

## **SITE 9, NORTH KUMUTOTO**



### **URBAN DESIGN ASSESSMENT**

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**Prepared for Willis Bond Capital Partners No 3 Ltd**

**July 2018**

# 1 INTRODUCTION

The proposal involves the construction of a new five storey office building on Site 9, North Kumutoto. The development site is located within the Lambton Harbour Area (aka Wellington Waterfront) and is part of the Central Area.

This report forms part of the AEE accompanying the Resource Consent Application and assesses the urban design outcomes of the proposal against the relevant District Plan provisions and any relevant non-statutory provisions. It also includes a townscape/visual impact assessment.

The assessment is based on site visits and a review of the architectural and landscape plans and associated Architect's Design Report and acknowledges the urban design issues discussed at the pre-application meetings and meetings with the Technical Advisory Group (TAG).

# 2 THE PROPOSAL

**Background** - the proposal subject to this assessment is based on the design of the competition entry submitted by Willis Bond & Co in response to a public interest process run by Wellington Waterfront Ltd (WWL) for Sites 9 and 10 in 2013. The competition entry, designed by Athfield Architects Ltd, was selected as the preferred design on the basis of assessment against multiple criteria, including design excellence and best fit to the North Kumutoto Design Brief (adopted by the Council, 2012). Since this selection the design has undergone design development based on further investigation and testing in the areas of architecture, building structure, services and construction feasibility, while also taking account of the expert design review by the Council's Technical Advisory Group (TAG), input from WCC officers and engagement with key stakeholders and the market.

**The proposal** - the proposed building is 5 stories (ground + 4 levels) with the southern end of the building being a storey lower (ground + 3 levels). The ground level accommodates retail and hospitality tenancies and the main entrances and foyer, along with servicing and building user amenities. Upper levels provide high quality office space. The main entrance is along the eastern/harbour side of the building with a second entrance off the Quays. Service entrance is located along the east side of the building to the south of the main entrance and lobby with access off Lady Elizabeth Lane (formally Kumutoto lane).

The proposed building form is comprised of two diagonally offset components designed to address the interface location of the proposal between the harbour and the city and acknowledge the proximity to the historic Shed 13 to the south. These include:

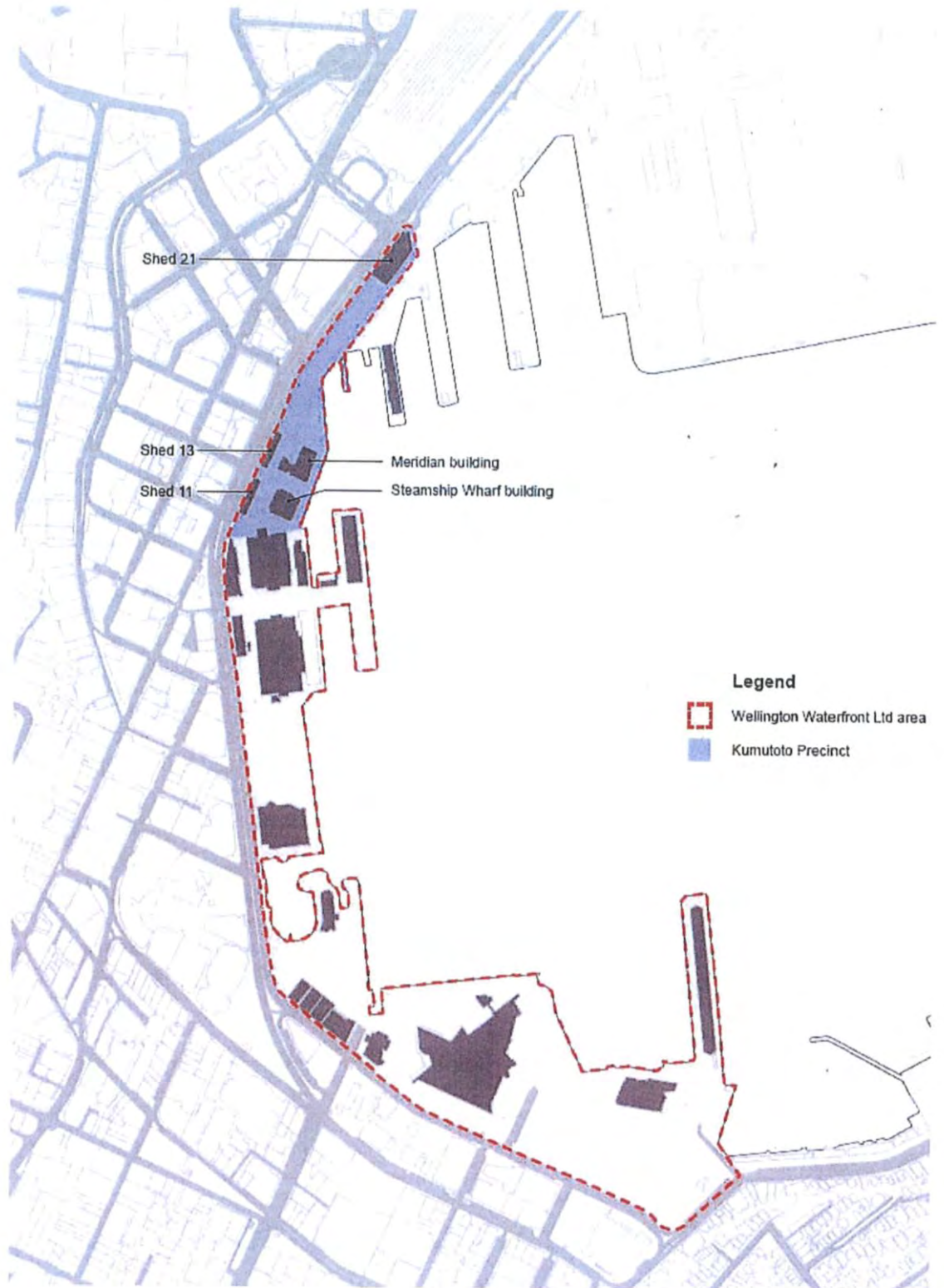
- a lower south/eastern component (ground + 3 storeys) extending along the eastern/harbour side of the building and wrapping around its southern end (akin to a 'container stack'); and
- taller north/western component (referred to as 'elevated frame') that folds along the western/city edge of the building following the shift in alignment along the Quays.

The proposed building has been designed as an integral part of a wider landscape/public open space including Whitmore and Site 8 landscape. A complete detailed outline of all development components can be found in the Architectural Design Report.

# 3 THE SITE AND ITS CONTEXT

**North Kumutoto** - the development site, known as Site 9, is located in North Kumutoto area - the part of the public waterfront between Shed 13, the Meridian Building and Shed 21. The North Kumutoto area sits at the northern end of the wider Kumutoto Precinct which covers the area bounded by Shed 21 in the north through to the Queens Wharf Centre in the south; Waterloo and Customhouse Quays to the west, and CentePort's boundary and the water's edge to the east (refer Map 1, North Kumutoto Design Brief, on next page).

