

APPENDIX C

Urban design review



URBAN DESIGN SPECIALIST REPORT

To: Earl Brookbanks. Senior Planner; City Centre.
Auckland Council

From: Peter Joyce. Principal Specialist - Urban Design
Built Environment Unit, Auckland Council

Date: 3 December 2013

Subject: Request for Expert Advice - Urban Design
"Elliott Tower"
106-108 Albert Street, Central Area, Auckland,

Application #: R/VCC/2006/7730/1

Dear Earl

Thank you for the opportunity to review the Section 127 RC Application from NDG Pacific for redesign of the proposed Elliott Tower. I understand Application seeks to vary the previously consented (2007) mixed use development (retail and apartments) and replace it with both a modified design for the building form and an increased mix of uses (retail, cinemas, apartments, hotel and ancillary function spaces), accommodated within: 5 levels of basement parking; a 9 storey podium and; a tower of a height equivalent to 52 levels above Elliott Street..

From the information provided, I have reviewed the following as being relevant to my urban design assessment of the revised development proposal for the site at 106-108 Albert St. Auckland Central Area:

1). Documentation related to the current S.127 Application for RC:

- Architectural drawings, plans and photo-montage images prepared by Paul Brown and Architects; dated October 2013
- Application documentation assembled by Mt.Hobson Group – Town Planning and Resource Consent Solutions; dated 4 November 2013. Including :
 - Site details, description of the proposed development, and background to the previous approved RC process and decisions. Prepared by MHG, October 2013.
 - Assessment of Environmental Effects. Prepared by MHG, October 2013.
 - Legal Opinion. Prepared by BerrySimons; dated 1 November 2013.
 - Elliott Tower Design Report. Prepared by Paul Brown of Paul Brown and Architects; dated October 2013

2). Documentation related to the previously approved RC Application (2007):

- Resolutions Passed subsequent to Planning Hearing for the previous RC Application. Hearing dates 24, 25, 27 September 2007.
- Urban Design Report. Prepared by Sue Evans; Snr. Urban Designer, Central Area Planning, Auckland City Council; dated 29 June 2007.

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The current design proposal has been progressively developed and refined as a result of several design iterations explored through regular pre-application review processes since October 2012. Urban Design focussed Pre-application meetings and discussions have included the Applicant's representative and consultants, Council planning and UD officers and the Auckland Urban Design Panel.

Having reviewed the current RC application documents and design drawings and assessed them against the relevant Auckland City DP, Central Area Section Assessment Criteria under Part 5 - Activities Section 5.6.3 d), it is my opinion, as expressed through this document, that as a result of these processes the current building design proposal is generally in accordance with the DP criteria and accepted UD principles. Consequently, pursuant to Section 127 of the RMA the current application for changes to the existing RC approved in 2007 can be supported from an urban design perspective, subject to any amendments to previous conditions of consent and/or imposition of new conditions of consent s to mitigate potential adverse effects as identified below in Section 5 of this report.

2.0 PROPOSAL

The subject site is located at the Northern end of the Auckland Central Area block bounded by Albert St., Victoria St. West, Elliott St., and Wellesley St. West. The site covers approximately one third of the block and the proposed development will have building frontages to Albert, Victoria and Elliott Streets. Currently the site is excavated into the relatively steep original slope falling from Albert St. to Elliott St and is utilised over 2 levels as an open carpark and the site for a "reverse bungy" entertainment facility. The site is one block (approximately 100m) from the Sky City SkyTower.

A previous design and development was proposed and consented over the period Feb 2006 – 19 Oct 2007. This original design included the following building components and uses:

- 6 basement levels of car parking and service/delivery spaces accessed from lower Albert St.;
- A 3 level podium providing for retail, food and beverage activities;
- Porte cochere with vehicle entry and exit at street level on Albert St.;
- 57 level tower above the podium providing for 259 residential apartments.

