

# **SITE 10, NORTH KUMUTOTO**

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**APPLICATION FOR RESOURCE CONSENT**

**URBAN DESIGN ASSESSMENT**

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**Prepared for Site 10 Redevelopment Limited Partnership**

**15 September 2014**

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

The proposal involves the construction of a new five storey office building on Site 10, North Kumutoto, and associated infrastructure and landscape works within the development site.

The development site which is within the Lambton Harbour Area (aka Wellington Waterfront) is part of the Central Area. The District Plan requires that new development in the Central Area is assessed against the Central Area Urban Design Guide.

This report provides an assessment of the outcomes of the proposal against the relevant Design Guide provisions. The assessment is preceded by an analysis of the context around the development site and a brief description of the proposal.

The assessment is based on site visits and a review of the architectural and landscape plans and associated Architectural Design Report, and forms part of the AEE accompanying the Resource Consent Application.

# 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 design brief and the draft Kumutoto Design Guide. 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 expert design review by the Council's technical advisory group (TAG), and engagement with key stakeholders and the market.

**The proposal** - the proposed building is five stories (ground + 4 levels) and a basement. Its ground level accommodates public accessible spaces for cafe/retail/gallery etc; main entrance to the office space on the upper levels; a cluster of 'fine grained' studio/retail/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.

The building form of the proposal is comprised of two primary components:

- The podium - a three-storey podium (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. A colonnade runs along the west/Waterloo Quay side of the building (the Quay-side colonnade). The southern end of the podium is setback from the south/east corner of the site to create a 'portico' to Whitmore Plaza.
- The Gantry - a continuous two-level upper level form spanning over the top of the podium akin to a working waterfront gantry.

The new building has been designed as an integral part of a wider landscape/public open space proposal defined by Site 9 on the west side and extending over Site 8. The proposed public open space development is covered in a separate but 'companion' resource consent application.

A further more detailed description of the proposal and its elements is integrated into the design guide assessment to follow (section 4 of this report).

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 10, 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 covering 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 CentrePort's boundary and the water's edge to the east.

Due to its 'interface' location, 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.

**Site 10 / the development site** - North Kumutoto is comprised of three development sites:

- Site 8 - located north of the Meridian Building and adjacent to the water's edge and intended to be developed as public open space;
- Site 9 - located to the north of Shed 13, intended to be developed in the future; and
- Site 10 - to the south of Shed 21, where the proposed new building is located.

Sites 9 and 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 will be developed as shared public open space as part of the landscape proposal. Whitmore Plaza is a junction point where the waterfront turns a corner, the central city grid changes alignment and the Quays come close to the water.

Site 10, which is immediately adjacent to this junction, has a rectangular shape and defines the northern edge of Whitmore Plaza with its narrow side. The northern boundary of the site sits approximately 14m from the southern edge of Shed 21.

The long frontages of the site are defined by distinctly different spatial / contextual conditions - eastern frontage faces CentrePort and the waterfront, while the western frontage is part of the vehicle-oriented environment of the Quays and the large-scale spatial setting of the CBD to the west.

The southern/short frontage of the site faces Whitmore Plaza. The northern frontage is less prominent and is perceived as a secondary frontage. The exact boundaries of the development site are outlined on Fig. 22, page 7 Architectural Design Report.

The site is currently used as a campervan/car-parking area with a temporary amenity block. To the east of the site is an area of mixed pedestrian and vehicle movement and parking defined (from south to north) by the Harbour Wharf and associated former Eastbourne Terminal Ferry Building (a listed heritage item), Waterloo Quay Wharf with its two storey shed, and the Railway Wharf. The latter two wharfs are part of the Operational Port Area.

The historical sea wall (currently unseen) runs along between the three wharfs and the development site.

Main vehicle access onto the waterfront in this area is at Whitmore Street. Access is also possible via the entrance at Bunny Street to the north and Brandon Street to the south.

**Immediate context/neighbouring building character** - the site has two immediately adjacent neighbours - Shed 21 to the north, and the former Eastbourne Ferry Terminal Building to the east. Both buildings are listed heritage buildings with strong associations to the harbour. However, their scale and character is very different thus contributing to the complexity/diversity of contextual conditions characteristic of Site 10.

The historic Sheds 11 and 13, located to the south of Site 9, are the more distant neighbours. Along with Shed 21, they play a key role in defining the Waterloo Quay edge.