**Map 1 – North Kumutoto location and context**



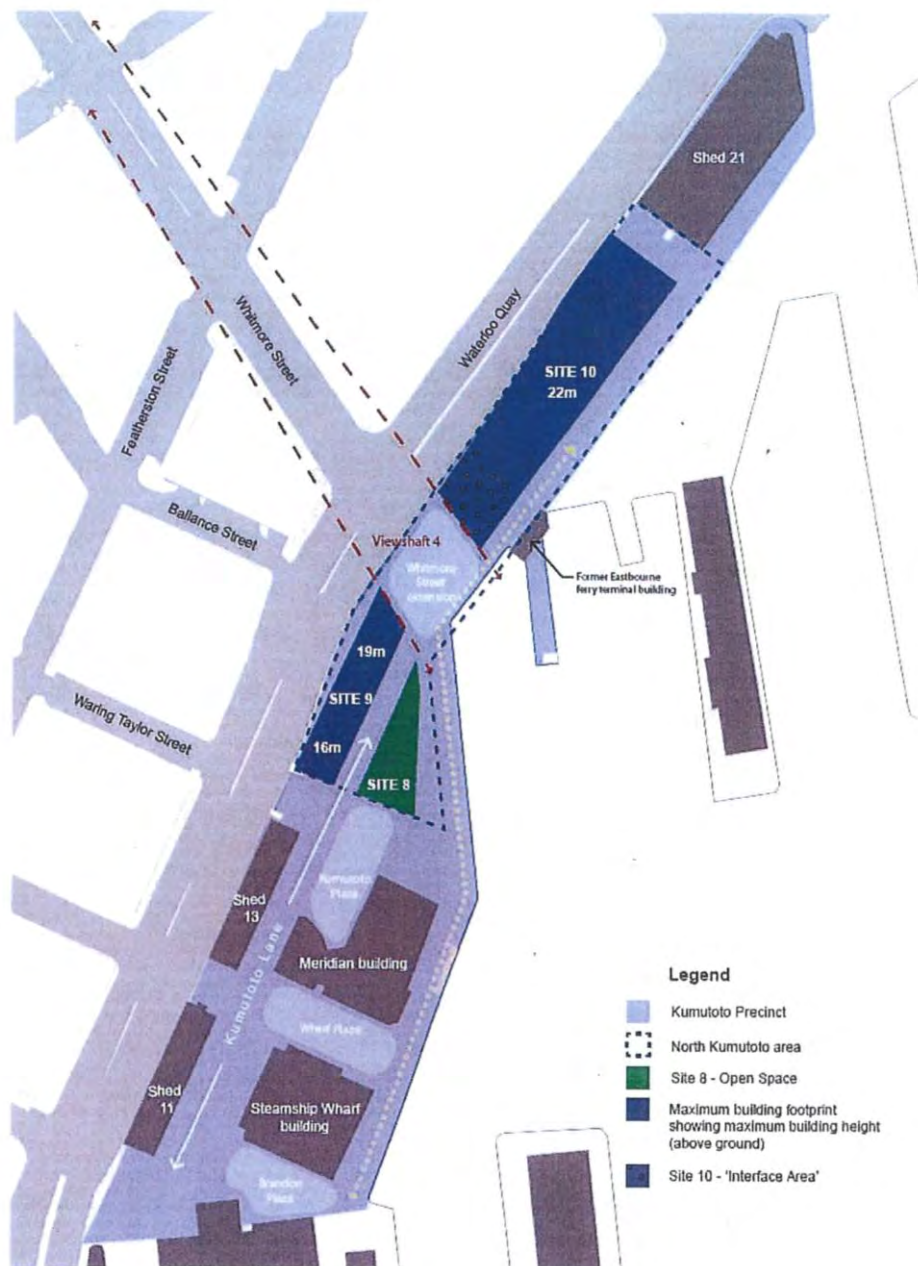
Due to its 'interface' location, North Kumutoto has a strong association with the Central Business District while providing a transition between the working port and the public waterfront, as well as links to maritime transport hubs and a connection to the Government Precinct. It also marks the northern entrance to the harbour promenade.

North Kumutoto is comprised of three development sites (refer Map 2, Kumutoto Design Brief below):

- Site 8 is located north of the Meridian building and adjacent to the water's edge and is currently being developed as public open space;
- Site 9 (the development site) where the new building is to be located sits between Site 10 to the north and Shed 13 to the south; and
- Site 10 is located to the north of Site 9 and to the south of Shed 21 and accommodates the recently completed PWC Centre.

*Adopted 22 November 2012*

**Map 2 – North Kumutoto: Sites 8, 9 and 10 location and development areas map (Indicative only: not to scale)**



Sites 9 & 10 are separated by a large open space extending the spatial corridor of Whitmore Street to the water's edge. Referred to as Whitmore Plaza, this space is being developed as a public open space integrated with the Site 8 landscape.

**Site 9/the development site** - Site 9 has a rectangular shape. It sits between Whitmore gates and Shed 13 and is defined by Lady Elizabeth Lane to the east and Customhouse Quay to the west. (The boundaries of the development site are outlined on RC 1.00-A).

Situated at the interface between the city and the harbour, the site is defined by different spatial and contextual conditions. The eastern frontage faces the waterfront with the Site 8 landscape in the foreground, while the western frontage is part of the vehicle-oriented environment of the Quays and the large-scale urban setting of the CBD. The historical sea wall (currently unseen) runs between the wharfs and the development site. The historical Whitmore Street and Ballance Street waterfront fence/gates are located directly to the north-west of the site.

The site, previously used as a commuter carpark, is currently a construction yard for the Site 8 landscape design work. Main vehicle access onto the waterfront in this area is at Whitmore Street.

**Immediate context/neighbouring building character** - the buildings immediately around the development site include the new PCW Centre to the north, the historic Shed 13 (and adjacent Shed 11) to the south and the Meridian building to the south/east. Shed 13 is a listed heritage building by the District Plan and its scale and character is different from the other two neighbours (PWC Centre and the Meridian building). Both of these buildings have a contemporary design, albeit of a different form and facade composition, that together with the historic character of Shed 13 account for the complexity of the visual setting of Site 9 and the North Kumutoto area as a whole.

On the city side of the Quays, directly opposite Site 9 are several office buildings including 109 Featherson Street (12 levels), the newly constructed Deloitte building (15 levels) and Maritime Tower (16 levels). The block to the north of Maritime Tower accommodates a service station. Further to the north, on the northern side of Whitmore Street is the New Zealand Post building.

**Historical context** - Site 9 was previously occupied by the 1904 Brick Store (Shed 15) which was part of the line of buildings along the old working harbour. Taller than the immediately adjacent Sheds 11 and 13 to the south and lower than the Customs Department Building to the north, Shed 15 mediated between the varying heights of its neighbours.

The site and wider Kumutoto area have a long history and despite the area's many transformations, its historic character is represented by important patterns/elements that new development needs to acknowledge. The key historical patterns/elements, and the way they have been responded to by the proposal, are discussed in Section 5 of this report under 'Relationship to Context'.

The heritage character and significance of the listed heritage buildings and elements in the vicinity of Site 9 are described and discussed in detail in the Heritage Assessment prepared by Archifact Ltd.

**Visibility** - Site 9 is visible from various locations to the south/east, including Oriental Bay, Mt Victoria and the wider waterfront. The visibility of the site from the city side is limited primarily to viewpoints from along the surrounding streets located within a viewing distance of approximately 200m. The proposal will also be visible from within nearby buildings.

The northern and southern sides of the proposal align with the view corridors of the District Plan Viewshafts 4 and 5, which run along Whitmore Street and Waring Talyor Street respectively.

The visual impact of the proposal on the immediate and wider townscape and on people's experience is discussed in the Townscape/Visual Impact Assessment (Section 8 of this report).



## 4 ASSESSMENT REFERENCE POINTS

The relevant provisions for the urban design assessment of the proposal include:

- (a) **Central Area Urban Design Guide** - the District Plan identifies the Central Area Urban Design Guide (Design Guide) as the primary reference for the assessment of the proposed building on Site 9. The intent of the Design Guide is “to achieve high quality buildings, places and spaces in the Central Area of the City”. The Design Guide is built upon six design matters with specific objectives/guidelines provided for each matter. The Design Guide (which is generic and covers the entire Central Area) acknowledges that good design is both site and programme specific, meaning that emphasis should be on the objectives and guidelines that are directly relevant to the context and issues of the specific proposal. It further acknowledges that due to the unique conditions of each location, some objectives might be more important than others.
- (b) **Environment Court Decision Variation 11 & Northern Kumutoto Precinct Design Guide** - the waterfront area, where the proposal is located, is not specifically referred to in the Central Area Urban Design Guide. District Plan Variation 11 included a site-specific design guide for the Northern Kumutoto Precinct, which was intended to be applied in conjunction with the generic principles of the Central Area Urban Design Guide. However, Variation 11 as a whole was declined by the Environment Court and therefore the Northern Kumutoto Precinct Design Guide has no statutory standing.

