

---

## **AUCKLAND UNITARY PLAN**

**Report To: Internal Steering Group/Political Working Party**

**Report Name: City Centre Options Paper – Technical Report**

**December 2011**

---

### **Context**

This options paper takes the key issues identified for the city centre in the Unitary Plan issue paper (prepared mid-2011) and details policy approaches and methods available to address these issues. The purpose of the report is to provide sufficient policy direction to enable the drafting of Unitary Plan provisions to occur through the first four to six months of 2012, subject to some further technical research and analysis.

The city centre encompasses a full range of complex District Plan level RMA issues within its defined geographical area. Because of this, there are several overlaps with the other issue-based workstreams (e.g. infrastructure) that are regionally focused at present.

There is a need to ensure that the policy approaches taken in the city centre give effect to the regional policy statement direction provided in the other workstream options papers. Similarly, as the other workstreams develop District Plan level policies and methods, there will need to be some flexibility in the recommended approaches for the city centre to ensure that provisions are well integrated across the region.

This paper discuss a number of topics in varying degrees of detail, reflecting the level of direction set at a strategic level and the number of options available.

---

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Strategic Context</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Role of the City Centre</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Providing for Growth</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Unitary Plan Principles</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Policy Approaches and Methods</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Character and Distinctiveness</b>	<b>6</b>
Strategic Direction	6
RMA Implications	6
Strategic Objective	6
Assessment of Objective	7
Policy Approaches	7
Methods	8
<b>Built Form - Skyline</b>	<b>10</b>
Introduction	10
Strategic Direction	10
Objective	10
Assessment of Objective	10
Policy Approaches	10
Methods	14
<b>Built Form – Individual Buildings (Architectural Quality)</b>	<b>15</b>
Strategic Direction	15
Objective	16
Policy Approaches and Methods	16
<b>Land Use Activities</b>	<b>21</b>
Introduction	21
<b>Commercial</b>	<b>21</b>
Strategic Direction	22
RMA Implications	23
Strategic Objective	24
Assessment of Objective	24
Policy approaches	24
Methods	26
<b>Residential</b>	<b>27</b>
Strategic Direction	27
RMA Implications	27
Strategic Objective	27
Assessment of Objective	27
Policy Approaches	28
Methods	29
<b>Historic Heritage and Historic Character</b>	<b>30</b>
Introduction	30
Strategic Direction	30
RMA Implications	31
Strategic Objective	32
Historic Heritage Policy Approaches	33
Historic Heritage Methods	33
Historic Character Policy Approaches	36
Methods	38

---

## Strategic Context

### Role of the City Centre

1. The city centre has different characteristics and a particular significance for Auckland by comparison with other centres. This is recognised in the Council’s strategic documents, being the draft Auckland Plan, City Centre Masterplan (“CCMP”), Waterfront Plan and Economic Development Strategy (“EDS”).
2. The city centre is prioritised in the draft Auckland Plan as one of two big initiatives because of its significance in contributing to the future economic performance of Auckland. It is anticipated that Auckland city centre will be “highly regarded internationally as a centre for business and for learning, innovation, entertainment, culture and urban living – all with a distinctly ‘Auckland’ flavour”.
3. The draft Auckland Plan identifies a transformational change to the city centre as one of two “big initiatives” for the Auckland region, specifically to “create a global city centre and destination of international repute”. The reasoning given for this is “because of its significance in contributing to the future economic performance of Auckland”. Further, the draft Auckland Plan specifies its vision for the city centre as follows:

“a leading financial, commercial, professional, business and cultural heart of international quality that serves all of Auckland.”

4. The draft Auckland Plan states that Auckland has an existing network of centres of different scales. The development strategy contained in the draft Auckland Plan highlights the various roles each play, the nature of public investment and activities likely to occur in each centre and the opportunity for growth. Reflecting the vision for the city centre stated above, the draft Auckland Plan identifies a centres classification with the city centre at the top.

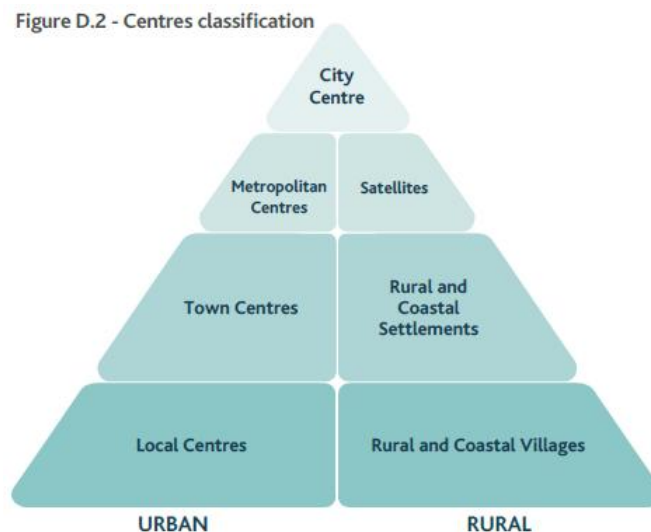


Figure 1: Urban Centres Hierarchy (draft Auckland Plan, p.25)

5. The draft CCMP and Waterfront Plan builds on and complements the draft Auckland Plan by identifying the goal of reinforcing the pre-eminent role of the city centre. The Waterfront Plan recognises the city centre as “attractive, distinct and vibrant” with a role to play in enhancing the region’s commercial and cultural offer, all with the intended outcome that an integrated waterfront will help Auckland to achieve its “desired step change in economic performance”.
6. Along with its over-arching priorities that apply to the region as a whole, the draft EDS promotes the city centre as a “major employment hub”, with an expectation that it will increase

---

its productivity by 117 – 156%. Further, the draft EDS recognises the city centre as an “important area of economic activity”.

7. It is clear from the draft plans that the strategic direction for the city centre is to establish its role as the pre-eminent centre in Auckland.

### **Providing for Growth**

8. The draft Auckland Plan and CCMP anticipate considerable growth in the city centre. In the draft Auckland Plan’s development strategy and urban centres hierarchy the city centre provides significant capacity for business and high-intensity residential development and is intended to accommodate the highest density of development in the region. Further, the draft CCMP states that the city centre will accommodate significant increases in employees (50,000+), residents (30,000+) and visitors.
9. The draft Auckland Plan states that the city centre, including the waterfront is prioritised for growth. Directive 8.3 states how this might occur:

“Design and plan centres to **enable** [emphasis added] mixed use environments with adaptable building forms, that are connected by corridors developed in accordance with the urban design principles outlined in Box 8.3 and 8.4 and the single-system transport principles outlined 11.1.”

10. Following on from this, Directive 8.4 states:

“Metropolitan, satellites and local centres will complement the role of Auckland’s leading centre – the city centre.”

11. The city centre must attract growth and investment if it is to achieve the ambitious vision set for it in the draft Auckland Plan and CCMP. The draft CCMP is playing its part in attracting growth and investment by detailing eight, public realm focussed, transformational moves that will make the city centre a beautiful and engaging place to be. As the regulator of private development, it is critical that the Unitary Plan strikes the right balance between enabling growth to occur and managing it to ensure that other urban design, transport and environmental objectives are achieved.

## **Unitary Plan Principles**

- 
12. Development of the Unitary Plan is being guided by several principles based direction-setting papers that were endorsed by the Political Working Party in early-mid 2011. The findings of these papers and their applicability in the city centre context are reiterated below to provide context for the policy approaches and methods that follow.
  13. The direction setting paper entitled “Regional Consistency and Local Variations” notes the need to accommodate local variations to region wide rules and standards. This is of particular relevance to the city centre where the distinctive built form character of different areas occurs at a very localised level. The character of these individual areas are what makes the city centre unique in the Auckland context and it should be celebrated and reinforced in the Unitary Plan.
  14. The direction setting paper “Effect-Based Planning and Outcomes-Based Planning” recommends that the Unitary Plan use a mix of numeric standards and assessment against objectives and policies to achieved desired results. It also recommends that the Unitary Plan should base assessment on qualitative criteria which balance planning burden against planning gain. These principles are also particularly relevant for the city centre, which has a complex and long established suite of built form controls (floor area ratio, heights, frontage controls, sunlight admission controls etc) which provide development certainty, as well as very refined design guidance.
  15. The direction setting paper “Degrees of Intervention/Regulation” explores the implications of adopting different levels of regulatory intervention in the Unitary Plan. For city centre built form, the recommended option of an outcome led Unitary Plan with more targeted regulation has implications as it may mean “letting go” some long established built form controls in favour reducing repetition and unnecessary detail.
  16. Two key themes emerge for the city centre built form methods from the direction setting paper “Innovative Tools and Techniques”. Firstly, it is recognised that effects based planning techniques alone are in some areas insufficient to achieve good quality outcomes and therefore design guides/criteria should also form part of the Unitary Plan. Secondly, the minimum use of rules approach in favour of requiring nearly everything to obtain a resource consent is not favoured. This does not match planning burden with planning gain and places too much reliance on objectives and policies in assessing what may be the most minor development proposals.
  17. The direction setting papers establish clear guidelines for the development of the Unitary Plan which will result in simple, unambiguous and directive planning provisions that are clearly linked to expected environmental outcomes. The direction setting papers, together with the first and second order principles guiding the Unitary Plan are referenced in the assessment of policy approaches and methods below.

---

## Policy Approaches and Methods

### Character and Distinctiveness

#### Strategic Direction

18. As stated above, the vision for the city centre is for it to be regarded internationally as a centre for business and for learning, innovation, entertainment, culture and urban living – all with a distinctly “Auckland” flavour. Outcomes and indicators in the draft CCMP include Auckland as an iconic international destination and a centre for higher education, research and innovation, while identified opportunities include a strong sense of place and character. These tangible and intangible characteristics contribute to the city’s distinctiveness, both as a whole and for areas within the city centre.
19. The draft Auckland Plan recognises the importance of distinctiveness in Box 8.3 Key Aspects of Design, which states places for people need to be “distinctive, offer variety, choice and fun”. Furthermore, the draft Auckland Plan adopts the following strategic urban design principles:
- Appreciate and respect local context (the character, heritage and setting of an area); and
  - Diversity of urban activities, uses and forms to provide vibrancy
20. The draft CCMP identifies “strengthening the quarters” as a factor affecting growth of the city centre, it states:
- “The city centre has a cluster of distinct areas each with its own characteristics and uses. These distinct areas will continue to be reinforced and promoted through the creation and implementation of quarter plans.”
21. The place-based approach is further emphasised in the strategy of the draft CCMP and its eight transformational moves, including developing a “fully-functioning Engine Room” and “exploiting waterfront opportunities”.
22. Both the draft Auckland Plan and CCMP recognise the importance of providing for distinctiveness and character of specific areas within the city centre. The applicability of the quarter planning approach in the Unitary Plan will be considered in detail below.

#### RMA Implications

23. The RMA implications of giving effect to the strategic direction relate to Part 2 of the Act, specifically enabling the city centre to provide for the social, cultural, and economic well-being of its community (s5), and the maintenance and enhancement of amenity values (s7(c)). Further, section 6 covers matters of national importance and includes the protection of historic heritage (s6(f)), which is particularly relevant in the city centre where the majority of the region’s built heritage of significance is concentrated.
24. Adopting a planning approach to manage distinctiveness results in the identification and subsequent protection of amenity, heritage and other environmental characteristics that the Act seeks to address. Further, the strategic direction gives effect to the overarching purpose of the Act, by managing the development of resources in a way that enables people and communities to provide for their own social, economic and cultural wellbeing. Indeed, managing distinctiveness helps to establish a sense of place or community.

