

isthmus

# North Kumutoto

Landscape Design Statement

for Wellington City Council

IGL 3158 DS001 (Revision A)  
Date:03.11.2014

Purpose of Issue:  
**Resource Consent**

## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 Wellington City Council intends to redevelop the North Kumutoto area of the waterfront to create a vibrant and distinctive addition to the existing Kumutoto Precinct.
- 1.2 Isthmus have been engaged by Wellington City Council to provide professional Landscape Architecture services for the project, and in particular for the public open space design of North Kumutoto.
- 1.3 The design proposals for the public open space have responded to consultation feedback, the site context and the various strategic planning and design documents that relate to North Kumutoto and Wellington Waterfront.
- 1.7 This Landscape Design Statement is to be read in conjunction with supporting documents (as shown on Isthmus drawing register 3158\_01) prepared as part of this Resource Consent application. Together they describe the overall intent of the design of the public spaces and the integration with the completed Kumutoto works, waterfront and the wider city.

## 2.0 Site Context

2.1 North Kumutoto is located to the north of Queens Wharf adjacent to Customhouse Quay and Waterloo Quay. The site to be redeveloped has a total area of approximately 9,500m<sup>2</sup>. It occupies a strategic position on Wellington's waterfront and has strong connections to both the city and working harbour. It is within five minutes' walk of Lambton Quay and Parliament and is a gateway to the waterfront for pedestrians from the Central Business District (CBD), railway station, cruise ship terminal and the stadium.

At the mouth of the Kumutoto stream, the area is of spiritual significance to Te Atiawa and takes its name from the historic Pa which once overlooked the area.



Figure 1: Site location diagram

To the south, Queens Wharf is the vibrant heart of the waterfront, with its cultural, entertainment and recreational offerings. Directly to the north are the shipping and commercial property operations of CentrePort, and the Harbour Quays precinct.

2.2 The Wellington Waterfront Framework has guided the development of the waterfront since 2001. The framework establishes a number of Waterfront-wide objectives and design principles that have guided the design for the Kumutoto precinct (previously known as North Queens Wharf).

*Waterfront-wide Objectives:*

- *The waterfront is locally and internationally recognised for its design.*
- *The waterfront is readily accessible to all people.*
- *The waterfront is, and is perceived to be, safe at all times.*
- *The waterfront is seen as an attractive place that draws Wellingtonians and visitors alike.*
- *The waterfront successfully caters for a wide range of events and activities.*
- *Significant heritage buildings (and features) are protected on the waterfront.*
- *Activities on the waterfront are integrated with those on the harbour.<sup>1</sup>*

