

Appendix 3

TAG Minutes



Urban & Environmental

TAG 1

B&A

Urban & Environmental

TAG (Technical Advisory Group) Recommendations

DATE OF MEETING	Friday 14 April 2023
PROJECT	Eke Panuku TAG Downtown Carpark Development
Session time	9.30am to 1.30pm
TAG panel	John Hunt, Carin Wilson, Gavin Lister, Rachel de Lambert, Gordon Moller, Andrew Lamb (AUDP Panel Member), Richard Blakey (AUDP Panel Member - did not attend meeting but provided feedback)
External Attendees	Blair Johnston, Warren and Mahoney Henry Crothers, LandLAB John Hudson, Hudson and Associates Karl Johnstone, Haumi Karl Cook, Barker and Associates Tim Woods, Precinct Properties Bianca Hurrell, RCP
Eke Panuku Project Team	Duncan Ecob, Head of Design Tom Belgrave, Development Manager Maria Walker, Team Leader Urban Design and Masterplanning Gemma Sandford, Team Leader Public Realm
Auckland Council Staff	Mustafa Demiralp, Principal Urban Design John Lan, Senior Planner Paul Murphy, Principal Landscape Architect Stephen Quin, Principal Landscape Architect Nicole Miller, Team Leader Urban Design Strategy & Projects (online) Karen Long, Team Leader City Centre (Regulatory) (online) Nidhi Nautiyal Principal Universal Design Specialist (online)
Eke Panuku – Other Attendees	Daniel Chapman, City Centre Design Lead Vrinda Moghe, Head of Planning (online) Jane Park, Intermediate Landscape Architect Lorraine Thomas, Executive Assistant

Introduction:

The Chair welcomed the applicant team and Council officers and noted that TAG would also be serving as the AUDP for the project. The Chair provided opening remarks in regard to the significance of the proposed development, the intention for a number of review sessions, and the purpose of these reviews in facilitating design development in preparation for lodgement of the Resource Consent application. The Chair noted the importance of a holistic view of the proposals, with the wider urban design merits of the proposal given recognition in considering any individual outcomes deemed to be less than ideal in urban design terms.

It was noted that Council, while requesting comment from the panel on specific aspects of the proposal, would also be carrying out their own assessment of the proposals against the provisions of the AUP.

TAG commended the generally high quality of the presentation, and the considerable level of attention to the urban design aspects of the project. TAG also commended the clarity and organization of the consultants' presentation material, including the specific responses to the AUP controls and the Essential Outcomes and Design Guidance prepared by Eke Panuku.

TAG was advised that the focus of this first review session was on the context, vision, and overarching strategies for the development, and for TAG to provide feedback in response to the questions from Eke Panuku and Council. TAG noted that its recommendations should also identify matters needing to be addressed by the consultants in preparation for the next presentation.

Design-related responses sought by Council and Eke Panuku:

TAG was asked to provide feedback in regard to the following questions:

Auckland Council:

1. Given the over-height aspects of the two towers in respect of the Harbour Edge Height Control Plane, what are the impacts in relation to the transition sought by this control from the waterfront to the core central business district, and the possible adverse effects that could be caused by the over-height components?
For response, refer to 1.2 below.
2. Both towers exceed the Maximum Tower Dimension. Can TAG comment on whether the proposed tower designs are progressing in a positive direction to achieve the outcome sought by this standard such as slender building appearance, human-scaled edge design and enabling views through the city centre?
For response, refer to 1.3, 1.4 and 1.5 below.
3. Comment on the general placement of the buildings, access arrangements and orientation.
For comment on building placement refer to 1.4 below. For comment on building orientation refer to 1.5 below. For comment on access arrangements refer to 2.4 below.
4. Comment on the separation distances between proposed Tower 1 and Tower 2 buildings and the neighbouring buildings within the existing urban block.
For response, refer to 1.4 below.
5. Comment on the design and legibility of proposed pedestrian connections, circulation, and the resulting public realm outcome (noting the requirement for at-grade 24/7 laneways).
For response, refer to 2.2 below.
6. Comment on the roofing of the majority of the central public space.
For response, refer to 2.3 below.

7. Feedback on the street edge condition, the amenity of the public realm and activation of both Lower Hobson Street and Customs Street West.
For response, refer to 2.1 below.
8. Following from question 7, comment on the resulting interfaces in a scenario where the removal of the flyover does not eventuate.
For response, refer to 2.1 below.

Eke Panuku:

9. Façade treatments, including the degree of difference between the three buildings.
For response, refer to 3.1 below.
10. Activity of ground floor uses and integration with the street.
For response, refer to 3.2 below.
11. The ‘flow’ of internal open spaces with the public realm.
For response, refer to 3.3 below.
12. Does the design quality meet the expected standards for a world class development that is distinctive to Tāmaki Makaurau?
For response, refer to 3.4 below.

The following comments and recommendations are organized on a topic basis, proceeding from broad considerations of the relationship between the proposals and their city and harbour edge context, to matters of urban design quality in regard to the immediate public realm. Each of the above questions has been cross referenced to the relevant section of these recommendations.

Note: In arriving at its conclusions regarding the potential impacts of the proposals on the cityscape, TAG has done so based on drawings alone. TAG anticipates an opportunity to more closely study the relationship between the proposals and their wider context, including the combined visual effects of the two towers, at the next presentation, assisted by a digital model and technically accurate visual simulations.

TAG requests that future agenda material includes page numbers.

1. Contribution to the cityscape

Any assessment of the effect of the proposed development on the cityscape needs to be undertaken in the context of Council’s intentions for the future form of the city centre. The Panel notes that when height controls were first introduced (over 50 years ago) the intention was for the form of the central city to respect the underlying ridge and valley geography, and that this is still required for the Central City as per Policy 30(c).

It would be helpful for Council to update the panel regarding intentions (if any) for the future form of the city centre in relation to the ridge and valley geography and to the harbour, and

to clarify the apparent contradiction between this Policy 30(c) and the following statement in the Zone description:

*“Within the city centre itself, development potential is concentrated in the core central business district. **Development potential reduces towards the ridgelines** and transitions to lower heights on the waterfront and landward periphery whilst allowing for variation and interest in built form outcomes”.*

TAG seeks clarification of Council intentions regarding the tracing of the ridge and valley geography of the city centre when viewed from the harbour, noting that the constraint of the Harbour Edge Height Control plane would be likely to see progressive redevelopment of the Quay St sites all seek to build to this height plane.

The Panel also invites the consultants to also outline their views on the evolution of this aspect of city form, and the contribution of their proposals to this.

The Panel notes that Plan Change 78 is understood to remove the height standards and FAR controls and place greater reliance (for this site) on the Harbour Edge Height Control plane and sunlight admission controls, and to incorporate a narrower west-east maximum dimension for towers. However the Panel is also aware that the PC78 process has recently been extended by 12 months and is conscious therefore that the current AUP rules will apply in the immediate future.

1.1 Overview

TAG considers that the basic form of the proposed development – two relatively slender towers above a podium that defines street edges and frames laneways - is a generally sound response that recognizes the development potential of this part of the city, the need for appropriate scale at street edges and the provision of through-site pedestrian routes that would significantly enhance the permeability of the block.

Without wishing to pre-empt the outcomes from 3D modelling, TAG members note the following considerations in regard to the potential visual impact of the two towers in their immediate urban context:

- The development is at the NW corner of the special height area where the AUP encourages taller (slender) buildings (albeit governed by the Harbour Edge Height Control in this part of the special height area);
- The buildings appear to respect the ridge and valley form, being aligned with the Federal Street ridge and opposite what was Ngā u Wera headland;
- With respect to the immediate waterfront and the HEHCP, the site is opposite Princes Wharf, set back behind the M Social hotel building, and tower T1 is inland of the HSBC

building. T1 is largely behind HSBC when viewed from the ferry basin and Wananga public space;

- While the transition to the Viaduct Harbour is not relevant to the Quay Street recession plane, it is nonetheless a relevant urban design matter and is subject to Policy 30(a) which seeks to transition building height in relation to neighbourhoods adjoining the city centre and to the harbour edge. In that regard TAG notes that there is a stepping down from tower T1 to T2, and that the project is on the opposite side of Lower Hobson Street and therefore somewhat removed from the Viaduct Harbour waterspace. Modelling of this particular relationship would be helpful and is anticipated by TAG as part of a future presentation.

In requesting this modelling TAG notes that unlike the Harbour Edge Height Control the matter of what constitutes an effective transition in height is more difficult to assess, particularly given that the neighbourhood in question is the Viaduct Harbour. It could be argued that this particular transition could be expected to be less gradual than that in other City Centre edge locations, given that the development site is within the Special Height Area. In this sense the proposed development could be considered to bookend the City Centre in relation to the Viaduct Harbour and beyond.

A further factor to be considered is the future possibility of tall buildings on selected sites within the Viaduct Harbour, in the context of PC78 submissions.

TAG recommend that technically accurate visual simulations of the proposed development include the following viewpoints:

- Harbour NE, N, NW
- Tamaki Drive (near Okahu Bay)
- Maungawhau (Mt Eden)
- Devonport
- E10 Viewshaft Harbour Bridge approach from North Shore
- Karanga plaza
- Te Wero Island
- Eastern end of Waitemata Plaza
- Northwestern motorway (between Te Atatu and Waterview tunnel interchange)
- Northern motorway heading South, (approx. Constellation Drive)

TAG is interested to understand the range of viewpoints discussed and potentially agreed between the applicant's landscape architect and Council landscape specialist in respect of visual simulation viewpoints. These static views, alongside seeing the proposal 'in the round' as part of 3D city modelling, will be important to forming a view as to the appropriateness of the height proposition.

1.2: Harbour Edge Height Control Plane

In regard to infringement of the Harbour Edge Height Control Plane, TAG considers that an assessment of the relationship of the proposed towers to the harbour edge and the adjacent central city area requires modelling and visual analysis. This should include a comparative analysis of the visual effects of a height-compliant development.

TAG recommends that this analysis should include both the Harbour Edge height control plane as it applies to this site, being 40m + 45o, and the Exception control of 60m + 45o (as used on 2.1.3.5 of the consultants' presentation), given that the use of the Exception control will need to be the subject of a Council assessment.

At the meeting Eke Panuku also recommended that the proposals be analysed in relation to the built form section of the City Centre Masterplan.

1.3 Tower slenderness and the maximum tower dimension

TAG notes that the AUP maximum plan dimension for both towers, measured diagonally at its widest section (noting the upper level tapering of the towers), is only marginally exceeded. The applicant also advised the meeting that the overall shape and size of the floor plates for the office tower are closely related to the economic viability factors.

In considering this issue TAG notes the following:

- The buildings have slender proportions - bulk is reduced by separating into two towers of different height and appearance (despite their proximity), and with tapered forms that contribute to visual slenderness at the upper levels.
- Their height also contributes to overall slenderness in terms of proportions.
- The distinctive chiselled forms introduced at the upper levels will assist in contributing positively to the skyline.

Working against this is the proximity of the tower and the fact that from a number of viewpoints the separation gap between them will not be evident. This is further discussed in 1.4.2 below.

1.4. Placement of the towers, separation distances between Tower 1 and Tower 2 buildings and separation from neighbouring buildings within the existing urban block:

1.4.1 Tower Placement:

TAG supports the placement of the towers, noting the appropriateness of the smaller residential tower at the western edge of the site, its contribution to the future character of

Lower Hobson St, and the opportunity for residents to enjoy views to the Viaduct Harbour and beyond.

TAG also considers that the position of the apartment tower (T2) is optimal in relation to ensuring a generous outlook space for the apartments facing the blank rear wall of the M Social building, while also enabling the formation of a generous forecourt space leading into the development from Lower Hobson St.

In regard to the separation distance between the commercial Tower 1 and the Aon building, TAG considers that although minimal (being similar to the width of Federal St) it is likely to be sufficient to ensure that no significant “visual wall” effects result. This will need to be confirmed by way of 3D modelling.

1.4.2 Separation distance between the towers:

TAG notes that the proximity of the two towers will result in a dynamically changing relationship between them as one moves around in the immediate public realm, and from the harbour. From some positions the separation gap will not be visible, although the fact that they are separate towers will be evident to the eye, with one tower being foreground to the other, together with tower height differences and façade differentiation.

In carrying out 3D modelling it would be helpful to check whether the widths of the towers will be compounded from key vantage points.

A factor in considering tower separation distance is the extent to which the tower footprints overlap. TAG notes that this is relatively limited, with a minimum extent of façades directly facing each other. In response to a question the consultants advised that only one apartment per floor level in Tower 2 would face directly towards Tower 1.

The issue of separation distance between the towers is further discussed in 1.4.3 below.

1.4.3 Tower setbacks from street frontages:

A further factor in the tower placements is the setback from street frontages. TAG noted that at 14.8m the separation distance between the two towers is minimal (compared for instance to a typical 20m street width, and noting the outlook standards of the AUP). The consultants raised the question of whether the gap might be increased by locating T2 closer to Lower Hobson Street. This was not discussed further, but could possibly be supported, based on the following: Hobson Street is wide (27m), while Lower Hobson Street is 31m, and the view to the harbour down Hobson Street is compromised to some degree by its alignment with Princes Wharf. However, the pedestrian experience resulting from moving T2 to the street edge, together with any wind effects at street level, would also need to be considered.

A further consideration is the potential for a setback of the tower in relation to podium to support the articulation of facade differences between the podium and the tower. A final decision on this matter will need to weigh all of the above factors.

TAG recommends that comparative modelling of the above options be undertaken and presented at a future review.

1.5 Tower footprints in relation to enabling views to the harbour from elsewhere in the city centre:

TAG notes that there is currently a glimpse of the harbour from St Patrick's Square, along the Federal Street alignment and passing through the site (albeit interrupted by a poorly located Sheoak tree). It will be important that this view, including its vertical extension/sky connection, is retained, and that a north-south circulation route at first floor level approximates to this viewshaft (acknowledging that an axial route is not possible) in order to give effect to the aspiration in the City Centre Masterplan of a laneway connection along the Federal Street alignment. (TAG also notes that AUP standard H8.6.6 ties consideration of height infringements of the Harbour Edge Height Control Plane to provision of such a connection).

More generally, TAG notes that both towers seek to minimize obstruction of views towards the harbour by orientating their footprints with the narrower dimension aligned east-west. In the case of Tower 1 the near-square footprint (4 structural bays by 5 structural bays) has resulted in relatively compact footprint, able to be serviced from a core on the southern face of the building. In the case of tower 2, TAG notes that the alignment of the building footprint responds to the preferred orientations for apartments.

Notwithstanding these efforts to achieve acceptable east-west separation distances between the two towers and between Tower 1 and the Aon building, TAG considers that these distances are minimal. TAG is aware that as part of Plan Change 78 provisions, Council is seeking to introduce a maximum east-west tower dimension of 30 metres, in order to provide for increased visual permeability from the City Centre towards the harbour. While this proposed change is yet to be tested in the hearings process it nevertheless points to a concern by Council with tower east-west dimensions of greater than 30 metres. Given the need for viable floor plate sizes in the order of 1400 sqm gross and 1300 sqm net lettable area, the north-south dimension of such a tower would need to be in the order of 48 metres. TAG notes that a tower footprint of these dimensions would appear to be possible within the site, although the consequences of such a change in the footprint of Tower 1 for the remainder of the development would need to be investigated. TAG further notes that while this change in footprint would require a centrally positioned core, the consultants advised that they were already investigating this option for the proposed T1 footprint.

TAG notes that an increase in east-west separation distances as a result of reduce tower width would offer urban design benefits in several respects, and as such would assist in meeting the expectation of "outstanding architectural quality" as indicated in the Eke Panuku Strategic Outcomes for the development. TAG recommends that the consultants provide a summary response to the Tower 1 footprint changes outlined above.

2. Streets and Lanes

Comment has been requested on the design and legibility of proposed pedestrian connections, circulation, and the resulting public realm outcome (noting the requirement for at-grade 24/7 laneways).

2.1 Street frontages

2.1.1 Lower Hobson Street

Subject to detailed design, the development will provide a positive frontage to Lower Hobson St and the intersection with Sturdee St. TAG notes the undulating frontage indicated on the render (both in plan and elevation) and questions whether the setbacks achieved by these means are also intended to serve instead of a canopy.