#### Strategic Objective

25. Derived from the above discussion, the following strategic objective for character and distinctiveness is proposed:

Maintain and enhance the distinctiveness of areas within the city centre.

**Assessment of Objective**

- 26. The strategic objective assists the Council to carry out its functions pursuant to (among others) sections 30 and 31 of the Act, specifically the “establishment of methods to achieve integrated management of the effects of the use, development or protection of land” (section 31(1)(a).
- 27. By adopting methods to maintain and enhance distinctiveness, development in specific areas can be carried out so that it is consistent with the recognised environmental characteristics of that area and further, so that development does not compromise or adversely affect the recognised distinctive character of an area.
- 28. This approach is also in accordance with the overarching purpose of the Act, to promote the sustainable management of resources and associated growth issues that are unique to the city centre.

**Policy Approaches**

29. Two broad policy approaches have been identified to achieve the strategic objective:

**Option 1 – Do nothing in the Unitary Plan to recognise character and distinctiveness**

- 30. In this option, the Unitary Plan would not expressly recognise the character of distinct areas within the city centre with objectives, policies or rules. Objectives, policies and rules would be applied consistently throughout the city centre.
- 31. While the Unitary Plan would not recognise the distinctiveness of particular areas within the city centre, the Council could use non-regulatory mechanisms to enhance the character of distinct areas including for example:
  - Advocacy to the development community
  - Exemplar development of key sites
  - Non-statutory quarter plans

Benefits	Costs
<p>This enables the distinctiveness of areas within the city centre to develop organically over time, which has the potential to enhance character.</p> <p>Simple and fast as the Unitary Plan would have fewer policy layers.</p>	<p>The character and distinctiveness of particular areas may be lost as sites are re-developed if they are not well designed.</p> <p>Provides little certainty to the community of development outcomes.</p>

**Option 2 – Identify and manage areas of distinct character**

32. In this option, the Unitary Plan would provide specific objectives, policies and rules that guide development in distinct areas of the city centre to encourage the enhancement of its special qualities.

Benefits	Costs
<p>Provides clear guidance on community aspirations for the area.</p> <p>Provides an opportunity for developments to recognise the special character of an area through the resource consent process. Unambiguous and outcome focussed policy will provide certainty to the development community.</p>	<p>Greater complexity of planning provisions as an additional layer of policy is required in the Unitary Plan.</p>

**Recommended Policy Approach**

33. While option 1 does not preclude development from being sympathetic to local character, the option provides little certainty to the community and therefore is not consistent with the outcome-focused intent of the Unitary Plan. Alternatively, recognising the character of special areas within the city centre in the Unitary Plan allows outcomes to be clearly articulated. For these reasons, Option 2 is recommended.

**Methods**

34. Two methods have been identified for maintaining and enhancing the distinctiveness of particular areas within the city centre.

**Option 1: Apply objectives, policies and rules in the Unitary Plan to the quarters from the draft CCMP**

35. The draft CCMP advances an earlier approach taken in the legacy “Auckland CBD into the Future” document and identifies seven distinct areas of the city as recognisable quarters (refer Figure 2 below).



Figure 2: Draft CCMP quarters plan

36. This option involves the Unitary Plan providing for these quarters by applying specific objectives, policies and rules that recognise their distinct character.

Benefits/Advantages	Costs/Disadvantages
<p>Consistent with the draft CCMP Quarter Areas.</p>	<p>The Quarters from the draft CCMP do not necessarily align with areas of the city centre that exhibit a particular built form character. They tend to be a larger scale (for example, the “Engine Room” Quarter, exhibits a range of different built form characters from the development outcomes sought for the Britomart, the core commercial high rise areas on the western side of Queen Street, and the lower scale historic character area on the eastern side of Queen Street).</p> <p>Division of the city centre into seven quarters, each with its own objectives, policies and rules will be reasonably complex. Furthermore, given that these quarters are not necessarily aligned with built form character, will likely still require additional overlay controls to maintain and enhance character.</p> <p>Several recently approved plan changes (e.g. Wynyard Quarter, Victoria Quarter, Learning Quarter) include specifically developed controls to manage the distinctiveness and character of these areas. Redefining the quarters to align with the CCMP risks re-considering recently agreed community aspirations for the distinct areas.</p>



**Option 2: City-wide objectives, policies and rules to recognise character and distinctiveness with more targeted objectives, policies and rules applying to particular areas (e.g. Britomart)**

- 37. This option involves the Unitary Plan applying city wide objectives, policies and rules that recognise the distinctiveness of the city centre as a whole. This would be overlaid with more targeted objectives, policies and rules that recognise the character and distinctiveness of specific areas within the city centre (e.g. Britomart). The distinct character areas would be identified on the basis of a particular existing, or aspirational built form outcome that requires a specific management approach.
- 38. The Unitary Plan could manage the character areas by a policy description only with no supporting rules. In some instances, rules may be required for the character area where a specific outcome is required.
- 39. This approach does not preclude Quarter Areas being included in the Unitary Plan at a descriptive level, but avoids the need for each of these to have its own objectives, policies and rules dealing with built form.

<b>Benefits/Advantages</b>	<b>Costs/Disadvantages</b>
<p>Reasonably simple approach which targets particular objectives and policies to those parts of the city centre which exhibit a distinctive character. Generic objectives, policies and rules apply elsewhere.</p> <p>Removes management layers that would arise if the Quarter Areas approach was adopted, albeit not entirely as it would still require targeted objectives and policies for certain parts of the city centre.</p> <p>Recognises and provides for the distinctiveness of particular parts of the city centre.</p>	<p>Risks lack of alignment with the draft CCMP Quarter Areas, as these will not be represented in any policy sense in the Unitary Plan.</p> <p>Has some degree of complexity as it still relies on layers whereby policy areas sit over more generic policies and rules for certain parts of the city centre. These areas are however targeted and so complexity of control is reduced somewhat.</p>

**Recommended Method**

- 40. The recommended method is Option 2. This option recognises that much of the distinctiveness and character of the city centre occurs at a localised level. The method has the advantage of simplifying what would otherwise be a complex multi-layered management approach of the existing District Plan and targets character policies only to those areas where its amenity is closely defined by built form.

---

## Built Form - Skyline

### Introduction

41. The following built form policy approaches and methods are considered to be a subset of the above discussion on recognising the distinctiveness and character of the city centre at a city wide and local level. For this reason, there is no need to consider the RMA implications of giving effect to the specific strategic directions outlined for the built form topics that will be covered in this section of the report.

### Strategic Direction

42. As stated above, the draft Auckland Plan identifies the city centre at the top of the centres classification where the most intensive development can be expected. This intensity of development and resultant built form is what makes the city centre distinctive and recognisable regionally, nationally and internationally.

43. The Masterplan identifies building height as a factor affecting the growth of the city centre and states:

*“When viewed from the harbour and wider city, the city centre is expressed by tall buildings and the Sky Tower making it recognisable as the region’s city centre. Protected views across the harbour to Auckland Museum frame this city centre view. The combination of volcanic features, the harbour and urban form make Auckland’s city centre particularly distinctive.*

*The area between these views allows for more generous building height, perhaps beyond current District Plan limits, and is where the city’s tallest towers are located. Building heights beneath the view-shafts are generally 15 stories or less.*

*Through the Unitary Plan, Auckland Council will reaffirm the approach to tall buildings in the city centre. Proposed buildings that challenge set height limits (where they exist) are expected to be of exceptional design quality.”*

44. The strategic direction for the city centre’s built form in relation to its skyline can be derived from the above discussion and the need to recognise and provide for character and distinctiveness at a city-wide scale. The skyline’s distinctiveness is not only created by its unique form but from the views to important landscapes and features that it retains, such as Mt Eden and the Auckland Museum.

### Objective

45. The following objective is proposed in relation to the city centre skyline:

*To ensure the city centre skyline is distinctive, protects views to significant landscapes and fosters a quality urban form.*

### Assessment of Objective

46. The objective assists the Council to carry out its functions pursuant to (among others) sections 30 and 31 of the Act, specifically the “establishment of methods to achieve integrated management of the effects of the use, development or protection of land” (section 31(1)(a).

47. This approach is also in accordance with the overarching purpose of the Act, to promote the sustainable management of resources and associated growth and amenity issues that are unique to the city centre.

### Policy Approaches

48. Three policy approaches have been identified as being able to achieve the objective stated above. The status quo options include methods (i.e. District Plan rules) to illustrate the current approach to managing building height.

### Option 1: Greatest building height in the core transitioning to the edges (status quo)

49. The Auckland Council District Plan (Auckland City: Central Area Section) (“District Plan”) currently contains height overlay controls. The general and special height controls within the District Plan establish different conditions throughout the city centre. The special height controls include admission of sunlight to public places, a control on the height of buildings along the harbour edge and the view protection planes. The area where the greatest business is focused has no maximum height limit and is only limited in height by the special height controls. These form a complex web over the city centre, which in some instances allow unlimited height (the Sky Tower site for example). These controls work together to predominantly concentrate the tallest buildings in the core of the city centre that transition to lower heights at the western, southern and eastern edges.

Benefits/Advantages	Costs/Disadvantages
<p>The existing controls recognise the pre-eminence of views to the volcanic cones and have sought to protect these as outstanding natural features as required under the RMA.</p> <p>The existing controls have contributed to establishment of the skyline we have today.</p> <p>Maintaining these controls provides a certainty of outcome to landowners and developers.</p> <p>Consistent with the CCMP which seeks to reaffirm the approach to tall buildings in the city centre</p>	<p>There are some areas where additional height may be appropriate to achieve better outcomes. In particular, on the western side of the city where there appears to be a relatively stark transition in building height on the Nelson Street ridge.</p> <p>Some of the localised viewshaft controls may have outlived their usefulness and require review (e.g. the Dilworth Terrace view shaft over Quay Park).</p>

**Option 2: Refined status quo – better transition at the edges**

50. This option involves refining the status quo to better achieve a quality urban form. In particular, the option involves refinement to building height controls on the western and northern edges of the city centre.
51. One of the issues in relation to existing skyline is the hard edge between the high-rise core and the lower building heights on the eastern and western edges of the city. While this is largely due to the existing view protection planes, the existing general height controls are more restrictive and there may be some scope to refine the existing controls to create a smoother transition. This could be achieved by increasing heights on key sites to fill the gap between existing general height limits and the view shafts, which will enable more variation in building height.
52. The western edge of the city is currently defined as the Victoria Quarter (refer Figure 3 below). This is the area of land bounded by Hobson St to the east, Union St to the south and west and Fanshawe St/Victoria Park to the north. The topography is such that the land slopes down from the Hobson/Nelson ridge towards Freemans Bay to the west and the waterfront to the north.