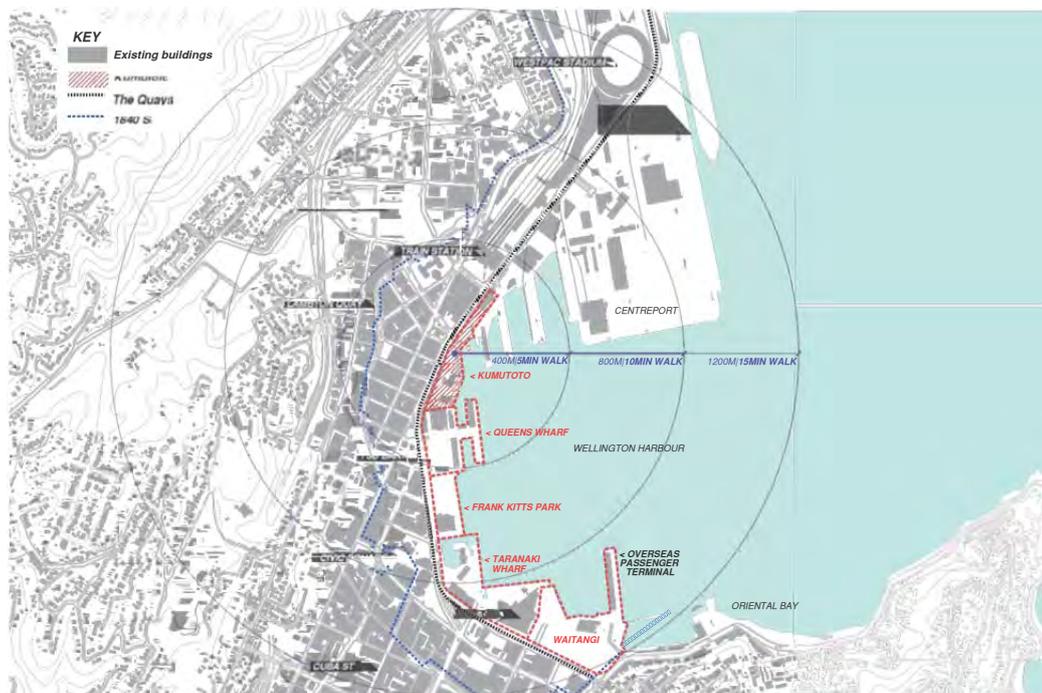


Figure 2: Waterfront precincts

Kumutoto is one of five precincts established by the Framework, each with a distinctive character, use and attractions. It will complement the other precincts while maintaining the consistent waterfront aesthetic.

Unlike the predominantly open space areas of the Waitangi Park, Taranaki Street Wharf and Frank Kitts Park precincts, Queens Wharf and Kumutoto have a stronger connection to the City's CBD. This connection is reflected with more a more urban character including a greater density of mixed-use buildings and a more intensely used public realm.

### 3.0 Kumutoto Precinct

- 3.1 The Kumutoto Precinct sits on reclaimed land which, through a constant process of reclamation between the 1840's and 1970's, has moved the water's edge almost 300 metres from the historic shoreline. This land has always had a strong working wharf character with a high proportion of buildings structures and intensely used external space. With the change in emphasis of the area from a working port to a recreational, cultural and commercial area, the first, southern-most, portion of Kumutoto Precinct (completed in 2006) balanced the expression of the historic character with new public amenity.
- 3.2 The completed works include a network of pedestrian orientated lanes, plazas and promenade spaces connecting the CBD to the waters edge. Kumutoto Lane is a sheltered pedestrian route and service lane that maintains the working feel of the historic harbour edge. The mouth of the Kumutoto Stream (piped under Waring Taylor Street) has been declaimed and celebrated through a series of terraces that acknowledge the stream's presence and important historical association with Maori settlement.
- 3.3 The 'North Kumutoto Design Brief' (adopted by Wellington City Council, November 2012) provides site specific guidelines for the further development of the Kumutoto Precinct. Buildings are envisioned on Sites 9 and 10, while Site 8 (located to the east of Site 9 and alongside the promenade) is to be excluded from building development and is to be developed as a public open space. This will help protect views, facilitate public access to the water and encourage public recreational use of the area. In addition to Site 8, Whitmore Plaza and the Wool Store Plaza will create new public spaces, linked by Kumutoto Lane, and complementing the public spaces completed in 2006.

## 4.0 Design Proposals

- 4.1 The intent of the public space design for North Kumutoto as shown on Isthmus drawings (see Isthmus drawings register 3158\_01) is to facilitate a high quality, legible extension to the existing Kumutoto precinct through the appropriate design of public open spaces.
- 4.2 It is proposed that North Kumutoto extends the precinct as a vibrant mixed-use area that is accessible to all as a gateway to the waterfront. It will be a place with the potential to support diverse activities such as social gathering, play, outdoor eating and events. Reflecting the central city location and distinctive sense of place, the open spaces will embrace the historic character of the waterfront while incorporating both innovative design and continuing the waterfront aesthetic that has been successfully developed over the last 10 years. These goals are consistent with those used in the first, southern-most, phase of development of the Kumutoto Precinct, and together with the overall waterfront objectives will ensure that an enduring and sustainable design for the open space is achieved.



Figure 3: Movement (refer to appendices for large version)

- 4.3 The open spaces of Kumutoto will form an overlapping sequence of amenity and movement spaces helping to achieve the goals of a rich and diverse urban precinct. Their design allows for flexibility of use and multiple activities. New spaces will complement the existing ones and integrate with the adjacent buildings to create high quality and flexible places that form a liveable and contemporary urban precinct.