The Environment Court decision on Variation 11 provides guidance regarding the massing/height of potential buildings on Sites 9 and 10 and their relationship to adjacent open space. The guidance for Site 9 is directly relevant to the assessment of the proposal as discussed in Section 5 of this report.
- (c) **‘Design Excellence’ considerations** - the proposal exceeds the permitted building height<sup>1</sup>. The District Plan requires over-height buildings to be assessed in terms of ‘design excellence’.
- (d) **The Wellington Waterfront Framework** - the Wellington Waterfront Framework, with special reference to the principles for the North Queens Wharf area (now referred to as North Kumutoto and outlined in the Council’s North Kumutoto Design Brief) provides another reference for the assessment, albeit of a non-statutory nature.

## 5 DESIGN GUIDE ASSESSMENT

### 5.1 DESIGN COHERENCE

- **Objective 01.1** To ensure each design solution is coherently designed, demonstrates design integrity, and integrates all relevant design criteria in the best possible way.
- **Guidelines** - the relevant guideline (G01.1) encourages designers to: “demonstrate in the design and composition of any building an overall coherence that integrates the various design guide requirements”.

Assessment - the form and design of the proposed building has been guided by the North Kumutoto Design Brief (the Brief). The Brief, which has been adopted by the Council, integrates the key principles of the Wellington Waterfront Framework and the Environment Court decision on Variation 11, while also referencing the underlying Central Area Urban Design Guide principles with special emphasis on design coherence and relationship to context. As a result:

- the proposal is based on a well-considered design concept and conveys a strong sense of design integrity through a context-driven design response;

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<sup>1</sup> Permitted building height is ‘zero metres above mean sea level’ (refer Planning Map 32)

- developed in a coherent fashion, the building form has been articulated into distinctive components generated in response to the varied conditions around the development site while acknowledging the townscape value of District Plan Viewshafts 4 & 5;
- the proposal has been designed as an integrated component of the adjacent public spaces Site 8 and Whitmore Plaza Landscape. Consultation with the Landscape Architect for the area has informed the fine-tuning of the building's position relative to heritage gates/fence and pedestrian movement zones around the north west and eastern sides and to the area to the south in relation to Waring Taylor Street gate and shelter elements; and
- the proposal achieves a good balance between interior layout, amenity and functional requirements and external heritage/contextual considerations, while adding to the vitality/activity of the waterfront by incorporating publicly accessible ground level uses and providing high-quality office space.

## 5.2 RELATIONSHIP TO CONTEXT

- **Objective 0.2.1:** *To recognise the unique qualities and sense of place of every urban setting and respond to and enhance these with new development.*
- **Objective 0.2.2** *To maintain or enhance the quality of the settings of individual heritage buildings, including those in heritage areas.*
- **Guidelines** - *the guidelines cover the following matters: Consistency or contrast (G2.1); Positive precedents (G.2.2); Achieving consistency (G2.3); and Developing an authentic sense of place (G2.4).*

Assessment: the main aspects of the context which the proposal has to respond to include - (a) character of the waterfront setting (past and present), (b) the scale/character of the nearby buildings and spaces; and (c) the vehicle nature of the Quays and urban scale/character of the adjacent CBD buildings.

Overall, the proposal is cognisant of the scale/character of nearby buildings and contributes to the quality, safety and activity of adjacent public space (Whitmore Plaza and adjacent Site 8 landscape). The overall massing of the built form and varied treatment of the southern and eastern facades respond well to the scale/heritage value of Shed 13 and to the waterfront setting to the east, while the design of the west/Waterloo Quay facade recognises its interface location between the CBD and the Harbour. The northern end of the building relates well to the PWC Centre and defines the southern edge of Whitmore Plaza. As a whole, the design of the proposed building has been informed by and makes clear references to the historical maritime context, while also acknowledging the changing character of the North Kumutoto area with its historical and emerging contemporary building and spaces working together. This conclusion is based on the following findings:

**Relationship to the waterfront setting** (history & spatial patterns) - this relationship is determined by the way the proposal has acknowledged and addressed key spatial, activity and historical patterns associated with the North Kumutoto area, including:

- distinctive pattern of a linear sequence of buildings shaping the Quays with gaps between buildings typically aligning with cross streets - the proposal responds to this pattern through its linear form and horizontal profile. The proposed massing reinforces the characteristic spatial pattern of separation distances between adjacent buildings along the Quays while retaining the relevant viewshaft corridors running along the northern and southern sides of the proposal (viewshafts 4 & 5);
- historical 'kinked' outline along the edge of the Quays, the shifting alignment of the historical fences/gates and the historical sea wall- the building's position and outline have been determined by the location/alignment of the Whitmore Street gates and refurbished Ballance Street gates) while its western edge defines the Customhouse Quay edge and Whitmore Plaza to the north. The shape of the upper level facade on the western side reflects the historical alignment of the Quays in that location;
- the scale of the 1904 Shed 15 (previously on Site 9) and its spatial relationship with Shed 13 - the form, alignment and facade treatment of the ground level of the proposal reflects the alignment, footprint configuration and materials of Shed 13. The large-scale articulation of the proposal into two integrated components, together with the textured facade of the lower/south-eastern component

assist the scale relationship to Shed 13 and the height transition between Shed 13 and Site 10, while referencing the general scale/configuration of the former Shed 15 on the western side; and

- historic pattern of mixed use waterfront access and service running parallel to the waterfront edge and the more recent history and associations with working waterfront activities - these patterns are reflected in the building form (e.g. the concept of a series of stacked containers that informs the expression of the building form and references the 'working port' history and activity patterns of the area) and further reinforced by its alignment with Lady Elizabeth Lane which defines the eastern extent of the proposal and provides access to the proposed service facilities.

#### ***Relationship to nearby buildings and spaces on the harbour side***

- the new PWC Centre (Site 10) and the Meridian building both have ground level footprints that are smaller than their upper level footprints - an approach that creates sheltered under-croft and/or colonnade space along the perimeter of the respective building. A similar condition is also exhibited by Shed 21 along its western/city side. The proposed Site 9 building will reinforce this pattern by setting back its ground level from the edges of the upper levels footprint to create a sheltered pedestrian space along its perimeter and extend the sheltered pedestrian route along Customhouse Quay to the south;
- the massing, form and texture of the southern end of the proposal references the scale of Shed 13. More specifically, the relationship of the proposal to Shed 13 is aided through: (a) the lower height of the proposal at its southern end; (b) setting back the top level from the eastern edge of the levels below; and (c) the detailed facade treatment of the southern end of the building and its eastern side. This approach will create a complementary scale relationship with the adjacent Shed 13 which will be further reinforced by the use of brick through the building's ground level;
- the proposed Site 9 building will integrate well to the wider built setting of the North Kumutoto with the proposed context-specific massing mediating between the smaller/lower scale of Shed 13 to the south and the taller larger volume of the PWC Centre to the north. The proposal is similar in height to the Meridian building with the treatment of its eastern and southern sides echoing the sense of scale, texture and materiality associated with the Meridian building. The built elements and trees and the Site 8 open space, aids further the spatial integration of the proposal to the collective spatial setting of the surrounding buildings on the harbour side; and
- integration with the emerging new public spaces has been achieved through alignment with Lady Elizabeth Lane and the building arrangement relative to Whitmore Plaza and Site 8 landscape.

***Relationship to the Quays and CBD*** - the proposal responds appropriately to the scale/character of the CBD buildings to the west by:

- providing a larger format simpler facade articulation and greater level of transparency on the western side of the building in response to the scale, predominant facade treatment and vehicle-oriented character of the Quays;
- defining and 'activating' the street edge on the western side of Customhouse Quay and providing a sheltered route along that edge;
- defining/addressing Whitmore Plaza which also enhances the connection to Parliament; and
- maintaining the spatial integrity of the views along Whitmore Street and Waring Taylor Street from Lambton Quay to the harbour (as per District Plan Viewshafts 4 & 5) by aligning with and/or setting back the southern and northern sides of building from the respective viewshaft corridors.

