

SUMMARY NOTES/URBAN DESIGN - DEYANA POPOVA

- 1 Kia Ora, my name is Deyana Popova. I am a qualified urban designer. My qualifications include a master's degree in architecture (specialising in urban design design) from the University of Architecture in Sofia Bulgaria (where I am originally from) and a master's degree of architecture (again specialising in urban design) from Victoria University Wellington. I have been in private practice for the last 27 years as a director of Urban Perspectives Ltd - a planning and urban design consultancy in Wellington. I have worked on projects in both the private and public sectors covering all aspects of urban design (ranging from assessments and character studies to design guidelines, urban design frameworks and master planning, as well preparation of Council and Environment Court hearings evidence).
- 2 For this hearing I prepared an urban design evidence-in-chief and supplementary evidence, but my involvement in the PDP goes back to 2020 when UPL was engaged to undertake a review of the ODP Viewshafts (Chapters 12 and 13 and associated Appendix 11).
- 3 Just to clarify, that the review was carried out in two parts. My evidence relates to Part One of the Review of which I was the principal author and which covered the core planning and urban design evaluation of the individual viewshafts. Part Two addressed the operation of the Operative District Plan provisions (and was prepared by my co-director Alistair Aburn who is planner).
- 4 I have prepared a summary highlighting the methodology and key findings and conclusions of the review and a brief overview of my responses to submissions.

Viewshaft Review

- 5 The purpose of the Review was to: (a) establish the value and relevance of the ODP viewshafts to city's urban form, identify and sense of place; and (b) identify the potential risks of removing any viewshafts from the District Plan (if they were deemed to be compromised and no longer worthy of protection).
- 6 Our methodology involved review/analysis of relevant documents, field work and setting up a checklist of 'assessment matters' to allow for the consistent evaluation of each of the 23 viewshafts.
- 7 Given that the District Plan seeks to protect viewshafts from inappropriate development (i.e development that exceeds the permitted bulk/form development standards), the review included an assessment of the potential risk of removing viewshafts on the value and integrity of the views they seek to protect. The risk assessment was carried out with reference to the Operative District Plan (height/bulk) provisions, with the level of risk assessed against a six-point scale (no obvious risk/very low, low, low-to-medium, medium, medium-to-high and high). The findings of the risk assessment informed the recommendations for possible viewshaft removal.

Key findings

- 8 In relation to their spatial character and extent, the review identified two basic types of protected views (contained and vista views) complemented by a panoramic view.
- 9 The Review concluded that most of the viewshafts have retained their value, relevance and contribution to the City's identity and sense of place, and, therefore, warrant protection subject to minor amendments (for some views) relating to viewpoint location, description detail and/or the need of a photo update.

- 10 The review established that the potential risk for most of the viewshafts to be impacted by future development was very-low or low and none of the viewshafts were at high risk¹.
- 11 The Review also established that while all views identified for retention warranted protection, their relative significance could vary depending on the public significance of the viewing location, the character of the view and the meaning and significance of the respective focal elements (e.g. the relative significance of vista and panoramic views from the Cable Car was considered higher given these views protect the visual relationship of the city to the wider landscape setting from one of the most popular and accessible 'viewing platforms' in the city. Similarly, the view from the Parliament Steps (Vs2) and the views towards The Beehive and Parliament Grounds (Vs 1, 3 and 4A) were also considered to have an enhanced public significance due to the national significance of the viewpoint location and/or the identified focal elements.
- 12 The review identified a small number viewshafts that could be considered for possible removal for one or more of the following reasons:
- a. the viewshaft has lost its integrity or has been compromised;
 - b. the viewpoint has lost its public significance;

¹ (14 of 23) were at no obvious/very low or low risk and (8 of 23) were within the low-medium and medium category. None of the viewshafts fell into the high-risk category, with only one viewshaft in the medium-high risk category.

- c. the viewshaft location point was difficult to find and/or not readily accessible by the public; and/or
- d. the viewshaft was at a minimal risk of being lost if not formally protected by the District Plan.