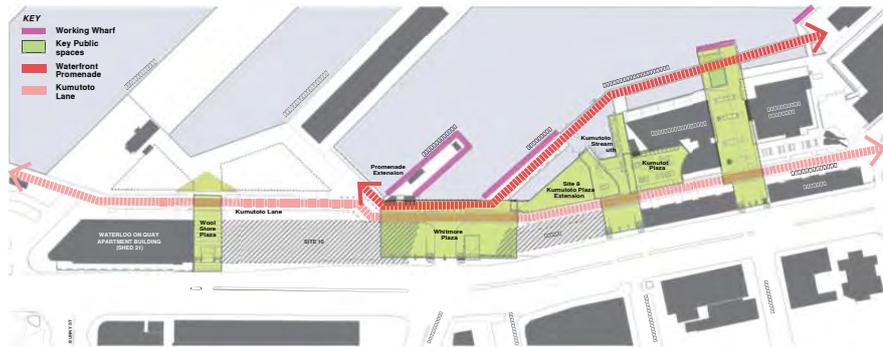


Figure 4: Kumutoto open space structure (refer to appendices for large version)

The key areas of the site are illustrated on **Figure 4** and outlined below.

- **Site 8** is to be developed as a destination open space offering amenity and complementing the existing Kumutoto Plaza.
- **Whitmore Plaza** is both a waterfront gateway and an important public space marking the closest point between the Quays and the harbour edge and the connection between Parliament and the harbour. It will have a strong relationship with Site 10 (and any future development on Site 9).
- **Wool Store Plaza** is a sheltered and intimate space, accommodating pedestrian and service access to the Waterloo on Quay Apartments and vehicle access to the Site 10 basement car park.
- **The Waterfront Promenade** is to be extended as a continuous movement space along the water's edge.
- **Kumutoto Lane** is a linear movement space shared by pedestrian and vehicles. It will have a strong relationship with surrounding buildings and spaces.
- **Site 9** is identified within the North Kumutoto Design Brief as a future development site; in the meantime the space will continue to operate as a car park.
- **Harbour Wharf** is not part of this application and will continue to be a working wharf (currently occupied by the Wellington Maritime Police).

#### 4.4 Site 8

Site 8 will extend the existing Kumutoto Plaza and offers the opportunity to create a memorable public destination that complements and enhances the adjacent public spaces. The design is principally conceived as reinterpretation of Wellington's wharves and aims to provide an experience not found elsewhere on the waterfront. Expressed through a folded timber deck it is playful in nature, creating a landform that floats above the coastal edge protecting and creating habitats for both fauna and flora below. Manipulation of this coastal edge and the rip-rap will allow the intertidal zone to be explored. Aquatic planting that provides habitat and added interest and activity at the water's edge will be incorporated. This greening of the rip-rap edge with pockets of planting (mimicking the existing self-seeded pohutukawa trees) will extend under the floating deck where conditions permit. Additional sections of the deck are 'cut out' to allow the coastal planting to extend further into the site.

The folded timber deck creates areas for informal play and dips down to the coastal planting. It is designed to encourage interaction and provide access to the water's edge. Its twisted form will seamlessly integrate seats into its folds and allow users to tuck themselves out of the wind. Additional furniture such as an elongated lunch table is also proposed to create a focus for gatherings and small events.

The tilted planes will be manipulated to create access to the water's edge for all. A new accessible route to the Kumutoto stream mouth will be created.

Views from Site 8 to the harbour are currently restricted by the Tug Wharf, contributing to the sites contained character. The realignment of a portion of the rip-rap along the coastal edge, and the lowering and raising of the ground level on the folded timber deck, will enable users to gain views both over and under the Tug Wharf. Two new narrow (2m wide) bridge structures will connect the Tug Wharf with Site 8, allowing access from the promenade and helping integrate the deck into the wider public realm.

A relatively small pavilion is proposed to the south east corner of Site 8. This structure aims to complement the existing series of architectural elements along the laneway. It adopts a similar form to the folded deck, but is uplifted from the ground to overhead, and in doing so, the surface undergoes a distillation and appropriate lightening that creates dappled light, shading and visual containment. The canopy visually registers the folded foreground decking, yet expresses its self through a finer texture fashioned from a clustering of the vertical timber battens. The cut profile of the vertical battens allows for subtle shading effects, and offers interesting possibilities for lighting at night that will be investigated during detailed design.