The heritage character and significance of these buildings and the historic sea wall are described and discussed in detail in the Heritage Assessment prepared by Archifact Ltd (Volume 3, Appendix 12).

**Historical context** - despite its many transformations, the historic character of the Northern Kumutoto area is underpinned by a number of patterns/elements that need to be acknowledged and interpreted in new development. The key historical patterns, and the way they have been interpreted by the proposal, are discussed in Section 4 of this report under 'Relationship to Context'.

**Visibility** - connections between the North Kumutoto area and its wider context include views/glimpses of the harbour and hills and views along the city streets. Site 10 and adjacent Shed 21 are visible from the south and south/east (the wider waterfront and Oriental Bay) and feature in both distant and mid-range as well as close up views from the more immediate parts of the waterfront.

The visibility of the site from the city side is limited to viewpoints located in the areas and along streets within a viewing radius of approximately 100m.

The key representative viewpoints describing the visibility of the proposal are marked on the drawing titled "Viewpoint Locations" (refer Volume 3, Appendix 10). The photomontages in Appendix 10 have been prepared to illustrate the proposal as seen from those viewpoints. The simulations are analysed and referred to in the assessment (section 4 of this report).

## 4 ASSESSMENT OF DESIGN OUTCOMES

### 4.1 ASSESSMENT REFERENCE POINTS

#### Central Area Urban Design Design Guide

**Introduction** - 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 10.

The intent of the Design Guide is "to achieve high quality buildings, places and spaces in the Central Area of the City" by ensuring buildings, places and spaces:

- *are coherently designed;*
- *make a considered response to context;*
- *address heritage values;*
- *establish positive visual effects;*
- *provide good quality living and working environments;*
- *integrate environmental sustainability principles; and*
- *provide conditions of safety and accessibility.*

**Design Guide structure and provisions** - the Design Guide is built upon six urban design matters with specific objectives and associated guidelines 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 only the objectives and guidelines that are relevant to the context and issues of the specific proposal need be satisfied. It further acknowledges that due to the unique conditions of each location, some objectives are more important than others.

**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. 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. Variation 11 as a whole was declined by the Environment Court and therefore the Northern Kumutoto Precinct Design Guide has no statutory standing. However, some aspects of it (with a special reference to the

'design excellence' principles) are useful and relevant and, for that reason, have been referred to in the assessment where necessary.

The Environment Court decision on Variation 11 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. The guidance re: Site 10 is directly relevant to the assessment of the proposal.

**The Wellington Waterfront Framework** - the Wellington Waterfront Framework principles for the North Queens Wharf area (now referred to as North Kumutoto) provides another (non-statutory) reference for the assessment.

## 4.2 ASSESSMENT AGAINST THE DESIGN GUIDE

### 4.2.1 **Design Coherence:** "A new building or public space should have its own inherent design integrity and coherence".

**Objective 01.1** aims: "to ensure each design solution is coherently designed, demonstrates design integrity, and integrates all relevant design criteria in the best possible way".

The relevant guideline (G01.1, titled 'Internal consistency and integration') encourages designers to: "demonstrate in the design and composition of any building an overall coherence that integrates the various design guide requirements".

#### **Assessment comments:**

The proposal is developed as a single building entity comprised of several identifiable/distinctive components relating to its built form, spatial structure and intended use. In relation to 'design coherence' the proposal has to address three interrelated design issues/objectives:

- (a) create a new office building of high quality that would allow it to function as required, while adding to the vitality/activity of the waterfront by providing publicly accessible ground level activities appropriate for this part of the waterfront;
- (b) be designed in a coherent manner - (integrate the various building elements and proposed uses into a whole that expresses the identity of the new building while establishing a positive compositional relationship with the immediate neighbours (Shed 21 and the former Eastbourne Ferry Building) and adjacent open space; and
- (c) ensure that the proposal as a whole is well integrated into its wider context (present and intended).

