

**BEFORE THE ENVIRONMENT COURT
AT WELLINGTON**

ENV-2015-WLG-024

IN THE MATTER of the Resource
Management Act 1991

AND

IN THE MATTER of applications for
resource consent by
Site 10 Redevelopment
Limited Partnership and
Wellington City Council
in respect of the area
known as Site 10

**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF DEYANA IVANOVA POPOVA
ON BEHALF OF SITE 10 REDEVELOPMENT LIMITED PARTNERSHIP AND
WELLINGTON CITY COUNCIL**

3 July 2015



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INTRODUCTION

1. My full name is Deyana Ivanova Popova. I am a qualified urban designer and a Director of Urban Perspectives Limited – a Wellington-based planning and urban design practice, established in 1996.
2. I hold a degree of Master of Architecture from Sofia University of Architecture, Bulgaria (specialising in urban design) and a Master of Architecture/Urban Design from Victoria University, Wellington.
3. I have more than 30 years' experience in the urban design field, including work in both the public and private sectors. My work experience, prior to establishing Urban Perspectives Limited, includes work for Wellington City Council (**WCC**) and Hutt City Council as an urban design advisor, and teaching at both Massey University and Victoria University of Wellington.
4. I have been involved in a range of urban design projects, including City Centre Studies and Urban Design Frameworks; Character Assessments; Urban Design Guidelines; Urban Design and Townscape Visual assessments of various development proposals; and Public Space Design Projects. Examples of key projects for which I have prepared urban design and townscape assessments, which are similar to the assessment for the present hearing, include:
 - (a) Kate Sheppard Exchange office building project;
 - (b) Bowen Integrated Campus office building project;
 - (c) Overseas Passenger Terminal/Clyde Quay Wharf Redevelopment project;
 - (d) Hilton Hotel, Outer T, Queens Wharf;
 - (e) 109 Featherston Street office building project; and
 - (f) 20 Customhouse Quay office building project.

CODE OF CONDUCT

5. I confirm that I have read the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses contained in the Environment Court Practice Note 2014 and that I agree to comply with it. I also confirm that the matters addressed in this statement of evidence are within my area of expertise, except where relying on the opinion or evidence of

other witnesses. I have not omitted to consider material facts known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions expressed.

BACKGROUND AND SCOPE OF EVIDENCE

6. I have been asked to provide evidence on the urban design merit of the proposed building at Site 10, North Kumutoto, Wellington Waterfront, and its visual impact. In September 2014, I prepared an urban design assessment on the same subject as part of the Assessment of Environmental Effects (**AEE**) lodged with the resource consent application. The evidence for the present hearing is based on that assessment. I have had no involvement in the design of the proposed building.
7. In preparing my evidence, I have had regard to the technical assessments and subsequent draft statements of evidence of the following expert witnesses – John Hardwick-Smith/architectural; Brad Coombs/landscape; Adam Wild/heritage; and Frank Stoks/CPTED. My evidence has been informed by, and includes reference to, the additional architectural drawings and further design detail provided by the applicants in response to requests made under section 92.
8. My evidence will cover the following matters:
 - (a) Existing environment - summary description of the site and its context;
 - (b) Proposed building - summary description of the building's key elements;
 - (c) Summary of assessment reference points;
 - (d) Summary assessment against the Central Area Urban Design Guide (**Design Guide**);
 - (e) Townscape assessment summary;
 - (f) Wellington Waterfront Framework, summary assessment;
 - (g) Response to submissions;
 - (h) Response to Section 87F Report; and
 - (i) Overall summary.

EXISTING ENVIRONMENT (Site and Context)

The site and its wider context

- 9.** The development site, known as Site 10, is located in the North Kumutoto area of the Wellington Waterfront. North Kumutoto sits at the northern end of the waterfront and is bounded by Shed 21 to the north and the Meridian Building and Shed 13 to the south.
- 10.** North Kumutoto has a strong association with the Central Business District (CBD), 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 waterfront promenade.
- 11.** In addition to Site 10, North Kumutoto includes Site 8 (to the north of the Meridian Building) and the adjacent Site 9, located to the north of Shed 13. Sites 9 and 10 are separated by a large open space extending the spatial corridor of Whitmore Street to the water's edge and referred to as Whitmore Plaza.
- 12.** Site 10 has a rectangular shape. The context and spatial characteristics along the eastern and western sides of Site 10 are distinctly different - the eastern frontage of Site 10 facing CentrePort and the waterfront is more open, while the western frontage is part of the vehicle-oriented environment of Waterloo Quay and the large-scale urban setting of the CBD.
- 13.** The southern/short frontage of Site 10 opens up to Whitmore Plaza. The northern frontage facing Shed 21 is less prominent and is perceived as a secondary frontage.