Figure 3: Location of Victoria Quarter

53. The existing Victoria Quarter provisions in the District Plan were prepared in recognition of the opportunity for significant redevelopment on this side of the city, in particular the former Council depot side (Rhubarb Lane) and the Placemakers site and its surrounds.
54. Building heights step down from 50m maximum between Hobson and Nelson Streets to 35m on the western side of Nelson street, down to 24m through much of the remainder of the land with the exception of Sale/Drake Streets where the permitted maximum is 16m. Building bulk is further restricted by floor area ratio and the E10 Mt Eden view protection plane.
55. With respect to the waterfront edge, provisions from the current Auckland Regional Plan: Coastal are geared strongly towards port activity and do not anticipate new buildings being constructed as part of publicly accessible waterfront (as anticipated by the draft Waterfront Plan). They are reasonably simplistic; however there are currently no or inadequate provisions which provide for variations in height and bulk along the wharfs, interactive frontages, pedestrian amenity, or good design outcomes. The exception is the Princes Wharf development controls which provide a complex 3-dimensional envelope to which the existing development has been built.
56. The existing Auckland Regional Plan: Coastal does not adequately anticipate development outcomes on the waterfront of the type being proposed under the Draft Waterfront Plan and the areas of the waterfront under Waterfront Auckland control (as opposed to Ports of Auckland Ltd) need to be fully integrated with the built form and urban design provisions in the remainder of the city centre.
57. The opportunity exists to introduce a new suite of built form controls which give effect to the outcomes sought by the Draft Waterfront Plan. Such an approach is considered to best align the Unitary Plan with the strategic direction set in the Draft CCMP and Draft Waterfront Plan.
58. The current Princes Wharf provisions relate strongly to the particular rooflines and built form of existing development and would benefit from simplification to an overall building envelope that provides for greater flexibility for any future redevelopment.

Benefits/Advantages	Costs/Disadvantages
---------------------	---------------------

<p>Maintains general continuity in the approach to height, while providing for appropriate further growth and development at the edges where gaps exist between existing height limits and view shafts.</p> <p>Helps to achieve the growth outcomes anticipated by the Draft Auckland Plan and the CCMP.</p> <p>There has been some initial analysis into potential areas for additional height, particularly on the western side of the city, which identifies that additional capacity can be accommodated.</p> <p>The height controls for the Victoria Quarter were only recently incorporated within the District Plan and extensive investigation, assessment and stakeholder consultation were undertaken to establish these controls.</p> <p>Aligns the Unitary Plan with the strategic direction set for the waterfront in the Draft CCMP and Draft Waterfront Plan.</p> <p>Simplifies the very complex existing building envelope controls for Princes Wharf that lock in the existing form of development.</p> <p>Provides for continuity and consistency with respect to the Quay Street control.</p>	<p>Will require a site-by-site analysis of existing height controls to understand the effect of the gap between existing height limits and the view shafts (including the relatively complex interplay with floor area ratio) to establish the best outcome.</p> <p>The extent of the problem, and the room for additional opportunity, is currently not properly understood and as noted above will be required to modelled. Some of the 'stark' transition effect may simply be as a result of the large areas of undeveloped land on the western side of the city centre contrasting with the significant development that has occurred on the Nelson Street/Hobson Street ridge in recent years. Development of these sites (such as Rhubarb lane) in accordance with the existing transitional height controls, coupled with the sloping topography, may significantly smooth this transition, although this needs to be tested through modelling.</p>
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

### Option 3: Reinforce the Ridge and Valley Topography

59. The existing skyline is the result of the last 40 years of planning and development. This has left the city centre with the concentration of tall buildings within the Queen Street Valley, and lower heights transitioning to the edges. More recently, high rise development has spread to the Nelson and Hobson Street ridgelines; albeit within the permitted height limits. However, the city centre skyline currently shows a concentration of buildings in the core, rather than reinforcing the distinctive topography of the city centre which is strongly defined by the Hobson/Nelson Street, Karangahape Road and Princes Street ridges.

60. This option involves using the Unitary Plan to reinforce the ridge and valley topography that would, over time, reshape the city to be congruent with the natural landscapes.

<b>Benefits/Advantages</b>	<b>Costs/Disadvantages</b>
<p>This would create a wholly new skyline in as far as possible within the context of existing development, yet distinctive in its own right.</p>	<p>The effect of this would be to limit building heights in most parts of the city except for the ridges. This would be a significant imposition on existing development potential, which has been long-established through planning policy.</p> <p>Would be counter to the concentration of density within the Engine Room; however could support intensification objectives around the proposed rail node at Karangahape Road.</p> <p>In order to maintain regionally significant viewshafts, there would still need to be some height restrictions on the ridges (in particular Nelson and Hobson Streets).</p> <p>It would take several generations to significantly shift away from the existing pattern. The reality is that it is too late to try and restrict the location of tall buildings to more strongly express the underlying</p>

	<p>topography.</p> <p>The approach is inconsistent with the approach proposed in the CCMP.</p>
--	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

**Recommended Policy Approach**

- 61. The recommended approach for the Unitary Plan is Option 2: revisiting and fine tuning the existing controls for height to generally maintain the existing heights within the core of the city centre and a smoother transition at the edges – including the western edge and the waterfront.
- 62. The smoother transition between the core and the western edge would provide for increased height in identified locations subject to further research including detailed site-based investigation to ascertain the effectiveness of any such measures versus unrealised development possible under the existing District Plan. Such a study should model existing development, development potential under the existing controls and then a limited range of options for additional height on identified sites while still respecting and remaining under the E10 Mt Eden Viewshaft. A visual assessment should then be undertaken that analyses the options from a range of public viewpoints, both street-based and more distant when viewed from afar.

**Methods**

**Option 1: General and Special height controls (status quo)**

- 63. This option would continue with the use of general and special height controls in the Unitary Plan

<b>Benefits/Advantages</b>	<b>Costs/Disadvantages</b>
<p>The existing height controls are well understood and their continuation provides for certainty of outcome.</p> <p>The height controls have resulted in the city skyline as currently exists.</p> <p>The existing height controls provide for protection of sunlight to public places (a key amenity issue in the city centre) and for protection of views to regional significant features.</p>	<p>Fails to take advantage of the opportunity to totally review the height controls and provide for potentially greater development potential and growth.</p> <p>Refinements can be made to the height controls while maintaining their key benefits (including protection of sunlight to public places and protection of views to regional significant features).</p>

**Option 2: Tall Buildings Strategy**

- 64. Drawing from international examples, this option involves using very directive policies to manage height. District Plan rules would be required to implement a tall buildings strategy. These would necessarily also be directive and may for example identify particular sites where tall buildings can be built. A recent example of this is Wynyard Quarter where four sites have been identified for tall buildings to complement the urban design framework.
- 65. Many cities internationally have developed specific methods to deal with the effects and encourage high design quality of very tall buildings. For instance, the City of Sydney includes the following provisions for tall buildings:
  - Minimum site area of 800 sq. metres or greater for tower buildings
  - Development must result in a free standing tower with each face able to be seen from a public place
  - Development must provide adequate amenity and privacy for occupants and will not significantly affect the amenity and privacy of occupants of neighbouring buildings
  - If the development involves the erection of a new building, all street frontages of the building will be active.

66. The City of Sydney has also put in place a Competitive Design Policy that requires a design competition or limited invited competitive design process for all buildings over 50 metres tall in Central Sydney.
67. Toronto has recently (2010) undertaken a review of tall building regulations in that city which included comprehensive research into the regulatory tools used by six other North American cities with high-rise built form (New York, Boston, Chicago, San Francisco, Vancouver and Calgary)<sup>1</sup>.
68. In addition to recommending new regulations and design guidelines for tall buildings, a key recommendation from the Toronto study was to make sure all tall buildings in the city centre go before the design review panel. They regard this as a key tool in regulating design quality.
69. Compared to these cities and Australian cities Auckland has a relative lack of design controls and design guidance for tall buildings. For instance, Toronto and all of the 6 benchmark cities studied have requirements for podiums that extend the length of the site and are built to the existing street wall line. Auckland currently has few such controls outside of the Queen Street Valley frontage height control which relates only to the eastern heritage precinct and the Quay Street frontage control.

Benefits/Advantages	Costs/Disadvantages
<p>A tall buildings strategy enables establishment of clear criteria for evaluation including taking into account relationship to context, effects on public spaces and historic heritage, relationship to transport infrastructure (such as the city rail growth nodes), architectural quality etc.</p> <p>A tall building strategy, of the sort used by the City of Sydney, ensures space between tall buildings by requiring minimum site sizes and visibility of building faces.</p> <p>This approach would maintain the distinctiveness of Auckland's skyline, which through a combination of development density and available sites has tended to space tall buildings in the city centre.</p>	<p>A tall building strategy by identifying sites where tall buildings can occur, or requiring minimum site size or characteristics, 'picks winners' and would be a significant departure from the current planning approach.</p> <p>This method requires a definition of what constitutes a tall building in the Auckland city centre context (say 70 metres) and imposes additional development control restrictions and design assessment criteria on such buildings.</p> <p>With the limited availability of development sites in the city centre, coupled with the relatively small size of many sites overlaid with the sunlight protection and viewshaft controls, there is only a small risk that towers in the city centre will become over-crowded within the life of the Unitary Plan (this assumes a continuation of a light and outlook bonus approach or similar through floor area ratio controls).</p>

### Recommended Method

70. The recommended method is option 1: Refining the Status Quo, with supporting objectives and policies. The smoother transition between the core and the western edge would provide for increased height in identified locations subject to further research including detailed site-based investigation to ascertain the effectiveness of any such measures versus unrealised development possible under the existing District Plan. A simplified Princes Wharf building envelope control should be introduced; together with strengthening design assessment criteria and more refined height controls relating to the waterfront wharfs.

## Built Form – Individual Buildings (Architectural Quality)

### Strategic Direction

<sup>1</sup> Reference: Urban Strategies Inc. & Hariri Pontarini Architects: *Tall Buildings: Inviting Change in Downtown Toronto*. April 2010. Also short video summarising the Toronto study can be viewed here: <http://www.toronto.ca/planning/tallbuildingstudy.htm>

71. The Auckland Plan identifies the radical improvement of the quality of urban living as one of the transformational shifts required to achieve its vision. It states:

*“Auckland has a stunningly beautiful natural environment. By contrast, with notable exceptions, the built environment is a “mixed bag”. There are many examples of poor quality architectural and urban design: poor living spaces, poor building design, bland streetscapes, lack of green spaces and of the city’s most beautiful assets, the waterfront is largely cut off from the city centre.”*

72. The city centre needs a built form that is distinctive and high quality to ensure that it is an *“iconic destination and [a] ‘must do’ for the international visitor”*.

**Objective**

73. The objective for managing building design and architectural quality can be broadly defined as follows:

*To ensure a well designed, high quality, pedestrian friendly, compact city centre urban environment that provides for growth and change, protects views to outstanding landscapes and fosters a distinctive urban form.*

**Policy Approaches and Methods**

74. The options analysis below combines policy approaches (e.g. regulate architectural quality in the Unitary Plan) and methods (e.g. the types of policies and rules that could be used in the Unitary Plan to regulate architectural quality).

**Option 1: Status Quo (Range of Regulatory & Non-Regulatory Methods)**

75. Currently the District Plan relies on design assessment criteria that make reference to architectural issues such as facade articulation, fenestration, design of rooftops and protrusions, appropriate materials and building finishes.

76. These are supported by a considerable number of non-regulatory methods that include the Urban Design Panel, Urban Design Champions within Council, CCOs and Local Boards. There has also been a relatively increase in the number of trained and experienced urban design staff within Council, with urban design officers involved with pre-application meetings and advice. The Council as a land owner can also purchase, comprehensively planning and on-sell strategic sites with property agreements such as Britomart. Investment in the public realm it also acts as a catalyst for improvement in the private sector.