Under Section 1.0 *Proposal and Background (cl: 1.1-1.8)* of the current Application documents prepared by Mt.Hobson Group and Sections 2-6 of the Legal Opinion prepared by BerrySimons – Environmental Law consultants, comprehensive background analyses are provided of the statutory procedures, design related processes and decisions made over the 2006/2007 period which contributed to the approval of RC for the previous design and development proposal. Included are comments on the assessment and recommendations of the Auckland Urban Design Panel of the time and the findings and proposed conditions of consent prepared by the Commissioners for the Publicly Notified RC application and hearings. I believe these to be accurate and do not require reiteration or further comment.

The current RC application is for development of the subject site including construction of a tower and podium building to a height of 52 levels above Elliott St. with an additional 5 levels of basement parking below. The following building areas, activities and functions are proposed:

- A podium base that almost fully covers the extent of the site and provides 5 levels of retail tenancies with 4 levels of conference, event, hospitality/dining and fitness/recreation facilities above (including rooftop outdoor spaces).

- The potential to enable internal commuter access to the future development of the Central Rail Link (Albert St. Transit Platform) is provided in the north western corner of the podium at the Elliott St. level.
- 5 major street entries to the podium retail spaces are provided, 1 at each corner and 1 centrally on the Victoria St. frontage. Direct street access is proposed to ground floor retail tenancies on of the Albert, Victoria and Elliott St. frontages.
- 36 studio and 2 bedroom residential apartments at levels 13 to 16 of the tower.
- 269 hotel suites and rooms are provided above the apartment levels within the tower which has a footprint area equal to approximately a quarter of the site and is located centrally over the western side of the podium mall. The hotel is entered from the Albert St frontage and is approached via a porte cochere which vehicles access from the Albert-Victoria St. corner. Lower Albert St. is further bridged to provide a vehicle exit, mid-block, onto Albert Street. Pedestrian movement along Albert Street is provided on the subject site between the boundary with Lower Albert St. and the porte cochere.
- Access to loading bays for service vehicles and the entrance to basement carparking levels are via Lower Albert St., and enter the building at retail level 2.

A more extensive and detailed description of the proposal can be found in the application documents, especially the background information, AEE and report prepared by MHG and the Design Report prepared by Paul Brown and Architects. I consider the information provided to be accurate.

3.0 CONTEXT

3.1 SITE AND URBAN CONTEXT

It is assumed that an analysis of the site within the urban context of the Central Area was provided for the assessment of the previous development proposal and was considered acceptable for approval of the subsequent RC Application. In that the current application is seeking variations under *Section 127* of the RMA to the previously consented development proposal and the new proposed building is of a similar scale, and will accommodate similar permitted and /or discretionary activities identified in the DP, it is my opinion that a further full site and context analysis is not necessary.

As in Section 2 above, a more extensive and detailed analysis of the Site and the Urban Context can be found in the application documents, especially; the background information, AEE and report prepared by MHG; the Design Report prepared by Paul Brown and Architects; the Auckland City Council, UD Specialist's Report (2007); and the Commissioners' Hearing Report (2007). Again, I consider these to be accurate and providing useful information for this UD assessment.

3.2 STRATEGIC CONTEXT

3.2.1 Auckland Plan

The *Auckland Plan* is a spatial plan that sets the strategic direction and provides guidance for the growth and development necessary to effectively support and balance the social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of Auckland's increasing population over the next 30 years.

Strategic Direction 10 of the Auckland Plan requires that we “create a stunning city centre, with well-connected quality towns, villages and neighbourhoods.” To achieve this, three priorities have been identified:

- (1) Realise quality compact urban environments
- (2) Demand good design in all development
- (3) Create enduring neighbourhoods, centres and business areas.

To give effect to these priorities, the Auckland Plan defines four principles of good design to guide development:

- Identity
- Diversity
- Integration
- Efficiency

These design principles have been considered in the following urban design assessment in accordance with Section 104(1)(c) of the RMA.