Immediate context

- 14.** Site 10's immediately adjacent neighbours include Shed 21 to the north and the former Eastbourne Ferry Terminal Building and associated Harbour Wharf to the east. Both buildings are listed heritage buildings with strong associations to the harbour. However, the buildings are distinctly different in terms of scale and character, thus contributing to the complexity of contextual conditions characteristic of Site 10.

15. Further to the north of Site 10 are Waterloo Quay Wharf with its two storey shed and the Railway Wharf – both part of the wider Operational Port Area. The historical sea wall (currently unseen) runs along between the three wharfs and Site 10. To the south of Site 10 are the historic Sheds 11 and 13, which, along with Shed 21, play a key role in defining the waterfront edge of the Quays.¹
16. The heritage character and significance of the buildings in the vicinity of Site 10 and the historic sea wall are described and discussed in detail in the evidence of Adam Wild.

PROPOSED BUILDING

17. The proposed building is five stories (ground + 4 levels) and a basement. The ground level accommodates publicly accessible spaces (cafe/retail); main entrance to the upper level office space; a cluster of 'fine grained' studio/small businesses spaces ('creative business unit hub'); and servicing area. The upper levels are developed as commercial office space. Carparking and building user amenities and servicing are provided in the basement.
18. The form of the proposed building is comprised of two primary components referred to as 'the podium' and 'the gantry'.
 - (a) The podium is three-storeys high with a ground level split by a sheltered pedestrian link (referred to as the Harbour Wharf Link) cutting diagonally through the building footprint to connect the Waterloo Quay side of the building to the harbour. The podium incorporates a colonnade along the west/Waterloo Quay side of the building, and a 'portico' feature at the south-east corner of Site 10 adjacent to Whitmore Plaza.
 - (b) The gantry is a continuous two-level form spanning over the top of the podium, akin to a working waterfront gantry.
19. Pedestrian entrances to the lobby are off Kumutoto Lane and along the Harbour Wharf Link. Vehicle entrance to the basement carpark is off Kumutoto

¹ Customhouse Quay and Waterloo Quay

Lane along the northern building frontage. A more detailed description of the proposed building is provided in the evidence of John Hardwick-Smith.

20. The proposed building has been designed as part of a landscape/public open space proposal for Whitmore Plaza and Site 8. The design and assessment of the proposed public open space are covered in the landscape evidence of Daniel Males and Brad Coombs.

ASSESSMENT REFERENCE POINTS

21. The documents relevant to my assessment include:
- (a) The Design Guide – the District Plan identifies this document as the primary reference for the assessment of the proposed building on Site 10.
 - (b) Environment Court decision on Variation 11 – this provides specific guidance in relation to the massing/height of potential development on Sites 8, 9 and 10 and their relationship to adjacent open space.
 - (c) The Wellington Waterfront Framework – this non-statutory document, with a special reference to the principles for the North Queens Wharf area (now referred to as North Kumutoto), provides another reference for the assessment.

ASSESSMENT AGAINST THE CENTRAL AREA URBAN DESIGN GUIDE

22. This section of my evidence summarises the key findings of the full assessment report I prepared as part of the AEE (Appendix 11 of the AEE). The assessment is focused primarily on the proposed building design and does not cover the proposed open space design of the adjacent Whitmore Plaza and Site 8.
23. My overall conclusion is that the proposed building will provide an outcome that is consistent with the objectives and relevant guidelines of the Design Guide. My conclusion is underpinned by the following findings, outlined with reference to the key matters covered by the Design Guide.

Design coherence

- 24.** The proposed building is based on a well-considered architectural concept and exhibits design coherence. This is achieved by considering the various building elements and uses together, and integrating them into a coherent building form that relates well to its immediate 'heritage' neighbours (Shed 21 and the former Eastbourne Ferry Terminal Building) and adjacent open spaces.
- 25.** The proposed building recognises and responds appropriately to the range of wider contextual conditions along each side of Site 10 – this is expressed in the modelling of the building bulk and the architectural composition of the individual facades.
- 26.** The 'gantry' concept plays an important role in shaping the identity of the proposed building, while clearly referencing the maritime context of Site 10.