2.1.2 Customs St West

TAG noted that activation of the street frontage relies on pedestrian movement on the two sets of stairs, one leading to the first floor public circulation routes and the other to the level 1 lobby to Tower 1. The potential for views from the street to the waiting spaces between lift banks would provide further visual activation. TAG acknowledged that retail uses on this south facing frontage would likely struggle to survive.

TAG notes that the generosity of the entry “throat” into the development from the corner of Customs St West and Lower Hobson St will significantly alleviate the spatial constriction of this part of Customs St West

Further information on the design of this frontage will be needed in order for TAG to make an informed assessment of pedestrian amenity.

2.1.3 Removal of the flyover

TAG considers that removal of the Lower Hobson Street flyover is essential if the potential public amenity resulting from the proposed redevelopment of the Downtown Carpark site is to be realized. TAG was reassured that there is a clear commitment on the part of AT and Waka Kotahi to undertake this work. TAG members questioned whether Auckland Council had committed to the public realm upgrade work based on the income that would be received from the sale of the Carpark land. The coordinated design, consenting and implementation of these works are necessary to secure the real public benefit of the land sale and site

redevelopment. TAG seeks further confirmation of the parallel progression of the public realm / streetscape works.

While the removal of the flyover is essential to realise the public realm benefits, TAG does not consider that the applicant's proposal itself relies on its removal, and therefore a revised design proposal would not be needed should the flyover remain. The proposal should not limit itself in that regard.

2.1.4 Modelling of the interfaces between the development and the public realm

TAG considers that the relationship between the development and the immediately adjacent public realm needs to be modelled and illustrated. While the agenda material included views of the development within its immediate street context, these were based on unrealistically generous street widths and from viewpoints that sought to maximize the extent of the development within the field of view. While helpful in conveying the architectural character of the development these views do not accurately convey the actual street conditions, including conditions on the opposite sides of the streets.

TAG recommends that the following views of the development within its immediate context be provided at the next presentation:

- Views from both ends of Lower Hobson Street, including with and without the flyover;
- Similar views for Customs St West;
- Views from Sturdee St and from within the proposed Sturdee St Park (referred to as the Shoreline Park public space on the masterplan drawing in 2.1.5.2);
- Views from Lower Federal Street indicating the podium open space between Tower 1 and the Aon Building aligned with the Federal St axis.

2.2 Laneways/public circulation routes

TAG notes that the Eke Panuku Essential Outcomes call for at-grade lanes in both N-S and E-W directions through the site. TAG acknowledges that while this outcome reflects sound urban design practice there are significant impediments to its implementation once the requirements for vehicle access and servicing of both the existing properties within the block and the new buildings are understood.

By retaining the existing N-S service lane and using it as the sole point of vehicle access to the development site, the consultants note that this will minimize the impact of vehicle movements on the surrounding public realm. TAG concurs with this view. TAG also supports the analysis of cycle and vehicle movements in order to access both the proposed development and the existing buildings (refer to 2.1.6.2 of the consultant's presentation). As

a matter of detail, the footpath needs to be continuous where the service lane meets the streets.

In further considering the issue of pedestrian movement at ground versus first floor level, TAG observes that existing level changes on Lower Albert St have resulted in established pedestrian routes at first floor level, accessed directly from the corner of Lower Albert St and Customs St West, and via the pedestrian overbridge from the Commercial Bay development. While extensions to the Aon building first floor occupation currently block pedestrian movement along the northern and southern faces of the building, TAG was advised that it is intended to redevelop these spaces for pedestrian circulation (refer to 2.1.4.16, Public Realm Network). This will result in multiple routes from Lower Albert St into the development site. TAG supports the applicant's intention to enhance all existing and proposed pedestrian routes within the block to have a consistent materiality and quality, thereby making pedestrian routes within and beyond the site, such as the route to Commercial Bay, to be of comparable public realm quality.

TAG also notes that a pedestrian bridge from Fanshaw Street arriving at the first floor level of the development would further contribute to pedestrian activity at this level and assist in stitching the development into its wider context. TAG recommends that the design proposals anticipate and explore this future connection.

Given that these pedestrian movements will need to return to street level along the Lower Hobson St frontage, this level change has been achieved by way of the central atrium space (referred to as the "urban room"), in effect a multi-level and multi directional urban space as well as a place of pause. TAG supports this strategy in principle, but notes the design development will need to address the following:

- Enhancing legibility by focussing on the spatial and visual continuity of the pedestrian routes in general;
- Enhancing activation by minimizing blank walls and the visible presence of corporate space, both along the laneway spaces and in the central "urban room";
- Provision of a legible N-S route at first floor level that achieves the intent for a laneway network that includes a city to harbour connection by way of Federal Street. As noted, this may include a combination of visual connections (glimpses of the harbour from St Patricks Square and a visibly aligned airspace between buildings as an implied N-S lane on the Federal St alignment) and physical connections (a lane at first floor level with legible connections where each end meets the street);
- Measures to improve the legibility and directness of the connection between Wheriko Lane (the E-W lane through Commercial Bay) and the proposed E-W lane along the north face of the AON tower. (The current steps from street level have poor visibility, face in the wrong direction thereby requiring a double switchback, and are not aligned with either Wheriko Lane or the proposed lane.)
- Use of materials in a way that reinforces the public and continuous nature of these routes and of the urban room as part of this network. In this regard TAG supports the further development of the "internal" walls of the podium and building P3 (the lower

timber framed building adjacent to the rear façade of the MSocial building) in a way that clearly relates them to their “ external” (street) facades;

- The need to carry out solar modelling to establish the extent to which sunlight enters these spaces, in particular the “urban room”.
- The need to carry out wind and other climatic modelling (such as the extent to which driving rain will enter the circulation lanes / ‘urban room’) to ensure the comfort and habitability of these spaces.

TAG recommends the preparation of diagrammatic plans, sections and 3D studies that are specific to each part of the pedestrian network, and which convey the experience of moving along these routes (akin to Gordon Cullen’s “serial vision” studies). This would also assist in clearly explaining which parts of these routes are indoor spaces and which parts are outdoors (open to the sky).

2.3 The “Urban Room”

TAG considers that it will be essential for this key element of the project to be experienced as part of the public realm of city, and thus as publicly accessible on a 24/7 basis. TAG has commented in 2.2 above regarding the design development of this space.

In response to a question the consultants advised that the extent of roof glazing over this space had yet to be determined on the basis of wind modelling studies. This would be discussed at the next review.

Putting aside climatic factors, TAG suggests that there would be an advantage to eliminating the roof glazing as much as possible, in that it would strengthen the continuity of visible and aligned airspace as a cue to circulation and strengthen the perception of outdoor space and circulation routes.

TAG supports the proposals to visually anchor the Urban Room by way of a solid and sculpted treatment of the perimeter wall surfaces. This is most clearly shown in the cut away perspective (section 2.1.4.18 of the consultants’ presentation).

2.4 Tower access arrangements:

TAG supports the proposal to gain access to the Tower 1 lobby from Customs St West via stairs as well as directly from the level 1 public circulation routes for those approaching from the east.

Access to Tower 2 from the Urban Room is also supported, noting that this maximizes the retail frontage to Lower Hobson Street and will assist in activation the Urban Room outside of normal working hours.

TAG requests further clarity of access routes for different users, particularly for residents at different times of the day and week.

TAG supports the nature of access for cyclists to the new ‘micro-mobility hub’ and encourages the continued integration of this facility within the development.

3. Eke Panuku questions:

3.1 Façade treatments, including the degree of difference between the three buildings

TAG notes that a future review session will focus on façade treatments. As a preliminary comment TAG considers that while the facades for each of the buildings will need to share qualities in common, there should also be a clear differentiation that reflects the different kinds of use intended for each building, with the apartment tower T2 clearly revealing residential occupation. Such differences would also assist in visually distinguishing the two towers when the separation space between them is concealed from view. TAG considers that there is a risk that the two towers will become more similar rather than more different as the design evolves, and that a more exuberant quality to the architecture of the apartment tower (for example as a “vertical village”) when compared to the office tower might offer a number of advantages.

The podium facades are also able to be differentiated from the tower facades on the basis of their role in contributing to the character and visual amenity of the streetscape.

The differentiation of the smaller ‘micro-mobility hub’ building façade is also supported.

3.2 Activity of ground floor uses and integration with the street

As outlined above.

3.3 The ‘flow’ of internal open spaces with the public realm

TAG is uncertain regarding the intent of this question. TAG has noted above the need to increase the legibility and directness of pedestrian routes, and in particular at the eastern end of the E-W link and at both ends of the N-S link.

3.4 Does the design quality meet the expected standards for a world class development that is distinctive to Tāmaki Makaurau?

TAG considers that with further development and attention to matters raised above, the proposals have the potential to meet this expectation. TAG notes the significant engagement with Māori cultural concepts in the work to date and commends the fundamental (rather than superficial) and sophisticated way in which these concepts have informed the development of the design conceptual work to date.

Noting the proximity of the development to the harbour, TAG suggests that references to the significance of the Waitematā could be introduced into the design proposals.

3.5 Compliance with Essential Outcomes

TAG supports the assessment of proposals against the Essential Outcomes, as recorded on pages 6 and 7 of the Briefing Note.

4. Other matters: further information required

Further to the additional information previously identified, TAG members request the following further information be included as part of the next review

4.1 RLs of adjacent streets in relation to RLs within development

4.2 Shading studies

These should include a comparison of the shading effects of over-height development versus compliant building heights on nearby streets and proximate areas of public space (per H8.8 1(6)(a) of the AUP). This should include possible effects on the Viaduct Harbour esplanade and Waitematā Plaza, for example.

4.3 Transport network update

Given the role of Customs St West in the routing of buses and the possibility of bus layover in the space currently under the Lower Hobson St overbridge, TAG requests that an update on intentions for public transport is provided at the next review.

4.4 Scope of project

TAG would appreciate an indication of the scope of the project beyond the immediate boundaries of the project site, including the status of the connection to the Viaduct Harbour through 204 Quay Street.

4.5 Apartment residents' amenity

TAG would appreciate an indication of how residential amenity for the community of apartment occupants might be secured, given the highly public nature of the ground level activities and the close proximity of the apartments to both the public realm and the office tower and its occupants. TAG notes that the intention is for the apartments to be owner-occupier and to provide for a wide range of income levels.

4.6 Anticipated life within the development outside normal business hours

TAG would appreciate an indication of how the development and its associated public spaces might be used outside of normal business hours, and how the design will accommodate and promote this.

4.7 Māori and Pacifica presence within the life of the development

TAG commends the recognition that has been given to date to Māori concepts and perspectives in the development of the proposals. However, it is less clear how Māori and Pacifica people might be able to identify with the development once completed and occupied, and how the range of experiences on offer might be attractive to them.

Post TAG1 – Requests from TAG Panel and Auckland Council

1.1 Overview (Visual Simulations)

TAG recommend that technically accurate visual simulations of the proposed development include the following viewpoints:

- Harbour NE, N, NW
- Tamaki Drive (near Okahu Bay)
- Maungawhau (Mt Eden)
- Devonport
- E10 Viewshaft Harbour Bridge approach from North Shore
- Karanga plaza
- Te Wero Island
- Eastern end of Waitemata Plaza
- Northwestern motorway (between Te Atatu and Waterview tunnel interchange)
- Northern motorway heading South, (approx. Constellation Drive)

1.2 Harbour Edge Height Control Plane

TAG recommends that this analysis should include both the Harbour Edge height control plane as it applies to this site, being 40m + 45o, and the Exception control of 60m + 45o (as used on 2.1.3.5 of the consultants' presentation), given that the use of the Exception control will need to be the subject of a Council assessment.

At the meeting Eke Panuku also recommended that the proposals be analysed in relation to the built form section of the City Centre Masterplan.

Auckland Council Notes

The height strategy should be presented in more detail, demonstrating how the proposed development will fit into the existing and future built form of the city centre area and how the purpose of the standard H8.6.5 Harbour Edge Control Plane would be achieved.

However, given the time constraints and in the absence of a ZTV map, Council specialists (urban design and landscape) are not requesting any additional visual simulations to what TAG have requested for the second TAG Panel. However, further visual simulations are likely to be requested at a later stage pending the ZTV map (that we understand the applicant will prepare and ideally present for the 2nd Panel). It is understood that this map will model existing and consented City Centre form to create more accurate visibility scenarios.

It is likely that future requested simulations will include additional viewpoints that are more proximate to the site (from different vantages with the City Centre) to get a better understanding of the effects.

It is requested that all visual simulations include massing of consented built form and that all visual simulations are accompanied by equivalent visual simulations demonstrating compliant massing. As it has not yet been determined whether 60m + 45^o or the 40 + 45^o is to be applied, the compliant simulations should include each separately.

Detailed sectional drawings that would illustrate the proposal with the broader context will also be a very helpful tool to assess the impact on the built form (The applicant has confirmed these are in the process of preparation). These sectional studies should illustrate both east-west planes and north-south planes together with the skyline profiles.

A separate version of these sectional assessment drawings including a fully compliant height variation should be included in the diagrams to illustrate the differences in the final outcome between a fully compliant outcome and the current sought outcome with the notable additional height requested.

1.4.2 Separation distance between the towers

In carrying out 3D modelling it would be helpful to check whether the widths of the towers will be compounded from key vantage points.

1.4.3 Tower setbacks from street frontages:

TAG recommends that comparative modelling of the above options be undertaken and presented at a future review.

2. Streets and Lanes

Comment has been requested on the design and legibility of proposed pedestrian connections, circulation, and the resulting public realm outcome (noting the requirement for at-grade 24/7 laneways).

2.1.2 Customs St West

Further information on the design of this frontage will be needed in order for TAG to make an informed assessment of pedestrian amenity.

Auckland Council Note

Together with the typical elevations that would illustrate the full extent of the development, some detailed elevations of the podium levels at a greater scale. Especially illustrating the conditions of the activated ground, first and second levels would be very helpful in understanding and assessing the building program and the functionality of the interfaces. These views should be considered for the main street interfaces of Hobson St and Customs St West, as well as from the internal 'Urban Room' areas, and the internal laneways and shared lanes.

In addition, Council specialists would like to understand the street interface/activation context of Customs Street West from the Viaduct esplanade to Te Komititanga and including how the proposal fits within this context. Such information could be presented diagrammatically, and to scale, with distance measurements of activated and non-activated street interfaces.

Council specialists have observed that Customs Street West is used frequently by pedestrians. It is requested that further analysis is provided of pedestrian movements past the site, in

terms of direction/purpose of travel (destinations, residential catchments) and numbers (if available).

2.1.3 Removal of the flyover

TAG seeks further confirmation of the parallel progression of the public realm / streetscape works.

Auckland Council Note

Council specialists request further clarity around the scope of the resource consent that is being applied for. It is understood that the applicant intends to offer a “precedence” condition that the development is subject to the removal of the Lower Hobson flyover. Council specialists would like to understand if such a condition could help to ensure that the flyover removal can be relied upon in the assessment of the proposal.

2.1.4 Modelling of the interfaces between the development and the public realm

TAG recommends that the following views of the development within its immediate context be provided at the next presentation:

- Views from both ends of Lower Hobson Street, including with and without the flyover;
- Similar views for Customs St West;
- Views from Sturdee St and from within the proposed Sturdee St Park (referred to as the Shoreline Park public space on the masterplan drawing in 2.1.5.2);
- Views from Lower Federal Street indicating the podium open space between Tower 1 and the Aon Building aligned with the Federal St axis.

Auckland Council Note

Refer to comments as above under 1.1 and 1.2.

2.2 Laneways/public circulation routes

TAG recommends the preparation of diagrammatic plans, sections and 3D studies that are specific to each part of the pedestrian network, and which convey the experience of moving along these routes (akin to Gordon Cullen’s “serial vision” studies). This would also assist in clearly explaining which parts of these routes are indoor spaces and which parts are outdoors (open to the sky).

Auckland Council Note

Council specialists would like width and length dimensions to be provided for the laneway circulation, including laneway entrance widths. It is also requested that diagrammatic analysis of pedestrian route hierarchy is provided for the circulation in and around the site.

