

SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE - ARCHITECTURE

- 1.1** I have been asked to provide evidence describing the Project and the key design elements relating to the architectural design which are within my area of expertise.

Project Overview - Site selection

- 1.2** The Waikato Regional Theatre project has always intended to be a transformational project for Hamilton and the wider region. This is the aspiration of the City Council through the City Transformation Plan and Momentum Waikato through its Transformational Vision. Accordingly selecting the correct site was a key success factor for the project.
- 1.3** The site selection process started with the analysis of 25 sites provided by Hamilton City Council and Momentum Waikato. Each site was analysed by addressing Primary non-negotiable considerations and secondary more flexible considerations. These considerations ranged from Urban Design best practice to the cultural engagement possibilities of the site. (*refer slide 1*)
- 1.4** The analysis also referenced the various city plans including: The City Transformational Plan, The Hamilton Plan, Vista Design Guide, The River Plan and The Ferrybank Plan. (*refer slide 2*)
- 1.5** Following this selection process the preferred site was established at the site of the old Hamilton hotel on the corner of Victoria St, Embassy Park and Sapper Moore-Jones place. This site provides an excellent opportunity for transformation through the positive re-engagement with the Waikato River, its proximity to the cultural precinct and the site's own heritage.
- 1.6** The site provided an opportunity for the meaningful adaptive re-use of the original hotel, the preservation of significant trees on the site and by referencing the historic gardens. Adjacent to the site will be public realm upgrade work to Embassy park and Sapper Moore-Jones place. This will create a high quality, safe and easy visitor approach from both of these public places. The site also provides an opportunity for the sensitive treatment of the urupā and the engagement and inclusion of Mana Whenua. This will

enhance the cultural history of the site as well as the archaeological value of the site.
(refer slides 3 & 4)

- 1.7** A key part of unlocking the complexity of the site was to establish a high-level masterplan. The masterplan considered the sites history, current use, setting, the theatre hotel and gallery functions, the scheduled trees, the urupā and the existing heritage buildings. The masterplan went through several iterations to establish the best location of the new buildings with consideration to the above criteria, for example the auditorium was moved as far up the site as possible to avoid both the urupā and the scheduled trees. (refer slides 5 - 7) The final configuration was established as it provided the best positive benefits for the site's heritage without compromising the theatre and hotel functionality.

Key building design considerations

- 1.8** The design proposal is for a comprehensive development of the site in order to provide a new multipurpose regional theatre, boutique hotel, and gallery. The theatre planning is based around the 1300 seat auditorium, front of house, back of house and technical areas, that feed into it. (refer slides 8 - 10)
- 1.9** The overall design aesthetic is primarily based on the screen that wraps around the auditorium and the towers that sit above it. the screen wraps around the theatre building visually linking the City to the River. From the River, the screen is a distinctive and dramatic feature that references the River as it hovers over it. The screen threads its way through the significant trees on the site, acting as a unifying object that orders both the complexity of the theatre building and the complexity of the natural landscape. The towers are located on the roofscape as urban markers for the city and the River. They also have a visual association with the tall trees on the site. The fly tower is the most dominant tower seen from both the River and the City. The smaller tower is the light well maximising the height over key circulation areas to the front of house and filling that space with light. (refer slide 11)
- 1.10** The design references the landscape history of the site with a series of courtyards, gardens and terraces around the site and within the building. Courtyards will be used to hold events and informal performance, while notable trees will be enclosed in the riverside courtyard to further reinforce the role of the garden in the site's history. The river courtyard sits above the urupā helping preserve this key feature. The courtyards

are also transitional spaces between the theatre and the existing character of the surrounding riverbank landscape. (*refer slides 12 & 13*) Following the Resource Consent submissions, Embassy Park has been re-designed to preserve the existing contours at the northern boundary for minimal disturbance with the existing terrane. (*refer slide 14*)

- 1.11** The Hotel design is based around the adaptive re-use of the old Hamilton Hotel, and includes; new luxury boutique hotel rooms, with associated food and beverage, hospitality and conference facilities. Also included are a number of shared facilities with the Theatre, including, conference room, sponsors lounge and toilet facilities. The façade will be restored back to its original 1920's condition, including the ground floor which has been heavily modified. Key original features will be preserved and re-used within the heritage hotel, such as the original stair and elements of the Queens room. Adjacent to the heritage building is the new gallery extension. The design of the new extension is modern, as a point of difference to the heritage building. The design complements the rhythms and proportions of the heritage building. (*refer slide 15*)
- 1.12** The hotel interior reflects the exterior design by being a mix of heritage and contemporary spaces. The benefit of the two styles of design is a point of difference bringing variety of offering to the repeat visitors. (*refer slides 16 & 17*) An atrium is proposed between the hotel and theatre, providing a buffer zone and internal garden, again referencing the historic gardens on the site. (*refer slide 18*)
- 1.13** The Waikato Regional Theatre will be a transformational project for Hamilton and the wider region, acting as a catalyst within the creative precinct to encouraging economic growth and help address the current skills gap. The project will further enhance the already vibrant and engaging city centre, by introducing a high-quality venue, that will support the existing hospitality culture. There will be a positive re-engagement of the site and its pre & post-colonial heritage with the community, through the meaningful adaptive re-use of the heritage features of the site and its proximity to the Waikato River. Ultimately this project is about providing a multiuse theatre to replace the Founders Theatre, one that will provide a world class performance space, and the provision of high-quality hospitality amenity.

David Pugh

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