Relationship to context

- 27.** In my opinion, the proposed building is appropriate for Site 10 and relates well to its waterfront context for the following main reasons:

 - (a) the shape, size and siting of the building footprint follows the general alignment of Shed 21 and has similar plan dimensions. The setback of the proposed building on the Waterloo Quay side reflects the geometry of the existing road alignment and references the siting of the historic Shed 17 that originally occupied Site 10;
 - (b) the proposed building improves the street edge definition along Waterloo Quay. The setback of the proposed building from the southern edge of Shed 21 provides a clear and distinctive separation between the two buildings. As a result, the proposed building will reinforce the existing spatial pattern of separate linear buildings defining the eastern edge of the Quays;
 - (c) the alignment of the Harbour Wharf Link recognises the distinctive pattern of north-south running wharves. Aligned with the 'bevelled' north-east corner of the former Eastbourne Ferry Terminal Building, the link will create 'framed' views to the harbour featuring Te Papa in

the distant background, while enhancing connections between Waterloo Quay and the promenade;

- (d) the proposed building establishes a positive scale and spatial relationship to Shed 21. This is achieved by respecting the alignment of Shed 21; providing a colonnade on the west side connecting to and extending the existing Shed 21 colonnade; and referencing the height of Shed 21. This is further reinforced by the modelling, form and texture of the northern end of the proposed building and the design of its east façade, which complements the scale and façade modulation of Shed 21;
- (e) the proposed building relates well to, and acknowledges the presence of, the former Eastbourne Ferry Terminal Building. This is achieved by aligning the southern edge of the ground level footprint with the northern edge of the ferry building to maintain visual links with Waterloo Quay; setting back the building mass of levels one and two from the east and south-east edges of Site 10 to acknowledge the proximity of the ferry building; configuring the Whitmore Plaza extension (facing south-east) to focus attention on the ferry building; and aligning the Harbour Wharf link with the 'bevelled' north-east corner of the ferry building; and
- (f) the 'gantry' concept underpinning the identity of the proposed building reflects its maritime context and creates a memorable image. This, together with the other 'signature' elements such as the portico, the box window along the east façade and the Quay-side colonnade, contribute to enhancing the local sense of place.

28. The proposed building addresses the relationship to Waterloo Quay in three primary ways:

- (a) maintains an appropriate/scale height relationship to the horizontal form of the NZ Post Building sitting opposite the proposed building on the other side of Waterloo Quay. Being approximately 7m lower than the podium of the NZ Post Building, the proposed building creates a step in height that assists the scale transition between the inland/CBD side of Waterloo Quay and the harbour;

- (b) provides a more 'solid' facade treatment on the western side of the proposed building in response to the scale and vehicle-oriented character of the Quays; and
- (c) defines the Waterloo Quay street edge, while providing a sheltered pedestrian route along that edge.

29. The relationship to the wider CBD is addressed through:

- (a) the spatial 'portico' effect created by the proposed building's massing at its southern end and the associated Whitmore Plaza extension enhancing the connection to the CBD; and
- (b) maintaining the spatial integrity of the view along Whitmore Street to the harbour (District Plan Viewshaft 4).

Building height, bulk and form

30. Overall, the height, bulk and form of the proposed building are appropriate for Site 10 and its context, and achieve an outcome consistent with the relevant Design Guide objectives and guidelines. This is because:

- (a) the proposed building follows key alignments relating to neighbouring buildings (Shed 21 and former Eastbourne Ferry Terminal Building) and adjacent spaces (Waterloo Quay, Whitmore Street and the public promenade);
- (b) the proposed building height (22.4m to the top of the gantry) is 0.4m above the height indicated as 'appropriate' by the Environment Court. In terms of the proposed building's overall impact on views and/or on the quality of the surrounding public space, this height difference is insignificant. The proposed height is similar to the height of Shed 21 (21.1m) and therefore it will not, in my opinion, affect the height/scale relationship to that building in any significant way;
- (c) the visual impact of the small area of rooftop services (plant and chillers) rising 3.85m above the roof line of the gantry is reduced by the alignment and setback location of the services from the building edges and by the minimalist approach to their treatment. Due to its

central location and relatively small footprint, the service area will not affect directly the height relationship with Shed 21; and

- (d) overall the height/scale relationship of the proposed building has been appropriately addressed. This is because the proposed height in relation to the building footprint will create a building of horizontal form that is similar to the height and plan dimensions of Shed 21, while also assisting the height/scale integration of the proposed building into the wider CBD context without dominating adjacent buildings and spaces. The overall building bulk has been appropriately articulated through projecting features and large scale recesses and further complemented by smaller scale modelling and the use of materials and design detail.

31. The proposed building has appropriately addressed the relevant 'internal amenity' requirements (natural light, outlook and ventilation). This is because:

- (a) as a free-standing building surrounded by public open space the proposed building allows for extensive glazing around the building perimeter, ensuring good levels of natural lighting;
- (b) locating the structural frame on the western/city side maximises views to the harbour;
- (c) the 24m width of the rectangular building footprint and its good levels of natural lighting are well suited for good quality office space. The office use is further supported by proximity to the Railway Station and the CBD;
- (d) level 3 decks at the east and north ends enhance views and internal amenity; and
- (e) the proposed building incorporates an appropriate ventilation system.