2.3 The “Urban Room”

In response to a question, the consultants advised that the extent of roof glazing over this space had yet to be determined on the basis of wind modelling studies. This would be discussed at the next review.

Auckland Council Note

Council specialists would like greater clarity on how trees/vegetation will thrive in the Urban Room context.

2.4 Tower access arrangements:

TAG requests further clarity of access routes for different users, particularly for residents at different times of the day and week.

Other matters: further information required

Further to the additional information previously identified, TAG members request the following further information be included as part of the next review.

4.1 RIs of adjacent streets in relation to RIs within development

4.2 Shading studies

These should include a comparison of the shading effects of over-height development versus compliant building heights on nearby streets and proximate areas of public space (per H8.8 1(6)(a) of the AUP). This should include possible effects on the Viaduct Harbour esplanade and Waitemata Plaza, for example.

Auckland Council Note

In addition, Council specialists would like to understand shading impacts on the surrounding street network and on Sturdee Reserve.

4.3 Transport network update

Given the role of Customs St West in the routing of buses and the possibility of bus layover in the space currently under the Lower Hobson St overbridge, TAG requests that an update on intentions for public transport is provided at the next review.

4.4 Scope of project

TAG would appreciate an indication of the scope of the project beyond the immediate boundaries of the project site, including the status of the connection to the Viaduct Harbour through 204 Quay Street.

4.5 Apartment residents' amenity

TAG would appreciate an indication of how residential amenity for the community of apartment occupants might be secured, given the highly public nature of the ground level

activities and the close proximity of the apartments to both the public realm and the office tower and its occupants. TAG notes that the intention is for the apartments to be owner-occupier and to provide for a wide range of income levels.

4.6 Anticipated life within the development outside normal business hours

TAG would appreciate an indication of how the development and its associated public spaces might be used outside of normal business hours, and how the design will accommodate and promote this.

4.7 Māori and Pacifica presence within the life of the development

TAG commends the recognition that has been given to date to Māori concepts and perspectives in the development of the proposals. However, it is less clear how Māori and Pacifica people might be able to identify with the development once completed.

TAG 2

B&A

Urban & Environmental

Eke Panuku TAG (Technical Advisory Group) Recommendations

Date of Meeting	Friday 19 May 2023
Project	Eke Panuku TAG Downtown Carpark (Built Form and Public Realm)
Session time	9.30am to 5.00pm
TAG panel	John Hunt, Carin Wilson, Gavin Lister, Rachel de Lambert, Gordon Moller, Andrew Lamb (AUDP Panel Member), Richard Blakey (AUDP Panel Member)
External Attendees	Blair Johnston, Warren and Mahoney John Hudson, Hudson and Associates Karl Johnstone, Haumi Tim Woods, Precinct Properties Bianca Hurrell, RCP (online) Pamela Stantos, Barker and Associates (online) Graeme McIndoe, McIndoe Urban Design Michael Hawes, Warren and Mahoney Kaare Krokene, Snøhetta
Eke Panuku Project Team	Duncan Ecob, Head of Design Tom Belgrave, Development Manager Maria Walker, Team Leader Urban Design and Masterplanning Gemma Sandford, Team Leader Public Realm Allan Young, General Manage Development
Auckland Council Staff	Mustafa Demiralp, Principal Urban Design John Lan, Senior Planner (online) Stephen Quin, Principal Landscape Architect Nicole Miller, Team Leader Urban Design Strategy & Projects (online) Karen Long, Team Leader City Centre (Regulatory) (online) Nidhi Nautiyal Principal Universal Design Specialist (online) Erin Quin, Design Panels Lead Elisabeth Laird, Policy Planner (Online) Bradley Peens, Consents Planner (Observer) (online) Zhijun Guo, specialist urban Design (Observer) (online) Ryan Crawford, Graduate (Observer) (online)
Eke Panuku – Other Attendees	Gyles Bendall, General Manager Design and Place Vrinda Moghe, Head of Planning (online) Daniel Chapman, City Centre Design Lead (observer) (online) Tosh Graham, Intermediate Designer (observer) (online) Jane Park, Intermediate Landscape Architect Lorraine Thomas, Executive Assistant

Recommendations drafted by John Hunt. Final recommendations include contributions from other TAG members.

Role of TAG

TAG observes that its role is to provide a general urban design review, and that this is not a substitute for detailed assessments as required by the specifics of the Unitary Plan and other Council policies. TAG's role is not to replace the detailed technical assessments and recommendations required by Council Urban Designers, Landscape Architects and Planners required to form their own views and recommendations as part of the Resource Consent reporting process.

DOWNTOWN CARPARK DEVELOPMENT

Introduction:

TAG commends the considered responses given to its previous recommendations, and the comprehensive and clearly organized material provided as a basis for a more fully informed design review, acknowledging also the short timeframe that the consultants had to prepare the information provided. TAG also appreciated the careful structuring of the presentation material to closely correspond with the previous TAG responses and recommendations, noting that this assists in a continuing conversation regarding key issues and ensures that issues and possibilities are not missed along the way.

TAG acknowledges the value of the information presented in Part A of the consultants' presentation, under "A- Key Planning Context" and "B-Holistic Project Context". In particular TAG notes the significant public realm benefits offered by the proposals when compared with the extent of public realm provision required by the AUP, and that this provision is possible by virtue of the scale and yield of the proposed development.

TAG is also mindful of the opportunity created by the adopted design approach for a more fundamental level of cultural engagement and expression than is typically the case for commercial projects of this kind. While noting that there is still a long way to travel in realizing these possibilities in the built outcomes, TAG remains enthusiastic about these possibilities. TAG is aware that much of this collaborative journey will necessarily take place in design development following the Resource Consent process, but also notes that it needs to be anticipated from the outset.

TAG makes the following observations and recommendations to assist in the further development of the project. Where possible, the section numbering employed in TAG's recommendations of 14th April has been adopted.

PART A: CITY FORM & PROPOSED MASSING

1. Contribution to the Cityscape

TAG appreciated the presentation by Elisabeth Laird (Auckland Council) on the future form of the city centre, including existing AUP controls and proposed changes to these controls as part of Plan Change 78. This briefing assisted in providing a fuller understanding of the Council's current position in regard the form of the city centre.

1.1 Overview:

TAG recommendations of 14th April identified a number of aspects of the larger urban context that would appear to support the introduction of buildings on the project site that are taller than might be anticipated. However, TAG also recognizes that this would require testing by contextual modelling of the proposals. TAG appreciates the extensive 3D modelling included in the material for this current review.

Based on the presented views of the proposed development in its urban and harbour context, TAG indicated qualified support for the proposals. The reasons for this support in principle, and the qualifications to this support, are outlined in following sections of these recommendations. Where TAG members have continuing concerns in regard to other more detailed aspects of the proposals, these are also outlined.

In indicating this support TAG notes that the proposed development, when combined with the existing buildings within the larger urban block that are owned by the same applicant, will result in overall development that is within the MTFAR density provisions of the Auckland Unitary Plan. In TAG's view this effective constraint on the further development of these other sites needs to be taken into account when considering the proposed development.

A key issue that will need to be resolved by the conclusion of the next TAG review is the height of tower T1, and it will be important for the consultants to address TAG recommendations in relation to this issue if TAG members are to be able to indicate unanimous support for this aspect of the proposal.

1.1.1 Responses to the View Analysis Images

TAG considered that the images taken from the consultant's 'white card' city model and the View Analysis images were very useful in understanding the effects of the proposed development on the city skyline. These effects include the further concentration of tall buildings towards the waterfront, and in particular towards the western end of the urban waterfront. However, with few sites remaining for wholesale redevelopment in this part of the city (and noting height controls in the Britomart Precinct), it could be anticipated that future development of height will be of sites elsewhere in the city centre, particularly in proximity to CRL stations. As a result the location of tall buildings within the city centre can be expected to become more widely distributed, strengthening the perception of an urban centre of some depth.

TAG considers that the distant views of the proposed development in its (pages 12-15 of Part A of the consultants' presentation) show significant variation in both building height and building setback along the interface between the city centre and the harbour, with the proposed development contributing to this variation. Of particular importance is Quay St (viewpoint 10) which clearly shows a stepped arrangement of built form when existing and proposed buildings are considered together. TAG notes that the following aspects of the proposed development contribute to this outcome:

- Height variation between T1 and T2;
- The variable setback of T1 and T2 from Quay St;
- The oblique chamfered cutbacks at the upper levels of both towers;
- The relatively slender proportions of both towers and the changing relationship between them when viewed from different viewpoints and in the context of moving around within the city.

TAG considers that in addition to the viewpoints provided, views from Queens Wharf, Princes Wharf and from the top of the tidal steps at Karanga Plaza, should be included in the next presentation.

In regard to the transition to the Viaduct Harbour, TAG noted in its recommendations of 14th April that *the matter of what constitutes an effective transition in height is more difficult to assess, and that it could be argued that this particular transition could be expected to be less gradual than that in other City Centre edge locations, given that the development site is within the Special Height Area. In this sense the proposed development could be considered to bookend the City Centre in relation to the Viaduct Harbour and beyond.*

In respect of the above, TAG considers that the significant shift in height between the development site and the eastern edge of the Viaduct Harbour precinct is acceptable from an urban design perspective and will serve to clearly demarcate the interface between the City Centre and the Viaduct Harbour, as demonstrated for example in the view from Wynyard Crossing (viewpoint 8) and from viewpoints such as Stanley Point (viewpoint 11).

A potential contribution of the proposed development to the cityscape at close quarters is to provide a visual focal point to this part of the city waterfront that draws attention away from the lesser qualities of the other buildings within the urban block. However, the façade designs for both towers will require reconsideration and further development to ensure this outcome. While some differentiation in façade treatment between the two towers has been indicated, the Panel considers that current similarities in façade expression serve to emphasize the cumulative size of the development (see view from Fanshaw St, viewpoint 9, in particular). The need for a reconsideration of the tower facades is further discussed in 3.1 below.

Further design development of the tops of the towers is also warranted. In the case of T1, TAG strongly recommends that an increase in the size of the chamfer at the north eastern corner of the building, in order to enhance the visual slenderness of this tower and to address its truncated skyline. Achieving a convincingly elegant and visually slender termination of the towers is considered to be essential if the height of T1 is to be supported.

1.2 Harbour Edge Height Control Plane (HEHCP):

1.2.1 Commentary on the HEHCP provisions

It should be noted that the commentary provided in this sub-section is intended as a background to the following subsections that address the assessment of the development in relation to the wider cityscape.

TAG anticipates that a key issue in the Council’s Resource Consent assessment processes will be the application of the HEHCP. TAG has had some difficulty in **meaningfully** applying this control as it relates to the built form of the city. The following comments attempt to summarize these interpretation difficulties. The parts of the statements of purpose that are in TAG’s view of particular significance are indicated with bold text.

In regard to the first stated purpose of the control (*to provide a transition in building height from the core central business district to the waterfront*), TAG notes that the HEHCP allows for a hypothetical building to a height of about 185m at the Customs St boundary to the development site, this approximately corresponding to the height of the main viewing deck of Skytower. In view of this TAG concludes that the use of this control to achieve a **progressive** reduction in the scale of built form towards the harbour over a significant part of the city centre (as implied in the concept of an amphitheatre-like urban form) is unrealistic, and that any transition in building height can only occur in a narrow band alongside Quay St. Such a narrow band cannot, in TAG’s view, be equated with an amphitheatre-like form of the city centre.

In regard to the second purpose of the control (*to maximize views between the harbour and the city centre*), TAG notes that this can be relied upon only where there is a Unitary Plan ordained sightline and that these sightlines are invariably along streets. The use of the control to either maximize views or secure sightlines to the harbour from unspecified development sites within the city centre, is therefore unrealistic. Where the “exception” provisions to the HEHCP apply, the compensatory open space “corridors” assist in avoiding visual wall effects and provide for glimpses between buildings, but such ‘corridors’ are limited to the development site.

In regard to the third purpose of the control (*to 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*), TAG notes that a strict alignment of tall building frontages would have the potential to result in visual wall effects, with potentially greater adverse effects than a condition of variable setback of tall buildings along this edge.

1.2.2 The HEHCP provisions in relation to the proposed design

TAG appreciates the comprehensive modelling/view analysis undertaken by the consultants in response to the recommendations from the review meeting of 14 April. TAG agrees with the consultants that since the conditions required for application of the “exception” to the HEHCP provisions appear to be met by the development, and that for TAG/UDP review purposes there is no need to model a development option that conforms to the basic control of a 40m + 45° height above Quay St.

A majority of TAG members considered that the purposes of the control are met in the proposed design (as identified in the Panel's recommendations for the meeting of 14th April), and that based on the modelling provided, there are no evident advantages to what the consultants present as a "compliant exception scheme" (being 60m and 45 degrees) when compared to the proposed (over height) scheme in respect of these stated purposes of the control. However, the views of all TAG members should be able to be indicated following the presentation of additional modelling from the requested further viewpoints and from the visual simulations yet to be provided.

Council officer responses to the earlier draft of these recommendations (received after the distribution of the Final version of the recommendations, and made in relation to DRAFT Rev1) have requested clarification of TAG views regarding the effect of height exceedances of the northern faces of the two towers (these being the closest faces to the harbour). TAG responses are indicated in 1.1 above, and modelling from three additional viewpoints has been requested for the next presentation. TAG has also previously indicated that it also looks forward to viewing the visual simulations yet to be presented.

1.3 Tower slenderness and the maximum tower dimension:

TAG was advised that, as part of PC78, Council has sought a maximum east-west dimension of 30m for towers in this part of the central city, with compensatory longer dimensions possible in the north-south direction. TAG was advised by the consultants that in their opinion this restriction in floorplate width would jeopardize the economics of high-rise office towers as certain dimensions are necessary to achieve efficient, market attractive floorplates.

TAG questions the urban design merits of tower footprints with a north-south dimension that is appreciably greater than the east-west dimension and considers that it would likely result in slab-like buildings that would reduce visual permeability of the city centre when viewed from the eastern and western view quadrants. Hence whilst potentially achieving greater north south visual permeability (only achieved if building footprints 'line up') a solid 'slab sided' effect could result in respect of the views from the east and west with poor urban form outcomes (especially in this instance as a backdrop to the Viaduct Basin). This proposed control also takes no account of site size and shape factors.

As discussed, TAG considers the proposed buildings are reasonably slender when seen in the round, and that slenderness is essential to the Panel's support of the height infringements. Measures to further enhance the slenderness of tower T1 are identified in the final paragraph of 1.1.1 above.

1.4 Placement of towers and separation distances:

TAG has previously supported the placement of the towers (refer to subsection 1.4.1 of the TAG recommendations 14th April) and agrees with the consultants' analysis and conclusions

regarding the avoidance of “wall effects” by virtue of the variable setback of towers along the Customs St frontage and the deep re-entrant spaces between the towers (refer to p.21 of the agenda material). The cut away chamfers at the base of the tower – between tower and podium – also assist in reducing any wall effect at the human scale of the street.

In 1.4.2 of the consultants’ presentation the modelling of the relationship between the two towers from key pedestrian viewpoints in immediate proximity to the development site demonstrates that the compounding of the two tower forms is minimal. Of particular significance for both pedestrians and those approaching the city by bus or car is the view from Fanshawe St on approach to the city. From this approach the development offers a memorable gateway experience, with the separation between the two towers and the sculptural effects of the chamfers clearly evident.

From the seven viewpoints selected along Quay St (three approaching from the east and four from the west) it is apparent that compounding visual effects of the two towers is also minimal.

TAG agrees with Council that there will be positions within the surroundings from which the two towers will appear to overlap, but notes that the nature of the offset relationship between the towers will tend to preserve their identity as separate buildings. Differentiation of façade treatments between the two buildings would further assist in preserving the appearance of two distinct buildings.

1.4.3 Tower setbacks from street frontages:

TAG appreciates the carefully considered response to this matter and concurs with the views set out in this section of the consultant’s presentation. TAG agrees that the podium is a key element of the overall urban form and that the tower setbacks reinforce its identity.