3.2.2 Other Strategic Documents

The following documents and/or development projects have been considered in relation to effects of the proposed development on the urban environment of the Central City (and vice versa):

- *Draft City Centre Master Plan (September 2011): Chapter 06 The Green Link – Connecting Victoria Park, Albert Park and the Domain as part of a blue-green park network.*

The proposed Victoria St. Green Link will contribute significantly to the quality of the pedestrian experience along the Victoria St. frontage of the subject development, especially around the Victoria St. intersections with Elliott and Albert Streets.

3.3 STATUTORY CONTEXT

The site lies within a Pedestrian Orientated Area of the Core Strategic Management Area (SMA1) under the Auckland Council District Plan (Central Area Section 2004). The eastern half of the site lies within the Queen Street Valley Precinct and the western half is not subject to rules or assessment criteria related to any specific City Centre precinct.

Pursuant to section 127 of the Resource Management Act 1991 (the Act), the applicant has lodged an application to vary a previous Resource Consent (approved in 2007)). In relation to urban design assessment of the current proposed development, the application will be considered as a Discretionary Activity.

District Plan Objectives and Policies

I consider the following Objectives and Policies of the Auckland City District Plan (Central Area Section) are pertinent to assessment of the quality of urban design expected of this development proposal:

Part 3 – Resource Management

- Objectives: 3.5.1 Policies: e); g); i); j).
- 3.5.2 c).

- 3.5.3 a); b); c).
 - 3.5.4 a); b); c); d).
- Part 4 - Core Strategic Management Area**
- Objectives: 4.1.3.1; Policies: a); c); e); f).
 - 4.1.3.2; a); b); c).
 - 4.1.3.3;
 - 4.1.3.4; a); d); e).
- Part 14.4 – Queen Street Valley Precinct**
- Objectives: 14.4.3.1; Policies: a).
 - 14.4.3.2; d); e); f); h).
 - 14.4.3.4; a); d).

In my opinion, the proposed revised design for the Elliott Tower is generally in accordance with the Objectives listed above and will provide the quality of architectural expression, functionality and urban spatial definition necessary to meet the respective Anticipated Environmental Results associated with each Objective in the DP.

4.0 URBAN DESIGN ASSESSMENT

4.1 Pre Application Meetings and Communications

A number of valuable pre-application design discussions were held with the Applicant's representative, consultant planner and architect over a period of 16 months prior to lodgement of the consent Application. These discussions included: approximately 6 pre-application meetings, with numerous additional phone conversations and emails. This process covered numerous architectural and urban design matters which were generally successfully resolved through the incorporation of acceptable alternative design solutions.

Council's specialist urban design and planning staff members reviewing the project have appreciated the willingness of the applicant and their design team to work collaboratively in considering identified design issues related to regulatory requirements and/or urban design principles, and for exploring alternative design options and incorporating them into subsequent design developments to achieve a better quality of building and/or urban design.

I am satisfied that the pre-application process has been successful in progressively addressing specific planning and design issues to the point where the current development proposal can be supported from an urban design perspective.

4.2 Auckland Urban Design Panel (AUDP or, the Panel)

The proposed development was presented to the Auckland Urban Design Panel on 3 occasions: 7 February 2013; 4 July 2013; 26 November 2013. The latter Panel meeting was held after lodgement of the s.127 application for changes to the original RC.

Comments and recommendations expressed by the Panel in their report prepared subsequent to each meeting were, in my opinion, satisfactorily addressed by the Applicant's architectural consultants.

The final comments and recommendations offered by The Panel in their report after the 26 November 2013 meeting are listed below with comments:

1. That future design development ensures that the architectural intentions illustrated in the 3-dimensional views as presented are maintained. Given the prominence and importance of this building, the Panel recommends that the exterior materials are clearly notated on the resource consent drawings, to assist in achieving the above.