32. The proposed building has successfully addressed the 'positive open space' and 'pedestrian block permeability' guidelines because:

- (a) the proposed 3m wide Quay-side colonnade space contributes to a continuous sheltered route along this section of the Quays. Together with the Harbour Wharf Link connecting directly to the promenade, it will provide a choice of sheltered routes;
- (b) the upgraded public promenade (east side of the proposed building) will be supported by the edge definition provided by the proposed building, the intended ground level use and the shelter provided by the box window;
- (c) the ground floor/upper level setback from the south-east end of Site 10 is a logical response to the spatial structure of Whitmore Plaza, extending the plaza under the proposed building. The proposed publicly accessible ground level defining the edge of the extended plaza space will activate the space and enhance its safety. The portico will provide shelter; and
- (d) the proposed landscape treatment and associated seating areas are well considered and will support the recreational use of the public space on the harbour side.

Edge Treatment

- 33.** The proposed building responds positively to the relevant guidelines for the following reasons:
- (a) the proposed building creates 'active building frontages' along the building perimeter except for several relatively narrow bays associated with the service areas and vehicle entries;
 - (b) to reduce its impact, carparking is provided in the basement. Vehicle entrance to the carpark (via an internal ramp) is appropriately located along the narrow/secondary frontage on the northern side;
 - (c) the service area, located along the harbour-side of the building, is well integrated within the otherwise active frontage that 'opens' up to the adjacent promenade;

- (d) uses promoting public access (such as retail and cafes) are appropriately located at the southern end of the ground level, adjacent to Whitmore Plaza and parts of the promenade;
- (e) the ground floor tenancies at the northern part of the building are envisaged to accommodate 'creative business units' with individual entrances. This intention complements the pattern of tenancies in the adjacent Shed 21;
- (f) pedestrian entrances are appropriately located; and
- (g) the proposed building will provide continuous pedestrian shelter along the building perimeter.

Façade Composition and Building Tops

- 34.** The composition and the detailed treatment of the proposed building façades respond well to the different contextual conditions around Site 10, and recognise the interface location of the proposed building between the harbour, the port and the city. This has been achieved in the context of an integrated and coherent building form.
- 35.** The proposed building is five stories. However, because of its design, the collective form of the building will read as comprised of three horizontal layers – ground level, upper podium, and gantry (with the two levels of the gantry expressed as a single horizontal module). The resulting three-tier facade composition is appropriate as it will enhance the horizontal proportions of the building and reduce the perception of height. It will also strengthen the height/scale relationship to Shed 21. With that in mind, my comments regarding the treatment of the individual façades are as follows:
- 36.** The podium – the different conditions around the southern and northern end of the building are appropriately recognised by the facade treatment. To this end:
 - (a) the massing and façade modelling of the podium at its southern end is conceived as an extension of Whitmore Plaza and treated as a highly glazed/visually permeable façade. The proposed setback of the façade under the portico will facilitate the spatial integration with

Whitmore Plaza, the former Eastbourne Ferry Terminal Building and the associated Harbour Wharf;

- (b) the proposed slender 'double-height' columns and associated 'fin' elements appropriately define the edge of the under-croft space at the south-east end, enhance its civic scale and add visual interest and a sense of vertical rhythm;
 - (c) the large diagonally-oriented window boxes at the south-west corner of the podium reflect the alignment/orientation of the wharf structures and help to enhance the Whitmore Gateway and the spatial connection towards Parliament;
 - (d) compared to the 'southern' podium, the façade of the 'northern' podium has a stronger horizontal emphasis. The projecting box window will enhance positively the façade, contributing to the overall compositional balance and three-dimensional quality of the entire eastern elevation. The box window will also provide shelter to the promenade below, while creating an open deck for the upper levels above; and
 - (e) the treatment of the north and west elevations of the podium, based on a more solid frame, is appropriate. While addressing the scale and vehicle-oriented environment of the Quays, it will also provide a level of solar mitigation.
- 37.** The treatment of the gantry as a largely glazed element 'subdivided' by the truss structure helps to unify its form and contribute to its 'reading' as a 'signature' element shaping the building top.
- 38.** The expression of the building top is appropriate as it is part of the overall design composition and its imagery reflects the maritime context of Site 10. The roofscape of the proposed building, as it will be seen from distant and nearer viewpoints, is illustrated on the photomontages included in Appendix 10 to the AEE (viewpoints 1, 2, 3, 7, 10 and 11) and further discussed in the next section of my evidence.

39. The structure of the gantry is designed to allow the creation of a large scale 'portico'/gateway effect at the interface with Whitmore Plaza. The gantry's setback corners at the northern end, especially as seen in long views from the east, help the formal transition to Shed 21 by emphasising the spatial separation between the two buildings.
40. The façade treatment conveys a sense of human scale at the publicly occupied edges of the building. This is expressed through design elements and architectural detail appearing at the ground levels of the development and carried through the upper levels of the building frontages as already discussed.
41. The building form and internal layout, with a special reference to the amount of natural light, will ensure a good level of adaptability for possible future changes of activity.