1.5 Tower footprints and positions in relation to enabling views to the harbour from elsewhere in the city centre:

TAG agrees with the consultants’ position that in the context of provisions in Appendix 9 of the Unitary Plan (“Business – City Centre Zone sight lines”) the sightline under discussion (on the alignment with Federal St) is not identified. However, TAG’s previous recommendations in respect of this issue were not based on any statutory sightline requirements, but on matters of good urban design practice.

TAG acknowledges that reference to “provision of **such a** connection” in para 1 under section 1.5 of TAG’s previous recommendations was ambiguous and that reference should have been to “an open space corridor”, as per the requirements of H8.6.6 in relation to the “exception” condition for the harbour edge height control plane.

The need for a pedestrian connection on the Federal Street alignment, supported by an “open space corridor” within the development site, is further discussed in section 2.2 below.

PART B: PUBLIC REALM & BUILT FORM

The consultants indicated that they considered that they had assembled the right public realm ingredients but had yet to bring them together in a convincing way. TAG recognizes that this will be a significant design challenge and that the public success of the development will in large measure hinge on achieving this. TAG looks forward to substantive engagement with the consultants and their collaborators on these matters at the next review.

2 Street and Lanes

2.1 Street Interfaces

2.1.1 Lower Hobson Street

TAG considered that the combination of a variable setback of glazing lines at the ground floor and a continuous canopy along this frontage, with emphasis in the way proposed at the residential lobby, would result in a successful street edge condition, noting at the same time the expectation that the canopy and entry statement will continue to be refined.

TAG agrees that a setback of Tower 2 from the street edge of the podium is required in order to achieve an appropriate scale for this podium edge, and to ameliorate likely local wind effects generated by the tower (noting that wind testing has yet to be carried out).

2.1.2 Customs Street West

TAG notes that the relocation of the service core in Tower 1 has enabled the building entry lobby to open directly onto Customs St West, with benefits for activation of this frontage. TAG considers that activation achieved by these means is preferable to reliance on retail uses where conditions are not conducive to their success. However, TAG also notes in 2.4 below the opportunity to extend to the street frontage the retail spaces that are part of the oblique route from Customs St West leading to the Urban Room.

TAG supports the proposal for dividing the two stairs that connect ground and first floor levels into two halves, one half within the public realm and the other within the lobby space for the office tower. This configuration is considered to provide for maximum choice of routes in moving between the two floor levels, together with the visual generosity that results from staircases of significant width.

In regard to the public stairs from the Customs Street West frontage that access the first floor level north-south lane, TAG notes several options, each with advantages.

The consultants' presented proposals indicate stairs parallel to the street frontage (with matching staircase within the building envelope) and with an inclined floor slab soffit above as a clear marker of the staircase. Depending on the position of stairs linking Fanshawe Street with the future Shoreline Park, the staircase in this position within the development site could be conveniently relate to the pedestrian line of travel.

An alternative solution could be to locate the public stairs in a north-south direction (aligning with the direct route from Federal St to Quay St) and positioned immediately to the east of the on-site service lane. Providing for both these options would further highlight the legibility of the first floor laneway that connects Federal St to the harbour edge.

2.1.3 Removal of Flyover

TAG notes that future additional imagery will include images depicting the nature and quality of the streetscape with the flyover still in place, although assessments of the surrounding environment will include both its continued presence and its removal.

2.1.4 Modelling of the Interfaces

TAG considers that the 3d images provided on pages 4-11 of the TAG 02 Part B document indicate the generally high urban design quality of the street interfaces of the development. In response to a question from Council officers, TAG considers that the deep re-entrant spaces that signal the entry points to the development from the two street frontages are well proportioned and establish appropriately generous lines of sight towards the Urban Room, whilst also incorporating desirable tightening of the throats and subsequent opening up into the internal spaces. The architectural composition and proportions of the interface at the Customs St West and Lower Hobson St intersection were considered by TAG to establish an effective gateway condition both for vehicles approaching along Fanshawe St and for pedestrians at closer quarters.

2.2 Laneways / Public Circulation Routes

TAG appreciates the comprehensive material provided by the consultants on this aspect of the proposals, in response to the various points raised in the TAG recommendations from the meeting of 14th April. The below subheadings have been introduced in order to structure TAG responses and have not been taken from the consultant's presentation.

2.2.1 Enhancing legibility and activation generally

TAG considers that based on the 3D views provided for each of the six journeys through parts of the laneway network, the potential exists for legibility of these movement spaces, subject to detailed design development.

In regard to activation, TAG notes the extensive provision of retail frontage along these routes (refer to pages 2 and 3 of TAG 02 Part B) but considers that activation will be a function of the suitability of the retail and the footfall along these routes. TAG therefore recommends the preparation of a retail strategy and modelling of expected pedestrian numbers, in order to confirm the likely success of the laneways.

TAG also recommends closer consideration of the scale and ‘grain’ of the retail footprints, including the consideration of fronts and backs to the street and the internal circulation routes.

TAG notes that there appear to be several pinch points in the public circulation spaces within the building P3 footprint, at level 1.

TAG understands that the consultants will provide further information about their approach to activating the public spaces, including the Urban Room, at the next review session.

2.2.2 Laneway on the Federal Street Alignment

In its recommendations from the meeting of 14th April TAG noted that the developed design should incorporate a legible north-south connection generally aligned with Federal Street. TAG’s recommendations were as follows:

“Provision of a legible N-S route at first floor level (within the development) that achieves the intent for a laneway network that includes a city to harbour connection by way of Federal Street. As noted, this may include a combination of visual connections (glimpses of the harbour from St Patrick’s Square and a visibly aligned airspace between buildings as an implied N-S lane on the Federal St alignment) and physical connections (a lane at first floor level with legible connections where each end meets the street)”

In support of this expectation TAG noted that the City Centre Masterplan seeks a pedestrian-focused laneways circuit and identifies Federal Street as a key element. The CCMP diagrams depict Federal Street connecting to the waterfront. This CCMP aspiration is reflected in the AUP Downtown West Precinct standards:

“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.” (Pedestrian connections standard I205.6.2(3))

TAG’s previous recommendations advocated for such a route at first floor level, based principally on the urban design merits of this connection. TAG considers this important because currently the block is the missing link in the Federal Street leg of the laneways circuit.

TAG also considers that spatial wayfinding cues and the actual route do not need to be perfectly aligned. The circulation spaces within the development should be designed to lead people through the site in the northerly direction and to negotiate the zig zag forced by the HSBC car park in a way that conveys that the route continues. This might include introducing glazed openings in the north and south walls of the HSBC carpark floor, in order to provide lines of sight.

TAG considers that the proposed repurposing of Wolfe Street as shared space, the creation of 'Sturdee Street Park' (or 'Shoreline Park'), and the diagonal laneway through the Urban Room, will all help to multiply pedestrian amenity and permeability but these measures would not substitute for the urban design benefits of a legible north-south connection to the harbour, generally aligned with Federal Street.

2.2.3 Approaches/access to the development from Albert St and the corner of Albert St and Customs St West:

TAG considers that both approaches have been substantially improved by the proposed design interventions.

Access from Albert St:

In regard to access from Albert St, TAG supports the decision to align the stairs perpendicular to the Albert St curtilage (signalling the direction of the laneway alignment beyond) while angling the public escalators towards Wheriko Lane within the Commercial Bay development. The double height of the canopy leading into the laneway further strengthens the gesture of public invitation.

TAG notes that the consultants have identified the need to remove part of the existing bus shelter in order to implement this proposal, and that this will be subject to AT approval.

TAG questions the relocation of the upper level retail tenancy (Retail 145 sqm) to the street frontage adjacent to the escalator, noting the challenge of backs and fronts to this retail space (ie: the prospect of the retailer using the level 1 street frontage as a back) and the relatively tight, dark corridor-like pedestrian route created on the inboard side of the unit and linking to the Lower Albert airbridge that continues to Commercial Bay.

Access from the Albert St/Customs St West corner:

In regard to access from the Albert St/Customs St West corner, the elevated linear canopy offers strong directional clues re the podium level route that leads to the N-S laneway on the Federal St alignment, while terraced seating allows for public occupation of this edge.

Opportunities exist for the further presence of soft landscape along this edge, with coastal plants potentially linking to the "Shoreline Park" beyond.

2.3 The Urban Room:

TAG has previously indicated its support for the Urban Room as a distinctive kind of public space facility. In this regard it is understood to be much more than a glass-roofed part of the public circulation spaces within the development.

TAG supports the intention indicated by the consultants in regard to the development of this critically important space and looks forward to further information at the next review in regard to the design strategies to achieve the stated intentions as follows:

- “A public place to occupy and to dwell;
- Occupant comfort and usability throughout the year;
- A destinational opportunity;
- A space that speaks to ‘the dynamic tension between permanence and permeability’;
- A space that offers diversity and choice by creating inclusive and safe spaces for all ages, genders, social and cultural backgrounds;
- The ability to foster a strong sense of community;
- An entry-point to Tāmaki, a connection point to the Waitematā.
- A space that is of world-class quality and distinctive to Tāmaki Makaurau”

Common to each of the above qualities will be the need for strong gestures of welcome, and a mātauranga Māori interpretation of what this means in terms of spatial and experiential qualities. In this regard TAG also looks forward to information at the next review in regard to the ideas and intentions expressed in section 4.7 on Māori and Pacifica presence.

In the further development of the Urban Room, TAG considers that its three dimensional qualities and its spatial identity, as well as its climatic and ephemeral qualities, will need to be more comprehensively defined. Current depictions suggest that apart from its spatial generosity it has a similar character to the remainder of the public circulation spaces.

In seeking to imbue this space with an encompassing identity of its own it may be useful to establish a number of overarching qualities to guide design development. The space will also need textural richness and visual warmth in order to distinguish it from the more corporate or commercial character of other parts of the development. At a previous review TAG members suggest that inspiration might be drawn from the close proximity of the Waitematā.

In considering how the edges of the Urban Room might help to activate this space, TAG suggested that the linear retail space (137 sqm) within the footprint of building P3 might be purposed for public or community use, contributing to the habitation of the Urban Room by residents and the wider community as a social space within the city.

TAG notes that the Spatial Strategy and Public Life Opportunities diagram on page 34 of the agenda material needs to be reconciled with the physical configuration of the space, including the position of stairs and entry points to the adjacent spaces.

TAG considers that an analysis of solar access to this space is needed, in order to understand this aspect of the character of the space.

2.4 Tower Access and Egress Arrangements

TAG noted the revised position of the core to Tower 1 but was unclear about the circulation options from Customs St West in order to gain access to lift lobbies. The consultants advised that they are in the process of reconfiguring lift access and ground floor connections to enhance street level activation and that they will provide more detailed plans at the next review. This should include identifying fire egress routes.

In further developing this part of the project, TAG notes the option of extending the ground level retail space (223 sqm) through to the street frontage, while still retaining an adequate size for the Customs St West lobby. An escalator/stairs on this western side of the service core could still be included, in order to connect this lobby with the main lobby of the first floor (noting that a similar connection is provided at the eastern end of the lobby).

TAG questions the provision of a public circulation route along the western edge of the first-floor lobby to Tower 1, noting that this may be infrequently used both as a way to reach the upper level of the T1 lobby and as a way of accessing the remainder of the Level 1 public movement network. As an alternative, consideration of public activation opportunities for this edge is suggested.

The issue of activation of the Customs St West frontage is also addressed in 2.1.2 above.

Other matters

3.1 Façade treatments including the degree of difference between the buildings

TAG notes that design intentions regarding the facades of each of the four buildings (T1, T2, P3, podium) will have a major effect on the experiential qualities of the development at a number of different scales.

TAG is encouraged by the statement on page 37 of the consultants' presentation (TAG 02 Part B) that the two towers need to be sufficiently differentiated (in order to clearly express the nature of their uses), and that this needs to be legible from a distance. Based on the material presented, TAG considers that this is yet to be achieved.

In conveying this quality of the towers, TAG considers that reliance on sophisticated renders alone will not suffice, and that for a project of this significance the façade elements, their materiality and the compositional effects resulting from their assembly should be presented.

TAG notes that this kind of information has been called for in other, less significant, projects as part of UDP review.

In attempting to understand the presented proposals for tower facades, TAG notes significant differences in façade appearance of the two towers when the 3D images are compared. For example, images on page 23 of TAG 02 PART A suggest that the only difference between the two towers is the size of the modules that comprise both facades. Differentiation between the two towers as represented on page 37 of TAG 02 PART B would appear to be largely dependent on the angle of light falling on the façade, with these differences possibly less evident under other light conditions.

In further considering the residential tower, conveying a sense of inhabitation over the full height of the residential tower will be very important. This will require more than a simple recognition of the cellular nature of residential accommodation in comparison to generic office space. In particular, the façade needs to make possible the expression of variation in patterns of occupation. Precedent studies of potentially relevant examples of apartment buildings, and an analysis of the façade strategies employed, may be needed if the design team is to avoid being constrained by the façade approach adopted to date.

The position of the residential tower at the interface between the core of city and the harbour precincts also points to other considerations that might be recognized in the architectural expression of the building.

In advocating for a greater differentiation between the towers, TAG is not seeking to promote “divergent design approaches to each building” (p37, TAG 02 PART B). Nor does TAG consider that design obligations to the underlying cultural narratives work against such greater differentiation. Acceptance of the possibility of different approaches to the façade of Tower 2 in particular could lead to designs that more convincingly express the cultural references and intentions that underpin the larger project.

TAG requests that detailed plans of a typical apartment floor, supported by indicative façade details, are provided at the next review in support of a further discussion of façade strategies.

3.2: Shading of St Patricks Square

TAG seeks clarification at the next design review in regard to the shading impacts of the proposed development on St Patricks Square, and has indicated that a more detailed analysis of impacts is needed.

3.3 Retail provisions

TAG considers more work is required in respect of the scale and ‘grain’ of the retail footprints including the consideration of fronts and backs to the street and the internal circulation routes. The indicated retail provisions should be reviewed in an economic retail study.

TAG 3

B&A

Urban & Environmental

**Downtown Carpark Development: Responses to TAG recommendations from 28.7.23 meeting
2 Lower Hobson Street, Auckland Central – PRR00040114**

To: John Lan, Senior Planner
Karen Long, Team Leader – City Centre
Resource Consents Department

From: Stephen Quin, Principal Landscape Architect
Mustafa Demrilap, Principal Urban Designer
Tāmaki Makaurau Design Ope

Date: 15.08.2023

Tēna kōrua John and Karen,

This memo provides responses from the landscape and urban design specialists from Tāmaki Makaurau Design Ope (TMDO) involved in the review of the Downtown Carpark Development to the recommendations put forward by the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) following the TAG meeting held on 28 July 2023. These responses are provided in the context of the relevant provisions of the Auckland Unitary Plan – Operative in Part (AUP(OP)). They are intended to provide clarity to the applicant to where we agree and disagree with TAG recommendations.

Landscape responses – Stephen Quin

- Part 1(e) – *agree* with the recommendation that “*the consultants adopt a design esquisse [preliminary sketch] approach to the generation of alternative treatments of the building crowns, and a comparative evaluation of these*”. Further to the TAG comments, it is considered that this approach could help to resolve a better transition to the harbour’s edge / waterfront as sought by relevant objectives, policies and standards of the AUP(OP) ¹.
- Part 2.1 – *disagree* with the comment that in the previous proposals (presented to TAG 14 April 2023) the “*chamfers were appropriately scaled and oriented to successfully gesture to the three harbours -Waitematā, Manukau and Kaipara*”. The cultural and natural landscape relationships that the towers might have to Manukau or Kaipara is difficult to understand, given the distances involved and the lack of any visual connections the towers will have to these Harbours. Conversely, due to the proximity, the towers will have a very close relationship to Waitematā and it is therefore considered that this relationship and narrative be respected to a greater extent than is in the current proposal. This could be realised by providing a stronger transition to the harbour’s edge / waterfront as sought by relevant objectives, policies and standards of the AUP(OP).

