I. My name is Robin Elizabeth Byron. I am employed as a Heritage Advisor for Architecture with Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga in its Northern Regional Office which is based in Auckland. I have been in this capacity with Heritage New Zealand for the past 12 years.

II. I am a registered architect with the Architectural Institute of British Columbia, Canada, and am an affiliate member of the New Zealand Institute of Architects. I have been involved in professional architectural practice in Canada (Toronto and Vancouver), England (Cambridge) and New Zealand (Auckland), and since coming to New Zealand 25 years ago have also taught architecture for a number of years at the University of Auckland’s School of Architecture.

III. I completed formal studies in architectural conservation from the Institute of Advanced Architectural Studies at the University of York, and at the International Laboratory for Architecture and Urban Design in Urbino, Italy (the focus of which was working in historic environments).

IV. I am a Board member of International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) New Zealand.

V. I will be speaking to the built heritage aspects of the submission made by Heritage New Zealand on the East West Link.

VI. The New Zealand Transport Authority (NZTA) has involved Heritage New Zealand in this project from an early stage, and intermittently as the proposal has progressed, including a joint visit to the heritage sensitive parts of the route to familiarise us with the environment. We have given ongoing constructive advice towards trying to ameliorate the effects that the project will have on the heritage it will impact, and in this connection largely agreed conditions that will to some extent assist in softening the effects. Nevertheless there will still be considerable adverse effects on built heritage.

VII. It seems apparent to Heritage New Zealand that NZTA did not have in the forefront of their thinking the avoidance of impacts on heritage in determining which option to select for the East West Link route. Comments made by Heritage New Zealand on the East West Connections Project: Heritage Assessment to Support Option Selection (15 October 2014) document three years ago was that it was not fulsome or comprehensive enough in its identification of heritage to be able to properly and fully assess the effects on heritage in informing in the decision of the chosen route. To my knowledge a decision was made without an in-depth heritage analysis at this time.

The built heritage impacts of the East West Link project of concern to Heritage New Zealand are as follows:

1. Exacerbating the loss of historic connection between the harbour and Onehunga town
2. Adverse effects on the visual appreciation and setting of the Aotea Sea Scouts Building
3. Adverse effects on Waikaraka Cemetery
4. Adverse effects on the setting of The Landing
5. Heritage Linkages

I will discuss these briefly in turn.

1. Exacerbating the loss of historic connections

   1.1. Onehunga is important historically to the foundation of early Auckland and as a settlement in its own right. Its harbour, Fencible history and trading post activities were significant to its early settlement, and the subsequent growth into a busy industrial centre has meant that the relationship between its harbour, wharf and business hinterland have always been important.

   1.2. State Highway 20, when established through the area in the 1970s, created a divide between the town and harbour severing these historic connections. The work that has been done recently with the foreshore restoration project, which The Onehunga Foreshore Society (TOES) persistently campaigned for, has been an attempt to recover some of the recreational amenity the harbour once provided, and was an optimistic step towards trying to reconcile the estrangement of the town and the foreshore.

   1.3. The increased traffic, extended lanes of roadway and new established roads that the East West link project would bring, will exacerbate the split between the town of Onehunga and the waterfront to an even greater extent, and no matter what mitigation is promised it cannot fully compensate for the inevitable further weakening of the important historic links between the two.

2. Aotea Sea Scouts

   2.1. The Aotea Sea Scouts, a scheduled historic place in the Auckland Council Unitary Plan, has been a landmark structure at the edge of the harbour since its construction as a clubhouse and boathed for the Manukau Yacht and Motor Boat Club in 1911, and it still retains a strong visual prominence. It has a notable architectural expression and pedigree (in being designed by John Park, architect of the Carnegie Library, and one time former mayor of Onehunga). It historically links to and is reminiscent of early and continuing recreational use of the harbour.

   2.2. The building will be affected in several ways by the East West link project, and at this stage it is not even possible to gauge the full effects because of the uncertainty of whether the building will be re-occupied by the Sea Scouts at the completion of the project (which is seeming increasingly unlikely), whether it is proposed to be adaptively re-used for another purpose if they don’t, or whether the building will be re-located. The project forces adverse effects on all these alternatives.

   2.3. If the building remains in its current position, the re-configuring of Orpheus Drive will affect the way in which the road now directly addresses the façade of the building, destroying the alignment and visual appreciation that it currently enjoys. The elevation of the new State Highway 20 on-ramp, embankment and connection to the overbridge in this area will adversely affect the open visual access one has travelling along State Highway 20, and dimin-
ish its presence as a landmark. It also affects the visual outlook from the building itself. With the current design proposal these adverse visual effects cannot be mitigated.