Materials and Detail

42. The relevant design issues under 'materials and detail' cover matters such as compositional coherence; visual interest; physical robustness and facade transparency. Many of these issues have already been discussed. Here I add the following further points:
 - (a) the proposed building conveys a strong sense of visual interest within a compositionally coherent form that relates well to its context. This has been achieved by applying appropriate design techniques enhanced by carefully considered materials;
 - (b) the treatment of the entire building exterior has been approached in an integrated manner and all elevations have been given appropriate treatment in terms of façade composition, materials and detail and in relation to their specific place within the surrounding setting; and
 - (c) the intended materials and their application on the building's façades are illustrated on the elevation drawings. Further information on design detail, materials and precedents is provided in the section 92 responses. This collective information indicates, in my opinion, a commitment to design excellence at both concept design level as well as at the level of finer architectural detail.

TOWNSCAPE ASSESSMENT: VISUAL IMPACT ON KEY PUBLIC VIEWS

- 43.** In addition to the assessment against the Design Guide, I also prepared a Townscape Assessment as part of the AEE. The aim was to assess the visibility of the proposed building, its relationship to the wider townscape, and its visual impact on people's experience when moving around the city.
- 44.** To aid the assessment, ten photomontages (artist's impressions) and one simulation (re: District Plan Viewshaft 4) were prepared by the applicants to illustrate the proposed building from typical public viewpoints (refer to Appendix 10 to the AEE). The conclusions of my assessment are summarised below.

Visibility

- 45.** The proposed building, along with the adjacent Shed 21, will be visible from a range of distances. It will be prominent in distant views from both the south and south-east (the wider waterfront and Oriental Bay), as well as in views from the more immediate waterfront setting.
- 46.** The visibility of the proposed building from the city side will be much lower and limited primarily to viewpoints located to the west, south-west and north-west of Site 10, within a viewing radius of approximately 100-180m.

Distant views (Refer VP 9, 10 & 11)

- 47.** In distant views from the south-east, the proposed building will appear as a small element of the wider harbour setting at the foreground of the collective cityscape of the CBD. Given the viewing distances, the attention will be on the overall building form and its large scale modelling. The complementary height/scale relationship of the proposed building and the immediately adjacent Shed 21 will be evident in those views.
- 48.** The proximity of the taller NZ Post Building at the immediate background will reduce the visual impact of the proposed building and downplay the presence of the roof top service area.

49. In many distant views, the base of the building will be obscured by the shed on Waterloo Wharf seen in the foreground. The former Eastbourne Ferry Terminal Building will come in view from viewpoints around and to the north of Te Papa.
50. Overall, due to distance, foreground elements and the dense backdrop of the CBD buildings, the visual impact of the proposed building in distant views will not be significant with its horizontal form blending into its visual context.

Mid-range views - (Refer VP 1, 2 & 8)

51. In these views, the general form of the proposed building, as well some of the more detailed design treatment, will be noticeable.
52. From Viewpoint 1:
- (a) the civic scale of the portico at the south-east corner of the proposed building and its relationship to the former Eastbourne Ferry Terminal Building will be clearly understood, with the void around the portico enhancing the spatial separation between the two buildings;
 - (b) similarity in height, building form and facade modulation between Shed 21 and the proposed building will be noticeable;
 - (c) the expressed horizontal form of the proposed building and the modelling of its east elevation relate well to the form of the Meridian Building and help the visual integration of the proposed building to its context; and
 - (d) the visibility of the roof top plant enclosure will be reduced as it will be seen largely against the backdrop of the NZ Post Building.
53. Viewpoint 2 (promenade southern end Shed 5) shows the proposed building from an oblique angle sitting between the horizontal volumes of the Meridian Building and Shed 21. The complementary height/scale relationship between the proposed building and its neighbours to the north and south will be evident in this view.

54. The simulation from Viewpoint 8 (District Plan Viewshaft 4 along Whitmore Street) shows that the proposed building will not intrude into the viewshaft, as its southern end is setback from the edge of the view corridor.
55. Overall, as seen in mid-range views, the proposed building fits in well into its visual context.