¹ Specifically policy H8.3.(30)(a) and purpose of standards H8.6.2 and H8.6.5/6

- 2.1.1 – *disagree* that “*the two buildings must relate or “speak” to each other*”. In time the public will see the towers as two different tower forms within the context of other different buildings in proximity. *Agree* that “*they also need to “speak” strongly to their locations on the waterfront*” but *disagree* that the earlier proposals achieved this.
- 2.1.1 – *disagree* that the towers must “*contribute to a singular, coherent and meaningful identity for the project*” and the concern that the differentiation of façades has gone too far. The façade articulation has helped the buildings appear as two different buildings with two different activities, which helps break down the bulk of the development and reduce its overall visual dominance contributed to by the tower heights. This is an important consideration in the context of AUP(OP) provisions.
- 2.1.2 – As noted above, *disagree* that the “*key to the success will be the considered use of chamfers...to enable the towers to be perceived as a related pair, and to gesture towards the three harbours*”. The towers are surrounded by the context of many tower forms and will not appear in isolation of this context. In this context, it is not important that they appear as a ‘pair’ as much as any other tower forms in proximity require a separate tower to appear similar to provide visual interest or express a cultural identity. In addition, the gestures towards Manukau and Kaipara harbours seem tenuous, and will not be legible to the public, nor understood why these gestures are being made by these buildings in this specific location. In contrast, the most identifiable and prominent design move is the chamfer on the southern side of T1 (facing away from Waitematā) and is understood to have been made to reduce shading on St Patrick’s Square (that would otherwise trigger a non-complying consent activity). It is considered Waitematā should be given the greatest reference (refer “*respecting*” as per objective H8.2(8)) by the design and could be achieved through a transition of height to the harbour’s edge as sought by Policy H8.3.(3)(a) of the AUP(OP) and the stronger use of chamfered forms facing the harbour.
- 2.1.2 – *disagree* with the comment that “*as a related pair the towers also have the potential to serve as exceptional “bookends” to the western end of the city centre when viewed from the harbour*”. There are no provisions in the AUP(OP) that support the “bookend” effect. Furthermore, the site does not demarcate the western end of the city centre as the city centre also includes Viaduct and Wynard Quarters as well as the Victoria precinct to the west. The AUP(OP) has specific provisions that seek to create “transitions” to the Harbour edge and also to the western suburbs. In regard to these provisions, the “bookend” effect also creates a “cliff face” effect that is contrary to the AUP(OP) objective to create transitions of built form to the harbour edge and western suburbs.
- 2.1.2 – *agree* that the T2 chamfer should not be reduced as this helps to create a slender form and also helps to achieve an important sculptural form that gives reference to Waitematā and acknowledges the transition to the harbour. However, this chamfer does not mitigate the adverse effects that T1 has on the transition of built form to the harbour’s edge, and the overall unresponsiveness that this tower has towards its waterfront setting in views towards it.
- 2.1.3 – *agree* with the minority view that the towers, particularly T1, are too high as they significantly exceed the HEHCP. *Agree* that this extent of height infringement will interrupt the height transition between the city centre and the harbour that is evident in View 11 – which shows T1 creating a “cliff edge” to the harbour. *Agree* that the height of T1 impacts the responsiveness that the PWC building has towards the transition of built form to the harbour’s edge.

- 2.1.4 – *agree* that there are a number of factors, including height to width ratio, that contribute towards slenderness but *disagree* that this justifies the HEHCP exceedances when these exceedances contribute to other adverse effects, such as the reduced transition to the harbour’s edge and unresponsiveness to the waterfront setting. Other options are available to promote slenderness, such as reducing width and through the design of sculptural forms, such as chamfering edges, and different façade treatments.
- 2.1.5 – *disagree* that the increased 3m separation will reduce the slenderness of the towers and prevent the view to the harbour along Federal Street. The increased separation helps to differentiate the towers rather than the two towers appearing as one building. This promotes a greater sense of permeability and slenderness as it gives greater breathing room between the buildings. The view from Federal Street is a small glimpse from a small part of the street and is not protected in the AUP(OP) as views from Albert and Nelson streets are. The view from Federal Street is compromised by the inability to create a direct access from Federal Street to the waterfront through the site. It is also considered that this view, currently obstructed by a mature tree protected by the AUP(OP), could potentially be built out by future development of the M Social Hotel. In this context, it is not considered that this view is an “*all-important sightline*” as per TAG’s comments, and that adverse effects of the tower’s shifted position in this view will be significant.

Urban Design responses – Mustafa Demiralp

- Part 1(a) – *agree* with the observation that the entire ground floor of the podium for T2 is allocated as lobby space, and that although they include F&B facilities the public may have a reluctance to use them due to the corporate nature of the lobbies. However, of greater concern is that the F&B facilities present few openings or doors and create minimal engagement and activation to the streets.
- Part 1(c) – *agree* that shading of the Urban Room should be checked.
- Part 1(d) - *partially agree* that viewpoints in the immediate public realm indicate a clear visual setback between podium and tower. However from Hobson Street the building will be perceived as one tower form with minimal differentiation between the tower and podium which is a key consideration against the Unitary Plan.
- 2.1.1 - *agree* that the towers should strongly relate to the waterfront context and identity. However *partially agree* that a certain level of subtle connection could be considered as a design narrative between the two towers. The variations created between the two towers and the podium levels below are now progressing in a positive direction to ensure a façade strategy that creates unique areas of differentiation and reduce the perceived bulk and overall dominance of the development. This design approach should continue.
- 2.1.2 - *agree* that the amendments made in the chamfer compositions of both towers do not present improvements to the slenderness of the towers. However, they also do not assist with the transition to the harbour as required by the Unitary Plan where they could be used to create a sense of descent. The T2 chamfer was previously partially following the HEHCP line, which was assisting with the harbour transition.

- 2.1.4 – *agree* that the chamfers could potentially reduce the perception of bulkiness. In the previous revisions the proposed chamfers, especially for T2, were notably helping and balancing the bulk of the building. With this element reduced the perceived slenderness of T2 has also now been reduced.
- *Partially agree* that the tower’s over-height components assist with achieving the slender building form. This is correct to some extent with the proportional change in the building form. The buildings generally appear to have a slender form from northern and southern views. At the same time, tower slenderness should not be dependent on significantly going over height. A tower that is complying with the height controls could still achieve a slender tower form.
- 2.2 - *Agree* that the urban room is currently unsuccessful, which is due in large part to it being a large accessway to lobbies, combined with a wall to the carpark. However, *disagree* with the primacy and focus of the Urban Room, as it is drawing people inside the development and away from the streets. Streets and public spaces have primacy and are required to be engaged and activated in the Unitary Plan. Customs Street West and in the future Lower Hobson Street are primary pedestrian routes that need to be highly activated by the development at the street edge. The extent of the lobbies, lack of doors and openings, high glazing, pulling away from the corner, very wide entrances into the Urban Room, and lobby F&B (which will close after 3pm) are collectively preventing the engagement and activation of the streets. If laneways to internal lobbies were provided rather than an Urban Room, and the retail on the first floor was brought down to the ground floor street edge, the development could have a stronger focus and edge to the streets. The future public space on Customs Street West will provide an attractive setting for street-based retail and food and beverage.

Please contact us should you wish to discuss the content of this feedback.

Nāku noa, nā,

Stephen Quin (NZILA Registered)
Principal Landscape Architect
Tāmaki Makaurau Design Ope

Mustafa Demiralp
Principal Urban Design
Tāmaki Makaurau Design Ope

Reviewed by:
Nicole Miller
Team Leader – Urban Design Strategy and Projects
Tāmaki Makaurau Design Ope

Peter Kensington
Landscape Architect
Consultant – KPLC

TAG (Technical Advisory Group)

Recommendations

DATE OF MEETING	Friday 28 th July 2023
PROJECT	TAG Review Downtown Carpark Development
Session time	9.30am to 1.15pm
TAG panel	John Hunt, Carin Wilson, Rachel de Lambert, Gordon Moller, Gavin Lister Andrew Lamb and Richard Blakey (Auckland Urban Design Panel Members)
External Attendees	Blair Johnston, Warren and Mahoney Graeme McIndoe, McIndoe Urban John Hudson, Hudson and Associates Karl Johnstone, Haumi Karl Cook, Barker and Associates Tim Woods, Precinct Properties Bianca Hurrell, RCP
Eke Panuku Project Team	Duncan Ecob, Head of Design Tom Belgrave, Development Manager
Council Attendees	Mustafa Demiralp, Principal Urban Design (Online) Stephen Quin, Principal Landscape Architect John Lan, Senior Planner (Online) Nicole Miller, Projects & Strategy Team Leader Erin Quin, Design Panels Lead Karen Long, Planning Team Lead – City Centre (Online) Nidhi Nautiyal, Principal Specialist - Universal Design (Online)
Eke Panuku – Other Attendees	Gyles Bendall, General Manager Design and Place (Online) Maria Walker, Team Leader Urban Design and Masterplanning Gemma Sandford, Team Leader Public Realm Vrinda Moghe, Head of Planning (Online) Daniel Chapman, City Centre Design Lead (Online) Lorraine Thomas, Executive Assistant

INTRODUCTION:

The Panel thanks the applicant for the comprehensive and clearly organized response to the recommendations from the meeting of 19th May 2023, and acknowledged the significant further design work undertaken since this previous Panel. The Panel reaffirms its support for the conceptual basis of the design proposals.

The Panel was provided with the outcomes of assessment of the design proposals by Council officers. This assessment was in terms of the provisions of the Unitary Plan. No specific questions or items for Panel feedback were requested by Council officers.

Eke Panuku requested feedback on a number of matters, as set out in the Briefing Note. These questions and the Panel's responses are provided below. The second part of these recommendations addresses other matters discussed during the meeting.

PART 1: FEEDBACK REQUESTED

The following are Panel responses to the Eke Panuku feedback items. Recommendations pertaining other matters are addressed in a following section of these recommendations.

a) Hotel inclusion:

Does TAG agree with Precinct's list of benefits in adding a hotel use to the proposal. Are these balanced with potential undesired outcomes, such as lack of balconies with a result of limited oversight and perception of occupation when viewed from the street? (Page A5).

The Panel understands the merits of including a hotel in the accommodation mix and appreciates the desirability of the location for a hotel use. However, the introduction of this kind of use also presents several challenges.

Separate or combined lobbies?

Panel members offered different views in regard to the provision of separate lobbies for the apartment residents and the hotel. One viewpoint noted that the ground floor level of the podium to Tower 2 was now devoted entirely to lobby space (including lobby F&B), with no direct activation of the public realm. While the public may well use such F&B offerings Panel members have previously observed that from a public perspective there can be a resistance to doing so.

This viewpoint sees advantage in a combined lobby space, noting that the different routines of apartment residents and hotel guests would ensure that the lobby would be activated for extended periods. Secure access to apartment lifts could be in close proximity to the lifts rather than at the street edge. Further activation would be achieved by introducing a café and /or bar into the lobby space, available for public use and supported with public toilets.

Other Panel members supported the proposal as indicated in the agenda material, with separate lobbies and the above noted activation introduced into the hotel lobby, and with the apartment lobby as a much smaller space, with secure access from the Hobson St frontage.

Basement access to hotel lobby:

The Panel supports the proposed basement lobby and vehicle access to the hotel via the southern lane, including the separation of service and vehicle entries. This access strategy avoids the need for any on-street port-cochere / pick up / drop off facility with associated negative impacts on the street environment.

Location of hotel use within the tower.

Regarding the proposal to locate the hotel at the lower levels of T2 and the apartments at the upper floor levels, some Panel members noted with concern that the reduced

opportunity for expression of occupation offered by a hotel use would be evident from the adjacent streets and public realm. Conversely, the increased wind exposure of the upper levels inhibits the development of façade elements such as open balconies that clearly express the life within the apartments. From this stance it would appear that opportunities for the expression of occupation would be significantly increased by having the hotel at the upper floor levels and the apartments at the lower levels. However, the Panel is also aware that the economic preference is to have the hotel occupying the lower levels.

Whichever option is adopted, the meaningful expression of occupation is an important aspect of façade differentiation between T1 and T2, and this is further discussed below.

Harbour views for apartments:

The Panel observes that views of the Viaduct Harbour would be possible from the lowest level of occupation (Level 8), suggesting that apartments at the lower levels would be able to enjoy harbour views to the west. The availability of views would therefore not be a factor influencing the location of hotel versus apartment floor levels.

b) Tower T2 balcony and façade strategy

T2 - Balcony and façade strategy – The use of Juliet balconies and operable windows instead of ‘wintergardens’? (Page A5 and A26) Potentially, these may be infrequently opened and reduces the possibility of fresh air in apartments. Would wintergardens provide more opportunity to have screens opened in adverse climatic and provide increased facades variety and a more distinctive perception of residential occupation?

Current proposals

On the basis of the floor plans provided on page A13 of the consultants’ presentation the Panel notes north-western balcony/terrace spaces are proposed for levels 36-46 (by virtue of the chamfer) while north-eastern facing apartments (levels 31-40) have wintergardens. Between levels 21-40 Juliet balconies are proposed. The Panel appreciates that Juliet balconies are a response to the relatively limited size of apartments but considers that these offer a minimal opportunities for expression of occupation.

A preferred strategy:

The Panel generally agrees with the Eke Panuku observation that wintergardens provide more effective environmental control and a stronger indication of occupation, than do Juliet balconies.

The Panel notes and strongly supports the inclusion of recessed balcony/terrace spaces over the lower levels of T2, as indicated in the proposals presented for the Panel meeting of 14th April, and considers that every attempt should be made to achieve a similar expression of occupation in the final design outcome. The inclusion of edge planting to these balconies was considered to assist in achieving a high quality façade outcome.

A preferred strategy would be one that also enables the subtle variation in façade treatment over the height of T2, in order to express the fact the building includes two different accommodation types. Such façade variations would need to be an integral part of the overall aesthetic intent for the tower, taking account of its relationship with tower T1.

The Panel observes that the articulation of the tower facades by way of these kinds of elements is not the only way to achieve expression of occupation and the articulation of façade depth, and that other kinds of façade elements can also assist in achieving these outcomes.

c) Shading effects resulting from the proposed additional level to P2:

The additional level to P2 providing a degree of increased shading to the public realm and potential park immediately to the south?

The Panel notes that this would need to be checked as part of a shading study. Panel members suggested that while not critical, the urban design merit of a uniform podium as a datum from which both towers extend is acknowledged (refer to renders on pages 12 and 13 of part B of the presentation and the more distant views included in Part B).

d) Tower T1 setback of 4.5m rather than 6m

Will this be more obvious at other locations than the image on A21?

The Panel notes that from more distant viewpoints the setback will be less evident than for views from the immediate urban context. Renders from viewpoints in the immediate public realm indicate a clear visual setback between podium and tower. The effectiveness of this setback dimension in reducing wind effects at street level is yet to be confirmed.

The Panel considers that the setback dimension of 4.5m is an acceptable outcome, given that the space available for a setback is the combined result of the east-west dimensions of the two towers, the required separation distance between the towers and the need to maximize the open space corridor on the Federal St axis. Other factors that alleviate any disadvantages of the reduced setback are the extension of the podium footprint beyond the tower footprint, the different footprint shapes of the podium and tower, the highly visible reverse chamfer at the lower floor levels of the south western corner of the tower, and the 30m width of Lower Hobson Street.

e) Details of the crown of the buildings and how they could/should be treated

Noting that the issue of height exceedances could become an impediment to the Panel's support of overall tower height, the Panel will need to be confident that the buildings will make an exceptional contribution to the city skyline.

The Panel considers that as presented, the upper terminations of both towers are unsuccessful. Specific concerns are the emphasis they give to the skin of the building rather than to the sculptural qualities intended for the buildings as a whole, and the way in which this skin wraps the edges of the chamfers, de-emphasizing any chiselled effects. In this regard the Panel considers that the roof terminations should support the conceptual intent of a dynamic composition of two buildings, both chiseled forms that look to the three harbours, and that such a composition expresses the cultural and natural setting of Tāmaki Makaurau.

f) The coherence of the strategy, vision and concept for the public realm

The Panel has previously provided recommendations in relation to the public realm (refer to Part B: Public Realm and Built Form in the recommendations from the meeting of 19th May).

The concept for the public realm is understood to be that of a network of laneway spaces that provide a high level of permeability and cope with some complex and difficult conditions, both within the block and at its perimeter. This network of routes is “gathered up” in the focal point provided by the multi-level space referred to as the Urban Room. The Panel supports this approach but notes that the design concept for the Urban Room needs to be re-evaluated in order to support further design work on this critical element. This matter is addressed in a following section of the recommendations.

g) Spaces with public character versus ‘private’ spaces that permit public access

The Panel considers that public circulation routes within the development have an appropriately public character, with strong spatial gestures of invitation at the points of entry from surrounding streets.