<b>Benefits/Advantages</b>	<b>Costs/Disadvantages</b>
<p>Provides for continuity with the changes made within the past 5 years that appear to have been successful in raising the bar on the quality of developments.</p> <p>The existing approach has been tested and has evolved over time with a number of relatively recent plan changes introducing design assessment criteria that are delivering higher quality outcomes.</p> <p>Maintaining these controls provides continuity and a certainty of outcome for landowners and developers.</p>	<p>The current design criteria taken as a whole can be confusing and contradictory, particularly where specific provisions have been developed for various quarters and precincts with long lists of assessment criteria on top of the general provisions. Often these criteria are very similar but slightly different permutations (e.g. Wynyard Quarter utilised a number of modified criteria originally developed for the Victoria Quarter).</p> <p>Some assessment criteria fail to provide adequate guidance/direction on desired outcomes, being capable of wide interpretation. While non-statutory design guidelines do exist for some topics, these carry no statutory weight.</p> <p>The existing non-regulatory measures, while broad, do not include some of the more innovative tools being used internationally to achieve architectural quality.</p> <p>Design guidelines risk being over-prescriptive and</p>



	<p>potentially unable to anticipate future types of development, becoming irrelevant.</p> <p>Design guidelines require extensive interpretation by developers and council planners.</p>
--	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

**Option 2: Status Quo with Additional Non-Regulatory Methods**

77. There are many potential additional non regulatory methods for achieving higher architectural quality. These include (but are not limited to):

- 3D Digital City Model
- Comprehensive Development Plans
- Design Code
- Holistic Design Review
- Architectural Review Panel
- Competitive Design Policy/Design Competitions
- Public-Private Partnerships
- Public Exemplar/Demonstration Projects
- Design Talent Pool
- Economic Incentives

<b>Benefits/Advantages</b>	<b>Costs/Disadvantages</b>
<p>International research clearly shows that it sensible to have the widest possible toolkit of methods for addressing issues of architectural quality. Not least of these is continual advocacy and raising the level of awareness of the public and developers, professionals and other special interest groups.</p> <p>Specific methods such as the Architectural Review Panel may prove a useful complement/adjunct to the second visit to the Urban Design Panel, allowing specific architectural issues of projects at a more refined stage to be discussed by a panel of architects.</p> <p>Design guidelines and standards supporting assessment criteria better signal Council's anticipated outcomes and standards for development. Introduction of guidelines and standards can also assist with (potentially significant) consolidation and streamlining of lengthy design assessment criteria.</p> <p>Statutory design guidelines have weight within the Plan (greater certainty and effect than non-statutory design guidelines).</p> <p>A combination of discretionary assessment criteria/design guidelines with design standards gives the flexibility to provide more open-ended flexibility for the more qualitative, site or development specific design aspects, and through detailed design standards be more prescriptive providing greater certainty/control over specific detailed design issues where consistency of application is important.</p>	<p>Some of these methods may not be suited to the Auckland situation or may unnecessarily duplicate the objectives of existing non-regulatory methods.</p> <p>Design guidelines risk being over-prescriptive and potentially unable to anticipate future types of development, becoming irrelevant.</p> <p>Design guidelines require extensive interpretation by developers and council planners.</p> <p>Risk that design guidelines and standards do not result in anticipated development outcomes (e.g. too much or too little flexibility) which could lead to perverse built outcomes.</p>

**Recommended Method**

78. It is recommended that Option 2: Additional Non-Regulatory Methods be given further consideration. Option 2 builds on the success of new methods introduced in the past 5 years, have been successful, particularly indicators such as the level of public awareness of urban

---

design and design quality. A focus on further non-regulatory methods is not to negate the importance of retaining urban design assessment criteria and other plan provisions. It is important to note that recommended methods for frontages and building design, including statutory design guidelines and design standards will contribute to improving architectural quality by providing further guidance and direction and where appropriate prescriptive rules and standards. It is also recommended that the current range of non-regulatory methods, including the Urban Design Panel, be continued.

79. Option 2 is about supplementing these with additional non-regulatory methods used elsewhere and that could potentially be at the disposal of Auckland Council. It is noted that this is the approach taken by Waterfront Auckland, as outlined in the Waterfront Plan Working Paper on Architecture and Design (refer References). There is considerable scope for Council to adopt a similar approach in some instances and this is identified in the Draft City Centre Masterplan. For example, Council has a strategic land holding of undeveloped land within the Aotea Quarter that they can use to leverage high quality development that supports the goal of intensification around the proposed Aotea CRL Station.
80. Specifically, the following additional non-regulatory methods are recommended for further investigation.

#### *3D Digital City Model*

- Cities such as Melbourne and Adelaide have developed comprehensive 3D digital models that provide accurate and detailed architectural modelling of buildings in the city centre. An invaluable planning and design tool for both development of new buildings and broader strategic planning initiatives. Applicants are provided with a copy of the model to assist architects and building designers to develop their buildings in a simulated real environment to refine their proposals. Both developers and Council are able to use the model to assist in assessment of development applications for new buildings, enabling accurate overshadowing, overlooking and simulation of how the building will look within the city context including relationship to streets, public spaces, and heritage buildings. Applicants could be required to submit a model of their building at the time of application and also a refined model once approved (where further design development or changes have taken place) so that the master model is constantly updated with the latest developments. It can also be used as a strategic planning and public consultation tool. The development of a 3D spatial model of the City can assist in testing scenarios and visualising the future of the city centre, particularly in relation to growth scenarios and land use planning. It can be used to test and communicate scenarios such as do building height controls.

#### *Comprehensive Development Plans*

- Non-Statutory Comprehensive Development Plans (CDPs) are a planning and design tool that can help enable architectural quality by delineating anticipated design outcomes to a high level of detail. They are most effective at guiding and delivering integrated development of precinct, blocks or very large sites, particularly where they are in single or limited land ownership. Non-statutory CDPs can be developed to a much higher level of detail; for plans that anticipate an extended implementation period, being outside the plan provides flexibility for where departures from the plan are required.

#### *Design Codes*

- Similar to Comprehensive Development Plans; design codes are a more detailed form of design guidance than Design Guidelines, are likely to be stricter and more exact where possible, and compliance is likely to form part of the legal arrangements governing what and how development occurs. A code is likely to comprise both a three dimensional masterplan and a supporting set of written documents. Like CDPs, Design Codes are most suitable for larger schemes such as major brownfield redevelopment sites, particularly where they are in single ownership. Codes should be exacting in terms of the urban design principles and more flexible in respect of the architectural response. They should not be used to rigidly code decisions that only the market can make (e.g. rigidity

---

over the location and mix of neighbourhood retail is pointless if the market determines that the location and mix should work differently). (Refer CABA: The Use of Design Guides).

#### *Public Exemplar/Demonstration Projects*

- Public-led demonstration projects can be an effective tool in leading the market in innovative forms of development in ways that can catalyse further development by the private sector and establish benchmarks for the quality of future development.

#### *Competitive Design Policy/Design Competitions*

- A Competitive Design Policy would require or encourage use of design competitions (open or invited) for large scale or high value developments and/or developments in high profile or sensitive locations. While such initiatives could be voluntary, the City of Sydney is introducing a mandatory competitive design policy that requires developments of a certain height or capital value or in certain locations, to demonstrate they are the result of a competitive design process (either an architectural design competition or a prescribed competitive design alternatives process). This includes all buildings over 50 metres in height within Central Sydney (and 25 metres outside of the centre), as well as any development with a value of more than AUD\$50million.

#### *Design Talent Pool*

- A method utilised by Waterfront Auckland whereby a design talent pool is established of accredited design practitioners, reviewed on a yearly basis. The pool is called upon for invited design competitions and requests for tender for development of sites owned by Waterfront Auckland or within its area of influence where developers agree to using this resource. (Refer Waterfront Auckland: Waterfront Masterplan Working Paper: Architecture & Urban Design. 2011).

#### *Economic Incentives*

- Economic incentives, namely rates relief send a strong signal to the private sector of desired outcomes and may expedite development of a certain type or nature where the market is unwilling to go unaided.

#### *Physical Transformation Projects*

- Public investment to transform streets and public spaces not only provides a high quality public realm but can signal and lead the market, catalysing development and providing greater quality assurance and certainty for private investment.

#### *Advocacy*

- Promote design quality through policy/strategy, public relations and media strategies, awards programmes and educational tools, to raise the level of awareness of the public, developers, professionals and other special interest groups. Auckland has made considerable strides in this area in the past 5 years or so; public awareness of the importance of urban design can be attributed to this.

#### *'Process' Methods*

- The Urban Design Quality Audit undertaken by Boffa Miskell limited for Auckland City Council in July 2009<sup>2</sup> recommended the following courses of action to improve urban design outcomes within the city:
  - Recommend applicants submit to Urban Design Panel at least twice.
  - Require a greater level of detail in consent drawings and conditions.
  - Require more detail and comment on landscape/streetscape treatment at Urban Design Panel stage.
  - Create more detailed regulatory design guidance/standards.

---

<sup>2</sup> Boffa Miskell Ltd for Auckland City Council: Urban Design Quality Audit: Opportunities for Improvement of Urban Design Outcomes through the Regulatory Process. July 2009

- 
- Holistic Design Review (comprehensive review of interconnected urban design elements – architecture, public realm/streetscape /landscape design, ground floor uses, building materials/finishes/colours etc versus current process where often reviewed in isolation from each other and at different points in the process).

#### *Architectural Review Panel*

- A panel of registered architects nominated by the NZIA and dedicated to reviewing the finer detailed aspects of architectural quality. Such a panel could complement the work of the Urban Design Panel, allowing assessment of specific architectural issues of projects at a more refined stage once the broader urban design considerations have been addressed and further design development occurred.

#### *Holistic Design Review*

- Instigate internal Council process whereby a comprehensive and integrated review of applications is undertaken of the interconnected urban design elements – architecture, public realm/streetscape/landscape design, ground floor uses, building materials/finishes/colours etc versus the current process where often reviewed in isolation from each other and at different points in the process. Potentially appoint a single case manager within the Council to ensure that issues are understood throughout the process and an integrated approach to consenting is pursued. This would also ease some of the frustrations of applicants in having to deal with different staff at different stages of the process. This has the benefit of joined-up thinking and co-ordinated advice from Council to applicants and can follow through to Standard Consent Conditions.

#### **Recommended Methods**

81. It is recommended that these non-regulatory methods operate in conjunction with a set of consolidated design assessment criteria that apply to the city centre as a whole, with particular additional criteria applying to areas of built form distinctiveness or places of transformation.