## **5.3 SITING, HEIGHT, BULK AND FORM**

- ***Objective 03.1:*** To complement existing patterns of alignment and achieve a positive scale relationship with adjoining buildings and public spaces.
- ***Objective 03.2:*** To respect the setting of heritage items and identified heritage areas.
- ***Objective 03.3:*** To create coherent patterns of buildings that contribute to the amenity of neighbouring public spaces.



- **Objective 03.4:** To ensure that reasonable levels of ventilation, daylight and outlook are maintained in a building's habitable spaces should development on adjacent sites be built to the maximum standard.
- **Objective 03.5:** To enhance the informal pedestrian network within the Central Area, by encouraging the retention and enhancement of existing pedestrian thoroughfares and promoting the creation of new thoroughfares where they would enhance walkability and permeability for pedestrians.
- **Guidelines** - the supporting guidelines cover the following matters: *Street edge definition and building alignment (G3.1 - G3.4); Height and scale relationship (G3.5 - G3.7); Building bulk (G3.8); Natural light, outlook and ventilation (G3.9); Positive open space (G3.10); Wind effects on public space (G3.11); and Pedestrian block permeability (G3.12).*

Assessment - many of the objectives/guidelines under 'Siting, Height, Bulk and Form' overlap with those under 'Design Coherence' and 'Relationship to Context'. To avoid repetition, the assessment cross-references already discussed matters where appropriate.

**Street edge definition and building alignment** - as already discussed, the proposal follows the general alignment of Shed 13. Its siting (which has been informed by the position of Whitmore Street and Ballance Street gates), will reinforce the continuity of spatial definition along the Quays. On the eastern/Harbour side the proposal is aligned with and defines the adjacent Lady Elizabeth Lane.

**Height and scale relationship & building bulk** - the objectives/guidelines under this heading are aimed at avoiding abrupt height differences between adjacent buildings while ensuring the height/bulk of new development relates well to and does not dominate adjacent public spaces and/or neighbouring buildings. The ultimate aim is establishing appropriate height and scale relationships between existing and proposed. Height/scale relationship with the adjacent heritage listed Shed 13 is a particularly sensitive issue.

Overall, the approach to the massing into two offset components with varying height and facade composition assists the height/scale integration of the proposal to its context. The proposal will create a building of horizontal form/bulk that references the general height/plan dimensions of Shed 13 and is similar in height to the Meridian building and lower and smaller in scale than the PWC Centre (Site 10).

The juxtaposition of the two primary building components creates a compositionally balanced and integrated building form. The scale relationship of the building form to its context is further assisted by the proposed facade composition and detailing that varies along each side of the building in response to the scale and character of adjacent buildings. This conclusion is supported by the following findings:

**Building form/bulk** - the proposed massing provides a context-driven response to the 'threshold' position of Site 9 while acknowledging the proximity of the adjacent Shed 13. The building bulk is articulated into two components - the 'container stack' and the 'elevated frame' - clearly differentiated by variation in height and facade composition. The 'container stack' (the lower of the two components) defines the scale/character of the eastern and southern sides of the building. Extending from Waring Taylor Street gates and wrapping around the harbour side it is 16.5m high<sup>2</sup>.

The 'elevated frame' (19.98m high) is diagonally offset from the container stack. It shapes the north-western corner of the building and defines the southern side of the Whitmore Street gateway and the western/Quay side of the proposal. It folds along its western edge in response to the historical alignment shift of the Quays.

The two primary components sit above the building's ground level with their collective footprint extending outwards to create a sheltered under-croft area along the building edges. The juxtaposition between the components creates an overall building form that steps down at the southern end adjacent to Shed 13 and along the harbour side adjacent to Site 8 open space. The 'stepping down' height at the southern end will be explicit in views from the Quays making reference to the lower Shed 13 to the south, while in views from the harbour it will provide a lower foreground to the 'elevated frame' behind. Stepping down the

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<sup>2</sup> All height quoted refer to height above mean sea level (amsl)

building form from the city to the water will downplay the height of the taller component in views from the more immediate waterfront.

Building height - the Environment Court decision states that the 'maximum height of the Block B (Site 9) should be 16m and 19m accordingly (...which would equate to the Meridian building apex and provide relativity to Shed 13). The proposed building height is 16.5m for the lower 'container stack' and 19.98m to the top of the 'elevated frame. These heights are 0.5m and 0.98m above the heights indicated as 'appropriate' by the Environment Court as a permitted activity baseline.

In terms of the building's overall impact on views and/or on the quality of the surrounding public space, the height 'increase' of 0.5m relative to Shed 13 will not be easy to detect and therefore it will not affect the height/scale relationship to Shed 13 in any significant way. Similarly, the height 'increase' of 0.98m for the 'elevated frame' will not affect significantly the height/scale relationship with the PWC Centre (22.85m tall) as the proposed building will remain approximately a storey lower than the PWC Centre, therefore maintaining the notion of a stepping-down building form (from north to south) in view from the Quays.

In views from the Harbour, the visual impact of the 'increased' height of the 'elevated frame' (relative to the Environment Court decision) will be moderated by its setback position from the building's eastern edge, with the lower volume of the 'container stack' sitting in front of the taller 'elevated frame'.

A small area of rooftop services (plant and chillers), proposed to be located at the centre of the building footprint, will rise between 1.2m to 2.5m above the roof line of the 'elevated frame'. The roof-top services are configured as elongated 'boxes' with narrow footprints and intended to be painted in a recessive colour. To reduce their visual impact, the taller 'boxes' are aligned perpendicular to the key views from city to harbour.

The service areas will be most visible in some public views from south/east (VP 1 & 2) and will also feature in 'private' views from surrounding buildings, but will not be seen in 'public' views from the more immediate area around the building (VP 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7). The rooftop services will also appear in some distant views (VP 8, 9 & 10). In such views they will be seen from a long distance against the background of the taller CBD buildings which will reduce their visual impact.

**Natural light, outlook and ventilation** - the Design Guide encourages new buildings to achieve acceptable levels of natural light, outlook and ventilation for residential and other habitable spaces by providing on-site setbacks from site and/or rear boundaries (or atria and light wells) and without needing to rely on the openness of adjacent sites. The proposal has addressed appropriately these matters as:

- the upper levels of the building are configured for a high quality base-isolated office space. The proposed building which is relatively narrow and has good aspect to all sides is well suited for good quality office space. The office use is further supported by the proximity of the site to the Railway Station and the CBD;
- as a free-standing building, the proposal allows for extensive glazing around the building perimeter ensuring good levels of natural lighting and excellent views;
- the proposed Level 4 deck running along the east and south sides of the building will enhance views and add to the overall amenity of the office space; and
- the proposal incorporates an appropriate ventilation system with building elevations designed with thermal performance requirements in mind (see detailed comments in the Architect's Design Report).

**Positive open space** - the Design Guide encourages that any publicly accessible on-site open space is located in a way that complements and/or positively defines it. Any space for recreational activity should be sunny and sheltered and support occupation. The proposal has successfully addressed these issues for the following reasons:

- the proposal will support the definition, quality and activity of surrounding public space by creating sheltered pedestrian space connected to surrounding public spaces such as Whitmore Plaza, Lady Elizabeth Lane and the recently completed Site 8 landscape and Customhouse Quay and accommodating publicly accessible activities along the majority of the building's perimeter; and
- the generous under-croft space at the northern end of the building will extend and activate the space of Whitmore Plaza and enhance its safety.

**Wind effects on public space** - a wind assessment has been prepared as part of the Resource Consent Application (refer to Wind Tunnel Study, prepared by Opus).