The proposal has responded well to all three issues. This is because:

- the proposal has been guided by a site-specific development/design brief (adopted by the Council). In essence, the brief integrates the key principles of the Central Area Urban Design Guide with the principles of other relevant documents (e.g. Northern Kumutoto Precinct Design Guide and the Wellington Waterfront Framework) and makes reference to the Environment Court decision on Variation 11);<sup>1</sup>
- the proposed design, developed in line with that brief, is based on a sound architectural concept which:
  - strikes an appropriate balance between urban design/heritage/contextual considerations and interior layout, amenity and functional requirements;

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<sup>1</sup> Wellington City Council, North Kumutoto Design Brief, adopted 22 November 2012

- considers the type and distribution of activities in relation to building form issues (with emphasis on ground level uses); and
- creates a distinctive building image that recognises the range of contextual conditions along each side of the building, including the townscape value of District Plan Viewshaft 4 (providing a long view to the harbour and beyond along the Whitmore Street corridor);
- the proposal is cognisant of the scale and heritage values of the adjacent buildings, and contributes to the quality, safety and activity of Whitmore Plaza and the promenade on the east side of the building. At the same time, the design of the Waterloo Quay facade clearly recognises its interface location between the CBD and the Harbour, while providing a city-harbour cross-connection. The proposed Harbour-Wharf Link cutting diagonally through the building is a case in point, along with the specific massing of the building bulk in relation to Shed 21 and the former Eastbourne Ferry Terminal Building.

As a result, the major building elements relate well to each other and the proposal as a whole conveys a strong sense of design integrity and coherence, while responding positively to the givens of the site and its context (see detailed comments under 'Relationship to Context' below).

**4.2.2 Relationship to Context:** *"Relating to context means understanding and responding in a considered way to conditions beyond the site".*

**Objective 0.2.1** aims: *"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** aims: *"to maintain or enhance the quality of the settings of individual heritage buildings, including those in heritage areas".*

The supporting **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 comments:**

**Relationship to the waterfront setting** - the key historical patterns/elements characteristic for the North Kumutoto area and the way the proposal has addressed those are discussed below:

- **linear buildings (separated by physical gaps) aligned with and forming the eastern edge of the Quays** - the proposed building has a rectangular footprint. It follows the general alignment of Shed 21 and has similar plan dimensions. On the Waterloo Quay side, the building is setback from the edge of Shed 21 - this reflects the geometry of the existing road alignment and appears to be consistent with the siting of the historic Shed 17 which originally occupied Site 10.

The proposal, apart from the ground level colonnade, is built up to the western boundary providing definition to the Waterloo Quay street edge. The proposed building is approximately 14m away from the southern edge of Shed 21 at ground level, thus establishing a clear and distinctive separation between the two buildings.<sup>2</sup> As a result, the proposal will reinforce the existing pattern of separate linear buildings defining the eastern edge of Waterloo Quay.

- **a distinctive pattern of north-south running wharfs with rail extensions directly accessing/servicing the wharf** - the proposal echoes this pattern by providing ground level pedestrian link (Harbour Wharf link). The link cuts diagonally through the building running on a parallel alignment with the Harbour Wharf and its neighbours to the north, reminiscent of railway lines that used to connect to the wharves.

The southern edge of the link is aligned with the 'bevelled' north/east corner of the former Eastbourne Ferry Terminal Building. The link will create 'framed' views to the Harbour which will terminate at Te Papa in the distant background.

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<sup>2</sup> At Levels 1 and 2 the setback is 12m and Levels 3 and 4 is 3m

- **relationship to Shed 21** - the proposal responds well to the scale and character of Shed 21 for the following reasons:
  - setting back of the ground level of the proposal from the eastern and western boundary of the site to reflect alignment with the edges of Shed 21;
  - providing a colonnade on the west side which connects to and extends the existing colonnade of Shed 21 (albeit on a slightly different alignment);
  - creating a new building with height similar to that of Shed 21. Setting back the north/eastern and north/western corners of the top two levels (working gantry) to reduce perception of height/bulk and strengthen the relationship to Shed 21. This is achieved through the proposed massing, form and texture of the northern end of the proposal which clearly complement the scale and facade modulation of Shed 21; and
  - reflecting/interpreting the elevational orders and modulation of Shed 21 - establishing clear visual links to its horizontal subdivision (e.g. height of ground level similar in both buildings, height of podium on new building relates to cornice line above Level 2, eastern elevation Shed 21).
- **relationship the former Eastbourne Ferry Terminal Building** - the proposal relates well to and acknowledges the presence of the building. This has been achieved by:
  - aligning the southern edge of the ground level footprint with the northern edge of the ferry building - this will maintain the visual relationship of the ferry building with the Quays;
  - setting back the building mass of levels one and two from the east and south/east edges of the site to create an open space under the Working Gantry that respects the proximity and scale of the ferry building;
  - configuring the Whitmore Plaza extension (facing south/east) to focus attention on the ferry building; and
  - aligning the Harbour/Wharf cross- link with the 'bevelled' north/east corner of the ferry building.