---

## Land Use Activities

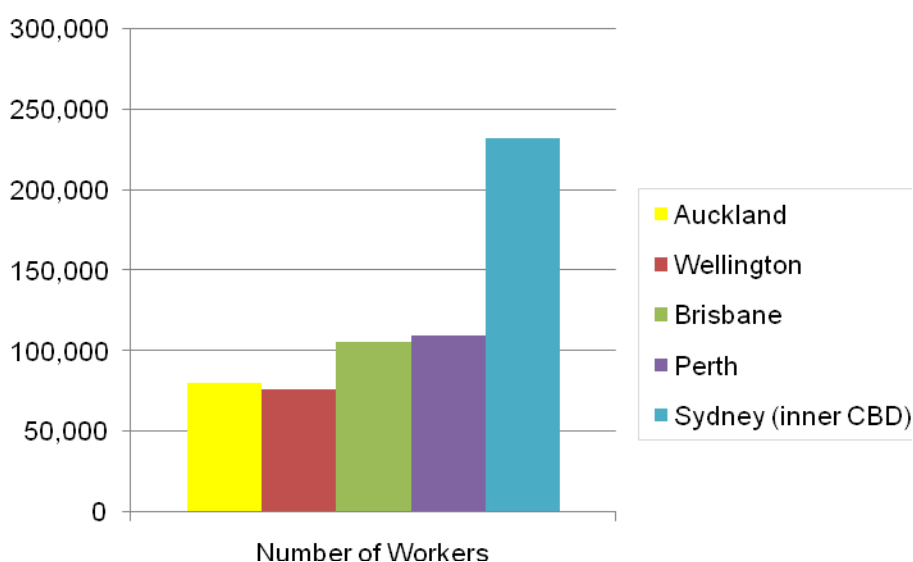
### Introduction

82. This section of the report considers how to manage the location and operation of activities in the city centre, taking into account the strategic direction set out in the draft Auckland Plan and CCMP and the effects that various activities have on the environment and on each other (i.e. reverse sensitivity effects). This section of the report focuses on commercial and residential activities.

### Commercial

83. Auckland's city centre is the pre-eminent hub of commercial activity. Currently, approximately 80,000 people work in the city centre, similar to Wellington (76,000), although substantially less than Perth (110,000), Brisbane (106,000) and Sydney (232,000). The city centre accommodates approximately 13% of Auckland's employees, which is less than Wellington (33%) but similar to Sydney.

84. The finance and insurance, property and business and government administration and defence sectors ("commercial sector") are a major part of the city centres employment population. The commercial sector comprises approximately 39,000 (40%) of workers which represents a 50% share across the region.



85. The finance and insurance, property and business and government administration and defence sectors ("commercial sector") are a major part of the city centre's employment. The commercial sector comprises approximately 39,000 (40%) of workers within the city centre and over 50% of commercial sector jobs within Auckland City.

86. The employment projections in the draft Auckland Plan indicate that 140,000 workers will be employed in the city centre by 2041 with the City Rail Link anticipated to attract between 5,000 – 20,000 jobs. Retaining and growing the commercial sector of the city centre is a fundamental component in achieving this employment growth and to achieving a globally significant centre with a vital and vibrant retail and commercial core. An important aspect of this is the agglomeration benefits in the co-location and focus of a commercial core, or engine room, in part of the city centre. Studies have confirmed that there is a benefit and competitive functional advantage in the commercial sector grouping together<sup>3</sup>.

87. Office vacancy rates within the city centre are high with approximately 130,000m<sup>2</sup> existing vacant business space. Vacancies are particularly high in areas of the city centre which are located at a distance from the prime waterfront locations (such as along Symonds Street).

---

<sup>3</sup> Assessing Agglomeration Impacts in Auckland – Phase 2, May 2008

88. There is competition for commercial office space on a local, city wide, national and international basis. On a local basis, areas of the city centre such as the waterfront and the Shortland Street precinct are seen as being more attractive to commercial activities for amenity and accessibility reasons. On a city-wide basis, office activity within the city centre currently competes with office space within other centres (such as Manukau) and business park areas. Currently, with the exception of Newmarket, maximum parking limits do not apply to other centres while there is currently no limit on the establishment of office activity or parking within many of the existing industrial zoned areas of the City (such as the Business 4 zone). The city centre therefore currently competes with other centres and with lower priced land zoned for industrial purposes on an uneven footing, highlighting the need for alignment with other workstreams such as those addressing transportation and parking.
89. Internationally, Auckland City competes with other major cities such as Sydney and Melbourne which reinforces the need for Auckland to be seen as a globally significant city and centre.
90. Currently the Operative Central Area Plan takes a ‘hands-off’ approach to commercial activity. Office activity is listed as permitted throughout the city centre with the exception of parts of Wynyard Quarter and the Port Precinct.
91. Within this context, this section of the report addresses the options available within the RMA framework of the Unitary Plan to enable or encourage commercial activity within the city centre in order to achieve the strategic direction, beyond the enabling provisions currently contained in the Operative Central Area Plan.

### Strategic Direction

92. The draft Auckland Plan sets out an urban centres hierarchy which describes the city centre as:

*“the focus of **national and international business, tourism, education, cultural and civic activities**. It provides **significant capacity for business** and high density residential development within a variety of precincts. It is also the focus for regional transportation services. It is surrounded by the city fringe, a walkable catchment, which provides complementary living, business and entertainment activities within traditional and higher density neighbourhood living and specialist precincts”* [highlighting added]

93. Although the no specific directives are included in the draft Auckland Plan in relation to activity with the city centre, the following description is provided<sup>4</sup> [highlighting added]:

Centre	Built form	Transport	Economic	Social
<b>City Centre</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High rise</li> <li>• Highest densities in the region</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional hub</li> <li>• High trip generation given its destination function.</li> <li>• Has the provision of high frequency public transport</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>24 hours</b></li> <li>• <b>Central banking, finance, insurance, and professional services.</b></li> <li>• <b>Other service sector and creative businesses.</b></li> <li>• <b>Head offices</b></li> <li>• <b>Specialty retail</b></li> <li>• <b>Activity precincts</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Civic headquarters</li> <li>• Major cultural / entertainment hub</li> <li>• Premier public spaces</li> <li>• Tertiary education</li> </ul>

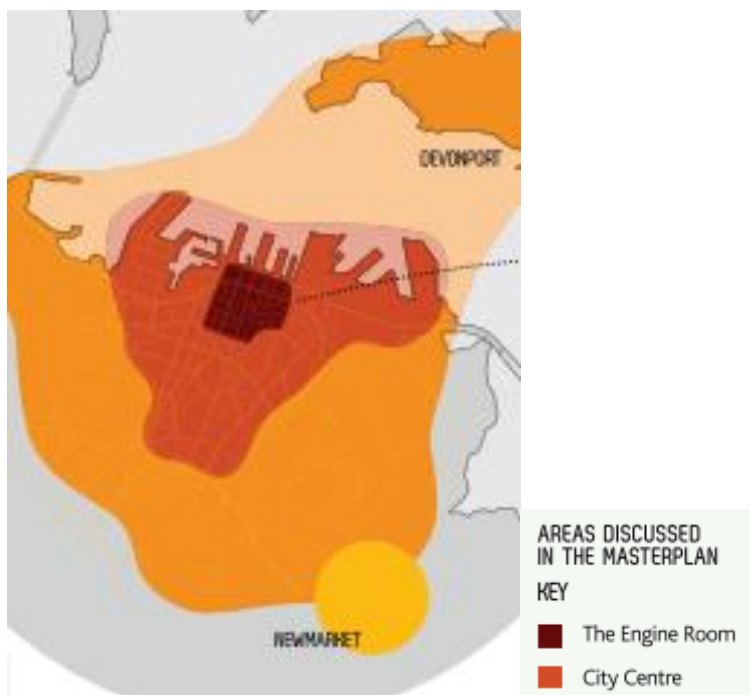
94. This highlights the importance of the commercial sector in contributing to the economic role and function of the city centre.

<sup>4</sup> Draft Auckland Plan, Table 8.2 Urban Centres Classification

95. The draft CCMP sets out the following vision for the city centre:

*“By 2032 Auckland’s City Centre will be **highly regarded internationally as a centre for business and for learning, innovation, entertainment, culture and urban living – all with a distinctly ‘Auckland’ flavour.**” [highlighting added]*

96. As one of eight transformational moves, the draft CCMP sets the goal to create an “engine room” within the central core area bound by Quay Street, Nelson St, Victoria Street and Albert Park to cement and grow its pre-eminent role in the nation’s economy.



"Areas discussed in the Masterplan", draft CCMP (pg 17)

97. The opportunities and challenges to be facilitated or overcome are described as:

- Queen Street as the ‘golden mile’ which lies at the heart of a grid of main streets sharing retail and commerce activity and creating a distinctly Auckland CBD;
- The office and retail competition from other competing centres;
- Growth of apartments within the downtown area; and
- The opportunity to emphasise its identity and uniqueness.

### RMA Implications

98. The RMA implications to giving effect to the strategic direction relate to those matters identified in Part 2 of the Act and specifically its purpose which is to achieve sustainable management. The direction to manage the use, development and protection of natural and physical resources in a way, or at a rate which enables people and communities to provide for their social, economic, and cultural well-being and for their health and safety requires the consideration of the form and function of the urban environment. This includes the consideration of the way in which activities within the urban environment of the city centre contribute to social, cultural and economic wellbeing, of people and communities including the contribution of particular activity to vitality, vibrancy and a sense of place and community.

99. The need to safeguard the potential of existing physical resources to meet the needs of future generations and to achieve efficient use and development of natural and physical resources (s7(b)) also directs activities to be located to make the most efficient use of land existing physical resources such as street upgrades, community facilities, open space and transport facilities.

100. The requirement to also manage the use, development and protection of natural and physical resources (s5(c)) and the function of local authorities to achieve integrated development (s31) also requires activities and the transport network to complement each other in order to encourage the use of public transport in order to reduce transport related effects on the environment.

**Strategic Objective**

101. A globally significant centre for business – the Engine Room of the Auckland economic powerhouse with a vibrant and vital retail and commercial core.<sup>5</sup>

**Assessment of Objective**

102. As identified with respect to the RMA implications, the city centre is the most integrated part of Auckland with the greatest potential for both development and further integration. In this regard, reinforcing the role of the city centre to create a compact and sustainable urban form will achieve the purpose of the Act, specifically the ability to provide for the economic, social and cultural well-being of city centre residents, workers, and visitors, and the region’s population as a whole.

103. In this respect:

- A fundamental requirement for a compact urban form is to focus commercial employment within centres. That is because offices are both the land use that is most effectively serviced by public transport and the one from which the greatest benefits flow from changing travel patterns. Office workers travel to a set location along a set route twice a day. Unlike retail customers theirs is not a discretionary trip – they have to undertake it for employment reasons and do so at time agreed with their employer. In many cases the trips take place during peak traffic times. Within the city centre, the area most efficiently served by public transport is the downtown area within convenient walking distance of Britomart rail station and the lower Queen Street bus terminal.
- Offices can be located in high or medium rise structures whereas retail tends to occur over two levels at most. Thus a great number of office workers can be accommodated in buildings immediately adjacent to public transport nodes.
- Providing a focus for commercial employment ensures that the physical resources of that part of the City are being efficiently used and also provides for synergies between businesses.
- Providing a commercial activity core also assists to improve the vibrancy and vitality of that part of the City during working hours. This can then complement entertainment uses by providing a 24hr inner city environment.
- Focusing commercial activity within centres also frees up other land for its intended use, including land which is better positioned and suited for accommodation activity and out-of-centre industrial land resource.

**Policy approaches**

104. Three broad policy approaches have been identified to achieve a globally significant centre for business.

**Option 1: Enabling commercial and other activities throughout the city centre (status quo)**

105. Enabling commercial activity throughout city centres is common in other planning jurisdictions and is essentially the status quo in Auckland. As summarised in the methods research table in Appendix 2, this approach is generally taken in Sydney, Melbourne and in other major cities across New Zealand including Wellington and Christchurch.