Close-up views - (Refer VP 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7)

56. Views from the south, along the waterfront, focus on and highlight the scale/spatial configuration of the portico and illustrate the similarity in height between the proposed building and Shed 21.
57. Further to this, the images show that:
- (a) the horizontal form of the gantry and the overall building form will fit in well with the horizontal scale of surrounding buildings; and
 - (b) the proposed landscape treatment around and to the south of Whitmore Plaza on Site 8 will provide some soft foreground to the proposed building. Future development on Site 9 could reduce the prominence of the proposed building and assist the scale transition between Site 10 and Shed 13, while defining the edge of Kumutoto Lane.
58. In views from the west/Waterloo Quay:
- (a) the expressive form and civic scale of the portico and its relationship to Whitmore Plaza and the Whitmore Street viewshaft corridor will be clearly understood and highlighted;
 - (b) the varied treatment of the western elevation (from more open at the southern end to more solid at the northern end) will enhance the visual relationship to Shed 21, while expressing the sense of scale at the base of the building; and

- (c) the positive visual relationship between Shed 21 and the proposed building and the contribution of the proposed building to enhancing the street edge definition along Waterloo Quay will be appreciated.
59. The view from the harbour side of Shed 21 (VP 7) illustrates the complementary height relationship of the proposed building to Shed 21. It also highlights the visual separation between the proposed building and the former Eastbourne Ferry Terminal Building. The horizontal façade composition of the proposed building and the recessed north-east corner of the gantry are clearly seen in that view as elements aiding the visual relationship with Shed 21.
60. Overall, the detailed façade modelling of the proposed building, which is in focus in the close-up views, reduces the impact of its bulk, enhances its visual quality and assists its integration with the surrounding context.

WELLINGTON WATERFRONT FRAMEWORK

61. 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.
62. The guidance provided by the Framework (structured around vision and themes; values, principles and objectives; and key areas) refers to both development of buildings and open space. Given the primary focus of my evidence is on the proposed building itself (the proposed open space design being assessed by others), not all of the Framework’s ‘provisions’ are directly relevant to my assessment. However, I acknowledge that the Framework as whole is an important reference.
63. Many of the Framework’s principles (particularly those for North Kumutoto) are reinforced by the Design Guide. These relate to matters such as scale relationship with 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.

64. The WCC Section 87F(4) Report (Appendix 4 of Annexure 1) provides a comprehensive assessment of the proposed building against the Framework. I have read the assessment and with the findings of my own assessments in mind, I concur with its conclusions (page 5) that: *“The proposal is consistent with the character identified by the Waterfront Framework for North Queens Wharf, that is ‘squares, lanes and new buildings in scale with the heritage buildings, such as Shed 21 at the northern end...’ (page 32). Considering expectations in detail, the proposal including both building and public open space design is consistent with the themes, values, principles and objectives for the waterfront, and also the specific intentions for North Kumutoto”.*

SUBMISSIONS

65. Key submissions concerning matters within my area of expertise and directly relevant to the scope of my assessment include:
- (a) Submission No.10/Waterfront Watch;
 - (b) Submission No.13/P. & A. Swan;
 - (c) Submission No.27/Architectural Centre Inc; and
 - (d) Submission No. 36/Wellington Civic Trust.

Further to this, there are a number of submissions which are similar to, and reiterate, the issues raised in the above submissions.

66. In summary, the key issues raised in the submissions relate to:
- (a) **Height and bulk** – proposed height/bulk inappropriate in relation to waterfront context and surrounding historic buildings;
 - (b) **Insufficient public access to ground floor** – proposed ground floor activities provide limited public use;
 - (c) **Design quality** – proposed building is of *‘insufficient quality and character’* relative to the expectations/requirement of the WWF and

does not exhibit exemplary level of design quality that reflects the character of the waterfront; and

- (d) **Views** – proposed building challenges the Whitmore Street Viewshaft and the view from the Cenotaph, and does not enhance existing views and/or create new unframed views.

My response to each of the key issues is as follows:

Height and Bulk

- 67. While some submissions do not oppose the height/bulk/form per se [the Architectural Centre and Wellington Civic Trust], others consider the proposed building to be too high and its bulk inappropriate for Site 10 and its context. In summary, the specific issues raised include:
 - (a) the building overwhelms surrounding historic buildings;
 - (b) *'building width, length when taking the overhangs into account and the resulting bulk is excessive for the site, the location on the waterfront and the location vis a vis other buildings in the vicinity, both historic and modern'* (Waterfront Watch, page 3);
 - (c) height exceeds the 22m identified by the Environment Court as appropriate; and
 - (d) Environment Court recommendation for a gentle slope of buildings from Shed 21 to Shed 13 ignored (Waterfront Watch, page 4).

- 68. Issues (a) to (c) above are covered by the Design Guide and discussed in my evidence under 'relationship to context' (paragraphs 27-29); and 'building height, bulk and form' (paragraphs 30-32). My assessment concluded that the proposed building responds appropriately to the relevant objectives and guidelines. More detailed assessment comments are provided in my Urban Design Assessment (Appendix 11 to the AEE).