The support structure for the canopy is a combination of slender steel posts that are discreetly placed back from the canopy edge as well as two clusters of timber that drop from the canopy as a "curtain fall" that offers, containment to the Kumutoto Lane and a back to the outlook over the folded deck and harbour. The canopy form is unmistakably a derivative of the folded planes prominent in the deck of Site 8. Its context is recognised yet it finds its own unique language.

#### 4.5 **Whitmore Plaza**

Occupying the closest point between the Quays and the Harbour, Whitmore Plaza is the main gateway to the waterfront from the CBD and Parliament, and the first waterfront open space discovered by visitors arriving by rail or from cruise liners.

Whitmore Plaza has been designed to create a significant pedestrian orientated public space that also facilitates vehicle access. This 'shared space' reinforces the plaza as a public space and pedestrian gateway and down plays vehicle priority. Large timber platforms provide opportunities for seating, art installations or performance. A reconfigured gateway and planting zone will help reorientate the space to the harbour and provide a buffer between the plaza and the Quays. The original gates aligned with Ballance Street (once a less significant entrance to the working waterfront) will be kept closed, restored and retained in their current (original) configuration with associated planting. This highlights their replacement by the Whitmore Street gates and associated link to the waterfront that was created in the 1970's with the demolition of the Customs House.

The proposed Site 10 building and historic Eastbourne Ferry Building will define this new public plaza together with restored gates along Customhouse Quay. However, until the development of Site 9, the space will not be defined on its southern boundary. It is proposed that the historic Toll Booth that was once located on Queens Wharf (refer to isthmus drawing 2.050) is temporarily located to the south of the Plaza serving as a sculptural element within the space and help to define its southern edge. The use of this building is yet to be confirmed but could provide space for temporary exhibitions, micro events, pop-up retail or a supplementary i-SITE with information for cruise-ship and other waterfront visitors.

The Toll Booth, built circa 1910 and originally located at the entrance to Queens Wharf, has been resident at the Silver Stream Railway since 1976 when the Wellington Harbour Board had the booth replaced with a larger and more efficient tolls office.

The Toll Booth remains almost entirely original and has been purchased and temporarily stored on the 'outer T' by Wellington City Council. It is probably the only opportunity to have an historic Harbour Board building returned to the waterfront. The kiosk will be restored (including painting of the exterior, refurbishment of the interior) and re-used in a way that respects its heritage and retains its integrity.

This opportunity to 'return home' and restore the former Toll Booth into a prominent position within Whitmore Plaza will ensure it is seen, used and appreciated by those who visit the area. On-going preservation and custodial care of the building will be provided and when Site 9 is developed a future home will be found either within the Whitmore Plaza or on Queens Wharf.



Figure 5: View shafts and ownership (refer to appendices for large version)

Both the 'Toll Booth' and the Site 8 pavilion are positioned out of the Whitmore Street viewshaft (4) and the Waring Taylor viewshaft (5).

The original 1901 sea wall and timber wharf demarcates the eastern edge of the Whitmore Plaza. The sea wall and timber wharf will be retained and restored, enhancing the setting of the Eastbourne Ferry Building and wider working waterfront sense of place.

#### 4.6 Wool Store Plaza

The Wool Store Plaza occupies the historic gateway space between the Waterloo on Quay Apartments (Shed 21) and the demolished Shed 17 (now Site 10). Due to the scale of the space and its enclosed character this space will have a more intimate feel than some of the surrounding public spaces.

Historically offering access to the wool stores and jetty, this space has always been a service connection to the local wharfs. This will be expressed through the use a simple palette of robust materials. Access to the Site 10 basement car park will be through the space with low seating walls and furniture will ensure the plaza is perceived primarily as a pedestrian space.

The wharf gates at Wool Store Plaza will be opened and lit, to reinforce the rhythm of gates / buildings along the Quays and create an entrance threshold to the waterfront, similar to those found at Waring Taylor Street.

Although they are not part of this application, the design allows provision for a possible future mid-block pedestrian connection across Waterloo Quay and further links to the water's edge over CentrePort land.

#### 4.7 **The Waterfront Promenade**

The promenade is a continuous water edge based movement space stretching from the Railway Station to Oriental Bay with architectural elements introduced, historical artefacts highlighted and the distinct character of precincts expressed. It is a unifying element through the waterfront and a shared pathway, designed to accommodate a range of uses including walking, recreational cycling, skating, and wheelchairs.