13 On that basis, six viewshafts were identified for possible removal.² Alternatively, it was suggested that only three of the six viewshafts could be removed with the remaining three retained, but from an amended viewpoint location.³

14 The Review concluded that the continued protection of the identified viewshafts through appropriate District Plan controls, and subject to the review's recommendations,⁴ was warranted, if Wellington's collective identity and sense of place was to be continually promoted and enhanced.

15 Finally, the Review included recommendations on the following additional matters:

- a. recognising the different viewshaft categories and acknowledging their relative significance;
- b. using consistent terminology for referencing viewshafts in the District Plan; and
- c. clearly marking the viewpoint locations for each viewshaft (based on survey confirmation) to facilitate interpretation in

² Vs3, Vs9, Vs13, Vs17, Vs20 and Vs21.

³ Vs9, Vs13 and Vs20 removed, and Vs3, Vs17 and Vs21 retained but with an amended viewpoint location.

⁴ District Plan Central Area Viewshaft Review, Part One 2020 / Section 4, pages 13-17.

preparing photomontages for resource consent applications. Out of experience, I would like to emphasise the importance of this recommendation for the resource consent process.

16 The review also recommended taking into account 'view protection' objectives when reviewing current building height limits for the Central City Zone, in situations where potential development sites 'frame' or potentially intrude into viewshafts.

RESPONSE TO SUBMISSIONS

17 I commented on three categories of submissions:

- a. Submissions seeking new viewshafts;
- b. Submissions seeking to reinstate existing viewshafts; and
- c. Submissions seeking amendments to viewshaft overlay mapping, extent of existing viewshafts or changes to description detail.

18 I have read the relevant submitters' expert evidence on the 42A report and the relevant legal submissions and confirm that these have not changed the responses included in my evidence-in-chief and my supplementary evidence.

19 In relation to Argosy Property No 1 Limited's legal submission regarding Vs3, I wish to highlight two points with regard to the outcome sought.

- a. The encroachment of the adjoining building (the Rydges Hotel) into the viewshaft's margin as referred to and shown in in plan (Fig A, p.15 of the submission) cannot be relied upon alone to make an accurate assessment, in my opinion, without a 'verified' 3D view showing the

potential impact of new development built to the street edge at 7 Waterloo Quay (a potential outcome sought by the submission).

- b. The photos in Appendix B (attached to the submission) show the viewshaft corridor and the encroachment of the adjoining building (the Rydges Hotel). However, it is not clear: (a) what is the exact viewpoint location for the photos and (b) whether the photos are verified views (e.g. surveyed in terms of viewpoint location and margins or certified by a registered surveyor). I have assessed a verified view of the same viewshaft prepared for an Environment Court hearing in relation to the Site 10 waterfront development (PWC Building) which shows that the encroachment of the Rydges Hotel relates only to small portion of the top-level eaves, but the building bulk is not visible from Vs3 viewpoint. This goes back to my initial concern under point (a) which is that without a verified view showing a development at 7 Waterloo Quay that is built to the street edge (as sought by the submission), it would be difficult to make an accurate assessment to whether and/or to what extent this might intrude on/narrow down the viewshaft's frame.

20 In relation to Argosy Property No 1 Limited's legal submission regarding Vs9, I wish to highlight three points with regard to the outcome sought by the submission:

- a. I note that when walking along Lambton Quay the Aon Centre first comes into sight mid-way between Panama and Grey Streets in the vicinity of Cable Car Lane (which is approximately 300m away from Stewart Dawson's corner). The viewpoint location for Vs9 is positioned approximately half-way between the Cable Car Lane and Stewart Dawson's corner and allows the MCL Building to be seen in relation the Aon Centre.

- b. The PDP Vs9 allows for the Aon Centre to be seen in its entirety (as a building volume) - that is because the right margin is largely aligned with the south/west corner of the Aon Centre.

- c. What is sought by the submission will potentially narrow the view of the Aon Centre by intruding on one of the two focal elements - something that the viewshafts are 'designed' to protect. Again, without a verified view showing the potential degree of intrusion caused by a development built to the street edge, it is difficult to assess the potential impact.

Date: 9/05/2023

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