Drawings not yet provided. Confirmation of exterior cladding materials, finishes and colours to be requested by Condition of Consent (or amendment to existing condition no. 45).

2. The Panel supports the intention for a transparent façade to the retail areas of the podium and notes that it will be important that a retail management plan is developed to assist in maintaining transparency. Transparency is considered to be a critical factor in the success of the design.

New Condition of Consent recommended requiring the preparation of a management plan setting out how all podium glazed wall areas will be kept free of internal furnishings and advertising signs at all levels to maintain transparency and visual connections from the street to activities at the various levels of the podium.

3. The Panel notes and reaffirms its previous understanding that no signage is intended on the tower. The Panel agrees that keeping signage restricted to the podium levels is an important outcome. The Panel recommends that a signage plan for the whole building be prepared and that as part of this plan, no signage be permitted above the podium level.

Amendment proposed to existing Condition of Consent no.64 (see Section 5.0 of this report below).

4. The Panel notes and supports the intention to extend the atrium escalators to level six to directly serve the cinemas, and that this will require the re-planning of the cinema level. This would assist in improving public awareness of, and accessibility to the cinema facilities.

Stairs have been included in the latest amended drawing set labelled "Elliott Tower – Resource Consent Issue" dated October 2013.

5. The Panel notes that the storage area for Retail 3 will be adjusted to follow the alignment of the retail frontage at level one.

Amended on latest drawing set, as identified above.

I am satisfied that the recommendations offered by the Panel throughout the pre-application and consenting processes, have been acknowledged and subsequently addressed by the applicant's design consultants. At each stage, I have reviewed amendments to relevant drawings and documents and support the alternative design solutions proposed.

4.3 Urban Design Assessment

The following section provides an analysis of the urban design merits of the application with regard to urban design best practice and the relevant Auckland City District Plan (Central Area Section) objectives, policies (identified in Section 3.3 above) and assessment criteria. The intention is to assess and determine whether the proposal:

- Is appropriate to its context;
- Will result in a development that responds positively to the unique characteristics of the site and its surroundings;
- Will contribute to a high quality and enduring city centre.

Notwithstanding section 127 of the RMA, the development has been assessed holistically with consideration being given, where appropriate, to the following six elements which encapsulate the nature of the urban "environment" within which the development will sit:

- Urban Structure;
- Use & Activities;
- Built Form;
- Pedestrian and Vehicle Movement;
- Street scape and Building Interface;

- Community & Culture.

Assessments of the current development proposal have been provided in the AEE and Architect’s Design Report. It is my opinion that these assessments do not cover the criteria in enough depth and they only reference some of the assessment criteria under clause 5.6.3.1 d) of the DP. There has been further assessment provided using criteria under clause 14.4.7.2 of the Queen Street Valley Precinct Appendix of the DP. After closely reviewing the rules and Precinct Plans, I consider that these latter criteria do not apply to this site.

I have therefore undertaken a more comprehensive assessment of the current development proposal against all the assessment criteria under *Part 5 - Activities Section 5.6.3 d) for; The erection of any new buildingrequiring Restricted Discretionary consent under Rule 5.5.3* of the DP. This assessment is presented in the Table on the following pages. Further, more general comments on design qualities of the current development proposal are provided in section 4.3.2 immediately following the Table.

4.3.1 Assessment Criteria

Table 1:

Auckland City DP (Central Area Section): Core Strategic Management Area – SMA1. Section 5 Activities; 5.6.3 Specific Activities; 5.6.3.1: Additional Assessment Criteria; 5.6.3.1 d): The erection of any new building...