Within the Kumutoto Precinct north–south pedestrian movement follows two paths; the waterside promenade along the Tug Wharf and Queens Wharf breastwork, and a land-side path (Kumutoto Lane). These two elements come together at Whitmore Plaza and while Kumutoto Lane continues north past Site 10 and Shed 21 on Wellington City land, the promenade extension past the Harbour Wharf promotes a future promenade extension on CentrePort land.

Access and berthage for small craft will continue to be provided along the Tug Wharf, and the treatment of the promenade and water's edge will be designed facilitate this.

#### 4.8 **Kumutoto Lane**

The current Kumutoto Lane is a linear movement space between Whitmore Street and Brandon Street. Running adjacent to the 1893-1901 Sea Wall, the lane references the historic service path along the wharf's edge.

The Lane is primarily a pedestrian and cycle space that is shared with vehicles allowing adjacent buildings to be serviced. As such, the lane includes generous pedestrian space (minimum 3m wide footpath widths) and minimised carriageway widths (5.8m), allowing for two-way traffic for the lane's full length. Key public spaces at the gateways take precedence over the vehicle carriageway creating raised tables to slow traffic and provide prominent pedestrian priority crossing points.

The extension of Kumutoto Lane northwards to the Bunny Street intersection will continue this rhythm of containment and overlapping public open spaces, emphasising the gateway spaces, aiding to the legibility of the city links and reducing vehicle speeds by creating pedestrian priority spaces. Whitmore Plaza will be the largest of these overlapping spaces creating a shared environment where vehicles give way to pedestrians.

Since its development, the existing Kumutoto Lane has successfully allowed the adjacent buildings and car parks to be serviced without creating a street dominated by cars and trucks. People often walk down the centre of the carriageway and vehicles largely move at slow speeds giving way to pedestrians and bikes.

The sea wall is demarcated through a 600mm wide kerb as it runs past Sheds 11 & 13 reinstating the proportions of the wharf's edge. This tracing of the sea wall will continue past Site 10 and Shed 21, with interpretive signage highlighting its historical significance.

The Falcon Shoal Buoy that was until recently located at the end of Tug Wharf will be relocated to the north of the Waterloo on Quay Apartments. Here it will act as a landmark full stop and viewed as one of a series of smaller scale architectural elements along the laneway.

The rhythm of pohutukawa trees along the laneway is proposed to be continued with trees positioned adjacent to Site 8 and on the landward side of the historic sea wall adjacent to Site 10 and the Waterloo on Quay Apartments, (Detailed investigations of the location of the trees in relation to the sea wall will be required to confirm if these location can be achieved without damaging the sea wall).

Vehicle access across the footpath to service buildings and the temporary car park on Site 9 will be minimised and ramps across the sea wall demarcation kerb configured to reduce vehicle speeds.

Car parking is incorporated along the lane with 10 parallel spaces along the lane and 3 to the north of the Waterloo on Quay Apartments. Seven of these are existing parking spaces (reconfigured) for the sole use of Waterloo on Quay Apartments. The remaining six will be configured to operate as short stay / loading bays in a similar way to the existing lane parking adjacent to the Meridian building.

It is our understanding that there is an agreement in place between Wellington City Council and CenterPort to allow the Kumutoto lane to be constructed across land owned by both parties. However Isthmus drawings 1.042 and 1.043 illustrate a one-way lane option that is restricted to WCC land in the unlikely event the licence agreement between WCC and CentrePort is terminated in the future.

#### 4.9 **Site 9**

Identified within the North Kumutoto Design Brief as a future development site, this space will temporarily continue to operate as a car park. Due to the reconfiguration of the adjacent Kumutoto Lane, parking will be reconfigured and reduced to 18 spaces. In addition to this reconfiguration, minor changes to the Customhouse Quay kerb line are proposed to enable a pedestrian footpath to be introduced between the Whitmore Street and Waring Taylor Street crossings this is complemented by a pedestrian canopy

to provide weather protection. A small planted area between the carpark and footpath is proposed to help visually soften the area and along with the proposed canopy provide containment along the western edge (adjacent to Customhouse Quay).