Benefits / Advantages	Costs/Disadvantages
-----------------------	---------------------

<sup>5</sup> CCMP Outcomes and Indicators



<p>The existing policy approach matches the status quo allows the market to determine the most appropriate location office and other activities (such as accommodation) within the city centre.</p>	<p>Transport efficiencies may be reduced as his approach will not necessarily achieve a consolidated commercial core within the 'Engine Room' and close to the most accessibility area to public transport.</p> <p>Less potential for agglomeration benefits and for increased vitality and amenity within the inner city area during working hours.</p>
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

**Option 2: Encourage commercial activity within the “engine room” of the city centre**

106. This option involves encouraging commercial activities to establish in the engine room using regulatory and non-regulatory mechanisms. Of the international examples, a more targeted and incentivised approach is taken in Brisbane and Westminster, the former by identifying major office building sites and strategic redevelopment areas and the latter via direction of office development to a core zone and specific sites.

<b>Benefits / Advantages</b>	<b>Costs/Disadvantages</b>
<p>This policy approach has the potential to encourage the consolidation of commercial activity near to the most accessibility area to public transport with agglomeration, vitality and amenity benefits.</p> <p>Non-regulatory mechanisms offer different (e.g. financial or risk-sharing) attractions to private development</p> <p>Non-regulatory mechanisms could be targeted to specific opportunities that would be exemplar projects and stimulate development elsewhere in the Engine Room</p>	<p>The potential disadvantage of this policy approach is that actual incentives to attract the market to a particular area of the City may not be able to be achieved under the RMA framework without disincentivising other activities.</p> <p>This approach could also be seen as favouring one area of the city over another thereby disadvantaging other land owners.</p> <p>Financial incentives involve direct costs to the public via reduced rates or contributions take</p> <p>To be effective, such mechanisms are more likely to be viable for specific opportunities and therefore not able to more generally achieve the strategic objective for the whole of the identified Engine Room</p> <p>On their own, non-regulatory methods may not provide sufficient incentive to overcome wider market forces</p>

**Option 3: Discourage non-commercial activity within the “engine room” of the city centre**

107. This option involves disincentivising non-commercial activities from establishing in the core. None of the international examples reviewed discouraged non-commercial activities in their core commercial area.

<b>Benefits / Advantages</b>	<b>Costs/Disadvantages</b>
<p>This policy approach will ensure that land is not taken up by other activities (i.e. residential apartments) within areas of the city centre which are best suited to the agglomeration of commercial activity.</p> <p>This policy approach has the potential to encourage the consolidation of commercial activity within the most accessibility area to public transport with agglomeration, vitality and amenity benefits.</p>	<p>This policy approach may be seen by some land owners as the removal of development rights from land within the identified Engine Room, particularly if the land titles affected are not large enough to construct viable commercial office floor plates.</p> <p>It would be difficult to justify discouraging non-commercial activities within the core using regulatory mechanisms as cannot be linked to an environmental effect.</p>

**Recommended Policy Approach**

108. The recommended policy approach to achieve the strategic objective is a combination of Option 1 and Option 2. While this policy approach would not prevent non-commercial activities from locating within the engine room as Option 3 would do, it is considered

---

inappropriate to take a directive approach to land use activities in the city centre given it is an intensive mixed use environment where growth must be enabled.

### **Methods**

109. Enabling commercial activities within the engine room can be achieved by using rules in the Unitary Plan (e.g. permitted activity status).
110. Encouraging commercial activities in the engine room can be achieved by either regulatory or non-regulatory methods. Regulatory development potential incentives (e.g. GFA bonus) could be used to encourage commercial activities to locate in the engine room, however, this approach can be unpredictable and can result in windfall benefits for commercial activities that were going to locate there anyway. Another approach could be the removal of accommodation bonuses within the central core. Non-regulatory incentives are more appropriate to encourage commercial activities to locate within the engine room as they are not linked with a statutory plan and can therefore be stopped if the objective is (or is not) achieved.
111. To summarise, it is recommended that commercial activities be enabled in the engine room using regulatory methods and encouraged using non-regulatory methods. It is recommended that further work be undertaken to investigate the implications of the potential removal or reduction of the accommodation bonus in the central core.

---

## **Residential**

112. The city centre is home to 22,000 residents and this is expected to rise to greater than 50,000 residents by 2032, with the draft Auckland Plan putting forward a target of 78,000 city centre residents by 2040. These figures identify a need to accommodate and enable this projected increase in the city centre resident population and present an opportunity to develop a 'lively & diverse urban realm' to support these residents as proposed by the draft CCMP.
113. The current challenges facing the residential population in the city are a lack of diversity in the residential housing available which typically favours the single, student transient resident; conflicting amenity issues and insufficient associated infrastructure/ services to support families, in particular children, and the elderly.

## **Strategic Direction**

114. Outcome 6 of the draft CCMP aims to achieve 'more people living in the city centre' and develop a 'lively and diverse 24 hour urban realm to support them'.
115. The draft Auckland Plan and the CCMP also put forward the theme of 'inclusiveness' which as it relates to the residential population means providing a range of living options which will accommodate a variety of family dynamics and budgets. In particular, the focus is on a 'child-friendly city' and the provision of community facilities to support these younger residents.
116. The key issues that come out of these strategic moves relate to ensuring the quality of residential living provided is improved and maintaining a balance between the residential and commercial communities in the city centre. Specifically, this means addressing amenity and reverse sensitivity issues such as noise and odour.
117. It is noted that the draft CCMP envisages establishing and strengthening the areas of Wynyard Quarter, Hobson & Nelson Streets, Victoria Quarter, and Newton for residential living.

## **RMA Implications**

118. Encouraging living opportunities near the 'engine room' of the city and the most integrated public transport hub encourages to sustainable transport patterns. Providing living opportunities close to public infrastructure, including parks, streets and libraries encourages the efficient use of existing physical resources.
119. Furthermore, providing apartment living in multi-level buildings represents an efficient use of land resource: urban form. Establishing and maintaining stable residential neighbourhoods and support facilities while managing effects of other activities – creates a sense of place, distinctiveness and community while enabling people and communities to provide for their social, economic and cultural well-being as well as their health and safety.

## **Strategic Objective**

120. The following strategic objective is proposed:

A city centre with a significant and growing residential population which provides a good standard of residential amenity and which continues to enable the operation and growth of non-residential activity.

## **Assessment of Objective**

121. As discussed in section 3.3, the objective enables people and communities to provide for their social, economic and cultural well-being as well as their health and safety by offering a choice of quality accommodation options that ensure that a good level of amenity is maintained for residents. The objective also recognises that a balance is required to be struck between achieving a good standard of residential amenity and enabling the operation and growth of the significant commercial, industrial and entertainment sectors within the Central Area.

## Policy Approaches

122. Four broad policy approaches have been identified to achieve the strategic objective for urban living within the city centre.

### Option 1: Enable residential development throughout the city centre and ensure an appropriate level of amenity

123. This policy option involves enabling residential development throughout the city centre. Potential reverse sensitivity effects would be managed by ensuring that residential development provides an appropriate level of amenity for residents.

Benefits / Advantages	Costs / Disadvantages
Encourages a mixed-use city centre which supports the integrated approach.	Potential for low amenity residential areas to arise throughout the city.
Provides for market-driven growth which encourages development.	Does not provide for concentrated residential areas.
May result in a reduction in administrative costs and time for the processing of applications for residential development.	This approach may not appropriately address reverse sensitivity issues.
Enabling residential development throughout the city gives rise to a range of choices for potential residents being location and accommodation type.	May undermine the agglomeration of related activities, such as the establishment of an Engine Room in the core area, as residential development may be interspersed throughout.
Results in a range of affordable housing options.	May discourage commercial activities from locating in certain areas.

### Option 2: Encourage residential development in specific areas of the city centre and manage potentially incompatible activities in these areas (e.g. bars/nightclubs)

124. This option involves encouraging residential development to occur in specifically identified areas within the city centre.

Benefits / Advantages	Costs / Disadvantages
Reduces sporadic/ ad-hoc residential development throughout the city, particularly within the commercial district.	These pockets would limit the choice for potential residents in terms of location, and accommodation options.
Allows complementary services/ facilities to be developed in tandem in these areas.	This approach does not give rise to providing for affordable housing options.
Does not preclude residential development as appropriate elsewhere in the city.	May prevent residential development elsewhere in the city which would create pockets of exclusivity.
Provides high amenity areas for residential development.	Not market driven and may discourage residential development.
Pro-actively deals with reverse sensitivity issues.	Isolates residential areas.
This approach works well with non-statutory measures to encourage residential development, such as rates relief.	May reduce access to complementary services/ facilities for residents.
Gives greater control through further identifying residential precincts.	May result in residential areas being less accessible to transport hubs.
Provides for a sense of community within residential areas.	Does not support the integrated approach for a mixed use city centre.
Results in increased amenity levels within	

---

these areas.	
--------------	--

Addresses reverse sensitivity issues within these areas.	
----------------------------------------------------------	--

### **Recommended Policy Approach**

125. The recommended approach is Option 2 which is to generally enable residential activity but to also encourage residential activity within parts of the city centre through the management of potentially incompatible non-residential activities. This approach will also require the management of residential activity in areas of the city centre which have potential for reverse sensitivity effects on existing industry operations (i.e. the Port).

### **Methods**

126. Enabling and encouraging residential activity while also managing reverse sensitivity effects can be done through the refinement of existing district plan methods. This can be achieved by generally permitting the establishment of residential activity throughout the city centre except within areas where potential reverse sensitivity effects are acute (i.e. close to the Port). Residential activity could be encouraged through the use of an overlay which manages potentially incompatible activities (i.e. late night bars) within these areas. The general residential amenity controls such as minimum apartment sizes, acoustic attenuation and outlook standards can be retained with refinements to improve outcomes. Bonuses could also be moulded to encourage residential development within areas of the city centre which are deemed to be more suitable for residential activity.

---

## Historic Heritage and Historic Character

### Introduction

127. The identified priority for heritage in the Draft Auckland Plan is to enhance and reveal Auckland's evolving heritage. The Plan recognises that the growth and development of Auckland ought to be encouraged should not compromise Auckland's unique heritage aspects.
128. Auckland has a distinctive historic heritage which is integral to the region's identity. Heritage is important for economic, social and cultural wellbeing. Historic heritage values are finite and cannot be recreated. In the past, a lack of understanding of the value of historic heritage gave rise to its depletion. In a growing, changing city, there will continue to be pressures on retention of historic heritage. Active stewardship is required to protect the remaining resource.
129. Auckland city centre is of particular significance within the wider region and as the focus of early development and commercial and cultural life, has a concentration of items of heritage value. Since the losses of built heritage during the 1980s, historic heritage within the city centre has progressively been identified and recognised as worthy of management, protection and conservation. Whilst a start has been made through policy, scheduling of heritage items and objects, and other management mechanisms, there is still a long way to go to retain, enhance and reveal what we value in the city centre.