**Pedestrian block permeability** - the proposal provides two inter-connected entrances to the building - a main entrance from the harbour side and a second entrance from the Customhouse Quay side. This will allow internal publicly accessible cross-connection through the building which will improve pedestrian permeability.

## 5.4 EDGE TREATMENT

**Objective 04.1** aims “to create building edge conditions that support pedestrian activity and enhance the visual interest, legibility, safety and comfort of streets and other public spaces”.

The supporting **guidelines** cover the following matters: *Building forms/street frontages; Active edges; Servicing and car parking; and Shelter and building entrance enhancement.*

### Assessment

**Building fronts & active edges** - the proposal has been designed with the relevant guidelines in mind and as a result:

- will provide public occupation of the building edges in a sheltered, safe and comfortable environment with servicing located between entrances and tenancies to maximise edge activation;
- the ground level includes cafe spaces, building entrances and lobby areas and appropriately located service areas. The main entrance and lobby to the upper level offices opens up to Lady Elizabeth Lane and is complemented by a second entrance from the Quays;
- the development creates continuous ‘active building frontages’ along the majority of the building's perimeter. The extent of ‘inactive’ ground level frontage is associated with the service areas and limited primarily to the central parts of the western/Customhouse Quay side of the building (where expected pedestrian flows are lower than on harbour side) and a relatively narrow section on the eastern frontage. The proposed second pedestrian entrance mid-point along the Customhouse Quay frontage and the ‘active’ frontages warping around the south/west and south/east corners of the building appropriately balance off the less interactive section of the street frontage;
- the proposed Tenancy 1 at the northern end facing Whitmore Plaza is well suited to accommodate a cafe linked to the main lobby area. The shelter at the northern and eastern sides provided by the overhang above allows for an outdoor seating/dining area to further activate the adjacent public space;
- Tenancies 2 & 3 (opening up to Lady Elizabeth Lane and wrapping around the southern end of the building) are also envisaged to be developed as cafe/restaurant spaces (and/or subdivided into smaller commercial units) subject to viability of these operations; and
- the proposed rubbish/recycling/storage area has a relatively narrow frontage and is discreetly located between the Tenancies 2 & 3 without compromising the otherwise active ground level frontage that ‘opens up’ to the waterfront. Servicing will be from Lady Elizabeth Lane with service vehicles able to park in a nearby layby or (at appropriate times) in the laneway immediately outside the service dock.

**Servicing and carparking** - the proposal does not provide any on-site parking. As discussed earlier, vehicle access to the rubbish/recycling area is off Lady Elizabeth Lane.

**Shelter and building entrance enhancement** - the ground level, which is inset from the upper level facades on all sides will provide pedestrian shelter along the east, west and south sides and a deeper verandah to the north around Tenancy 1. Entrances to the building, as discussed above, are appropriately located, sheltered and internally linked through the lobby.

## 5.5 FAÇADE COMPOSITION AND BUILDING TOPS

**Objective 05.1:** *To ensure the façade and building top design is coherently resolved.*

**Objective 05.2:** *To ensure that additions and alterations to heritage buildings maintain the heritage values of those buildings, their setting and any associated heritage area.*

**Objective 05.3:** *To facilitate multiple and changing building uses, except where such change adversely affects the heritage values of heritage buildings or areas.*

The supporting **guidelines** refer to issues such as: *Relationship to neighbouring buildings; Shopfronts, Building tops and roofscapes; and Human scale.*

### Assessment

**Relationship to neighbouring buildings** - this issue has been largely covered under 'Relationship to Context'. Further to this, the following additional comments are made:

The proposal is based on a concept where the building form/facade composition and detailing along each side of the building respond to the varied conditions around Site 9 and its interface location between the Harbour and the city. The east and south sides of the building are characterised by more texture, finer scale facade articulation and more 'informal' composition recognising the proximity of Shed 13, the open space context of Site 9 and the pedestrian nature of the waterfront. Conversely, the modelling of the western/city side facade is based on larger format articulation and greater level of transparency that reflects the street context and vehicle-oriented nature of the Quays, while addressing thermal performance requirements. The varied facade composition/treatment of the two building components has been carefully considered at both conceptual and more detailed design level to achieve a sense of differentiation while maintaining the compositional integrity of the building as a whole. This conclusion is supported by the following findings:

Based on an abstract reference to a series of stacked containers the facade pattern of the lower component is comprised of solid earth-toned porcelain or pre-coloured aluminium panels offset with glazed components with aluminium louvers to moderate morning solar gain and glare. The proposed facade treatment conveys a sense of 'randomness' and informality that reflects the harbourside aspect of the site. From a distance, the facade pattern will be reminiscent of a stagger bond stacked shipping containers. At close up it will provide scale, a finer grain texture and sense of materiality in response to the scale/character of the historic facades of the sheds to the south and the scale and texture and facade elements of the neighbouring Meridian building and Site 8 landscape. The use of brick through the ground level façade on the western side provides a further reference to the visual character of Shed 13. The proposed pattern of staggered openings and articulated louver system wraps around the southern and south-western end of the building where it appears as a more vertically aligned pattern.

The majority of the 'elevated frame' facade uses unitised glazed system articulated by solid aluminium panels (natural or pre-finished metallic paint) to address thermal performance requirements located at the centre and the northern end of the facade. The facade composition is expressed in two-storey bands referencing the scale and pattern of the larger transparent facades characteristic of the CBD buildings on the city side. The simpler/larger format facade articulation recognises its proximity to the Quays and the dynamic way of experiencing the buildings (for many by car and at a greater speed). The expressed fold in the west façade reflects the original alignment of the Quays with the arrangement of the proposed solid panels at the northern end reflecting the alignment of the Ballance/Whitmore Street gates.

The shaping of the north/western end of the building to form a 'prow' and its recessed roof-top level is particularly expressive in views from the north where the varied approach to the context-specific massing and facade composition is clearly understood.

**Building tops and roofscapes** - designed as an integral part of the overall design composition the building top is setback from the south and east sides of the building to create a stepped roof top that is perceived to be lower on the east and southern sides. The result is an articulated building top that accentuates the height difference between the two sides of the building, with the top-level setbacks providing usable roof-top balcony with views to the harbour. The proposed roof-top pergola element along the balcony edges adds detail that 'lightens up' and enhances the 3D quality of the building top.

The lift overrun and plant areas are well setback from the building's edges and their dimensions have been minimised to reduce visual impact in views from within the surrounding area (as already discussed under 'height and scale relationship & building bulk').

**Human scale** - the design conveys a sense of human scale at the publicly occupied edges of buildings. This is expressed through design elements and architectural detail appearing at the ground level of the development and carried through the upper levels. The key features contributing a sense of scale have already been discussed under 'relationship to neighbouring buildings' above.

**Flexibility and adaptability** - the building form, width and internal layout, with a special reference to the amount of natural light it will provide, supports its adaptability should a future change of use be considered.

## 5.6 MATERIALS AND DETAIL

**Objective 06.1:** *To achieve qualities of visual interest and physical robustness consistent with demands arising from the building's location in the central city.*

**Objective 06.2:** *To respect and conserve original heritage fabric.*

The supporting **guidelines** cover matters such as: *Compositional coherence; Visual interest; Physical robustness; and Façade transparency.*

### Assessment

#### **Compositional coherence/visual interest /physical robustness/facade transparency**

- overall, issues of materials and detailing are appropriately addressed as already discussed under 'façade composition';
- the treatment of the entire building exterior has been approached in an integrated manner - all elevations have been given appropriate treatment in terms of materials and design detail in response to their specific place within the surrounding setting. This will create a visually interesting development that fits in with its setting; and
- the proposed glazing systems will facilitate the desired visual connection between the surrounding public space and the building interior.

