness, they do not require their own specific objectives based on any specific ideal or outcome. This means that there is no ideal formula to achieve a well-proportioned or slender building or that they are always necessarily required.

- (b) In addition to the above, the experts record the following individual comments.
- (i) In respect of 'proportion' RdeL considers the term to describe the relationship between component parts or elements. In respect of buildings it is generally related to the proportion of height to width. The provisions of the Wynyard Precinct for this site provide for an enabled 62m building height and 30mx30m building width above 31m. This is an approximate 2 to 1 proportion. In her opinion, this enabled building massing does not constitute a building form of slender proportions.
  - (ii) GH notes that architectural slenderness is often associated by a building's width to height ratio. However, in this context, slenderness (or managing a bulkiness) was considered relative to the city fringe setting and the prevailing scale of development within Wynyard Precinct. A buildings perceived slenderness and proportionality are influence by its scale, form, floorplate dimensions articulation, vertical expression, materiality/colour, solid to void composition and the balance and coherence of these.
  - (iii) BJ (in the context of the architectural approach taken) observes that 'slenderness' and 'proportion' are important architectural considerations – 'slenderness' is typically directional (vertical), whereas proportion is directionally unspecific. The operative standards (height and floorplate) do not derive a floorplate which would be typically considered slender regaRdeLess of architectural articulation.
  - (iv) BJ (in the context of the architectural approach taken) notes that neither 'slender' nor 'proportion' are referenced within the Wynyard Precinct AUP provisions, and that a range of floorplate dimension standards apply to 'marker sites' with permitted heights in excess of 52m – suggesting 'slenderness' is not a primary intent of the built form standards.

5.4 The experts discussed the contexts in which views of / proximity to / exposure to large-scale buildings (height, width, or both) might be adverse and what those potential adverse effects are. The experts discussed the context(s) in which such buildings might have positive effects, and what those are.

- (a) Prior to the commencement of the conference, the experts considered this matter and provided a range of opinions. These were discussed and as a result the experts agree (in a general way) that:
  - (i) when viewed from close proximity greater levels of architectural expression and detailed features of buildings are experienced. When in the immediate vicinity, it is the lower levels of a building that have the greatest impact on the way the building is experienced and the way it relates

to surrounding built and open space interfaces. When viewed from mid to longer range locations it is the overall form of a building and its contribution to the wider Cityscape that is more relevant. The changing relationship between the viewer, the building, and its wider context impacts on the type of effect experienced (whether it be positive, neutral or adverse).

- (ii) the determination in respect of the effects of a proposal – beneficial / positive or adverse is related to context. The same building located in a suburban context will generate different effects to that located in a City centre context. The experts agree that at closer proximity to a building it is the lower levels, at the general scale of the podium, that are mostly experienced and the more detailed materiality and architectural features of the building that are experienced. The experts also agree that in more distant views the overall built form becomes more apparent as a component of the site's context within the cityscape.
- (iii) buildings in an urban, city context can contribute positively to the urban locality and cityscape in proximate locations where they define adjoining street edges and open space, demonstrate visual interest, quality architecture and detailing at the lower levels of the podium particularly where the building responds well to its specific context. In the wider cityscape context buildings which relate to their site context and are architecturally well modulated can be seen to contribute positively to their locality. Building height can also assist wayfinding at the scale of the cityscape positively reinforcing the identity and character of the locality.
- (iv) when proposals to increase building heights and floor plates are being developed and/ or reviewed by design experts, it should be assessed through an incremental and iterative design exercise to determine the potential positive and adverse effects of increases to the overall bulk, scale and form.
- (v) additional building bulk and scale beyond the applicable zone or Precinct standards (e.g., height, floorplate), can influence visual connections to valued landscape and urban features (e.g., marina precinct, Wynyard Quarter harbour edge, city fringe) and, if not well integrated, may reduce aspects of landscape character and visual amenity over time due to increasing scale, bulk and visual dominance of buildings within the precinct. In contrast, well-designed buildings that respond to their landscape and urban context that can reinforce a sense of place, frame and enhance views, strengthen the harbour edge identity, and contribute positively to landscape character and visual amenity values.

- (b) BJ (in the context of the architectural approach taken) considered this to be fundamentally a question of context. Within a city centre context, BJ is of the view that adverse effects are primarily physical and related to wind effects and shading. Built form has many positive effects including providing positive definition to streetscapes and public spaces, and establishing legibility of wider urban form. BJ agrees with others that architectural quality is a key determinant of visual outcomes.