CRITERIA	DESIGN OUTCOME	DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION
<p>1. CBD Context, Street & Public Open Space Frontages</p>		
<p>General Design Principles</p>	<p>a) Quality of design; Dvlpmt. to contribute to the identity of the Auckland CBD both from a distance and from within it.</p> <p>b) Building is to: address & align with street</p>	<p>From a distance, the sheer height, scale and form of the tower will make it a dominant component of the Auckland Central city-scape. The currently proposed tower is essentially of the same height & plan form as the previously consented dvlpmt.</p> <p>From within the urban street environment of the CBD, the scale, mass and form of the podium will be experienced as having the greater significance. The currently proposed podium is of the same plan form as the previously consented dvlpmt. but the height is considerably increased from the previous 3 levels to 9 levels and the architectural expression of the street facing elevations is entirely revised.</p> <p>Elliott & Victoria St: podium frontages are aligned with & address the</p>

	<p>boundary; enclose street; provide street front continuity but avoid monotony thro' some variance of façade depth.</p> <p>c) Architectural façade elements to harmonise, compliment & strengthen street frontage.</p> <p>d) Avoid flat plane, blank facades; Provide modulation, relief, surface detail to reflect overall scale of bldg.</p> <p>f) Frontage at street level to contribute to ped. vitality, interest & safety; maximise doors, glazing, canopies etc.</p> <p>g) Entrances: visible, easily identifiable, and directly accessible.</p>	<p>respective streets; there is some recession of retail entries & glazing between structural elements at street level.</p> <p>The tower is set well back from both streets.</p> <p>Albert St: At street level the podium is set back from the boundary to provide a porte cochere approach to the entry into aptmt., hotel, & function activities of the tower. The porte cochere was not supported in the previous apartment tower proposal at officer level but was approved through the RC hearings process. To allow for on-site continuity of pedestrian movement along Albert St. the tower is also set back from the western bdry.</p> <p>Elliott & Victoria St: Retail frontages are fully glazed at street level and it is the intention that entries into individual retail tenancies will be provided from the street. Canopies are provided full length along both streets with main entries expressed by an increase in canopy height.</p> <p>Main entries into the podium space are located at all corners of the site and midway along the Victoria St. frontage.</p> <p>Albert St: Main entries into the podium are located at the southern end of the frontage & northern corner with Victoria St. both expressed with a glass "lantern" canopy. Entry to the tower is less obvious under the porte cochere and there is little glazing to the podium wall fronting onto this space.</p>
<p>Street Level</p>	<p>h) Facades fronting streets to provide richness, interest & depth thro'</p>	<p>Elliott & Victoria St: Middle levels of the podium are articulated thro' subtle folds and layering in the façade</p>

<p>Upper Levels</p>	<p>detail of arch. elements.</p> <p>i) Avoid large areas of blank walls.</p> <p>j) Arch. detail to differentiate upper level from lower levels.</p>	<p>glazing panels. These panels further broken down into smaller panes by “randomly” patterned glazing framing. The tower is set well back from both streets.</p> <p>Albert St: Is dominated by the tower which is formally expressed by the verticality of glazing frames and a full height, eccentric vertical fold in the fully glazed façade.</p> <p>There are no large areas of blank walls.</p> <p>The upper level architectural elements of both the podium and tower have a distinctive change in glazing colour & patterning.</p>
<p>2. Rooftops</p>	<p>a) Roof to be integrated with bldg. form; provide arch. qualities to skyline; services & mech. Plant/equipmt. concealed.</p>	<p>Podium: Roofs are nearly all large open terrace/amenity spaces and therefore do not have a distinctive roof form.</p> <p>Tower: Roof comprises 2 vertically stepped “crowning” elements that conceal the services & mech. Plant/equipmt. These elements are separated from the main body of the tower by the upper skydeck and are fully glazed in a contrasting glass colour which will be back lit at night.</p>
<p>3. Corner Sites</p>	<p>a) Bldg. to emphasise street cnrs. & provide transition between adjoining streets.</p> <p>b) Top of bldg. to be integral with other cnr. elements.</p> <p>c) Main bldg. entrances on cnr. & integral with other cnr. elements.</p>	<p>The main Victoria/Elliott St. podium corner entry is emphasised by a simple and well-proportioned increase of height of the street canopy as it wraps around the corner. On the corner of Victoria/Albert St. the podium entry is at level 3 and is accessed from the street corner plaza space via the landscaped steps and ramped pavement approach from Victoria St. All corner entries to the podium spaces are further emphasised by large scale, fully transparent, triangular glazing panels</p>