- 69. To avoid repetition here, I reiterate the following points:
 - (a) the proposed design is aligned with, and sufficiently separated from, the adjacent Shed 21. Its footprint and plan dimension are similar to those of Shed 21;

- (b) the setbacks at ground level and levels one and two (southern end of the proposed building) respect the proximity and scale of the former Eastbourne Ferry Terminal Building, while maintaining views from Waterloo Quay to the harbour. The latter is further reinforced by the alignment of the proposed Harbour Wharf Link;
- (c) the overall horizontal form of the proposed building, enhanced by the gantry, reflects the predominantly horizontal scale of adjacent waterfront buildings;
- (d) while addressing the variable conditions along each side of the proposed building, the building bulk has been effectively articulated through projecting features (e.g. projecting boxes) counter-balanced by large scale recesses (e.g. the portico, the diagonal cross-link and the colonnade). This contributes to an expressive building form with an enhanced sense of human scale at its ground level;
- (e) the proposed building has a height similar to that of Shed 21. Being lower than the podium of the NZ Post building, the proposed building provides an appropriate transition between the CBD and the harbour;
- (f) the height and overall building bulk relate well to the scale and spatial configuration of Whitmore Plaza; and
- (g) the height difference between the proposed building and the height regarded to be appropriate by the Environment Court in its decision on Variation 11 is insignificant in urban design terms. The location, and the minimalist design approach to the treatment of the small area of rooftop services, reduces its visual impact.

70. In relation to issue (d) of paragraph 67 above ('Environment Court recommendation for a gentle slope of buildings from Shed 21 to Shed 13 being ignored'), I understand that the concept of the 'gentle slope' does not relate to the height of Site 10 per se. Rather, it relates to the relative heights considered appropriate for Site 9 and Site 10, with the height for Site 9 being 19m at its northern end (that is 3m lower than Site 10) and stepping down to 16m at its

southern end in response to the lower height of the adjacent Shed 13 to the south.

Insufficient public access to ground floor

71. There is a concern that the proposed building provides insufficient public access to the ground floor. Key issues include: the ground level provides limited public use; the creative business units envisaged for the northern part of the building are not publicly accessible spaces; and the proposed building does not provide space that is truly public (e.g. you do not need to buy anything to be there). My response to the issues raised is as follows:
72. In my opinion, the envisaged publicly accessible ground level tenancies and the lobby space, in combination with Site 10's boundaries' setbacks, the colonnade and Harbour Wharf Link will appropriately activate the building edges. Providing individual entrances to the 'creative business units' will add further sense of edge activation. The location of the publicly accessible spaces at the southern end adjacent to Whitmore Plaza will enhance the use of this public space.
73. While the intent of the Framework for 'ground floors of buildings to be predominantly accessible to the public' has not been fully achieved, the proposed ground floor uses are acceptable, in my opinion, given the current situation along the waterfront indicating that ground floor retail tenancies are not feasible for all buildings; and considering that the layout of the creative business units allows flexibility of use, thus facilitating the possibility to use some of the units as retail outlets if or when there is a demand. Further to this, the concept of 'creative business units', which supports start-up small businesses, has its own 'public' benefits, albeit economic, rather than spatial.

Design quality

74. Specific design quality issues raised in submissions include:

Architectural Centre submission

- (a) *'the building might be sufficient within the context of the CBD as a standard commercial building, but that is clearly not one of sufficient*

design quality to make it an appropriate development on this sensitive and significant publicly owned coastal site. As such it does not meet the exacting standard of the WWF of design excellence' (p.14);

- (b) while the general form and scale of the building are not of concern, *'the building lacks ambition' (p. 7); the proposal 'lacks clarity of building form and while the gantry idea has potential the two level volume is placed awkwardly beneath it ' making it difficult to read as a cantilevered structure';*
- (c) the proposal does not maximise views between harbour and city at ground level, visual connections between Waterloo Quay and the Harbour need to be enhanced (p.4);
- (d) *'while we appreciate the intention of the Harbour Wharf link (i.e. the diagonal line cutting through the building) this appears to be a crude architectural move, which doesn't understand the geometry of the building (p.11);*
- (e) *'the built volume within the 'space' under the gantry cantilever also closes off the openness and visual connection to the FEFT (p. 8);*
and
- (f) the proposal needs to remove the built structure immediately above the gantry cantilever and increase floor to ceiling height to a minimum of 5m.

[continued over page]

Wellington Civic Trust submission

(g) the submission is not opposed to the building form – it states that the building *'is light and glassy/translucent and so does not compete with older buildings such as Ferry building or Shed 21. It obscures and softens the brutalism of the Post Office building from the waterfront, and the cantilevered roof at the southern end frames the Ferry building and adds a good area of covered and sheltered (in some winds) open space in what is now the caravan park. Overall, there is little objection to the style and finish of the building, albeit that it does not incorporate any element of architectural excitement or frisson'* (paragraph 4, page 1).