#### **Relationship to the Quays and CBD**

The proposal addresses the relationship to the Quays in three primary ways:

- maintaining an appropriate/scale height relationship to the closest building neighbour the NZ Post building - the proposal is approximately 7m lower than the podium of the NZ Post building and relates to its horizontal scale. The step in height acts as an appropriate transition between the inland/CBD side of the Waterloo Quay and the harbour;
- providing a more solid facade treatment on the western side of the building to provide a more substantial edge in response to the scale and vehicle-oriented character of the Quays; and
- defining the street edge on the western side of Waterloo Quay and providing a sheltered route along that edge.

The relationship to the wider CBD is addressed through:

- the 'portico' effect created by the building's massing at its southern end and the associated Whitmore Plaza extension which also enhances the connection to Parliament ; and
- maintaining the spatial integrity of the view along Whitmore Street from Lambton Quay to the harbour (as per District Plan Viewshaft 4) by setting back the southern end of the building from the viewshaft corridor.

#### **4.2.3 Siting, Height, Bulk and Form**

*"The siting of buildings should allow for intended activities while also acknowledging neighbouring buildings, reinforcing valued patterns of public space, and creating positive open spaces".*



**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.

The supporting **guidelines** relate to 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).

Many of the objectives/guidelines under 'Siting, Height, Bulk and Form' overlap with those under 'Design Coherence' and 'Relationship to Context'. To avoid repetition, cross-reference is made, where appropriate, to any overlapping matters already discussed.

#### **Assessment comments:**

**Street edge definition and building alignment** - as discussed, the proposal 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).

**Height and scale relationship & building bulk** - these guidelines 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 a positive height and scale relationships between old and new.

**Proposed building form** - the bulk/form of the proposal is comprised of two primary components and incorporates a sheltered ground link:

- **The podium** - a three-level podium with ground level broken by the proposed Harbour-Wharf Link (the south/east end of the podium) accommodates cafes and retail activities intended to spill out onto the adjacent open space; the northern end is taken by the 'start-up' innovation cluster - fine grained small business and retail outlets fronting the waterfront lane and the Wool Store Plaza). The upper two levels of the podium accommodate office space. The upper levels' footprint is largely aligned with site boundaries on the north, east and west side, except for the south/east corner which is setback to create an extension to the adjacent Whitmore Plaza. The main entrance to the upper levels is mid-way along the Harbour-Wharf Link;
- **The gantry** - a continuous upper level form spanning over the top of the podium like a working waterfront gantry. The gantry is two storeys. Its form and scale at the southern end act as a gateway marker and a civic 'portico' to Whitmore Plaza. The form and design at the northern end are modulated differently to provide a transition and connection to the scale/facade modelling of Shed 21;
- **Harbour-Wharf Link** - a 4m wide sheltered public link cutting diagonally through the ground level of the podium to connect the Quayside colonnade to the waterfront. The western entry of the link is signalled by glazed double-storey box-window positioned above the entrance opening.

**Proposed height** - the proposed building height is 22.4m to the top of the gantry. The height is 0.4m above the height indicated as 'appropriate' by the Environment Court. In terms of the 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 (21.1.m) and therefore it will not affect height/scale relationship to that building in any significant way.

The proposed height is lower than the height of the podium of the NZ Post building, the closest Waterloo Quay neighbour located directly opposite the proposal on the western / CBD side of the street.

A small area of rooftop services (plant and chillers) is proposed to be located at the centre of the building footprint, rising 3.8m above the roof line of the gantry. With the exception of the chillers, the service area will be enclosed with a high quality louvered screen. The chillers are configured as two free-standing rectangular elements with narrow footprints. To reduce their visual impact they are aligned perpendicular to the key views from city to harbour, in a manner consistent with the other waterfront structures (e.g. container or operating cabs to the main gantry structure). The minimalist approach to the treatment of the plant and its central location is a valid approach towards reducing its impact. The service area will be most obvious in 'private' views from surrounding buildings. Its impact will be lower from the more distant viewpoints to south and south/east as it will be seen against the backdrop of adjacent CBD buildings. It will not feature in close up views - (refer BuildMedia photomontages 4, 5, 6 and 7 - Volume 3, Appendix 10). Due to its central location and relatively small footprint, the service area will not affect directly the relationship with Shed 21.