#### 4.10 Harbour Wharf

Although not part of this application the Harbour Wharf will continue to operate as a working part of Wellington Harbour. Currently occupied by the Wellington Maritime Police, access to the wharf must be maintained. The presence and activity of the Maritime Police on the wharf helps to reinforce the working character of the Kumutoto precinct.

## 5.0 Planting

- 5.1 The indicative planting (shown on drawings 1.080, 1.081 and 4.080-4.081) has been selected to respond to climatic, spatial and growing conditions for the location. Further detailed examination of appropriate planting will ensure that an appropriate palette of native shrub and groundcover species is used that reinforces the area's ecology and desire to establish further coastal habitats. In addition to these environmental considerations, planting will be mindful of public safety on the waterfront and ongoing maintenance requirements.

The existing pohutukawa trees located along the edge of the motorhome park (planted in 2010) will be relocated to the positions shown along the laneway. The self-seeded pohutukawa trees within the rip-rap, adjacent to Site 8, will be retained where this is not possible (due to root conditions / rip-rap modifications) they will be replaced with large grade (400L) trees of a similar scale to the existing.

Within Site 8 the 'greened' rip-rap will mimic the self-seeded nature of the existing planting and will extend under the floating deck where conditions permit. The folded deck will fold into the ground and the rip-rap and ground level raised in these locations to ensure that the planting zones are close to flush with the deck / do not create fall hazards.

## 6.0 Materials and Furniture

- 6.1 A simple palette of robust materials and furniture is proposed. This selection of materials is mindful of the area's distinctive character, life-cycle costs, durability and of the need for a cohesive precinct character. The furniture and materials will be consistent with the existing Kumutoto and waterfront material palette, linking the spaces through the use of common elements.

6.2 Robust use by skateboarders, scooters and BMX riders is anticipated in the appropriate detailing of edges and furniture elements. The Waterfront Furniture Design Brief has been consulted and will influence the detailed design. Advice from Wellington Waterfront TAG and the Council's Accessibility Advisory Group will be sought during detailed design.

6.3 Paving and other materials and finishes used under-foot will provide adequate traction while the use of nonslip insets into timber (particularly on the folded deck of Site 8) will be used to ensure key movement routes are safe. Contrasting materials or textures to indicate hazards and assist the visually impaired will also be incorporated.

Surface Materials:

- Pedestrian surfacing - In-situ concrete (honed / exposed finish), timber & asphalt
- Carriageway surfacing - Asphalt, in-situ concrete (exposed finish)
- Vehicle Ramps – reclaimed / new granite cobbles
- Shared use surfacing - Exposed aggregate concrete
- Kerbs - Pre-cast / boxed in-situ concrete

6.4 The standard palette of waterfront seating used within Kumutoto will be used. Edges and walls will allow for informal seating with back and arm rests incorporated in key locations. Seating will be located to give people a choice of where and how they would like to sit, providing;

- different types of seating options including; ledges, steps, seats with armrests and backs, and benches.
- choice of location within each space, such as in the sun, in the shade, in groups, alone, close to activity, or somewhat removed from activity.

6.5 Signage elements found along the waterfront will be used to aid both wayfinding and the interpretation of key points of interest while other furniture elements such as bollards and bins will be integrated into the design in appropriate locations.

## 7.0 Lighting

7.1 During the detailed design phase detailed lighting proposals will be developed to take into account not only the safety of users but also to enhance the area's night-time environment, provide attractive, vibrant and stimulating spaces and increase foot-fall and safe public usage at night.

- 7.2 From the Wellington Waterfront Framework and the Waterfront Lighting Strategy the following lighting principles will be followed.
- Vitality and design   
Lighting will reinforce the experience of Kumutoto while care taken to not over-light the waterfront and mask harbour views.
  - Connections   
Lighting will be used to create a clearly legible night-time environment with focal points at the end of views and gateways highlighted.
  - The view over the water   
Its position in the geography of Wellington provides views of the waterfront from many vantage points. Low lighting at the water's edge will be balanced with key elements highlighted to enhance the waterfront wide lighting composition when viewed from afar.
  - Public safety and accessibility   
Lighting plays a key role in night-time accessibility and user safety. Night-time hazards will be assessed during the detailed design and appropriate lighting treatments used to highlight hazards / identify safe pedestrian routes.
  - Sense of place   
Lighting will be used to enhance the expression of the waterfront's heritage history and design - all lighting equipment should suit the "working" and coastal context of the Waterfront, both in terms of durability and aesthetics.
  - Green principles   
The public lighting will carefully consider possible environmental damage and adverse effects on flora and fauna. Lighting will be designed to minimise light spill (to conform to AS/NZS 4282) and minimise power usage.