		which extend from the canopy to the full height of the mid-section of the facades above.
4. Materials	a) Exterior materials to be durable, high quality, easily maintained.	Podium & tower exterior cladding materials are both predominantly glass in aluminium curtain wall framing systems with aluminium vertical fin screening components on the north and south elevations. Major expressed structural columns & shear walls at street levels are clad with stone.
5. Activity Relationship to Public Open Space	a) Maximise outlook from internal space to streets at all levels.	Extensive fully glazed wall planes of the tower and podium provide outlook to all streets at all levels. A sense of engagement with the activities inside the upper levels of the podium is achieved by the various degrees of transparency of the glazed facades.
	b) Ground level activities to engage with & activate street frontages.	Glazed retail frontages and entry doors to the street provide clear visual connections and freedom of movement between interior of the bldg. & the street.
6. Adaptable Buildings	a) Adaptable design to allow alt. uses; provide higher fl.to fl. Dimensions.	Podium levels all have very generous floor to ceiling heights that would, if necessary, accommodate future changes in use.
7. Accessways, Links & vehicle Access	a) Entrance to through-site link to be clearly indicated; portal imagery.	The entry to the through-site link connecting Elliott St. directly to Albert St. is expressed by the street canopy being raised over the entry.
	b) Vehicle ingress & egress to give primary consideration to peds. & cyclists.	Addressed in Traffic Engineer's report.
	c) Avoid multiple service & vehicle access points to street frontages.	Apart from access to the porte cochere, all private and service vehicle access is via the Lower Albert St. slip lane, therefore not crossing the street frontage of the bldg.
	d) Provide separate entrances to various	Entries to the podium retail & entertainment activities are separate

	<p>activities in mixed use dvlpmt.</p> <p>e) Utilise alternative vehicle access where poss. to minimise crossing frontages.</p> <p>f) Provide through-site ped. links where poss.</p>	<p>to the entry into the tower apartment/hotel accommodation.</p> <p>See c) immediately above.</p> <p>As with previous consented dvlpmt. a direct internal escalator link is provided from Elliott St. to Alfred St. adjacent and parallel to the Southern site bdry.</p>
8. Proximity to Scheduled Heritage Items	<p>a) New dvlpmt. to give regard, thro' scale, form & design, to scheduled heritage items abutting or in close proximity.</p>	<p>There are no scheduled heritage items close enough to necessarily warrant overt reference in the design of this dvlpmt.</p> <p>The cubic form of the podium could be perceived to have some relationship to the proportions of Auckland's current and former iconic multi-level retail department stores (Smith & Caughy, at the southern end of Elliott St, the former George Courts on K Rd.).</p>
9. Crime Prevention	<p>a) Design to be in accordance with CPTED guidelines; Annexure 6 of DP.</p>	<p>A CPTED assessment has not been provided. It is not considered that the dvlpmt. presents significant CPTED issues.</p> <p>However, I would have some concern in relation to previous dvlpmt. recommendation for the provision of a generous footpath for pedestrians moving through Lower Albert St. In my opinion pedestrian access through this area should not be encouraged for CPTED reasons. I therefore do not support any Conditions to that effect.</p>
10. Accommodation	<p>a) Compliance with Appendix 12 of DP.</p> <p>b) Provide natural thro' ventilation; avoid mech. ventilation only.</p>	<p>Apartments, hotel suites and rooms generally meet App.12 standards & design guidelines except for studio to 1 bedroom apartment ratio.</p> <p>Except for corner apartments & hotel suites/rooms all others are single aspect & and cannot meet this criterion.</p>