The intended palette of proposed materials and their application on the building's facades are illustrated on the elevation drawings and further described in the Architect's Design Report. It is noted that facade materials and detailing have been subject to an iterative process of refinements. This process is likely to continue at the next stages of design development should consent to the proposal is granted. As with any project of the scale and complexity as those of the proposed building, the challenge at a resource consent stage is providing a level of certainty on design quality (in terms of materials and detailing) while allowing for flexibility in the next stages of design development. This can be addressed via a condition of consent re making final choice of materials and associated detailing subject to Council's approval prior to lodging a building consent. This is an appropriate and well-used mechanism that will be offered by the Applicant.



## 6 WELLINGTON WATERFRONT FRAMEWORK

The Wellington Waterfront Framework (the Framework) is a non-statutory document adopted by WCC, which “sets out the vision, values and principles that will guide the development of the waterfront”. In addition to waterfront-wide values, principles and objectives, the Framework also provides site-specific guidance on development within a number of identified areas, with North Kumutoto (referred to in the Framework as North Queens Wharf) being one of them.

The guidance provided by the Framework is structured around vision and themes; values, principles and objectives; and key areas. The vision and themes provide a higher-level direction for new development on the waterfront with the principles and objectives clarifying and translating that direction into more specific provisions. These are then applied to inform the site-specific principles/ideas for each of the identified five individual areas. Since the adoption of the Framework by the Council in 2001 a number of the objectives and ideas have already been implemented.

The Framework refers to both development of buildings and open space. Given the primary focus of this assessment is on the proposed building itself, not all of the Framework’s ‘provisions’ are directly relevant to my assessment. However, it is acknowledged that the Framework as whole is an important reference with the provisions for the North Kumutoto (North Queens Wharf) area being most directly relevant to the assessment.

Many of the Framework’s principles that are directly relevant to the urban design assessment (particularly those for North Kumutoto) are included in the North Kumutoto Design Brief and reinforced by the Design Guide. These relate to matters such as scale relationship with adjacent buildings and space with particular emphasis on relationship to heritage neighbours, maritime character, carparking, open space, active building edges, connections to CBD, sheltered pedestrian routes, and design quality. In relation to those common issues, the conclusions of my Design Guide assessment are also relevant to the assessment against the Framework. Regarding the more specific principles for North Kumutoto/North Queens Wharf, the following points are reiterated:

- Pedestrian routes - the proposal provides sheltered a pedestrian route along the Quay side of the building thus supporting pedestrian movement along the Quays from the Railway Station to the CBD;
- Parking and vehicle access - proposed servicing and vehicle access has been designed with ‘pedestrians come first’ in mind - the proposal does not provide parking, while service areas are appropriately located to minimise their impact on adjacent pedestrian space and accessed via Lady Elizabeth Lane;
- Orientation - views to the waterfront and harbour down Whitmore and Waring Taylor Streets as specified by the Framework will remain unaffected by the proposal;
- Promenade - the proposal provides sheltered pedestrian route along the both sides of the building and along the southern edge of Whitmore Plaza;
- Open space - the proposal provides definition to the Quays edge, to Whitmore Plaza and Lady Elizabeth Lane and supports the activity and use of those spaces and the new Site 8 open space through the intended publicly accessible ground level uses; and
- Building relationship to open spaces - the proposal creates active building edges along most of the building’s perimeter. The ground level accommodates commercial uses and building entrances with the upper levels providing high quality office space. This will support activity in the CBD and enhance the use of and activity in adjacent public space. In terms of height/scale, the proposed building relates well to its neighbours and its massing recognises and fits in with the varying building heights to the north and south respectively - taller to the north and lower to the south. The massing and overall building form of the proposal and its facade treatment is of high quality and addresses the scale and character of the adjacent heritage Shed 13.

With the above in mind, it is considered that the proposal is consistent with the character identified by the Wellington Waterfront Framework for the North Kumutoto Area. Regarding design detail the proposal is consistent with the themes, values, principles and objectives for the waterfront, as well as with the specific intentions for North Kumutoto and associated Design Brief.

## 7 DESIGN EXCELLENCE

The proposal is located on a site with a 0m height limit<sup>3</sup>. The District Plan requires design excellence for any building that is higher than the height standard specified for the Central Area (Policy 12.2.5.5). There are no explicit criteria in the District Plan for assessing design excellence. However, the explanation under Policy 12.2.5.5 states that in processing a consent application for an over-height building, Council will consider: *"both the scale of the proposed height increase and the comparative height of the resulting building in relation to its surroundings"*.

While all new buildings are expected to be of sufficient design quality and make a positive contribution to the public environment, delivering design excellence is considered particularly important for: *"proposals that will result in a building that is significantly higher to the surrounding built form"*.

The two likely scenarios re over-height buildings discussed in the explanation include: (a) *"... a building of exceptional height in comparison to every other building in the city (i.e. in excess of 130m in height),* and (b) *"...a building that is very tall in relation to the scale of surrounding properties. Both scenarios are likely to result in a building of significant visibility and prominence"*.

The proposal, although prominent because of its location, does not fall directly under either of the likely scenarios. Regarding the 0m height limit for the waterfront, the heights as per the Environment Court decision provide the primary reference for assessing the appropriateness of the proposed height (in urban form terms). With regard to the Environment Court decision the proposal slightly exceeds the heights indicated as 'appropriate' by that decision (between 0.5 and just below 1.0m) with a small area of the roof top services rising between 1.2-2.5m further above the 'elevated frame' (the taller component on the city side of the building).

There are no explicit criteria in the District Plan for assessing design excellence. However, to aid the assessment of over-height proposals the Council has provided a non-statutory list of considerations. It is noted that in essence these considerations reinforce and/or emphasise the key principles/objectives of the Design Guide.

The Council's 'design excellence' considerations and associated assessment comments are outlined below.

*"Design excellence requires:*

- *a coherent and concept driven design, relevant to its context. This will include a thorough site analysis identifying matters of importance to the site and how they influence the design.*

As already noted, the proposal is based on a well-considered design concept derived from the site's context and conditions and underpinned by a clear understanding of key spatial and historical patterns, the character of the individual buildings and spaces around the site and their collective contribution to the North Kumutoto area (see Architect's Design Report). The building form, comprised of two distinctive components generated in response to the site's context (past and present), will stand as a coherent building entity that fits in with and contributes to its surroundings.

- *a design that enhances:*
  - *the site*
  - *the street (including neighbouring buildings)*
  - *the urban block*
  - *the wider city*

The proposal will repair the Customhouse Quay edge of the site and enhance the spatial definition of the street. It will also define and activate the southern edge of Whitmore Plaza and Lady Elizabeth Lane while providing sheltered pedestrian routes on either side of the building. The proposal will reinstate/complete the historic linear pattern of buildings along the Quays while retaining the integrity of the identified viewshafts along Whitmore and Waring-Taylor Streets. In that way the proposal will

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<sup>3</sup> Height limit on the waterfront is 'zero metres above mean sea level' (refer to Planning Map 32).

make a positive contribution (in spatial, amenity, activity and visual terms) and enhance the site, the adjacent street/Customhouse Quay, the North Kumutoto area, waterfront and the city as a whole.

- *a high level of internal and external building functionality and amenity*

The building's external form, internal amenity and functionality have been approached in an integrated manner to produce a building that provides flexible upper level office space of high amenity and a ground level that accommodates publically accessible uses while minimising the extent of the 'in-active frontage' associated with service areas and vehicle access. The integrated approach to external form and internal amenity/functionality is clearly expressed in the design of the building facades that reflect the physical conditions around the site including orientation, sunlight access and views, as well as character of surrounding buildings and spaces.

- *three dimensional articulation of building form and building top to reduce the visual impact of the building, mitigate wind effects, and create a strong architectural identity.*

As noted earlier, although the building is technically over-height it will not read as an out-of-scale/height building. The portions of the building which rise above the height considered appropriate by the Environment Court (between 0.5m and just below 1.0m) will not create a visually dominant structure with an overwhelming height/bulk that requires substantial mitigation. The 'over-height' portions have been treated as part of a building top designed as an integral element of the building composition - a composition aimed at creating a well-articulated building form with an architectural identity that reflects the maritime character of the site and its former working port history. The impact of the rooftop plant/service areas has been reduced through their setback position in the centre of the site and their minimal dimensions.