Overall the height/scale relationship of the proposal has been appropriately addressed. This is because the proposed height in relation to the building footprint will create a building of horizontal form/bulk that is similar to the height/plan dimensions of Shed 21, while also assisting the height/scale integration of the proposal into the CBD context.

**Proposed bulk** - the proposed form and massing of the proposal are appropriately addressed. This is because:

- the proposal is based on a concept where the building form/treatment along each side of the building responds to the specific conditions of the adjacent context. To this end, the east and south sides of the building are more 'open' with an expressive three-dimensional articulation recognising their open space context, while the modelling on the western/city side, guided by the structural frame, reflects the street context of the Quays; and
- the podium, with its expressive three-dimensional modelling on the eastern/harbour side, relates well to the form and scale of the gantry above. Together these two primary building components create a compositionally balanced and integrated building form. The bulk of this collective form 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. This has helped to reduce the perception of building bulk and assist its integration to the adjacent open space and to the neighbouring buildings. (See also comments under 'Facade Modelling and Building Tops').

**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. In relation to these matters the comments are:

- the proposal is a free-standing building which allows for extensive glazing around the building perimeter ensuring good levels of natural lighting;
- the structural frame is on the western/city side which allows for continuous glazing along the eastern side of the proposal to maximise views to the harbour;
- at 24m width and a generally rectangular footprint, and a great aspect to all sides the building is well suited for good quality office space. The office use is further supported by proximity to the Railway Station and the CBD;
- at Level 3 the access to decks at the east and north ends enhances views and internal amenity; and
- the proposal incorporates an appropriate ventilation system.

**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 this issue for the following reasons:

- the proposed Quay-side colonnade relates to extend the existing Shed 21 colonnade. The proposed colonnade will provide sheltered pedestrian space connected to surrounding public spaces such as Whitmore Plaza and the waterfront promenade;
- the proposed extension to Whitmore Plaza is a logical response to the spatial structure of the Plaza and its context. The proposed publically accessible ground level defining the edge of the extension will activate the space and enhance its safety. The portico will provide shelter;
- formalising the public promenade space on the east side of the proposal will be supported by the building edge which will both define and activate it through the intended ground level uses. The projection of the box window will provide shelter along the building edge; and
- 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.

**Wind effects on public space** - the height of the proposal is above 18.6m - this triggers the need for a wind assessment. A wind assessment has been prepared as part of the Application. According to its conclusions no specific on-site measures/design elements are required for potential wind mitigation.

**Pedestrian block permeability** - the proposal provides a 3m wide colonnade space on the Quay-side of the proposal which connects to and extends the existing Shed 21 colonnade. This contributes to a continuous sheltered route along this section of the Quays directly linked to the harbour-side route via the proposed sheltered Harbour-Wharf Link. The Harbour-Wharf Link provides access to the office foyer and the Whitmore Plaza extension. This will improve the accessibility to the waterfront and create a permeable ground level providing physical connections to the waterfront promenade and Whitmore Plaza; and visual connections to the wider harbour setting.

The proposed glazed box window above the western end of the link will signal the presence of the new public cross link from oblique angles and when moving along the Quays and promote its use. The box window will add to the three-dimensional quality of the facade and introduce a sense of human scale and variation.

#### 4.2.4 Edge Treatment

“The buildings that line the edges of streets and other public spaces establish their character and attractiveness”.

**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 Comments:

**Building fronts & active edges** - the proposal responds positively to the relevant guidelines for the following reasons:

- the development creates continuous ‘active building frontages’ along the entire building perimeter except for several relatively narrow bays associated with the service areas and vehicle entries;
- the vehicle entrance to the basement carpark is appropriately located along the narrow/secondary frontage on the northern side. The service area although located along the harbour-side of the

building is well integrated within the otherwise active frontage that 'opens' to the adjacent promenade;

- in a similar manner, the building service areas fronting the Quay-side of the building are an active frontage defining the proposed colonnade space;
- the ground level at the southern end, adjacent to the proposed Whitmore Plaza extension, appropriately accommodates uses that clearly promote public access such as retail and cafes. The cafe tenancies are envisaged to open up to Whitmore Plaza on the southern side and the promenade on the northern side to activate further the adjacent public space areas;
- the tenancies around the north/east, north and west sides are envisaged to be small businesses with individual entrances. This intention complements the pattern of tenancies in the adjacent Shed 21;
- the building has two entrances connected by an 'L-shaped lobby with access points on the eastern side of the building and mid-point along the Harbour-Wharf Link respectively. This ensures that the building can be accessed from either side, with the lobby providing connections to the Whitmore Plaza; and
- the extensive glazing associated with the upper level offices, and associated upper level decks, will activate the upper level frontages.