2.4. The future usability and viability of the Aotea Sea Scouts Building, whether the Sea Scouts return to the building or not, is challenged by this project, and must be addressed. For the Sea Scouts there are stated concerns over the safety of the children with increased and closer traffic, the loss of the access to Gloucester Park South for use by the club for parking, boat manoeuvring, etc. A new raised roadway, embankment, squeezed area between road and heritage building, and traffic noise will all impact on the amenity of the area immediately around the Sea Scouts. The proposed footpath and cycleway illustrated is very rudimentary, and does not adopt the design, materiality and quality of paths established by the foreshore project to which it is proposed to connect. Conditions are included which can address the design in a more satisfactory way, but what has been shown to date is an impoverished approach in my view. Much of it will remain at the level of dressing-up the embankment and footpaths, and a softening of planting, but the more significant fundamental problems, those of the spatial constraints, and traffic and noise impacts, will remain negative effects.

2.5. The building may be able to be adaptively re-used for another function other than its boat club use currently. There would inevitably be a loss of heritage values because of the cessation of the original use of the building, and it would be necessary to ensure that a compatible use be found so as not to require a significant number of changes which would further reduce the significance and values associated with the place. There remains the question of whether, given the reduced amenity of the setting, there would be interest in another user in occupying the building.

2.6. There is the option of re-location. All places start off being intrinsically linked to their sites. The way in which they are situated in their geographical setting, the way they are oriented, their relationship to features and the context around them, are all important factors in the way they have been conceived, and give meaning. While it is not generally considered good heritage practice to extricate a historic building from its site, if an original setting becomes so compromised that the values of the place and its functionality are severely diminished, re-location sometimes becomes a viable alternative. In order that some continuity and retention of values and the integrity of a place is maintained, it relies on finding a site which will be able to provide a similar setting compatible with the building’s heritage values. To my knowledge there has been no specific site investigated and/or proposed to date for a potential re-location of the Aotea Sea Scouts if a decision is made that this is a preferable option.

2.7. I understand that agreements have been made to update the Aotea Sea Scouts Conservation Plan, carry out remedial works to the building and provide if possible a wastewater connection. These measures, along with a commitment to provide some parking nearby (which I understand has now also been offered), will assist in some way to enticing and facilitating future use, but there are still significant adverse effects and an uncertain future for the building posed by the East West Link at this stage.
3. Waikaraka Cemetery

3.1. The Waikaraka Park and Cemetery are recognized for their heritage significance through scheduling in the Auckland Council Unitary Plan. The cemetery opened in 1881 on land originally set aside for Fencible settlement, the first public cemetery in Onehunga. In the nature of its use as a cemetery it is a place of peace and quiet contemplation, especially at its remotest southeastern end where its physical and visual connection with the water’s edge occurs.

3.2. While the existing road, trees and stone wall along this edge of the cemetery are retained, the effects of the East West Link roadway proposed to be constructed beyond the edge of the foreshore, and elevated, will adversely affect the ambience and setting of the cemetery. Unmediated, it would result in a compromised outlook to the foreshore viewing (largely the underside) of a busy elevated motorway structure. The noise would negatively affect the peaceful atmosphere of the place.

3.3. A berm/bund or similar structure constructed along the south edge would be a preferred treatment to help ameliorate the effects of noise and the visual intrusion of the motorway structure. Unfortunately there would be the loss of the current outlook to the water and probably some residual noise impacts.

3.4. There will ultimately be a loss of heritage values in the disturbing of the historic relationship of the cemetery to the water and its edge, and the ambience that currently exists.

4. The Landing (former Manukau Tavern)

4.1. Heritage New Zealand’s submission in respect to The Landing is that there will be adverse effects with the introduction of the motorway adjacent to it.

4.2. The lowering of the roadway into a trench avoids potential visual effects, but the physical divide created further isolates the historic building from the surrounding context, notably its historic links with Onehunga Wharf and the harbour.

4.3. The way to ameliorate the adverse physical is to make reconnection possible through the design and interlinking of the pedestrian and cycleway network including and an extended land bridge. In our view no convincingly effective proposal has yet been devised and designed, and so the adverse effects are at this stage unmitigated.

5. Heritage Linkages

5.1. The pedestrian and cycleway networks which are proposed by the project have the potential to help link up the areas of Onehunga that have been disconnected through various interventions over the years, including the SH 20 project of the 1970s, and exacerbated by this project.

5.2. Providing good cycle and pedestrian links, designed in a manner that offers amenity and interpretation to users, ties in with the design of the New Old Mangere project and the design of the already constructed Foreshore project, and which has regard for the important and historic connections between the foreshore, Onehunga Wharf and the town centre, are
critical mitigation for the intrusion of this project. A commitment to quality urban and landscape design, sensitive to the historic connections and integrated with the other projects and initiatives, there is a chance to reduce adverse effects, however significant adverse effects on heritage will remain.