- *detailing and materials that add visual interest to the façades*

The building facades have been appropriately designed to; (a) respond to the varying conditions around the site through context-specific facade articulation that acknowledges the way the building will be experienced in terms of distance and type of visual audiences; (b) respond to orientation, environmental factors and outlook; and (c) provide visual interest, a sense of human scale and an enhanced three-dimensional quality through architectural detail and application of materials that aid the visual relationship to surrounding buildings/spaces.

- *a design which goes over and above what would normally be expected to satisfy the Central Area Urban Design Guide provisions”.*

Design excellence can be defined and measured at different levels. Broadly, it is seen as a design that clearly goes above the ordinary or standard response and delivers a solution resolved in an exemplary way both conceptually as well as at the level of design detail.

Depending on the context, scale, function, prominence and place of the building within the street and the city, design excellence may be expressed in different ways.

For example, for exceptionally tall buildings in visually prominent locations and/or for buildings with an important public function, design excellence may mean a building with a striking form and design that becomes a landmark and enhances both its local/immediate context, as well as the wider cityscape. In other cases, where the development is of a relatively small scale and sits within a context with an established character design excellence may mean sensitively fitting the new building in with that context while delivering a sense of specialness or an extra design quality in a subtle way through a creative design response and carefully considered design detail. The scale of the proposal and the character of its context suggest that the latter approach to delivering design excellence would be more relevant / appropriate.

A building of the scale/function as the proposed Site 9 building and its place within both the wider waterfront and the specific North Kumutoto context does not call for an iconic or landmark type architecture. The immediate context of the proposal is diverse and visually complex. It has a long history and includes variable in scale, age and character buildings, some of which have a strong heritage value, others with a distinctive contemporary image on their own. The sense of complexity is further reinforced by the visually interesting landscape treatment of the adjacent spaces (Site 8

space and Whitmore Plaza). This suggests that while establishing its own presence and identity is important for any new building on Site 9 the sensitive integration to its context is the overriding objective towards achieving design excellence.

The proposal has achieved that through a commitment to design excellence expressed both at conceptual level as well as at the level of architectural design detail and materials. It provides a sensitive response to the underlying context with the aim of completing the linear pattern of buildings along the Quays and defining the emerging network of open spaces while referencing the working port history of the waterfront.

Technically, because of the current 0 m height limit and the Environment Court decision, the proposal requires a 'design excellence' assessment. Urban form and height issues were discussed in the Design Guide assessment which established that the proposal in terms of form and massing relates well to and is comparable to the height/scale of adjacent buildings and will contribute positively to the surrounding public spaces. The proposal will not impact on the identified viewshafts and will not appear as an out-of-context/character building. Although technically an 'over-height' building, the proposal, as experienced on the ground, will read as a well-considered addition to the building fabric of the waterfront that completes and reinforces important spatial, historical and activity patterns and complements both the character of the wider waterfront as well as that of the North Kumutoto area.

The overall quality of the proposal as a whole, as discussed throughout this report, shows that the outcome will exceed the quality of a development that merely satisfies the Design Guide. As already discussed, a condition of consent re making final choice of materials and associated detailing subject to Council's approval prior to lodging a building consent will provide a good level of certainty on building design quality outcomes.

## **8 TOWNSCAPE ASSESSMENT/ VISUAL IMPACT**

### **8.1 OVERVIEW**

Visibility/visual catchment - as part of the waterfront setting, the proposal has a wider visual catchment to the south/east including Mt Victoria, Oriental Bay/Oriental Parade and the waterfront, while its visibility from the city side is limited to the area to the west/south/north the development site contained within a semicircle with a radius of approximately 200m.

Viewing directions - views from the south/east will be obtained from various locations and range of distances and will include long-distance and mid-range views (public and private). Views from the city side will be obtained from a shorter distance from along the surrounding streets and nearby buildings.

Viewing audiences - the main visual audiences include pedestrians who will experience the proposal in a dynamic way when moving along streets and public spaces and motorists travelling at a greater speed. Other audiences include residents in the distant residential areas and users of nearby office buildings who will experience the proposal in static views.

Impact on visual experience - the impact of the proposal will be most pronounced on pedestrians moving within the vicinity of Queens Wharf/North Kumutoto area and those moving along the adjacent city streets. In such public views the proposal will be seen as part of a sequential experience where the focus of attention will vary and change depending of the viewing angle and distance.

In views from within the private properties in the distant residential areas to the south/east, the impact of the proposal will be reduced by the distance, foreground elements and the surrounding built context within which the proposal will be seen as a small element of the wider and visually complex cityscape.

In views from nearby office buildings the proposal will be experienced from a closer distance. The impact of the proposal in those views will vary depending on the position of the observer - e.g. views from the

lower levels of nearby buildings will focus on the street and/or side elevations, while in views from the upper levels the attention will be on the roof top of the proposed building.

The assessment that follows is focused primarily on the impact of the new building on public views. To aid the assessment, the Applicant has produced photomontages from 10 key public viewpoints (see Buidmedia Artists Impressions set). The viewpoints have been discussed with and approved by TAG and considered to be representative of the collective visual experience of the proposal by the public.

## 8.2 PUBLIC VIEWS: VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

**Distant views from the south/east** (Refer VP 8, 9 & 10) - these are sequential views from the south/west representing the visual impact of the proposal on the wider townscape and on people moving along Oriental Parade towards the waterfront (approximate viewing distance between 0.9km and 1.6km). All three views focus on the east elevation which will be most clearly seen from VP8/ the vicinity of Clyde Quay Wharf which is located closest to Site 9.

In those distant views the proposal will be seen as a small element of the wider harbour setting against the backdrop of the CBD buildings with the distant hills in the background. In these views the attention will be on the overall building form and its large-scale articulation allowing the reading of the two building components and the visual reference to the stagger bond stacked shipping containers expressed on the east elevation.

Shed 13 does not feature in those views and the proposal is seen in close proximity to the Meridian building with Whitmore Plaza and the PWC Centre to the north. In terms of height and overall form/bulk/scale, the proposal sits comfortably in the context of its immediate neighbours with its height being similar to the height of the Meridian building and lower than that of PWC Centre/Site 10. Due to distance and the dense background of the CBD cityscape, the visual impact of the proposal in distant views will not be significant and it will blend into and complete the visual context of the harbour setting.

**Close-up views from the immediate waterfront area-** (Refer VP 1, 2 & 3) - in these views the overall form of the proposal, as well its more detailed design treatment, will be appreciated.

Viewpoint 1 (Queens Wharf/Outer T, northern end, approximate viewing distance 175m) will reveal most of the east façade with its southern/lower end hidden behind the Meridian building and its northern end defining Whitmore Plaza. The new Site 8 landscape appears in the immediate foreground. The height similarities between the proposal and its neighbours are evident. View 1 shows the contribution of the proposal to the spatial definition of the Whitmore Plaza and Site 8 landscape. It also shows how the proposal extends the line of buildings along the Quays by transitioning between the volumes of the Meridian building and PWC Centre. The proposed facade treatment echoes the horizontal scale of those buildings and reflects the sense of texture/detail and materiality expressed on their facades. The prominence of the roof top plant enclosure in that view will be reduced as it will be seen against the backdrop of the CBD buildings rather than against the skyline.

Viewpoint 2 (promenade, northern end of Meridian building, approximate viewing distance 80m) will focus on the south and east elevations and reveal the spatial relationship of the proposal to Shed 13 and the PWC Centre. The lower southern end of the proposal and the setback of the 'elevated frame' reduce the bulk/height of the proposal and aid the visual relationship with Shed 13 which is further assisted by the spatial corridor of Waring Taylor Street/Viewshaft 5 that separates the two buildings. This view clearly shows the contribution of the proposal towards completing the line of buildings along the Quays, providing definition to the adjacent spaces and the compatible visual relationship between the proposal and its neighbours. The latter is reinforced by the texture/detailing (materials and colour) of the east façade that references the scale/texture of Shed 13 and the detailing of Site 8 landscape and the Meridian building a small part of which appears in the view's foreground.