**Servicing and carparking** - service areas and a short term pick-up and drop-off area is proposed from the shared-use Kumutoto Lane running along the east side of the building.

Parking space is provided in the basement and is accessed via an internal ramp located at the north end of the building, thus reducing its impact.

**Shelter and building entrance enhancement** - the proposal will provide continuous pedestrian shelter along the building perimeter. The projecting box window in combination with the portico will shelter the south and east edges of the building. The proposed colonnade will provide a shelter along the Quay-side edge the building. The projecting footprint of the podium upper levels will shelter the northern building edge.

Entrances to the building, as discussed above, are appropriately located and linked through the Harbour-Wharf Link to Whitmore Plaza.

The projecting window above the western entrance of the Harbour-Wharf Link appropriately enhances the entry point.

#### 4.2.5 Façade Composition and Building Tops

*"The composition of buildings determines their relation to context, their design coherence, and their suitability for a range of uses".*

**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 comments:**

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

The overall facade composition and the detailed treatment of primary building elevations are appropriately approached in response to the different contextual conditions around Site 10 and its interface location between the harbour, the port and the city. With that in mind, the comments regarding the individual facade treatment of the building elevations are:

#### **The Podium**

##### Southern podium (south of the Harbour-Wharf Link)

- The massing and facade modelling of the podium at its southern end is conceived as an extension of Whitmore Plaza. The portico (integrating exterior and interior space under it) and the highly glazed/visually permeable facade of the adjacent ground level are key elements of the design. The facade under the portico is setback to facilitate and enhance the spatial integration with Whitmore Plaza, the former Eastbourne Ferry Terminal Building and the associated Harbour Wharf.
- The south/west corner of the podium incorporates large diagonally oriented window boxes. This reflects the alignment/orientation of the wharf structures and helps to enhance the Whitmore Gateway and the spatial connection towards Parliament.
- The scale, spatial quality and detailed treatment at the south end of the podium, especially around its south/east corner, are conceived as an integral part of the overall facade composition and will be a key feature of the building's identity.
- 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.

##### Northern podium (north of the Harbour-Wharf Link)

- Compared to the southern podium, the form of the 'northern' podium along its eastern/harbour side is more regular and continuous with an enhanced horizontal emphasis. It incorporates a long box window which projects (approximately 3m) forward from the edge of the ground level footprint. The box window will enhance positively the facade modelling by creating a 'layering' effect. Its length/proportions will contribute to the overall compositional balance and three-dimensional quality of the entire eastern elevation. It will also provide shelter to the promenade below and act as an open deck for the upper levels above.
- The design of the north and west elevations of the podium is based on a more solid frame and 'hit and miss' facade system. This approach is appropriate as it:
  - provides a level of solar mitigation on these exposed sides;
  - creates a more substantial edge responding to the scale and traffic-oriented environment of the Quays;
  - provides a transition between the more open southern end of the podium and the more solid brick mass of Shed 21;
  - introduces a sense of vertical rhythm which, when seen in motion, adds a sense of dynamic and visual interest; and
  - incorporates a projecting glazed box window positioned above the western end of the pedestrian cross link - the box window is a positive feature that will mark the western entrance

to the new link and will add to the three-dimensional quality of the facade, while acting as a transitional element integrating the varied facade modelling associated with the south and north ends of the podium.

### **The Gantry**

The gantry, except for the variation at the north and north/west end, is continuously glazed and 'subdivided' by the truss structure. This helps to unify its form and contribute to its 'reading' as a building top, while referencing the maritime architecture and infrastructure of the adjacent port land.

The structure of this element is designed to allow it to cantilever over the extended Whitmore Plaza and create a large scale 'portico'/gateway effect at the interface with Whitmore Plaza and transitioning into the Whitmore Street corridor.

The proposed setbacks at the north/east and north/corners of the 'gantry' form help to reduce the perceived mass of the building at the interface with Shed 21. In relation to the overall building image, the setback corners of the 'gantry', especially when seen in long views from the east, create the impression as if this element has moved horizontally from north to south to accentuate the formal transition to the Shed 21 and emphasise the spatial separation between the two buildings. The sense of transition is further enhanced by the proposed materials and associated architectural detail. The three solid panels on the northern side of the Quay elevation (part of the structural frame) fit in well into the overall facade composition.