## 8.0 Earthworks

- 8.1 Earthworks and site contouring is required within Whitmore Plaza, the Wool Store Plaza and on Site 8 to enable the site to be formed for proposed public spaces and to achieve good accessibility through the site. All footpaths and open spaces will have cross falls of less than 1:50 with steeper areas or ramps restricted to relatively short sections (less than 10m) within the gate zones and Site 8.
- 8.2 Cut required is generally less than 1m and restricted to Site 8 with further excavation anticipated where the rip-rap alignment is to be altered next to adjacent to the Tug Wharf.
- 8.3 Filling is required within Whitmore Plaza and the Wool Store Plaza with the maximum depth being less than 1m.

8.4 The earthworks and site contouring will result in approximately 1,000m<sup>3</sup> of cut material being removed from Site 8. Approximately 750m<sup>3</sup> of fill material will be required within Whitmore Plaza and the Wool Store Plaza. It is proposed to retain as much of the cut from Site 8 as possible on site, but due to unsuitable material there may be a need to dispose of up to 1,000m<sup>3</sup> of the surplus material to licensed landfills. Suitable sub-base material will be imported to form a solid base for paving and built elements.

## 9.0 Conclusion

It is our opinion that the landscape design approach outlined above and illustrated on Isthmus Drawings will appropriately integrate North Kumutoto in to the surrounding waterfront context by facilitating a safe, high quality and legible public environment that provides a high level of amenity for all users.

We recommend the imposition of an appropriate resource consent condition, should consent be granted, requiring detailed landscape proposals and specification to be signed off by Wellington City Council's Urban Design representatives prior to construction.



Dan Males  
Isthmus Group Ltd  
3 November 2014

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<sup>i</sup> The Wellington Waterfront Framework, 2001, Page 21