- 75.** In essence, issues (a) to (d) challenge the design integrity of the proposed building and its image/identity, which are considered not memorable or special enough for its location. These issues are discussed in my evidence under 'design coherence' (paragraphs 24-26); 'facade composition and building tops' (paragraph 34-41); and 'materials and detail' (paragraph 42). The Harbour Wharf Link (location and layout) is discussed under 'relationship to context' (paragraphs 27-29), and 'pedestrian permeability' (paragraph 32) of my evidence.
- 76.** For the reasons outlined in my evidence, I consider that the proposed building is coherently designed. Its overall form and specific façade composition will create a building with expressive three-dimensional quality and image that references the waterfront context of Site 10.
- 77.** In my opinion, in the context of the wider waterfront, the location of Site 10 does not call for an 'iconic' or 'landmark' structure. Rather, the diverse contextual conditions around Site 10 and the variable scale and character of the neighbouring heritage buildings suggest that, while establishing its own presence and identity is important for any new building on Site 10, the integration to its context is an overriding objective.
- 78.** The gantry, as a 'signature' element of the design gives the building its identity, makes it memorable without having to compete with its neighbours, while reinforcing existing spatial patterns. To this end, I consider that the design exhibits a level of distinctiveness that is appropriate for Site 10 and its place within the wider waterfront.

- 79.** The proposed façade treatment and the further information on design detail, materials and precedents, provided in the section 92 responses, indicate, in my opinion, a commitment to design excellence expressed both at conceptual level as well as at the level of architectural detail and materials. The WCC Section 87F(4) Report, Appendix 2 of Annexure 1, assesses the design excellence of the proposed building. I agree with the assessment and concur with its conclusion that the proposed building passes the test of design excellence.
- 80.** Issues (e) and (f) relate to the openness of the ground level, particularly at its southern end, and the visual connection between city and sea, including visibility to the former Eastbourne Ferry Terminal Building. These issues are discussed in my evidence under ‘relationship to context’ (paragraphs 27-29) and in my Townscape Assessment (paragraphs 43-60). I consider that the modelling of the proposed building at its southern end provides an appropriate level of openness that allows visual connection to the former Eastbourne Ferry Terminal Building. The diagonal Harbour Wharf Link creates a new ‘framed’ view from Waterloo Quay to the water and beyond.
- 81.** Increasing the ground floor to ceiling height to a minimum of 5m as recommended by the Architectural Centre is not necessary in my opinion for two main reasons – the proposed ground floor height is appropriate as it creates a building base that relates proportionally well to the building as whole; the ground and upper level setbacks at the southern end, the colonnade space and the Harbour Wharf Link contribute an appropriate degree of openness/space at the base of the proposed building.

Views

- 82.** The specific concerns in relation to views include southern end of the proposed building challenges the protected Whitmore Street Viewshaft; the existing view from the Cenotaph along Whitmore Street will be lost with the ‘overhanging’ end of the building blocking views to Mt Victoria and compromising the city to sea connections; the proposed building spoils views from Waterloo Quay and for pedestrians on the waterfront; no new views created, only ‘framed views’ and glimpses to the inner and outer harbour.

- 83.** Impact on views is discussed in my evidence under 'relationship to context' (paragraphs 27-29); 'building height, bulk and form' (paragraphs 30-32); and throughout my Townscape Assessment (paragraphs 43-60). More detailed assessment is provided in my Urban Design Assessment (Appendix 11 to the AEE).
- 84.** To avoid repetition here, I reiterate that based on my assessment I consider that the proposed building relates well to its immediate and wider visual context, while protecting the Whitmore Street Viewshaft and maintaining the visual connection to the former Eastbourne Ferry Terminal Building.
- 85.** Regarding the concern for the loss of the view from the Cenotaph along Whitmore Street my response is that this is not a protected view, and a site visit will confirm that the area around the Cenotaph does not allow direct views along Whitmore Street to the waterfront due to viewing angles and foreground features. I also note that historically the viewshaft along Whitmore Street to the sea was 'closed off' by the former Custom House demolished in 1969.

SECTION 87F REPORT

- 86.** I have read the WCC's section 87F report prepared for this matter. Most relevant to my evidence is Annexure 1 of the report, which provides a comprehensive urban design review of the proposal. Overall, I concur with the findings and conclusions of that review, as they are similar to mine.
- 87.** Paragraph 4.12 of the urban design review identifies several matters of detail relating to the ground floor that require further attention. I agree that these are minor matters that might be readily addressed at the next stage of design development should consent to the proposal be granted.

CONCLUSIONS

- 88.** Based on my assessment, I conclude that the proposed building for Site 10 appropriately addresses the provisions of the Design Guide and is generally consistent with the requirements of the Framework.
- 89.** The result will be a building with a coherent form, high architectural quality and memorable image which integrates well to its context and adds to the activity,

vitality and accessibility of the waterfront and its CBD context, while reinforcing street edge definition and improving open space quality.



Deyana Ivanova Popova

3 July 2015