5.5 The experts discussed the key contextual factors affecting the Site including the relationship of the Site to the Precinct and wider Central City; the potential Te Ara Tukutuku project; the Site's visual exposure generally; and other matters.

- (a) All experts agree that relative to the two other marker building sites to the immediate east (37-55 Madden Street) that sit on the Wharf axis, these sites have different opportunities than the Site, to respond to the crank of the Wharf axis / Te Ara Tukutuku. These include different shaped titles, effects of the Maunga viewshafts and relationship to the water's edge.
- (b) The experts also agree:
  - (i) The Proposal should be an holistically designed, integrated response to the Site and its urban context which is key.
  - (ii) The Proposal should respond to the former industrial character of the Wynyard Quarter.
  - (iii) The Site defines the western end of the Waterfront axis beyond which to the north lies the angled alignment of Te Ara Tukutuku / the Wharf axis.
  - (iv) The Proposal should respond to the character of the Wynyard Precinct, including the open space qualities in the surrounding context and to its interfaces with marine industrial activities to the south (on land) and west (on water).
  - (v) The Site is not adjacent to any established residential development within the Precinct.
  - (vi) The Site simultaneously offers the potential for high amenity views outwards and would sit within many views to and beyond the Site.
  - (vii) There are two relevant considerations of built form and transition. One is between the city centre core and neighbouring Precinct. Another is within the Precinct itself (RdeL clarifies that her interpretation of policy I214.3(3)(b) AUP identifies that the sites with site-specific opportunities for taller buildings are excluded from that concept of transition). For reference, the Waterfront axis extends along Quay Street which is anchored by city centre

buildings of a range of heights including M-Social 39m parapet 43m top of plant / HSBC 114m / Commercial Bay 160m main tower 182.30m top of roof form / Intercontinental (#1 Queen Street) 83.8m along with the recently consented Te Pūmanawa (Downtown Carpark site) with two towers at 227m (55 levels) and 162m (45 levels) respectively.

### **Any matters of disagreement**

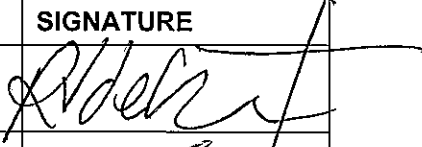
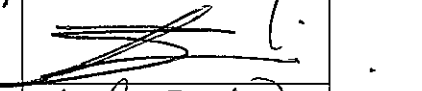
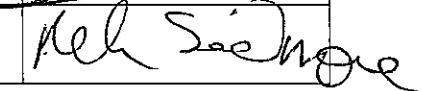
- 5.6 Prior to the discussion of the Panel's directions relating to the Tower Building below, the experts set out whether they have any remaining concerns with the Applicant's urban design and landscape effects relating to the following topics.
- (a) The experts refer to paragraph 4.1(b). RS, GH, MC and SS wish to record that there are many aspects of the Proposal that are supported.
  - (b) RdeL and BJ confirm they do not have any concerns with the Application as relevant to their area of expertise.
  - (c) RS areas of concern relate to: building height and mass in combination; visual effects from north (more distant views), west and south (mid to distant views); planned neighbourhood character; landscape character – cityscape and the AUP planned transition between the City core and the Harbour edge.
  - (d) SS and MC's areas of concern relate to: the proposed scale, form, and architectural design response in particular to the west and south. Relative to the comments provided to the Panel previously, SS and MC now confirm they are no longer concerned with the street interface response (including the provision of veranda and canopies) and the shading effects.
  - (e) GH areas of concern relate to: the proposed scale, height, architectural expression, visual dominance, visual amenity, and landscape character outcomes (including in relation to the transition from the city to the harbour edge) specifically when viewed from the west and south of the Site.
  - (f) RS, GH, MC and SS agree that the issues of concern do not relate to how one would experience the building up close. Key concerns are focused on the medium to longer distances where the viewer can take in the fullness of the Proposal's form, scale and mass in particular when viewed from the west and south in mid to long range distances.
  - (g) SS confirms that building height itself is not the primary concern however this is subject to achieving an overall well considered form.
  - (h) GH confirms that in terms of the more distant landscape, her key concerns are the combination of height, width and form.