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# Appendices



Figure 3: Movement

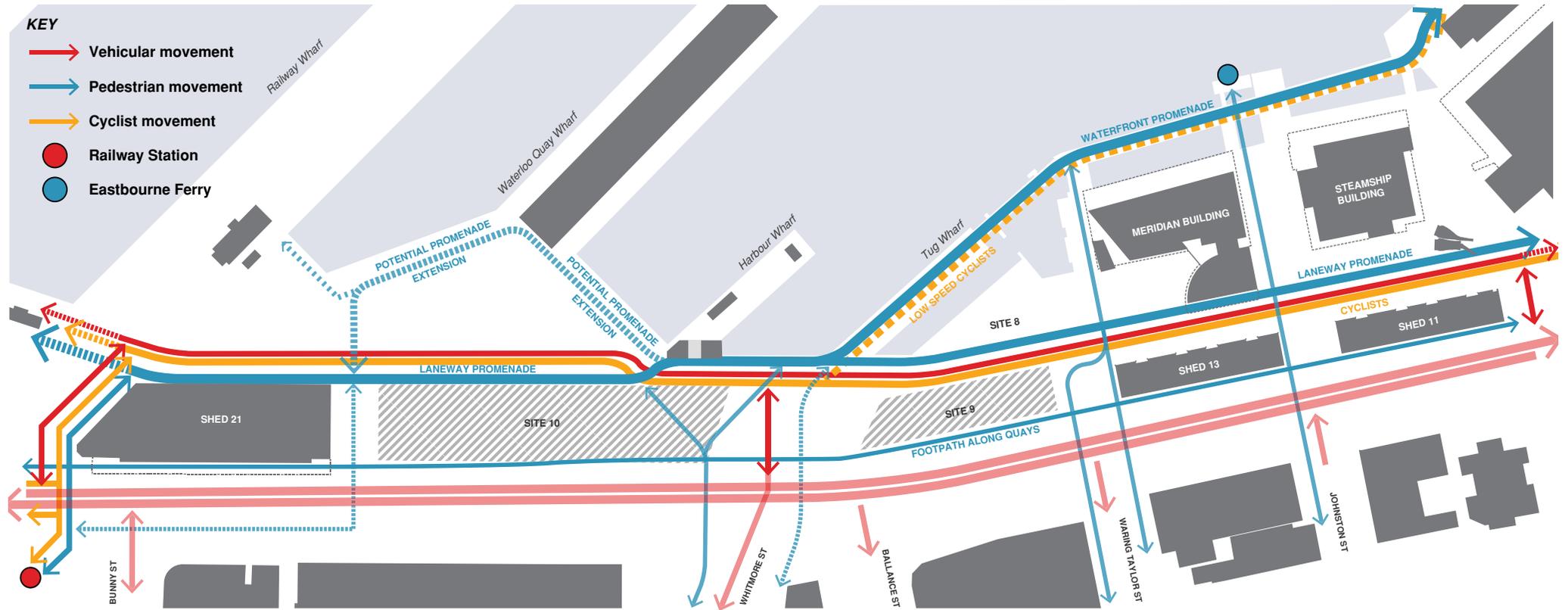


Figure 4: Kumutoto open space structure

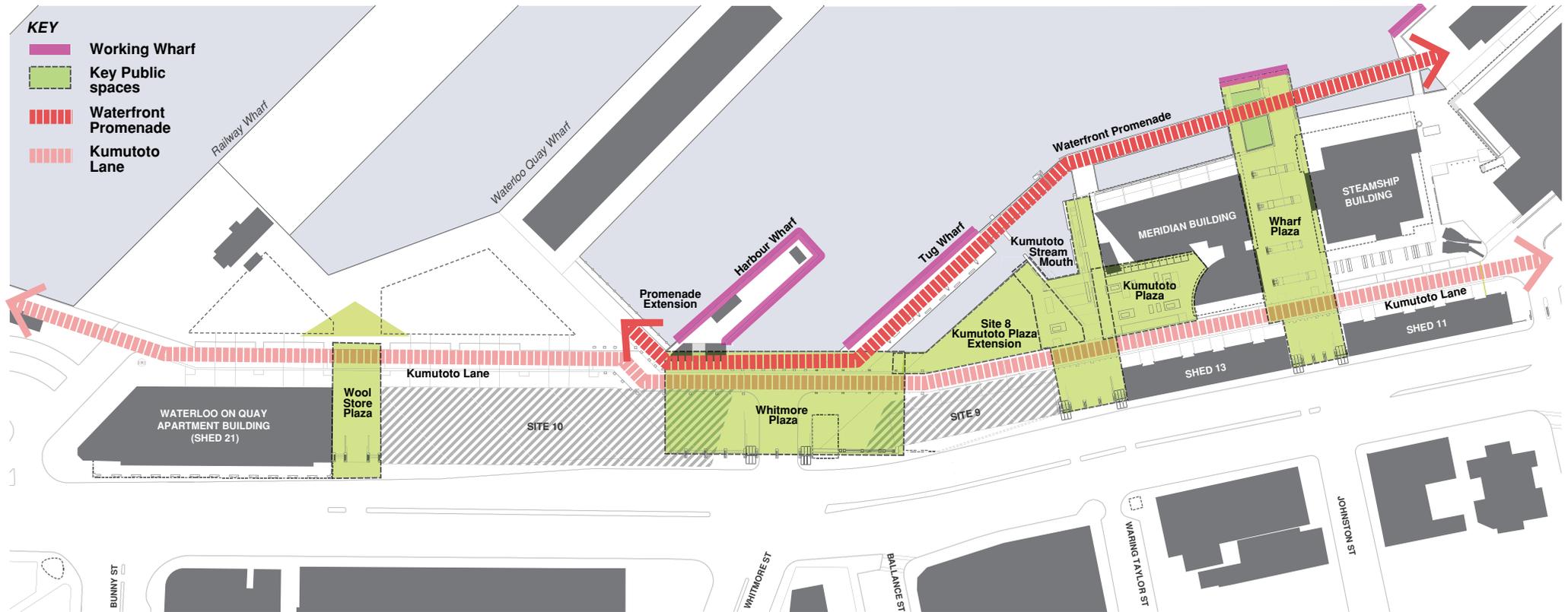


Figure 5: View shafts and ownership