The proposal is five storeys (4.5m ground level + 4 office levels above). However, the collective building form (in terms of its large scale modelling) will read as comprised of three horizontal layers. This is because the two upper levels of the podium and the two levels of the gantry are 'visually combined' and expressed as single horizontal facade modules/layers. The resulting three-tier facade composition - ground level, upper podium, and gantry - 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, as the ground level layer aligns approximately with the ground/colonnade level of Shed 21 while the top of the middle layer visually extends the cornice line (above the middle level) of Shed 21.

**Building tops and roofscapes** - as discussed above, the unified form/treatment of the gantry contribute to its 'reading' as a building top, while referencing the maritime architecture and infrastructure of the adjacent port land. The impact of the enclosed plant room and chillers over the roofline of the gantry are discussed under "height and scale relationship".

The roofscape of the proposed building, as it will be seen in context from distant and nearer viewpoints, is illustrated on photomontages from viewpoints 1, 2, 3, 7, 10 and 11.

The proposed expression of the building top is appropriate as it is part of the overall design composition and its imagery reflects its maritime context.

**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 levels of the development and carried through the upper levels of the building frontages. The key features contributing a sense of human scale have been already discussed under 'relationship to neighbouring buildings' above.

**Flexibility and adaptability** - the building form and internal layout, with a special reference to the amount of natural light, provides a level of adaptability for possible future change of activity.

### **4.2.6 Materials and Detail**

*"Materials and detail are important in maintaining visual interest and a positive relation to context and heritage value".*

**Objective O6.1:** *To achieve qualities of visual interest and physical robustness consistent with demands arising from the building's location in the central city.*

**Objective O6.2:** To respect and conserve original heritage fabric.

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

#### **Assessment comments**

**Compositional coherence/visual interest /physical robustness/facade transparency** - many of these issues have already been addressed. Here the following points are added:

- overall, issues of materials and detail are appropriately addressed - as a result, the development conveys a strong sense of visual interest, while establishing a positive relationship to its context. This has been achieved in various ways by applying appropriate design techniques as already discussed throughout the assessment;
- 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 materials and design detail and in relation to their specific place within the surrounding setting;
- the intended materials and their application on the building's facades are illustrated on the elevation drawings. A detailed description of façade detail and the proposed palette of materials (with reference to their specific qualities and level of robustness) is provided in the Architectural Design Report; and
- the proposed glazing systems ensure a good level of transparency of the building exterior providing the desired visual connection between the surrounding public space and the building interior.

## **5 VISUAL INTEGRATION: IMPACT ON VIEWS**

The proposal, as part of North Kumutoto Area, will be seen in both distant views from south/east (Oriental Bay and the wider waterfront), as well as from mid-range and close-up viewpoints within the more immediate waterfront context, and/or along adjacent city streets.

To illustrate the visual impact of the proposal on people's experience when moving around the city, the Applicant has produced photomontages from 11 key viewpoints. These include:

- 3 distant viewpoints located to the south/east of the Site 10 along Oriental Parade and Te Papa (viewing distance between 0.8-1.6km);
- 3 mid-range viewpoints (viewing distance 200m - 350m); and
- 5 close-up views (viewing distance 200m or closer)

The viewpoints have been discussed with and approved by TAG as representative of the collective visual experience of the proposal. The viewpoints are marked on the drawing titled "Viewpoint Locations" being one of the drawings of the BuildMedia photomontages - refer Volume 3, Appendix 10.

**Distant views** (Refer VP 9, 10 & 11) - in distant views from the south/east the proposal will be seen against the backdrop of the CBD buildings as a small element of the wider harbour setting and with hills in the background. In these views the attention will be on the overall building form and its large scale modelling.

The visibility of the proposal will increase when moving from east to west along Oriental Parade towards Te Papa. However, in many views the base of the building will be obscured by the shed on Waterloo Wharf in the foreground. The former Eastbourne Ferry Terminal Building will come in view from viewpoints around Te Papa.

In distant views the similarity in height between Shed 21 and the proposed building will be evident. The prominence of the proposal is reduced as it will be seen against the taller horizontal volume of the podium of the NZ Post House building and the buildings of the wider cityscape. Due to distance, foreground elements and the dense backdrop of the CBD buildings, the visual impact of the proposal in distant views will not be significant and it will blend into its visual context.