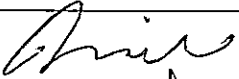
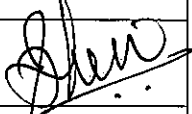
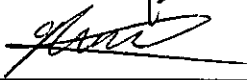
### **Panel directions in relation to the Tower building**

- 5.7 The Panel directed the experts to discuss, and so far as possible, agree a series of design refinements that could be made to the mass, proportion and architectural expression of the Tower building in order to achieve a range of outcomes.
- 5.8 In advance of the conference, BJ and RdeL prepared two potential massing options to respond to the Panel's questions and foster discussion with the experts. These are referred to as Option 4 – "Backpack" and Option 5 – "Backpack and Integrated Crown" in the document attached to the JWS for the Panel as **Appendix 1**. BJ and RdeL note that this was a confidential document for the purpose of the conference and it is not authorised for wider distribution. These options were developed purely by the designers and do not represent or signal any formal change to the Proposal currently before the Panel.
- 5.9 Following discussion and clarification of the options, MC, GH, RS and SS discussed them and concluded that while presenting a number of enhancements, neither would be sufficient to address the concerns expressed in previous reports and summarised previously. However, GH, SS, MC and RS agree that either would be better overall urban design and landscape outcome than the lodged Proposal.
- 5.10 In the spirit of being constructive and efficiently using time, MC, GH, RS and SS considered whether further potential changes to Options 4 and 5 might be sufficient to address their remaining concerns.
- 5.11 In summary:
- (a) Although subject to a reduced angle of rotation on the northern face in Options 4 and 5 compared to the lodged Proposal, MC, GH, SS and RS considered that the design intent was retained. No further reduction would be supported.
  - (b) GH and RS consider that Option 5's integrated southern elevation and roof termination was preferred.
  - (c) MC and SS consider that either Options 4 or 5 south elevation and roof termination were noticeable improvements and acceptable.
  - (d) GH, RS, MC and SS agree that additional changes to the top third of the Tower building to reduce its footprint and introduce the dynamic of a crank on the western elevation would result in significant difference to the perceived bulk of the lodged Proposal.
  - (e) Notwithstanding the above and noting the conceptual nature of what was presented, further resolution of the Tower's materiality (including the differentiation of the southern elevation and the solidity of the backpack/ integrated crown options) would be necessary.
- 5.12 The above was indicatively marked up on a plan and an elevation taken from the circulated set and these are included in **Appendix 2**.

- 5.13 The experts discussed ways to potentially reduce or mitigate the overall bulk and prominence of the Tower building when viewed from the west and south.
- (a) The experts all agree that the tabled Options 4 and 5 do reduce or mitigate the effects of concern but in the case of GH, MC, RS and SS they consider that further changes similar to that described at 5.11(c) could, in principle, (i.e subject to assessment of a full revised plan set) be supported.
- 5.14 The experts discussed how the anticipated transition and scale relationship between the City Centre core and the Precinct / harbour edge could be achieved.
- (a) RS, GH, SS and MC consider that even with the changes (Appendix 2 version), given the foreground location when viewed from the west, the building would challenge the intended transition. However, the effects of concern would be reduced to an acceptable level.
- 5.15 The experts discussed how greater integration of the Tower building with the Cityscape when viewed from the west and south could be achieved.
- (a) In a similar vein to 5.14(a), GH, SS, MC and RS consider that given the foreground location when viewed from the west (Appendix 2 version), the Tower would remain prominent in relation to the City core skyline. However, the design refinements reduce this effect to an acceptable level.
- 5.16 The experts discussed how greater congruity with the established character of the Wynyard Quarter and the future outcomes sought in the relevant plan provisions as the Quarter evolves and develops.
- (a) In a similar vein to 5.14(a) and 5.15(b), GH, SS, MC and RS consider that an outcome similar to the Appendix 2 version incorporating either the backpack or the integrated crown approach and subject to materiality and detailed refinement, and in conjunction with the other proposed buildings (Marina and Beaumont), would present an acceptable interface with the Precinct.
- 5.17 The experts agree that all the design refinements discussed above, would still achieve a suitably integrated overall outcome for the Site.

**Confirmed in person: 11 September 2026**

| EXPERT'S NAME     | PARTY                  | SIGNATURE                                                                             |
|-------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Rachel de Lambert | Applicant's expert     |  |
| Blair Johnston    | Applicant's expert     |  |
| Rebecca Skidmore  | Panel appointed expert |  |

|                   |                  |                                                                                     |
|-------------------|------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Michelle Chan     | Auckland Council |  |
| Sheerin Samsudeen | Auckland Council |  |
| Gabrielle Howdle  | Auckland Council |  |