Further consideration of the spatial character of the Urban Room is required and this is discussed in Part B below.

h) The balance between circulation and dwell spaces

The balance between circulation and dwell spaces, and how street furniture, planting beds and other ‘features’ define and express these general uses

The Panel notes the provision of a number of dwell elements (indicated on page B31 and B32), primarily in the form of seating associated with movement spaces. Only one of these seating areas has any degree of spatial definition (being the space at the top of the Urban Room stairs and adjacent to the tidal water feature). The Panel anticipates that as part of design development of the Urban Room one or more dwell spaces that are other than incidental to circulation spaces, and which therefore possess a greater degree of spatial definition, would emerge.

i) The vertical glass screen on the eastern edge of Te Uranga Hau (the Urban Room)

The inclusion of the vertical weather shield / wall of glass on the eastern edge of Te Uranga Hau, illustrated on page B20 and 21 –2.2.1. Will this adversely affect the open-air nature of Te Uranga Hau?

The Panel supports the introduction of this vertical glass screen with the intent of reducing wind effects in Te Uranga Hau. The Panel notes that successful public circulation routes frequently have a degree of spatial containment at their ends and that in this case the glazed nature of the screen will retain views of the spatial corridor along the east-west route between the AMP and AON buildings.

Since the glass screen will add to the spatial enclosure of Te Uranga Hau, it will become even more important to introduce a strongly public character by way of other aspects of its design. Traditional urban arcades typically succeed in this regard by the treatment of

internal elements and surfaces as though they were in an external location such as a street frontage.

j) The proposed public realm in-lieu of the laneways and the laneway circuit identified in the City Centre Masterplan

Does the significant area of public realm, incorporating Te Uranga Hau and the lanes between the buildings, both on the Downtown Carpark site and the adjacent properties, provide a suitable contextual response in-lieu of a very specific ‘laneway’ circuit, identified in the City Centre masterplan, the Essential Outcomes and Design Guidance and the Unitary Plan Precinct Provisions? Noting the potential for closing this ‘after hours’ in some areas.

The Panel notes that based on previous presentations by the consultants it is not feasible to provide circulation routes strictly in the configuration indicated in these other documents. The Panel considers the proposed routes follow as close as possible the laneway positions indicated in these other documents. The need to negotiate level changes would be an impediment to the use of traditional laneway solutions.

The Panel reiterates its previously indicated support for the way in which public circulation routes within the proposals have been developed, and the degree of permeability that the network of circulation spaces offers.

E-W connection:

This route is considered to be as successful as it might be, given the constraints. The Panel has previously commended the resolution of the connection to Albert St.

The introduction of seating niches along the wall to the carpark floor (described as an eroded wall feature) assists in alleviating the blank wall condition.

N-S connection:

The sightlines from the top of the stairs from Quay St have been improved by a combination of the shape and glazing of the retail spaces at the upper ground level, in particular the fully glazed F&B space at the western of the carpark floor.

The southern part of the N-S connection is well activated with retail uses on both sides of the laneway.

The Panel accepts the basis for retaining the east-west alignment of the stairs from Customs St West to the upper level N-S circulation route.

N-S laneway on Federal Street alignment:

The Panel notes that this issue has been explicitly addressed on page B22 of the consultants’ presentation, and that the possibility remains for a pedestrian crossing at the end of Federal St and a lift and stair to Customs St in a position opposite the end of the proposed E-W aligned stairs leading to the upper level N-S circulation route.

A minority view considers that while the proposed mix of ground-floor and first-floor circulation successfully negotiates the constraints within the block, especially in an east-west direction, this internal permeability along with the provision of Te Uranga Hau open space cannot be considered in lieu of – or as an adequate trade-off for – the north-south leg of the laneways circuit along Federal Street, in terms of both physical circulation and legible open space corridor. (The issue of a legible open space corridor is also addressed in ‘Tower separation’ below).

PART 2: OTHER MATTERS

The Panel has previously identified the significant merits of the proposals. The following recommendations are intended to provide guidance in reviewing and further developing significant aspects of the proposals in order that the aspirations for the project might be realized.

1. Towers

The Panel considers that the visual character of both towers had been progressively reduced during the design development that has taken place since the proposals presented at the meeting of 14th April. Renders included in the presentation of this date indicated a pair of related but subtly different towers with façades that incorporated scale-giving secondary orders (vertical on T1 and predominantly vertical but more varied on T2). Chamfers were appropriately scaled and oriented to successfully gesture to the three harbours -Waitematā, Manukau and Kaipara - and spoke to the notion of chiselled forms and illumination by light. The 3D imagery included in the latest presentation illustrates the extent to which this early promise has been lost. The outcome is that the towers are now appearing as more conventional and ordinary, and as a result more divorced from the distinctive ambitions that set this project apart from comparable tower and podium projects elsewhere.

The following subsections address various aspects of the current proposals for the towers.

1.1 Tower relationships:

In the first instance the two buildings must relate or “speak” to each other, and contribute to a singular, coherent and meaningful identity for the project. They also need to “speak” strongly to their location on the waterfront and to the identity of Tāmaki Makaurau. Initial design proposals for the two towers held promise in this regard.

In previously advocating for differentiation in the expression of the towers the Panel did not intend to promote differentiation for its own sake. The Panel considers that differentiation based on recognition of differing uses will need to be set within a larger framework of urban design intentions for the whole development within its city and harbour context and within the framework of cultural aspirations for the project. These expressions of difference within a singular overarching framework will enable the development to read successfully at a

variety of scales, and to justify additional prominence resulting from the tower height above that anticipated in the AUP.

Other aspects of the issue of tower relationships are addressed in the following subsections.

1.2 Tower form and architectural expression:

The key to the success of the tower forms will be the considered use of chamfers to speak to the intended cultural references, to contribute to the visual qualities of the tower forms as buildings conceived of in the round, to enable the towers to be perceived as a related pair, and to gesture towards the three harbours.

As a related pair the towers also have the potential to serve as exceptional “bookends” to the western end of the city centre when viewed from the harbour. Panel members also noted the potential for the towers to evoke associations with *pou*.

The Panel considers that adjustments made to the size and orientation of the chamfers have substantially diminished the power of this design feature, and in the process have made the towers look less slender. The Panel therefore does not support the reduction in the north-west (harbour) facing chamfer to T2 and the realigned chamfers to Tower 1. All chamfers need to approximate as closely as possible to 45 degrees to the orthogonal plan geometry in order to have the intended visual effects.

1.3 Tower heights:

A majority of panel members have indicated that they do not consider the tower heights *per se* to be inappropriate to this corner of the city centre, or contribute to negative urban design outcomes. This position is subject to the resolution of design proposals that would enable elegant and expressive tower forms that support the realization of larger contextual and cultural aspirations for the project.

Panel members consider that while acceptable in principle, the design proposals have yet to achieve a level of quality that would justify the heights proposed.

A minority view considered that the towers were too high on the grounds that they significantly exceeded the Exception Provision to the Harbour Edge Height Control, and that they thereby impacted on its City-wide purpose. One such impact is the interruption of the height transition between the city centre and the harbour, evident for example in view 11 of the consultants’ presentation to the meeting of 19 May. In terms of effects on the skyline, view 11 also appears to indicate that the height of T1 visually undermines the responsive tower termination of the PWC tower in the adjacent Commercial Bay development.

The issue of tower heights in relation to the HEHCP is more fully addressed in the recommendations from the meeting of 19th May.

1.4 Tower slenderness:

The Panel has been made aware by the applicant of the economic imperatives that govern tower floor plate sizes and layouts. Whilst acknowledging the revised maximum diagonal

increase to 55.5m the Panel notes that the chamfers potentially create variation in the building form seen in the round, such that the potential bulkiness of the building will be less apparent. The Panel also considers that in addition to these aspects of building form the quality of slenderness will ultimately also depend on overall tower height (i.e. tower proportions) and on façade design. The Panel notes that the “over-height” aspect of the tower proposals assists in achieving the condition of slenderness.

Regarding façade design, the Panel considers that a predominantly vertical expression, with the potential to introduce secondary vertical articulations within the primary form (as evidenced in the renders in the presentation of 14th April) is preferable to a façade expression that gives primacy to the horizontal. In this regard the revised façade design for T2, presented at the meeting, was not supported.

1.5 Tower separation:

The Panel does not support the proposal to increase the separation distance between the two towers by a 3 metres, noting that this would further close down the all-important sight line (“open space corridor” in the language of the AUP) from St Patricks Square along Federal Street towards the harbour. The shaft of open space and its harbour and sky connections reinforce the laneway circuit along Federal Street and the connection between city and harbour. The Panel considers that from a larger urban design consideration it will be essential that this existing glimpse is retained. Closing off this open space corridor would have greater impact on connections between the city and harbour than any benefits from increased space between T1 and T2.

It is also suggested that the previous narrower gap between the two towers contributed to the slenderness of the overall composition and to the impression of the two towers as part of a single composition. (This can be clearly seen in comparing the two sets of 3D views.) This earlier impression of a single composition would also add to the power of any cultural references intended for the tower forms.

2. Te Uranga Hau (The Urban Room)

The Panel remains of the view that the Urban Room has the potential to become a new kind of public space within the city. Based on the experience and expertise held by panel member Carin Wilson, the Panel understands that the framework of experiential objectives and design principles that have been adopted for the further development of Te Uranga Hau (The Urban Room) holds the promise of an exceptional outcome.

The Panel notes and supports the introduction of elements, materials and textures that seek to differentiate the Urban Room from the remainder of the public realm within the development, and to reference the cliff edges and foreshore origins of the site. While this recent design work holds promise, the Panel considers that proposals for the Urban Room have yet to achieve the distinctive and aspirational qualities intended for this space. As presented this space remains somewhat corporate in character and its activation is focused primarily around F&B activities. Comparisons with developments such as 80 Collins Street Melbourne were suggested.

A key challenge will be to create a public space with a democratic social quality, a place that anyone might feel able to occupy and use as public realm. The Panel appreciates that this is a significant design challenge and suggests that identifying exemplar urban spaces and analysing their attributes could offer a starting point.

Re-thinking some of the underlying attributes of this space may call for adjustments to the building geometries that currently define this space, and which have been determined to date primarily by considerations of circulation.

While there is no single “right” approach to generating a design concept for the Urban Room, the following reflections (offered by panel member Carin Wilson) offer one starting point.

In view of its strategic harbour-edge location and intended mixed use functionality the Urban Room should project a strong and specific sense of place, reflecting the unique cultural identity of Aotearoa New Zealand. References may point toward a crossover between an urban marketplace and the Marae as an acknowledged forum for gathering and exchange in our South Pacific regional context. Discovery has also been a compelling part of this assemblage of influences on our development path.

The gathering of benchmarks or referencing of world-wide projects will not achieve this objective. In a more complete exploration of our regional narrative the 3-harbour references in the tower forms would be maintained in a consistent experience at the public plane, ensuring the coherent development of an integrated design language across the entire site.

The following are reflections from other Panel members:

The Panel supports exploration of the ways in which qualities of the natural environment - taiao - can influence the quality and experience of this publicly available space, but considers further refinement is needed to achieve an appropriate balance between the qualities of a truly public outdoor and semi-indoor space. Whilst appreciating the opportunity that ephemeral or tidally responsive water could contribute to the connection to place, the appropriateness of the proposed water play elements is questioned. The direction in respect of indigenous species vegetation / green wall elements ‘letting nature in’ is supported and encouraged.

The Panel considers the extent of F&B edges to the Urban Room (where not activated by lobby spaces) detracts from the potential for the quality of the democratic social space and encourages the applicant to define spaces that will enrich the public offer in support of the public occupation and use of the room. The carving out of the carpark wall to create spaces for occupation indicates a successful direction for that challenging laneway.

As a concluding comment the Panel notes that renders included with the agenda material indicate substantial solar access to the space. It will be important to demonstrate this with accurate sun studies, in preparation for future discussions with the Panel on the design development of the Urban Room.

TAG 4

B&A

Urban & Environmental

TAG (Technical Advisory Group)

Recommendations

DATE OF MEETING	Friday 10 th May 2024
PROJECT	TAG Review (04) Downtown Carpark Development Reference Design
Session time	9.30am to 1.00pm
TAG panel	John Hunt (Chair), Carin Wilson, Rachel de Lambert, Gordon Moller, Gavin Lister, Andrew Lamb, Richard Blakey
External Attendees	Blair Johnston, Warren and Mahoney Michael Hawes, Warren and Mahoney Graeme McIndoe, McIndoe Urban Bianca Hurrell, RCP Tim Woods, Precinct Properties Max Parekura, Precinct Properties Karl Cook, Barkers Pamela Stantos, Barkers (online) John Hudson, Hudson Associates (online)
Eke Panuku Project Team	Duncan Ecob, Head of Design Tom Belgrave, Development Manager
Council Attendees	John Lan, Senior Planner (Online) Karen Long, Planning Team Lead – City Centre (Online)
Eke Panuku – Other Attendees	Gyles Bendall, General Manager Design and Place Maria Walker, Team Leader Urban Design and Masterplanning Gemma Sandford, Team Leader Public Realm Zac Thorp, Landscape Architect (Online) Lorraine Thomas, Executive Assistant (online)

INTRODUCTION:

TAG has previously carried out formal reviews of this project on 14 April 2023 (TAG 01), 19 May 2023 (TAG 02), and 28 July 2023 (TAG 03), and has prepared recommendations arising from these reviews to assist the consultant team in revising and further developing the proposals. In addition, TAG participated in informal design workshops with the consultant team on 26 January and 15 March 2024.

Representatives of Council’s TMDO attended the first three review meetings (14 April, 19 May, 28 July 2023) and identified issues that they wished TAG to address during the first two meetings. TAG responses to each of these issues were incorporated in the

recommendations resulting from these reviews. At the third meeting Council officers provided the outcomes of their assessment of the consultants' proposals in terms of the provisions of the Unitary Plan. No specific questions or items for discussion were identified by Council officers at this meeting.

TAG acknowledges the involvement of Council's reporting planners as observers of each of the review sessions and has noted their suggestion that TAG's views on the relationship between the proposal and the Objectives and Policies of the Unitary Plan would be helpful. Comments on this relationship are included in PART A of these recommendations.

Comments on the relationship between the proposal and Eke Panuku's Essential Design Outcomes for the project are included in PART B below.

Comments and recommendations on urban design matters relating to the design development since the TAG 03 review of July 2023 are outlined in PART C below.

TAG was advised that the design proposals presented at this review were considered to constitute a Reference Design in terms of the Development Agreement between Eke Panuku and the development proponent. As such they were considered by the consultants to represent a benchmark level of design quality while potentially being subject to further refinement as the project progressed.

Note: references in these recommendations to the Reference Design document are to the document presented to the TAG review meeting of 10 May 2024.

SUMMARY OF OUTCOMES FOR THE CURRENT REVIEW (TAG 04):

TAG members 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. A single Panel member considered that Tower T1 would be too high, and a statement provided by this panel member has been included below. In all other regards panel members were in general agreement.

The following notes and recommendations outline Panel member views in response to the design proposals and supporting information presented by the consultants. While these recommendations relate in part to the development of design proposals since the TAG 03 review of July 2023, important matters addressed at the first three TAG reviews were also referred to by individual TAG members as an essential context for their responses to the current design proposals.

CHALLENGES PRESENTED FOR THE REVIEW PROCESS:

At the TAG 01 review the consultants noted that, for the project to be commercially viable, the design proposals would need to be considered as an integrated package, with the proposed quantum of development enabling the public realm offering that is central to the proposal.

A further challenge for the review process has been the strategic significance of the development site, being in proximity to (but not directly adjacent to) the Waitematā Harbour to the north, the Viaduct Harbour to the west, and being at the western edge of the central city area and within the Downtown West Precinct.

TAG has given close consideration to the above factors in its assessment of the potential impact of the proposed development, and in this regard has been assisted by the various simulations of the development within its immediate and wider contexts. TAG's views on the relationship between the urban form of the proposal and its urban and harbour edge contexts are summarized in Section A1 below.