	<p>c) Maximise outlook.</p> <p>d) Rooftop areas designed to be landscaped, accessible & usable as amenity/recreation spaces.</p> <p>e) Scaled floor plans to show configuration of living spaces.</p>	<p>All apartments and hotel suites/rooms have full external wall glazing exceeding required standards.</p> <p>The podium rooftops are all generous outdoor terrace spaces. The tower has 3 levels (L.10 lap pool/gymnasium & L.29 & 46) which are designed as skydecks which are open to the exterior and intended to be accessible for amenity/viewing spaces.</p> <p>Plans are provided. In general, useability and liveability of apartments are considered acceptable.</p>
11. Outlook Space	<p>a) Outlook space to meet requirements of Rule 6.16 of DP.</p> <p>b) Outlook space to avoid Typologies 1, 2 & 3 of Annexure 12 Sectn.A of DP.</p>	<p>Outlook from all apartments & hotel suites or rooms meet requirements of Rule 6.16 of the DP</p> <p>Tower floor plan configurations do not reflect Typologies 1,2,3 of Annexure 12.</p>

4.3.2 General Urban Design Comments Related to Assessment of the Proposal against the Criteria under Section 5.6.3 d)

This Section 127 application for changes to the building design previously approved for RC on the subject site are driven by the revised number and type of activities to be accommodated in the currently proposed development. The proposed activities are considered to be appropriate for the city centre location and to not have a significant change of effects that would reduce the quality of urban design outcome anticipated from the previously consented activities.

Although the respective plan shape, area and site location of the currently proposed podium and tower are essentially the same as the previously consented development, the architectural language of the 2 dominant forms has been completely restated. The respective façade cladding details and architectural expression are consciously disparate and acknowledge that the 2 forms are predominantly perceived and experienced from different viewpoints: the tower more from a distance, contributing to the macro form of the city centre and the podium more from within the city’s urban fabric, contributing to the nature and quality of the street environment. As a design concept this was supported by the AUDP and I concur.

When considered as a whole the volumetric proportions of the new podium’s essentially cubic form, evokes a perception that it is of a scale, mass and strength more capable of providing base support and stabilisation for the slender form and height of the attached tower than the previous 3 storey podium.

The Tower Design

The tower facades are detailed to emphasise the building's verticality and slender rectangular plan form. Planar relief to the scale of the full height glazing is achieved by articulation and expression of the substantial vertical structural members of the curtain wall system (east and west elevations) and the stepped vertical screen fins (north and south elevations). 3 skydecks provide horizontal interruptions at the bottom, middle and top of the tower and effectively further moderate the scale and proportions of the wall planes. It is to be noted that the similar skydeck levels proposed in the previous tower design were intended to be generously planted. In the current proposal, the architects are not convinced that such planting would be successful and have excluded this option from the current design.

The glazed curtain wall on the west façade of the tower has a full height, shallow vertical fold which will provide a sense of further articulation of the tower, by creating a subtle difference in the light perceived reflecting off the 2 differently angled faces of the folded surface.

The Podium Design

On Elliott and Victoria Streets, the podium will abut the street boundaries for its full 8 storey frontage height, providing a stronger sense of street enclosure than the previous 3 storey podium proposal.

The podium is essentially a large scaled cube set back into the western slope of the Queen St. valley. Its facades are predominantly fully glazed with various degrees of transparency to provide visual connections between the adjacent streets and the various internal activities at each level. (This outcome was recommended by the AUDP & I concur). Planar relief to the facades of the podium is creatively achieved through the subtle layering and vertical folding of large sections of the curtain wall glazing. Variations in the reflection of light from the angled planes will give a sense of articulation to the various glazed surfaces. Within a majority of the planes a further sense of intricacy is introduced by a non-rectilinear, random pattern of glazing bars supporting individual panes of glass.