130. The City Centre Issues Paper identified the following key issue in relation to heritage:

*The intensification of the city centre and the high value of land places significant development pressure on historic heritage.*

*The protection of historic heritage from inappropriate subdivision, use and development is identified as a matter of national importance in the Resource Management Act 1991.*

*Unlike historic heritage in suburban areas and centres, managing historic heritage in the city centre is especially difficult given its high built density and associated land values. A unique planning response is therefore required.*

### Strategic Direction

131. The strategic direction for heritage is established within the Draft Auckland Plan Chapter 3: Auckland's Arts, Culture, Heritage and Lifestyle and within the CCMP.
132. The target for heritage across the City from the Draft Auckland Plan is to increase the number of scheduled items and areas by 100% from 2,100 to 4,200, by 2040.
133. The identified priority for heritage, Priority 3, is to enhance and reveal our evolving Heritage. The Plan recognises that our heritage values define who we are, where we have been and inform where we are going. It states that Auckland's built heritage contributes to our sense of belonging, enriches our environment and plays an important role in shaping the character of the neighbourhoods where we live. The Plan recognises that the growth and development of Auckland ought to be encouraged should not compromise Auckland's unique heritage aspects.
134. The following directives from the Draft Auckland Plan are of particular relevance to heritage and character in the city centre:  
Directive 3.6: *Protect nationally, regionally and locally significant historic heritage.*  
Directive 3.7: *Ensure that existing built and cultural heritage appropriately guide area regeneration and new development ... [in accordance with good design and local character]*
135. Auckland's historic heritage is recognised as a strong response to its distinctive natural heritage features. With respect to natural heritage, the Auckland Plan gives the following

---

relevant directives:

Directive 5.1 *recognise and promote*:

- the contribution of natural heritage to urban character and quality.
- natural heritage as part of sustainable rural land management.
- opportunities for conservation of natural heritage on public open space and private land”

Directive 5.2: *Identify, protect and restore regionally and nationally significant landscapes and natural heritage, including significant landscapes*

136. The natural heritage attributes of the city centre include coastline, landscapes (including the E10 and E16 view shafts to volcanic cones which traverse the city centre) and trees.
137. The CCMP sets out the following as its direction for heritage within Auckland’s city centre:
- Areas where heritage buildings and spaces are concentrated will form distinctive ‘character areas’. They will be high-quality amenity areas that are celebrated and new development will need to be particularly sensitive to their character.
  - The development and management of a framework for identification and statutory recognition of the interdisciplinary historic landscape.
  - Creation of heritage walks across the city.
  - Use of conservation best practice to lead the approach to managing the historic landscape with a variety of regulatory and non-regulatory tools.
  - Use of the council heritage investment fund to acquire buildings at risk, protect and refurbish them before handing them on.

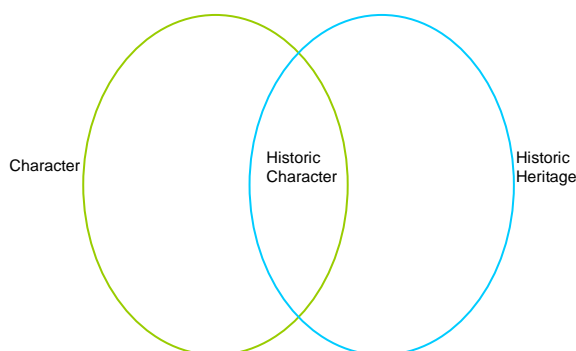
### **RMA Implications**

138. The RMA implications of giving effect to the Auckland Plan, and its broader strategic direction in relation to heritage, are examined in the “Heritage Issues Paper” and the “Option Evaluation Paper for Historic Heritage Workstream”. The following comments are made in respect to those aspects of heritage and character that are of particular relevance to the city centre.
139. This paper also makes a distinction between historic heritage and historic character which is discussed later. The RMA assists in this distinction, with very clear directives on the protection of historic heritage and maintenance and enhancement of amenity values, which include the character of the place (including its historic character).
140. The protection of outstanding natural features and landscapes from inappropriate subdivision, use and development is included as a matter of national importance under the Act (s6(b)) and is of particular relevance to the maintenance of the volcanic view shafts which traverse the city centre.
141. Similarly, the protection of historic heritage from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development is also a matter of national importance under the Act (s6(f)).
142. The efficient use and development of natural and physical resources is listed as matter which persons exercising their functions under the Act must have particular regard to (s7(b)). This is particularly relevant in the city centre where the land resource that provides for the highest densities and heights in the region, is a limited resource. This outcome always needs to be balanced against the section 6 protection outcomes identified above.
143. The maintenance and enhancement of amenity values is also identified in the Act as a matter which persons exercising their functions under the Act must have particular regard to (s7(c)). Amenity values are defined in the Act as those natural or physical qualities and characteristics of an area that contribute to people’s appreciation of its pleasantness, aesthetic coherence, and cultural and recreational attributes. City centre planning objectives which seek to maintain or enhance the particular character of an area (including character

---

defined by its historic character such as the eastern side of the Queen Street Valley) relate back to this section 7(c) matter.

144. The principle of reasonable use is also of particular relevance in a city centre context, again where development potential typically significantly exceeds the floor area of a heritage building. This is regulated through section 85 of the RMA which allows any person who considers that the District Plan provisions would render the land incapable of reasonable use to challenge the provision before the Environment Court. There are no recent cases which have tested section 85 reasonable use in the city centre; however it remains a relevant issue in determining appropriate methods for both historic heritage and historic character.
145. A clear policy distinction will need to be made in the District Plan between historic heritage and character and the area of overlap between the two, termed historic character.



146. The policies should recognise the need to protect those items and areas identified as historic heritage (such as scheduled buildings or conservation areas such as Princes Street). The policies should also recognise that in areas of historic character such as the Queen Street Valley (and other areas whose character is primarily determined by a concentration of historic buildings) a management approach to change which provides for appropriate growth and development is more appropriate.
147. Historic character can be defined as those sites and areas in the city centre which have a particular character that is mainly defined by historic values. They are distinct from historic heritage areas which are areas that will generally contain a high number of scheduled items and cumulatively significant built form. These areas may not necessarily contain a concentration of scheduled buildings, but may have a built form that is defined by historic buildings. In themselves, however such buildings may not have sufficient heritage values to warrant scheduling. An example of such an area is the blocks bounded by Sale Street and Drake Street to the south of Victoria Park, where the predominance of older buildings, small sites and a fine grained street pattern define the historic character of the area. Another example is Anzac Avenue/Emily Place, which exhibit a pattern of development closely tied to the creation of Anzac Avenue in the late 1920s. These areas may not warrant the same degree of protection as heritage areas; however an appropriate approach to managing change and development is required to ensure the historic character of such areas is not lost.
148. The policy and method approaches discussed below draw on this distinction between historic heritage and historic character.

### **Strategic Objective**

149. The Strategic Objectives and Policy Approach are set out in the “Option Evaluation Paper for Historic Heritage Workstream”. The strategic objectives are appropriate for all historic heritage throughout the region.
150. For the city centre, this strategic objective can be distilled to the following:



“To ensure the appropriate level of protection, management and conservation for items and areas of natural and historic heritage value and historic character areas, while ensuring that there are sufficient incentives to private land owners to encourage this outcome”.

### Historic Heritage Policy Approaches

151. The policy approaches to historic heritage are set out in a separate option paper covering historic heritage across the region. The recommendations are summarised below.

#### Policy Approach 1: Identifying historic heritage – Evaluating significance

152. Each of the nine legacy district plans and the Auckland Regional Plan: Coastal contain a schedule (or schedules) of historic heritage. This is the predominant tool used within the region to identify historic heritage, with related plan provisions targeted to protecting those items, places or areas identified within the schedules.

153. It is recommended that that a single consistent historic heritage significance evaluation method be developed for the region. The significance evaluation method will consist of criteria contained within the plan. Additional items, places or areas of historic heritage will be included within the schedule after having been evaluated as meeting the significance criteria, using the methodology.

#### Policy Approach 2: Manage, protect and conserve historic heritage – Extent of precautionary approach

154. It is recommended in the option paper covering historic heritage across the region that the schedules are managed and to adopt a precautionary approach only in areas where there is not a broad understanding of heritage values. A precautionary approach should be adopted where historic heritage values exist, but those values are yet to be fully understood. Such an approach to management is appropriate due to the cumulative effects of past destruction, a lack of accurate and reliable information, and the continuing threat to heritage.

155. In the city centre, heritage values are generally well understood. The City Centre represents a concentration of heritage resource that has had the benefit of many years of study and protection. In these circumstances, a precautionary approach is not considered necessary. Rather, an approach that identifies the heritage resource and applies a regime of either conservation, protection or management (according to the values of the heritage resource) is considered appropriate in the City Centre.

### Historic Heritage Methods

156. The following section considers regulatory methods to protect and manage historic heritage. Specifically, the option of relying on the current methods is considered against the option of modifying existing heritage floor space bonus incentives and new non-regulatory incentives.

#### Option 1 – Existing Methods for the Protection of Historic Heritage (including existing heritage floor space regime)

Benefits/Advantages	Costs/Disadvantages
<p>Established rule and criteria, which are being refined through plan change 42 to the District Plan: Central Area section.</p> <p>There has been a significant award of the bonus (albeit limited up take). As a result considerable unrealised floor space value</p>	<p>Does not provide sufficient incentive for heritage protection and the bonus currently operates in a flooded market (in part as result of the value of the heritage bonus relative to other bonuses).</p> <p>Inadequate recognition in the calculation</p>

<p>needs to be recognised in any changes to the bonus regime – in particular any change that would devalue the bonus.</p> <p>Remains theoretically an effective method to recognise that heritage protection in the city centre can result in the loss of significant development potential and providing for this loss.</p> <p>The award of the bonus assists with the costs of the conservation plan which is a pre-requisite of the bonus.</p>	<p>of the bonus is given to buildings with smaller floor plates or for particular scheduled parts of buildings</p>
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

**Option 2 –Incentivise the protection of historic heritage using a modified heritage floor space regime, together with non-regulatory methods**

157. The second option to incentivise the protection of built heritage in the city centre is through a combination of an improved heritage floor space bonus transferable development rights (TDR) and a range of non regulatory methods.
158. The existing heritage floor space bonus regime has some limitations, which significantly reduces its effectiveness and take up by the market. In particular, significantly more bonus has been granted than there is for demand for it to be taken up in development sites. With the depressed demand for new office development in the city centre there is, in turn, limited demand for the bonus. The accommodation bonus is currently offered at the same rate in the city centre as the heritage floor space bonus, and so there is no real incentive for developers of residential buildings to utilise the heritage floor space bonus.
159. There has been variable success in ensuring the conservation plan requirements have been met, post the award of the bonus. The bonus is also calculated on the basis of both heritage value (based on a numeric score) and the floor plate of the heritage building. With the introduction of a hybrid qualitative and quantitative assessment system for identification of heritage, the method of determining how much bonus is awarded will need to be reassessed. In addition, the opportunity exists to re-evaluate where the heritage floor plate parameter unduly penalises smaller buildings can be reassessed.
160. The heritage floor space bonus provides a significant opportunity to incentivise heritage protection and meets the strategic objective in relation to historic heritage for the city centre. In the city centre context, this remains the most effective method for recognising what may typically be a significant loss of development potential. This requirement attached to the award of the bonus is an incentive on landowners to ensure that conservation plans are prepared for heritage buildings. The bonus can recognise both the loss of development rights as a result of scheduling and for the cost of conservation of heritage buildings.
161. The following improvements are recommended to the heritage floor space bonus method to ensure it provides a better incentive for heritage protection:
- Increase the value of the bonus relative to other bonuses to encourage its use, through awarding a greater bonus relative to other bonuses available. This is the most effective way to reinvigorate the take-up the bonus and the heritage benefits (such as conservation plans) that occur and would significantly shift the cost benefit equation closer towards benefit for owners of heritage buildings.
  - Develop a better method for recording, tracking and promoting the use and take-up of the bonus. The City of Sydney system of recording is an effective public record which assists the market to understand what bonus is available and provides the market with easily accessible information by way of a regular web based newsletter on availability and price to promote and encourage its use. It is noted that before adopting this method, a

---

reasonable amount of work would need to be undertaken to bring the existing records up to date to a good degree of accuracy.