In undertaking its urban design evaluations, TAG has been mindful of the provisions of the Unitary Plan but has looked beyond the development standards to consider the urban design merits of aspects of the proposal that may not comply with such standards. TAG is fully aware that the application for resource consent for the proposal will be considered as a discretionary activity...and intends its commentaries to assist in assessments in this regard.

PART A: THE DESIGN PROPOSALS IN RELATION TO UNITARY PLAN OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

A1: Objectives and Policies regarding urban form:

TAG considers that the basic form of the proposed development – two relatively slender towers above a podium that defines street edges and frames laneways - is a generally sound response that realizes the development potential of this part of the city (and the benefits that it brings), together with the need for a well-designed contribution to the city's skyline, for appropriate scale at street edges, and the provision of through-site pedestrian routes that would significantly enhance the permeability of the block.

The following sub-sections evaluate the design proposals in relation to the relevant Unitary Plan objectives and policies, and in relation to Unitary Plan Standard H8.6.5. Harbour Edge Height Control Plane.

A1.1 Objectives:

The development is located in the Business - City Centre Zone and is considered by TAG to support each of the six objectives for this zone, the most pertinent being Objective H8.2(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 valley and ridgeline form and waterfront setting. TAG considers that the proposed built form skyline respects the ridge and valley form, being aligned with the Federal Street ridge and opposite what was known as the Ngā u Wera headland.

It is within the special height area where the AUP envisages the tallest buildings, and encourages well-designed, slender towers.

A1.2 Policies:

The Unitary Plan contains 22 policies for Business Zones, of which 14 relate to all Business Zones and 8 relate specifically to the Business - City Centre Zone. Of the 14 general policies, two (#8 and #14) do not apply to the City Centre zone and the remainder would appear to be met by the proposed development, subject to further assessments in regard to the provisions of policy 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*).

Of particular note is Policy 5: *Require large scale development to be of a design quality that is commensurate with the prominence and visual effects of the development*. TAG considers that the proposed development satisfies this policy requirement.

Policies identified in the Unitary Plan as relating specifically to **city form** (of the central city) provide a further set of tests for the assessment of the development proposals, as follows:

Policy 29 seeks to *enable the tallest buildings and the greatest density of development to occur in the core central business district*. The proposed development is consistent with this policy.

Policy 30 seeks to *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 respect the valley and ridgeline form of the city centre and building design to be complementary to existing or planned character of 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, slender towers on sites identified within the special height area on Map H8.11.3.

Policy provision 30(a):

The interpretation of what constitutes **an effective transition of building height and development densities** down to the Viaduct Harbour (being the only “neighbourhood” adjacent to the site), and to the harbour edge, calls for a design-based evaluation. Subsection A1.2 below summarises the majority TAG view as indicated at the TAG 01 review and reaffirmed at subsequent design reviews.

Policy provision 30(b):

TAG noted that this has been a key driver of design considerations particularly in respect of tower 2 and sunlight access to St Patrick’s Square, with compliance established by studies undertaken and presented by the consultants.

Policy provision 30(c):

The first part of (c) with respect to the valley and ridgeline topography has been addressed in A1.1 above. The second part of 30(c) requires reference to the provisions of the Downtown West Precinct which is discussed below. TAG notes that the current character of the block within which the site is located has relatively poor urban design characteristics, and that the proposal will make a significant contribution to the character of the precinct and wider cityscape – specifically with respect to the cultural and contextual design response, the internal public space network, and the architectural quality of the towers.

Policy provision 30(d)(i):

All TAG members except one consider that the scale, form and design of buildings has been managed to avoid “adverse dominance and/or amenity effects on street and public open space” (subject to further assessment of wind effects at street level). In this regard TAG notes that the podium effectively sets the towers apart from the street and assists in transitioning building height down to the streets and public open space, including open space made possible by the future removal of Lower Hobson St flyover.

Policy provision 30(d)(ii):

TAG members consider that the two towers are slender and well designed.

With respect to slenderness:.

- Slenderness is achieved by the overall height to width ratio of the towers, variation in tower heights, the chamfered tops to each tower, and detailing such as the façade treatment.
- The chamfers are now sufficiently bold to be able to be read from a distance as an integral part of the tower form, with the smaller chamfers at the bases of both towers helping to separate the towers from their podiums.

- The slender space between the towers, and the congruity (or family likeness) of the two towers, will contribute to the slenderness of the two buildings viewed as a composition.
- In regard to the floor plate dimensions of tower T1 exceeding the 50m diagonal standard (by approximately 5m), TAG was advised by the consultants that the existing Unitary Plan development standard in regard to diagonal dimensions do not enable economically viable floor plates for premium office uses. Given this commercial constraint, TAG would support the decision to minimise the floor plate dimension in the east-west direction and to extend the footprint of T1 in the north-south direction (thereby orientating the narrower dimension to the harbour and Customs Street West, favouring views between and around buildings between the harbour and city, and orienting the wider face to buildings within the block (to AON and tower T2).

With respect to ‘well-designed’, TAG considers the two buildings will make a significant contribution to Auckland’s skyline on the following grounds:

- TAG considers the two buildings will create a composition that is greater than the sum of the two buildings.
- The composition resolves what TAG considers a perfect balance between individuality and family likeness.
- The family likeness expressed in individual ways creates something of a human (or organic) quality to the composition despite the buildings’ geometries and machine-like characteristics. Elements contributing to the successful composition include:
 - Different tower heights and floorplate geometries.
 - Staggered (offset) location on the site.
 - Variations on the chamfers’ size, orientation, and face treatment
 - Overlapping of the large chamfer (south-west corner Tower T1) with Tower T2 (so that the chamfer proportions are similar).
 - Individual development of similar façade systems, and subtly different colours.

Policy 31 seeks to *maximize light and outlook around buildings*. The assessment of design proposals against this policy needs to be measured against the context of site conditions and other decisions taken regarding the optimal configuration of the development. Within this context it should be noted that light and outlook has been maximised by the appreciable offsetting of the towers in relation to each other and in a way that responds to the shape of the development site, being constrained in the east-west direction. This, in conjunction with the location of the service core and the apartment layout in Tower T2 has resulted in minimal constriction to apartment outlook (as indicated on page 57 of the Reference Design package). TAG notes that the lowering of podium P3 from seven to three floors has enhanced outlook.

Policy 32 seeks to *Encourage public amenities to be provided within developments, including publicly accessible open space, works of art and through site links.* The proposed development actively achieves this policy. TAG recognises that the eventual choice of artwork will need to be informed by, or to otherwise support, the intended cultural narratives. TAG notes and supports the express intention of the development to present a consolidated cultural narrative.

A1.3 The transitioning of building height and development densities down to neighbourhoods adjoining the city centre, and to the harbour edge:

In addressing the expectation of a transitioning of building height down to the harbour edge, TAG notes the following features of the development site and its immediate context:

- The site is set back from the harbour edge in both the northern and western directions. To the north, the MSocial Hotel site, Quay St and the built form of Princes Wharf separate the development site from the edge of the Waitematā Harbour. To the west, Lower Hobson Street and the buildings on the western side of Lower Hobson St separate the development site from the edge of the Viaduct Harbour.
- Tower T1 is inland of the adjacent HSBC building, and views towards T1 from the Ferry Basin and the Wānanga waterfront public plaza are screened by the HSBC building.
- The lower height of Tower T2 in relationship to T1 achieves an effective visual transition in building height in north-south and east-west directions while at the same time being of sufficient height to visually “bookend” the City Centre when viewed from the harbour. This is clearly illustrated in the render views on page 47 of the consultants’ presentation for the current review (10 May).

In view of the above, the majority TAG view is that the proposal, due to its location and its design responses, successfully meets this policy.

A1.4 Harbour Edge Height Control Plane (HEHCP):

TAG notes that the HEHCP is a Unitary Plan Standard intended to give effect to its stated purpose which is to manage the scale of buildings at the western end of Quay Street to:

1. provide a **transition in building height** from the core central business district to the waterfront.
2. **maximise views** between the harbour and the city centre; and
3. **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.

In the view of some TAG members, the standard has shortcomings in achieving these purposes for reasons identified below.

TAG recognises that the design proposals infringe this standard by a substantial extent, but notes that a number of factors contribute to minimising the effect of this infringement.

At its second review (19 May 2023) TAG carefully considered the purpose of this standard in conjunction with the relevant policies, including Policies H8.3.(29) and (30). TAG recommendations from this meeting addressed a number of matters under the heading of “Contribution to Cityscape”, with subsection 1.2 providing a commentary on the HEHCP provisions.

In regard to the first purpose of the control (*to provide a transition in building height from the core central business district to the waterfront*) TAG has previously noted that in practical terms the standard applies only to the blocks between Quay Street and Customs Street. TAG concluded that any transition between the city centre and the waterfront in response to the HEHCP could only occur within a narrow band.

In that respect, transitions are achieved by setbacks of both T1 and T2 from Quay St, and by the presence of the mid-rise MSocial Hotel between the development and Quay St. Transitions to the Viaduct Harbour waterfront are also achieved by the step-down in height from T1 to T2, and the buildings on the west side of Lower Hobson Street – this is evident in the render views included on page 47 of the consultants’ Reference Design presentation.

In regard to the second purpose of the control (*to maximise views between the harbour and the city centre*), TAG noted that this can be relied upon only where there is a Unitary Plan ordained sightline and that these sightlines are invariably along streets. The use of the control to either maximise views or secure sightlines to the harbour from unspecified development sites within the city centre is therefore unachievable. Where the “exception” provisions to the HEHCP apply, the compensatory open space “corridors” assist in avoiding visual wall effects and provide for glimpses between buildings, but such corridors are limited to the development site and cannot be assumed to extend beyond the site.

At the TAG 03 review the TAG chair presented a scale drawing demonstrating that a development complying with the HEHCP standard would fully obscure views of the Sky Tower from as far away as the mid-point of the Waitemata Harbour measured between the end of Princes Wharf and Stanley Point. On this basis it is possible to conclude that any expectation that the control will maximise views or secure sightlines from the harbour to the city centre is also unachievable.

In a further example of these conflicting provisions the TAG chair also presented a drawing that compared the existing MSocial hotel building and a building of permitted height on that site, in order to demonstrate the way in which any “visual cliff” effects resulting from the height difference between the existing building and the proposed tower T2 would be significantly reduced by future development of the MSocial site to the height permitted by the HEHCP.

Notwithstanding the above, TAG observes that the relatively narrow E-W dimension of both towers will create opportunities for views towards the harbour from positions to the south of the development site.

The third purpose of the control (*to 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***), relies principally on the alignment of buildings to Quay Street. TAG notes that the consultants included 3D views in their 19 May presentation showing that the proposed towers were not visible from the Quay St corridor, with the northern face of Tower T1 positioned 80m to the south of the Quay St curtilage.

However, the two towers will still assist in marking the termination of the Quay St axis when viewed from the harbour, by virtue of their “bookending” qualities as discussed in A1.2 above. This skyline effect is illustrated in the views included on page 46 of the consultants’ presentation to the TAG 04 review.

A1.5: Minority view in regard to proposed tower heights:

A minority view held by TAG Panel member Richard Blakey considered that the towers were too high on the grounds that they substantially exceeded the Exception Provision to the Harbour Edge Height Control (in particular Tower 1), and that they thereby impacted on its City-wide purpose. This minority view held that one such impact was the interruption of the height transition between the city centre and the harbour, evident for example in view 11 of the consultants’ presentation of 19 May 2023 (and Render 06 of the May 2024 Presentation). In terms of effects on the skyline, the same panel member considered that view 11 also appeared to indicate that the height of T1 visually undermines what was considered to be a responsive tower termination of the PWC tower in the adjacent Commercial Bay development.

The above view was not shared by other TAG members.

The minority view also identified the HSBC Tower and No.1 Queen Street as demonstrating alignment with the purpose of the HEHCP standard, further highlighting the height exceedance if Tower T1. However, it should be noted that both these buildings are significantly closer to the harbour edge than is the case with Tower T1, and therefore could be expected to be of less height.

A2. Objectives and Policies regarding the public realm

In regard to objectives for the Business - City Centre Zone, these have been addressed in section A1 above.

In regard to policies, the Business – City Centre Zone provisions contain 5 policies that relate in a general way to the public realm (policies 33-37). Policies 33 and 34 relate directly to urban design quality, as follows.

*Policy 33 requires 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.*

TAG considers that the proposed development is consistent with this policy and achieves a level of urban design quality comparable with recognised international precedents, while also responding to the distinctive context of Tāmaki Makaurau.

*Policy 34 requires 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**.*

Proposals for the activation of street frontages and public spaces within the development are indicated on pages 16 and 17 of the consultants’ Reference Design package, with the architectural treatment of the Customs St West, Lower Albert St and Lower Hobson St frontages indicated on pages 35, 37, and 39 respectively. Streetscape renders on pages 40 and 41 provide further information on street frontages. Public spaces within the development are comprehensively depicted on pages 27 to 33. TAG considers that the qualities sought in fulfilling these policy requirements are met in the proposed design, noting further details including dimensioned cross sections included in the Reference Design drawing set.

In summary, TAG considers that despite the challenging conditions of the block, the proposal will provide an integrated network of lanes, activation of the periphery street frontages, a high quality central public place, and opportunities for artwork that is well integrated with the architecture.

Policy 35 requires 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.

TAG considers that the existing carpark building presents significant adverse effects on pedestrian amenity and that its removal and replacement with the proposed development will transform pedestrian amenity in this part of the city. TAG observes that part of this anticipated amenity derives from the proposed integration of the on-site pedestrian network with the street-based network.

The full achievement of policy 35 would require the removal of the Lower Hobson St flyover. TAG was advised that while there is a commitment on the part of Council and AT to do this, it is a separate consenting and funding process than that for the Downtown Carpark site.

A3. Objectives and Policies for the Downtown West Precinct

TAG notes that the provisions for this Precinct include 3 objectives and 3 policies, as follows:

Objective 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.*

Objective 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.*

Objective 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.*

With regard to objective 1, a minority view does not support the form and scale of development, as noted in A 1.5 above. In regard to objectives 2 and 3 all TAG members consider that the proposed development achieves these objectives.

In terms of the relevant policies:

Policy 1: *Enable and encourage a diverse range of activities within the precinct including residential (including visitor accommodation), commercial, recreational, temporary activities and events.*

Policy 2: *Encourage an integrated network of attractive streets, lanes and pedestrian connections to improve pedestrian permeability and accessibility through the precinct and support the transport interchange function of the area.*

Policy 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.*

Comment on the above Policies taken together:

TAG considers that the proposed development achieves all three of these policies. TAG notes that the proposed network of pedestrian connections departs from that indicated in the City Centre Masterplan and in the development standards for the Downtown West Precinct Plan, and that these departures have been discussed in detail with the consultants at several TAG reviews. The following comments outline the basis for TAG support for these departures:

- At-grade connections through the block are not feasible because of existing conditions (buildings, car parking structures, and servicing of existing/retained buildings within the block).
- The proposal represents a practical response to these conditions and will achieve the outcome of a permeable and legible network.
- By providing pedestrian connections at first floor level over the eastern part of the urban block, the proposal enables vehicle access to be confined to the existing

service lane between Customs Street West and Quay Street, with first floor level pedestrian circulation able to connect directly to existing buildings (AON building, HSBC foyer, skybridge to Commercial Bay).

- As part of this new and extended pedestrian network, entry points into the block have been formed at a mid-point on Lower Albert Street and at the corner of Lower Albert and Customs St West. By virtue of street gradients, this latter entry is close to street level, thus presenting a strong invitation for the public to enter the whole block movement network at this significant street intersection.
- Ground floor level connections in the western part of the development will serve to activate the Customs St West and Lower Hobson Street frontages.
- The transition between the upper and lower levels of this movement network is achieved by way of a level change within Te Uranga Hau, providing additional focus and spatial drama to this space. TAG considers the necessary change in level thereby will be positive element of the development.
- While the existing buildings within the block do not permit the east-west lane to be aligned with Wheriko Lane within the Commercial Bay development, the proposed new steps to Lower Albert Street are angled to signal a continuation of the route through to Wheriko Lane.
- Where the north-south route is circuitous and with comparatively weak entrances from Customs Street West and Quay Street, it mitigates these shortcomings through an activated 'south lane', by the use of earth coloured brick to frame the entrance from Customs Street West, and by providing cues to navigate around the end of the existing internal car park that has prevented a more direct alignment of this route.