The setbacks of the top building level and its roof top treatment and detailing provides articulation to the building top and reduces the perceived building height. The simple form, intended recessive colour and setback position of the roof-top service areas and plant will moderate their visual impact. It is noted that any future building at 1 Whitmore Street (the site of the service station immediately to the west) will



provide a built background to the proposal and therefore will further reduce the visual impact of the roof-top service 'boxes'.

Viewpoint 3 (northern end of Kumutoto Plaza, approximate viewing distance 50m) - this close-up view focuses on the southern facade of the proposal with its east facade seen at a sharp oblique angle. The proposal is seen in the foreground of the view and its relationship to the PWC Centre is highlighted. The view illustrates the sheltered pedestrian route along the eastern edge of the building created by the upper levels overhang and the transparent ground level frontage. The view illustrates the positive way in which the proposal will define Lady Elizabeth Lane and the adjacent Site 8 open space by extending the built edge created by the PWC Centre to the south with the trees and landscape features of Site 8 providing a scale transition between the building and the water edge. The subdivision/materiality and design treatment of the south facade and the overall volume of the proposal as seen in this view relate well to both the adjacent space and the scale/height of the PWC building to the north.

Viewpoint 4 (waterfront promenade southern end, vicinity of PWC Centre, approximate viewing distance 50m) - this close-up view focuses on the northern facade of the proposal with its east facade seen at an oblique angle. This will be the initial view of the building as one approaches the waterfront promenade from the north. The building is seen at the foreground with Whitmore Plaza in front of it and the Meridian building and Site 8 landscape to the south/east. Shed 13 is largely hidden behind the proposal and further screened by the trees/features of the Site 8 landscape.

The juxtaposition of two primary building components and the resultant articulation of the building form is clearly understood with the prow at the north/western end being a prominent element in this view.

The highly glazed volume of the elevated frame makes clear reference to the glazed facades of the Maritime Tower to the south/west. At the same time, the sense of 'randomness'/informality conveyed by the proposed 'hit and miss' facade of the container stack and the timber pergola associated with the roof top above reduce the perceived height/bulk on the harbour side while establishing visual links with the materiality and textures of the Meridian building and Site 8 landscape.

Viewpoint 4 illustrates well the context-specific approach to the articulation of the overall building form and the detailed design treatment of its facades. It also acknowledges the gateway location of Site 9 and its role in defining the southern side of Whitmore Plaza.

The sheltered pedestrian space along the south and east sides of the building, supported by a transparent/active ground frontage, illustrate the positive contribution of the building to both the spatial definition and activity within the surrounding public space, while adding a sense of human scale.

#### **Close-up views from the immediate-streets on the city side of Site 9 (refer to VP 5, 6 & 7)**

Viewpoints 5 & 6 provide sequential views of the proposal from south/west along Customhouse Quay. In both views the south/west and western sides of the proposal will be in focus and the contribution of the proposal in completing the line of buildings along the Quays will be understood.

Viewpoint 5 (corner of Johnston Street and Customhouse Quay, approximate distance 100m) shows the proposal in relation to Shed 13 with the south/western corner of the PWC Centre also visible. The image illustrates the similarity in height between the lower/southern end of new building and Shed 13. The proposed façade treatment, including materials, texture and depth of façade relief and the visual references they provide to Shed 13 will be appreciated. The taller volume of the 'elevated frame' as seen in this view relates well to the height of the PWC Centre and its folding facade alludes to the kink in the alignment of Customhouse Quay in that location and enhances the street edge definition. The solid panels on the west façade of the elevated frame articulate its surface and introduce a sense of vertical scale that moderates the perception of its length, while adding visual interest and introducing a sense of detail and materiality.

Viewpoint 6 (corner of Waring-Taylor Street and Customhouse Quay, approximate viewing distance 50m) provides a closer view of the proposal where the fold in the western façade is clearly expressed with the southern facade seen at an oblique angle. The focus is on the relationship with Waring-Taylor gates and the way the proposal defines the end of the western frame of Viewshaft 5. The façade texture and design detail in this view are clearly expressed with the 'negative' detail at the junction between the container

stack and the elevated frame articulating the two components. The proposed discreet fold in the centre of the south façade, which will be noticeable in this view, enhances the 3D form of the façade and moderates the perception of its width. The view illustrates the contribution of the proposal to the definition of the Customhouse Quay edge and to providing pedestrian shelter and activity along that edge.

Viewpoint 7 (corner of Whitmore Street and Customhouse Quay, approximate viewing distance 50m) shows the relationship of the proposal to the CBD building to the south and its contribution to the definition to both Customhouse Quay edge and Whitmore Plaza. The view is focused on the northern end of the building with the west façade seen in perspective and a small portion of the north/east corner of the container stack also visible. The extensively glazed folded western façade and its detailed articulation in two horizontal bands, counter-balanced by solid vertical panels reflect the Customhouse Quay shift in alignment and visually fit in well with the CBD cityscape. The recessed ground level articulates the bottom of the building and reduces its overall bulk. Its contribution in providing a sheltered pedestrian route and active frontage along the building edge is clearly understood. The building form mediates well between the height of the taller PWC building and Shed 13 and, as seen in this view, is consistent with the concept of a building form that steps in height from north to south.

**Viewshafts** - Site 9 sits between the spatial corridors of Waring-Taylor and Whitmore Streets. The views along both streets to the waterfront are identified as protected viewshafts by the District Plan (Viewshafts 4 and 5). The visual simulations prepared in relation to both viewshafts illustrate that the proposed building sits within and will not affect the identified 'frames' of either of the viewshafts.

**Summary** - visibility is largely limited to a combination of long distance views from the south/east and closer range views from the more immediate setting of the proposal on both its harbour and city sides. The location of the proposal within the wider waterfront and the alignment of the Quays does not enable mid-range views. While the proposal will be experienced primarily by pedestrians and motorists, its visual impact will be most pronounced on pedestrian experience in views from the near vicinity of the North Kumutoto area.

The analysis of public views from representative viewing points (as illustrated on the photomontages) shows that while prominent from certain areas, the proposal fits in well with its visual context. Its massing will create a building of height/overall scale that relates well to that of nearby buildings, while also referencing important patterns and alignments of the surrounding context - this will be noticeable in both distant and close-up views. The context-specific detailed facade modelling of the proposal, which will be in focus in the close-up views, reduces the impact of its bulk, enhances its visual quality and assists its integration with the surrounding building and spaces. Overall, in terms of visual impact, the proposal will make a positive contribution to both people's visual experience and the character of its immediate and wider visual setting.

## 9 SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

The proposal is for a new office building with a predominant publicly accessible ground level on Site 9, North Kumutoto Area of the Wellington Waterfront. An assessment carried out against the relevant provisions of the District Plan (including the Central Area Urban Design Guide and 'design excellence' criteria) and the Wellington Waterfront Framework established that the urban design outcome of the proposal is consistent with the stated intent, principles and objectives of those documents. The result will be a building with a coherent and integrated form which:

- acknowledges the interface city/harbour location of the development site;
- responds to the range of contextual conditions around the development site while referencing characteristic waterfront-wide patterns;
- contributes to the definition and activity of adjacent public space and the Quays;
- adds to the activity and vitality of the waterfront and its CBD context;

- improves the accessibility to the waterfront by providing public sheltered accessible routes on established desire lines; and
- provides a high-quality office space located close to the Railway Station, the Government Precinct and the CBD.

Further to this, a visual impact assessment carried out to assess the visual impact of the proposal on the wider townscape setting and on people's experience, showed that the proposed building fits in well with that setting and will enhance the visual experience of both pedestrians and motorists.

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