The intention to have retail tenancies fully glazed with entries opening to the street will provide continuity along the Elliott and Victoria St. frontages. This will further reinforce the vitality of the pedestrian focussed shared space environment of Elliott St. and create a new centre of retail activity and interest with direct connections into the individual street frontage tenancies accommodated within the podium.

On Victoria St., street entries into retail tenancies are again proposed. The adjacent footpath is narrow but the pedestrian experience along this frontage will be significantly improved when the Victoria St. Green Link linear park project, as proposed in the City Centre Masterplan, is implemented.

Canopy Design

A continuous pedestrian canopy is proposed to extend along Elliott St., wrapping around into Victoria St. and continuing up to the Albert St. corner. The proposed canopy design is an elegant, relatively fine cantilevered level plane which defines a simple line of separation between the regular continuity of the retail frontage along the base of the podium and the architectural intricacies of the mid-level glazed walls above. Well-proportioned steps in the canopy identify and accentuate the main entrances to the podium on both Elliott and Victoria St. In my opinion this is a more fitting solution than that proposed on the previous podium which I consider was architecturally fragmented and structurally overstated.

The street environment on Albert St. is far from ideal and pedestrian movement along the frontage to the Elliott Tower site is currently severely compromised by the location of the Lower Albert St. slip lane. It is accepted that the slip land needs to be retained for access to the basement service and parking areas of both the subject development and the other existing adjacent sites. The applicants are to be commended for linking the Albert St. forecourt of the tower to the plaza of the adjacent building to the south and extending a generous pedestrian pavement on their site parallel to Albert St. between the slip lane and the structural columns of the tower.

On the Albert St. façade of the tower the glazed curtain wall doesn't continue down to street level but peels away from the tower façade in a horizontal curve towards the street. This creates a "grand" architectural gesture that both defines the hotel entry/porte cochere and forms a sheltering canopy for the pedestrian spaces below.

5.0 CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall I consider the Elliott Tower development proposal and the activities to be accommodated are appropriate to the Auckland Central Area context, and from an urban design perspective will result in a development that responds positively to the unique characteristics of the site and the surrounding urban environment. Therefore, I support the application from an urban design perspective, subject to the updating of relevant existing conditions of consent imposed upon the previous development proposal (as listed in the Hearing Commissioner's report) and the inclusion of any recommended new conditions of consent related to the current application. All as listed below.

5.1 Conditions of Consent Relating to Urban Design

Requirements for New Conditions of Consent and/or amendments to existing Conditions of Consent. (BEU-UD specialist to be consulted at time of review and approval).

It is recommended;

- that the final design for
 - a. paving and the delineation of vehicle/pedestrian movement areas within the Porte Cochere & Albert St. plaza spaces, and
 - b. the means of achieving continuity of surface with adjacent street spaces be submitted to Council for approval.
- that existing condition 45 be amended (where necessary) to require that, plans and elevation drawings, with exterior cladding materials, finishes and colours clearly notated, be submitted to Council for approval, prior to issue of Building Consent. These drawings shall provide confirmation that the quality of design and architectural expression illustrated in the 3-dimensional photo-montage images presented at the AUDP meeting 26th November will be implemented.
- that a management plan be submitted to Council for approval, ***setting out how all podium glazed street frontage wall areas will be kept free of internal furnishings and advertising signs (not meeting the requirements of 64) at all levels to maintain transparency and visual connections from the street to internal activities at the various levels of the podium.***

- that existing condition 64 be amended (where necessary) to also require a signage plan for the whole of the building to be prepared and that as part of that plan no signage be permitted above the podium level.

I have also reviewed the correspondence from Matthew Lee of WSP NZ Ltd. relating to his evaluation and recommendations for “*appropriate external lighting levels*”. I accept his proposed maximum luminance standards and support the new Condition of Consent to define and control lighting and luminance levels for the whole development as proposed in clause 1.12.18 of the AEE prepared by MHG.

Should you wish to discuss the content of this memorandum or discuss anything further on this application please contact me.

Yours sincerely,

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