Comment on Policy 3 in regard to activation of street frontages:

TAG considers that the development will activate its two primary street frontages (i.e. Lower Hobson Street and the western part of Customs Street West) and will also contribute to activation of the balance of Customs Street West and Lower Albert Street. Aspects that will contribute to this activation include:

- The entrances to the permeable internal laneway network are from each of the four peripheral streets, including the entrances to Te Uranga Hau from Lower Hobson Street and Customs Street West;
- Separate office and residential lobby entrances are provided to both Lower Hobson Street and Customs Street West; and
- There is a clustering of retail/F&B on Lower Hobson Street and around the entrances to Te Uranga Hau. These locations will be attractive for several reasons, including solar orientation and proximity to the spatial focal point of Te Uranga Hau.

A4. The implications of the Objective and Policies for the Public Realm in regard to permeability and legibility of circulation:

The statements of Objectives and Policies for the Downtown West Precinct do not make direct reference to the quality of legibility and refer to permeability only in relation to Downtown West Precinct Policy 2, where pedestrian connections to improve legibility are “encouraged”. TAG considers that achieving pedestrian circulation that is both permeable and legible will be a critical success factor and offers the following comments on this issue.

Page 14 of the Reference Design presentation provides plans of the east-west and north-south connectivity within the development and within the wider urban context. These plans indicate a number of alternative public movement routes in both directions. TAG considers that these routes will offer a high level of permeability and legibility for the following reasons:

- They are directly accessible from positions around the full perimeter of the urban block, with the necessary level changes resulting from the changing contours of the street frontages given visual prominence in the design. Seven entries to the circulation network at the perimeter of the site are located as follows:
 - Lower Hobson Street (future connection to Viaduct Harbour);
 - the intersection of Lower Hobson and Customs Street West (opening onto the future Sturdee St park);
 - mid-block Customs Street West (adjacent to the north-south service lane);
 - the intersection of Lower Albert Street and Customs Street West;
 - Lower Albert Street (diagonally opposite Wheriko Lane),
 - the skybridge to Commercial Bay; and
 - Quay Street (via HSBC building).
- Terracotta/brick textured walls are employed as a linking element that unites most of the circulation network, including street entrances on Lower Hobson St, at the intersection of Lower Hobson St and Customs St West (where brickwork forms the side wall to a public stair leading to the upper ground floor circulation network), at the mid-block public stairs on Customs St West, and at the Lower Albert Street entrance.
- Entry points to the circulation network are spatially generous and provide clear sightlines into the public realm beyond. Sightlines from the Commercial Bay skybridge (and from Quay St via the HSBC building) are unavoidably compromised by the configuration of this existing building.
- North-south and east-west laneways that are reached by stairs from the mid Customs St frontage and from the Albert St frontage are 4 and 5 metres wide respectively with straight edges, double floor height and continuously glazed to the sky. The north-south lane is activated on both sides while the east-west lane

necessarily has a solid wall where it passes alongside the podium level carpark to the HSBC building.

- While the location of existing buildings does not permit this east-west lane to be aligned with Wheriko Lane, the proposed new steps to Lower Albert Street are angled to signal a continuation of the route to Wheriko Lane. The east-west connection includes the alternative connection via the skybridge to Commercial Lane via the HSBC building.

A5: Summary Comment

With the exception of the Harbour Edge Height Control Plane standard, and the specific details of the standards relating to through site links, TAG concludes that the Reference Design is in general compliance with the relevant Unitary Plan development standards and gives effect to the Objectives and Policies relevant to urban design matters.

PART B: DESIGN RESPONSE TO EKE PANUKU ESSENTIAL OUTCOMES:

There are 17 Essential Design Outcomes, ranging from matters that call for a holistic assessment of the design proposals to those that involve specific design features that are readily identifiable or able to be confirmed on a yes/no basis.

1. Ensuring a world class development that is distinctive to Tāmaki Makaurau.

***Response:** TAG considers that this has been convincingly achieved, as evidenced by a number of TAG's evaluative comments in previous and current design reviews.*

2. Exploring Māori identity in design.

***Response:** Māori identity and its role in the shaping the conceptual origin of the project, its formal/shape considerations and aspects of its materiality has been fundamental to the project from its beginnings. TAG notes significant further opportunities in relation to detailed design of the public realm in particular.*

3. Implementing the City Centre Masterplan:

***Response:** TAG considers that while it has not been possible to provide a direct at-grade north-south pedestrian route between Federal Street and Quay Street, the proposal overcomes inherent difficulties in the provision of a ground level route by the development of legible routes at first floor level. Existing impediments to the development of a direct North-South route have been dealt with in a way that TAG considers will achieve an acceptable degree of legibility in this direction. The key objective of creating pedestrian links in an east-west direction, linking Commercial Bay with the Viaduct Harbour, has been convincingly achieved in the design proposals.*

While the removal of the Hobson Street flyover remains a Council responsibility, TAG considers that the design proposals anticipate this and will capitalise on the substantial urban design opportunities that the flyover removal represents.

4. Providing pedestrian laneways

Response: *Apart from the requirement for laneways at grade and straight, TAG considers that the laneway requirements outlined in the Essential Design Outcomes statement are generally satisfied. TAG considers that it would be difficult to achieve at grade and straight laneways with good urban design qualities given the constraints. Rather, the proposal works with the constraints to provide a legible and permeable laneway network that is anchored by a high quality internal public place. TAG supports the extent to which the laneways are protected with glass roofs while otherwise being open to the sky.*

5. Ensuring mixed-use development

Response: *The development proposal meets this outcome.*

6. Activating street edges

Response: *Lower and upper ground plane plans included with the Reference Design indicate continuous activation of street edges with either retail/F&B or entrance lobbies. This has been made possible by limiting service and private vehicle access to the existing service lane, the retention of which has required pedestrian laneways to be raised to first floor level in this part of the site.*

7. Integrating with the future public realm

Response: *TAG has previously reviewed the inter-relationship between the development proposals and the envisaged public realm outcomes and considers that the design of the street interfaces, including the location and shape of public circulation spaces at ground floor level, will improve the activation of the reconfigured public realm associated with Lower Hobson St and Customs St.*

8. Ensuring high quality design

Response: *TAG considers that this has been convincingly achieved, as evidenced by a number of TAG's evaluative comments in previous and current TAG reviews.*

9. Minimising impacts of parking and servicing

Response: *TAG considers that this has been convincingly achieved, subject to confirmation of the adequacy of provision for drop-off and pick up for Tower T1 residents in particular.*

10. Support public transport and the City Centre Bus Plan

Response: *Subject to confirmation by Eke Panuku. The internal laneway network will improve connections between Lower Albert Street and Lower Hobson Street if both of these streets are to be part of the transport hub.*

11. Including cycle and micro mobility facilities

Response: Subject to confirmation by Eke Panuku. TAG has been advised that previous Auckland Transport requirements for facilities that would serve the wider precinct have been deleted.

12. Providing green or brown roofs

Response: These were indicated in previous presentations. The extent of such roofs and their technical feasibility will need to be confirmed by Eke Panuku.

13. Providing sustainable solutions

Response: Subject to confirmation by Eke Panuku that provisions meet the requirements outlined in the Essential Design Outcomes statement.

14. Ensuring safety in design

Response: TAG considers that the public realm design would appear to meet this outcome but notes that an independent CPTED and IPTED audit would be expected.

15. Including Universal Design

Response: TAG considers that the public realm design would appear to meet this outcome, noting the provision of at grade access from all street frontages except Quay St, and an accessible lift adjacent to the public stairs between the lower and upper ground floor level.

16. The Design Guidance is to be used in conjunction with the Essential Outcomes

Response: TAG notes that the majority of items included under Design Guidance have informed the development of the design proposals. In those few instances where this is not the case TAG makes the following observations:

Guideline 3.2F: TAG agrees with the consultants' view that differentiation of façade treatment between commercial and residential floors in Tower T1 would work against the larger design intent in relation to façade differentiation between the two towers, and the difficulty in having a fine grain of residential façade articulation able to be meaningfully expressed at height. TAG was advised by the consultants that there was some uncertainty around the actual number of residential floor levels in Tower T1.

Guideline 4F: TAG notes that the consultants "anticipate that lighting is a key element of the project – focused on the triangular carved elements at the top of each tower". TAG strongly supports this intent but notes that design work on this aspect of the project has yet to be undertaken.

Guideline 7B: "Laneways should be open to above." This has been addressed in regard to Essential Outcome 4 above.

Guideline 12: (Sustainability): as noted in regard to Essential Outcome 13 above, a compliance check by Eke Panuku will be needed in regard to the eleven guidance points under this guideline.

17. TAG review:

Response: TAG has been fully involved in four reviews of the consultants' proposals and has participated in two workshops. This close involvement, together with the considered engagement of the design consultants in the review process, has ensured that a significant

majority of TAG members are able to indicate comprehensive support for the design proposals.

PART C: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PROPOSALS PRESENTED TO TAG 03 AND TAG 04 (REFERENCE DESIGN)

The following commentary seeks to record TAG responses to the Reference Design proposals presented to TAG at the meeting of 10 May 2024, focusing on aspects of the design that have been further developed since TAG 03.

TAG commends the consultant team for refinements to design proposals that have addressed issues raised at TAG 03. This has resulted in significantly improved design outcomes. TAG notes that the two workshop processes (26 January and 15 March 2024) appear to have been used to advantage in progressing the further development of the design.

TAG makes the following observations regarding the consultants' presentation. These generally follow the order of the consultants' presentation:

1. Cultural narrative and hierarchy:

TAG considers that the overarching cultural narratives as outlined on pages 7 and 8 of the consultants' presentation have been significantly strengthened in their expression, and now offer a strong foundation for their further development at the micro scale. Key design changes that have made this possible are the reduction in the height of podium P3 (with significantly enhanced solar penetration into Te Urunga Hau), the considered and appropriate use of brickwork to ground and defining the enclosing surfaces of Te Urunga Hau and the public circulation spaces that lead to it, and revisions to the carved planes ("chamfers") at the upper levels of both towers as a means of referencing notions of carving and chiseling of the tower forms and enhancing sunlight penetration into the development.

2. Te Urunga Hau – urban room

TAG considers that this has the potential to become a significant sheltered public space within the central city, activated by its location at the confluence of a number of clearly defined public circulation spaces that will assist in announcing Te Urunga Hau as belonging to the public realm. A comparison of perspective views provided as part of the 28 July 2023 presentation and the 10 May 2024 presentation highlights the ways in which the former corporate character of the Urban Room has been replaced by a more convincing public character.

A key design change that has enabled this change in character has been the reduction in the height of podium P3. This has enabled the introduction of an organic uniformity to the podium that would have been overbearing if employed over 7 floor levels. The reduced podium height has also significantly increased solar access to Te Uranga Hau, thereby strengthening the public invitation into this space.

The use of curving solid brick defining edges with their sculptural qualities and references to cliff-like organic forms serve as an effective foil to the regular geometries and machine-like qualities of the towers and give the space a distinctive identity and warmth that is in keeping with the intended cultural narrative.

The extension of these brick walls to the exterior of the site on three street frontages, and the way in which they will signal the public realm at each of the frontages, is considered by TAG to be an inspirational move that will effectively tie Te Uranga Hau to its wider urban context while at the same time providing strong gestures of public invitation to move into and through the development. The distinctive organic geometry and materiality of these walls will also give legibility and scale to these public spaces.

TAG notes that the space occupied by the stairs and adjacent sitting terraces that connect the two levels within Te Uranga Hau has been compressed in comparison with that indicated previously. TAG supports this change as enhancing the spatial drama and sense of intimacy at this point in the public realm but suggests that any further spatial compression of this important element would compromise the reading of public invitation to move between the levels.

3. Laneways and associated streetscapes:

TAG considers that the overall laneway spatial sequences, as indicated in the material on pages 28 – 33, are engaging and legible and generally overcome the challenges presented by existing conditions within the larger urban block. While the retention of the existing ground level service lane is a sensible way of confining the interruption on the surrounding streets of the servicing and vehicle access, it poses significant design challenges to the development of the pedestrian circulation routes, as does the interruption of the north-south pedestrian desire line by the HSBC building and internal car park building. .

Nevertheless, the points at which the laneways meet the existing streets have been developed in a way that presents strong gestures of invitation into the site as well as increased activation of these street frontages.

With regard to the north-south pedestrian route, TAG notes that while not achieving the clarity and directness of the laneway identified in the City Centre Masterplan, it nevertheless provides a route through the block at first floor level that currently does not

exist and can be augmented with incorporation of elements to help wayfinding and activate the route.

TAG generally concurs with the consultants that retaining the existing north-south service lane at ground level and providing all vehicle access to the proposed development from this lane, will minimise the number of vehicular street crossings and simplify street-based vehicle movements. This in turn will contribute to street-based pedestrian amenity. TAG supports the intention to manage access to the vehicle service lane and to prevent its use by non-authorized traffic as a through-route.

4. Podium facades:

TAG agrees with the consultants that the use of terracotta vertical fins with contrasting curved and flat faces comprising their cross section will both assist with the play of light and shade across the fins and introduce welcome variation by inverting the fin cross-section. In addition to the offsetting of the fin alignments between pairs of floors, the way in which this variation will enliven the substantial surface area of the podium facades is well illustrated in the renders on pages 39-41 of the agenda material. TAG encourages the consultants to retain a strong differentiation between the ‘gritty podium base’ and the towers – including maintaining a dense pattern of fins at the podium level to ensure the base has an appropriate visual mass.

5. Tower facades:

TAG considers that these have been significantly developed since the July 2023 review, and that the towers now read as a complementary pair. This has been assisted by a reduction in the overall height of tower T2, the simplified skyline of T2, and an increase in the extent of the chamfers across the two towers. The resulting enhanced relationship between the towers is clearly evident in the renders on pages 46 and 47 (E2 CITY SKYLINE) of the agenda material.

TAG considers that the façade treatment of the upper-level chamfers, while different between the two towers, clearly differentiates these surfaces from the cladding on the vertical faces of each tower. In both cases a simple horizontal articulation of these chamfered surfaces has been adopted, with the scale difference of these horizontal elements (edges to deeply recessed balconies in the case of Tower T2 and 750mm horizontal fins at every second floor and continuous glazing between these fins in the case of Tower T1) as appropriate to the relative heights of the two towers and to the more “granular” character of the T1 facades.

6. Tower crowns:

TAG considers that the tower crowns are now articulated with an appropriate simplicity and clarity and are effective terminations to the tower forms. TAG notes that while the continuation of the tower façade above the level of the top floor serves to integrate the crown with the remainder of the tower in each case, the transparency of the façade glazing potentially becomes more evident once it is naturally lit from both sides.

TAG members noted that it would be important for building signage to not interrupt the potential transparency of the crowns and their integrity as roof level extensions of the main tower facades. TAG suggests that any upper-level signage (corporate or otherwise) could detract from the simple clarity of the tower forms and the cultural references that underlie them. Such signage should be sufficiently lower to give space to the crown.

7. Tower colour:

TAG noted that the renders indicate a palette of warm earth colors for tower T2 and a cooler grey/blue tone for tower T1. In response to a question, the consultants confirmed that this was their intention. TAG agrees that a subtle colour differentiation of some kind will be important, with warmer colours being an appropriate response to the residential focus of T2.

8. Complementary form of the towers

TAG considers the design now perfectly resolves the individuality and family likeness between the two towers. It results in a composition that is greater than the separate buildings. The family likeness expressed in individual ways creates something of a human (or organic) quality to the composition despite the buildings' geometries and machine-like characteristics.

- Elements contributing to the successful composition include different tower heights and floorplate geometries.
- Staggered (offset) location on the site.
- Variations on the chamfers' size, orientation, and face treatment
- Overlapping of the large chamfer (south-west corner Tower T1) with Tower T2 (so that the chamfer proportions are similar).
- Individual development of similar façade systems, and subtly different colours.