**Mid-range views** - (Refer VP 1, 2 & 8) - in these views from the south the general form of the proposal, as well some of the more detailed design treatment, will be noticeable.

Viewpoint 1 (Queens Wharf, northern end, viewing distance 200m) will provide a clear view of the south/east part of the building with the former Eastbourne Ferry Terminal Building in the foreground and Whitmore Plaza and the Meridian Building to the south. The civic scale of the portico at the south/east corner of the proposal and its relationship to the former Eastbourne Ferry Terminal Building will be clearly understood.

Similarities in height and building form between Shed 21 and the proposal are noticeable. The photomontage image shows that the roof line of the proposal visually extends into the roof line of its neighbour, while the top line of the projecting box visually connects to the cornice line above the middle level of Shed 21.

The prominence of the roof top plant enclosure will be reduced as it will be seen against the backdrop of the NZ Post Building rather than against the skyline. The view shows the visual relationship of the proposal to the Beehive and its wider city context.

Viewpoint 2 (promenade southern end Shed 5, viewing distance 320m) will show the proposal from an oblique angle sitting between the horizontal volumes of the Meridian Building and Shed 21. The positive height/scale relationship between the proposal and its neighbours is evident in this view.

Viewpoint 8/ District Plan Viewshaft 4 (view along Whitmore Street from Lambton Quay, viewing distance 350m). The visual simulation shows that the proposal will not be seen in this view as its southern end is setback from the edge of the view corridor.

Overall, as seen in mid-range views the proposal fits in well into its visual context.

**Close-up views** - (Refer VP 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7) - these views focus more closely on the detailed design of the building.

Viewpoints 3 and 4 are sequential to viewpoint 2 but from a closer distance. In both views the south/east corner and the eastern side of the proposal will be in focus. The impact of the proposal from viewpoint 3 will be similar to that in the previous views as it will be seen in relation to the same buildings and spaces, but from a slightly different angle.

Viewpoint 4 shows the relationship to the former Eastbourne Ferry Terminal Building on one side and the NZ Post House building on the other. Due to lack of foreground buildings the visibility of the proposal will be increased showing the portico and its relationship to Whitmore Plaza. The proposed landscape treatment around and to the south of Whitmore Plaza on Site 8 will provide some soft foreground to the proposal. Future development on Site 9 will reduce the prominence of the proposal and obscure parts of it.

Viewpoints 5 & 6 - show the proposal from the south and north along Waterloo Quay/western edge. Viewpoint 5, which is approximately 50m away, focuses on the west and south sides of the proposal. This view illustrates the expressive form and civic scale of the portico and its relationship to the former Eastbourne Ferry Terminal Building and Whitmore Plaza. The detailed design of the western elevation, which varies along its length (from more open and three-dimensional at the southern end to more solid at the northern end) enhances the visual relationship to Shed 21. It also emphasises the sense of scale conveyed by the proposal and illustrates its design quality. The proposal relates well to its visual setting in this close-up view.

Viewpoint 6, which is approximately 180m away to the north, shows the proposal from an oblique angle in relation to Shed 21, which is seen in the foreground. The positive visual relationship between the two



buildings and the contribution of the proposal in defining the street edge of Waterloo Quay are evident in this view.

Viewpoint 7 is approximately 100m away to the north. It shows the proposal from an oblique angle from the harbour side with Shed 21 seen in the foreground. The box-window on the east side of the proposal and the recessed north/east corner of the gantry are clearly understood as features that aid the scale relationship with Shed 21.

The detailed facade modelling of the proposal, 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.

## 6 SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

The proposal is for a new office building with a publicly accessible ground level at the northern end of the North Kumutoto Area of the Wellington Waterfront.

An assessment against the relevant Central Area Urban Design Guide provisions has established that the urban design outcome of the proposal is consistent with the stated intent and objectives of the Design Guide. The result will be a building with a coherent and integrated form and memorable image which:

- acknowledges the interface city/harbour location of the development site;
- responds to the range of contextual conditions around the development site;
- creates positive new public space and enhances existing public space;
- 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 and new desire lines; and
- provides a high quality office space located close to the Railway Station, the Government Precinct and the CBD.

Deyana Popova  
Urban Designer  
**URBAN PERSPECTIVES LTD**

15 September 2014