- Better enforcement of conservation plan requirements. It is also recognised that the cost of implementing a conservation plan can be a significant disincentive for landowners. Non-regulatory methods could also be investigated for a Council contribution to both the cost of preparing a conservation plan, as well as a contribution to the conservation work implementation (subject to a regular Council review of its implementation)
- Evaluate the method of calculating the heritage bonus to ensure that it aligns with any changes to the heritage evaluation criteria (such as points ranking) and that adequate recognition is provided for buildings with smaller floor plates or for particular scheduled parts of buildings (which may still be of significant heritage value).

162. Non-regulatory methods which could work in tandem with an improved heritage floor space regime include:

- **Heritage Grants**

163. There are many opportunities to better utilise existing heritage grants available to owners of heritage buildings. Possibilities range from undertaking physical works through to the preparation of a conservation plan. Given the limited amounts available and the cost of work that would normally be expected for heritage buildings in the city centre (the typical scale and complexity of the work) there are limited opportunities to make very real differences in terms of physical works. A contribution to the preparation of the conservation plan would provide better heritage outcomes in this context. There are also opportunities to award the grant differently and to target funding to particular works or sectors (for example to not for profit organisations such as churches, or for bodies that are responsible for a significant heritage resource such as the tertiary education campuses). The City of Sydney for example has an annual programme which provides matched funding of up to \$10,000 and only for not for profit landowners of heritage sites to undertake new conservation work.

- **Rates Relief**

164. There are also opportunities to offer rates remission to owners of heritage buildings, particularly where there is commitment by the building owner to maintain their building so that its heritage values are protected and potentially restored. The Nelson City Council currently grant rates remission in these circumstances, with the express purpose of recognising the public benefit of privately owned heritage buildings and encouraging building owners to maintain the heritage value of their buildings. The rates relief can be tied to a regular review of progress against the conservation plan.

- **Heritage Areas Conservation Management Plans by Council**

165. An important feature of the English Heritage conservation area approach which is typically lacking in New Zealand is the preparation of a management plan for the conservation area by the local authority. This recognises that the responsibility is not simply on the individual landowner, but the collective whole as well as the Council in its role with streets and open spaces. Components of a management plan might include design guidance; a regeneration strategy; enhancement schemes; street and traffic management; a trees, open space and green infrastructure strategy, and an enforcement and remediation strategy. The conservation area approach, coupled with a management plan, elevates the method from one that may be perceived as simply imposing additional limitations on the use and development of sites, to one which sets a clear strategy for enhancement of an area, which in turn adds value.

- **Earthquake-Prone, Dangerous and Insanitary Buildings Policy**

166. Although a regulatory method, the Council's 2011-2016 draft Earthquake-Prone, Dangerous and Insanitary Buildings Policy sits outside of the District Plan. It is a requirement of the Building Act 2011. This policy will have significant implications on the viability of heritage buildings protection in the city centre, as will the Insurance sector's response to insuring buildings identified as earthquake prone. A policy that allows such buildings to be strengthened to a lower standard than the new building standard and which provides for a

flexible approach to timelines to achieve this standard is an important method for heritage protection.

<b>Benefits/Advantages</b>	<b>Costs/Disadvantages</b>
<p>Maintains the benefits of a heritage floor space regime; namely, recognises that heritage protection in the city centre can result in the loss of significant development potential and provides for this loss, as well as assisting with the cost of a conservation plan for the scheduled item.</p> <p>Recalibration of the value of the bonus relative to other bonuses will increase its take up.</p> <p>There are many opportunities to better utilise existing heritage grants available to owners of heritage buildings. Possibilities range from undertaking physical works through to the preparation of a conservation plan.</p> <p>As noted above, an opportunity exists to better target such funds, with an obvious candidate being the preparation of conservation plans, these potentially having long lasting benefit for minimal expenditure.</p> <p>In combination more effectively deals with the private costs of heritage protection.</p>	<p>The implications on development potential and costs on recalibrating the heritage bonus relative to other bonus will need to be properly understood and it may lead to an increase in the cost of development (the heritage bonus must be purchased, as opposed to other bonuses such as accommodation which are typically simply part of a development and therefore do not incur any additional cost)</p> <p>There are some difficulties associated with heritage rates remission policies which would require careful consideration. It can be criticised for lack of transparency compared with other forms of spending such as grants or loans. There will be some costs in administrating, particularly where eligibility is tied to a commitment to undertaken work to a scheduled building. Lastly, such a measure may confer 'windfall benefits', rewarding ratepayers for actions which they would have taken anyway. These issues are not insurmountable and were clearly considered and overcome with the likes of the Nelson City Council when it adopted its current policy. Where the rates remission is tied to securing a particular outcome such as a conservation plan, then such windfall benefits are not necessarily negative.</p> <p>The clear challenge with the heritage grant is making a limited budget go far enough to make a difference.</p>

### **Recommended Method**

167. The recommended regulatory approach to incentivise the protection of historic heritage in the city centre is Option 2, which is through a combination of improvements to the heritage floor space bonus and a range of non regulatory methods as set out above.

### **Historic Character Policy Approaches**

#### **Option 1 – Manage development of specifically identified historic character buildings and areas (status quo)**

168. The issue of historic character was dealt with by the former Auckland City Council by way of plan changes 5 and 8 to the District Plan. These introduced a heritage character overlay to certain identified areas (generally groups of buildings rather than individual sites, excluding those already protected by heritage scheduling) and a pre-1940 control to the Queen Street and Karangahape Road Precincts. In both instances, a resource consent is required for the demolition of qualifying buildings, with the Council's discretion generally limited to consideration of the replacement building and how it maintains streetscape character. A

criticism of this approach is that it favours facadism, where the simplest way to maintain streetscape character is to retain only that face of the building and redevelop the remainder. With limited development occurring in the city centre since the introduction of the control in 2008, there is little conclusive evidence as to its effectiveness. The key criticism of the control from landowners, and indeed the former Auckland Regional Council, was that it was insufficient targeted, was a blunt method and in focussing on replacement buildings potentially does little to retain historic character.

169. Historic character areas would be identified on an overlay map. Policies and rules in relation to these areas would be focused on management, rather than protection or conservation. Appropriate redevelopment of sites (that are not specifically scheduled) should be provided for in historic character areas, emphasising streetscape qualities, with rules requiring assessment of new buildings against design criteria.

Benefits	Costs
<p>Fairly matches planning burden to planning gain by regulating only where necessary to achieve the strategic objective for historic character.</p> <p>Utilises the existing knowledge base of historic character values in particular areas of the city centre (area assessments).</p> <p>Allows a clearly defined response to each area. Policies and methods relating to historic character areas can be focused on management.</p> <p>Allows a clear identification of the particular character values of an area and what the desirable outcomes are, against which development proposals may be assessed.</p>	<p>Risk that historic character is not recognised and degraded in areas outside those specifically identified as having historic character value.</p>

## Option 2 – Manage historic character values of all development in the city centre

170. This option (the precautionary approach) would involve applying city-wide policies and rules to manage historic character values e.g. pre-1940's demolition control.

Benefits	Costs
<p>Addresses any potential gaps in knowledge of the city centre's heritage values.</p> <p>Although not entirely robust, 1940 is a useful marker in the development of the city centre (pre war/post war)</p>	<p>Potentially fails the planning burden vs planning gain principle as not all buildings in the city centre have historic character value.</p> <p>The 1940's control is relatively crude and does not account for heritage values that are not defined by building age.</p> <p>Potentially 'waters down' the concept of historic character as many buildings in the city centre were constructed prior to 1940.</p> <p>The precautionary approach which leads to a pre-1940 control is not required in the city centre where there is a good body of knowledge on the heritage values of the place. The precautionary approach which leads to a pre-1940 control is not required in the city centre where there is a good body of knowledge on the heritage values of the place.</p> <p>Perceived as 'scheduling by stealth' without any of the incentives and benefits that are available to scheduled heritage buildings or areas.</p>

	<p>The pre 1940 control is not effective to maintain or enhance character as it focuses on maintaining streetscape character, without any clear identification of what that particular character is nor what are the desirable outcomes.</p> <p>Limit growth potential of city centre.</p>
--	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

**Recommended Policy Approach**

171. Option 1 is recommended as it will result in a regulation that is evidence-based and targeted at areas that are expressly identified as having historic character. The identification of historic character areas would be based on a range of criteria, not just building age, resulting in a robust control.

**Methods**

172. There are broadly two methods available to manage historic character in specifically identified areas of the city centre. The first is to allow for appropriate development and change in historic character areas, providing for demolition and rebuilding. The second is to tightly limit demolition in order to maintain existing buildings, as a method of retaining existing character.

**Option 1 – Policies, rules and assessment criteria which allow for demolition and appropriate redevelopment**

<b>Benefits</b>	<b>Costs</b>
<p>Fairly matches planning burden to planning gain by regulating only where necessary to achieve the strategic objective for historic character.</p> <p>Recognises that historic character buildings do not warrant the same level of protection as historic heritage buildings. If they did, then they would be on the schedule of historic heritage.</p> <p>Provides for growth and development.</p> <p>Allows for the assessment of the replacement building at the time demolition is proposed. Recognises that new buildings can maintain and enhance the character of a place.</p>	<p>Risk that the character of a place is lost if too many buildings are demolished.</p> <p>Can lead to a facadism response, whereby only the faced of a building can be retained to maintain streetscape appearance and character and development behind occurs.</p>

**Option 2 – Policies, rules and assessment criteria which limit demolition**

<b>Benefits</b>	<b>Costs</b>
<p>Ensures the character of a place is maintained by preserving buildings.</p>	<p>Opportunities for growth and development are severely restricted, particularly as the method would apply to whole areas as opposed to single buildings.</p> <p>Possibly sets the bar higher than heritage buildings, where demolition is sometimes acceptable.</p> <p>Fails to recognise that new buildings can maintain or enhance the character of a place, even its historic character (for example the High Street area has a particular historic character which new developments such as Chancery Square, maintain or enhance).</p> <p>Would be difficult to defend in the above</p>

	circumstances.
--	----------------

**Recommended Method**

173. The recommended method is Option 1 is to allow for appropriate development in change in historic character areas, providing for demolition and rebuilding. This method would need to be supported by rigorous rules and assessment criteria which enable an assessment of the replacement building at the time of demolition and if it is not appropriate, the ability to decline the application. Assessment criteria would need to relate back to the objective of new buildings maintaining or enhancing the character of a place. The Unitary Plan should specify what this character is, through a clear statement of historic character values relevant to a particular place, to assist in the evaluation of new buildings.

<b>Authors</b>	
Peter Hall	Consultant Planner, Boffa Miskell Limited
Nick Roberts	Consultant Planner, Barker and Associates
Angela Smith	Principal Planner
Rachel Morgan	Planner