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Capital Precinct Framework

draft

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1 Introduction

Wellington's role as the southern most capital and Capital of New Zealand needs to be celebrated. This is Wellington's main point of difference compared to other cities. At present the capital function is not well portrayed in Wellington, in New Zealand or to the wider world. This Framework proposes that the precinct around Parliament be enhanced in recognition of this important function.

This project has been developed as a joint venture between Wellington City Council and the Ministry for the Environment and delivers on one of the Ministry's important initiatives – the Urban Design Protocol. A steering group of key stakeholders including representatives of Council, key government agencies, the Anglican and Catholic churches, Victoria University, Capital Properties and the Civic Trust were involved in developing this Framework.

It is recognised that the area around Parliament will, as it has for a century continue to grow and change. This document provides a framework to assist in directing this change for the purpose of celebrating Wellington's role as capital city.

Formal boundaries have purposely not been created around this precinct as it is important that this area assimilates into the adjacent city. The area is loosely bounded by the motorway to the north and west - both sides of Bowen St including Bowen House - Whitmore St including the High Court site, the waterfront and along Thorndon Quay.

The purpose of the Framework is to:

- outline the issues that need to be considered
- articulate a vision and set of objectives to govern change in the precinct
- proposes a set of initiatives to bring about this change
- provide an understanding for the context or sense of place that needs to be protected and enhanced

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2 Background

2.1 Issues

There are two interconnecting issues that this Framework is looking to address:

- A need to promote national identity to reinforce Wellington as the Capital
- A need to improve the poor physical manifestation of what is a capital city

A need to promote national identity to reinforce Wellington as the Capital

There is minimal recognition by Central Government as to the status of Wellington City as the national capital.

At a national level, politically, there are often conflicting demands for resources and funding. Issues in other cities such as Auckland often have priority when aligned to economic gain rather than for social or cultural well being.

Associated with this, is little interest in promoting a New Zealand identity through a place based acknowledgement of the notion of nationhood. This is in contrast with the strong sense of national identity in other areas such as sports or IN collection of 'Kiwiana'.

A growing body of literature relating to the importance of capital city status suggests the confidence with which a government presents itself is critical. A recent publication produced by the Property Council of Australia defines the critical role of Australian capital cities to the national Australian economy.

New Zealand is operating in a highly competitive environment, and Central Government has an important role in generally promoting the country and its ideals. The commitment to a strong capital status is critical.

In the case of national capitals, there are many examples of cities proactively 'marketing' their capital status:

"All Australians have an interest in Canberra, their National Capital. Over the past one hundred years our nation has made a real philosophical and financial investment in the capital. The concern for the future must be that this investment is realised with the capital maturing as the seat of Government and as the natural home of the nation's most important cultural institutions and symbols, celebrations and ceremonies. The National Capital Authority is responsible for securing such a future"¹.

Canada's capital city, Ottawa, also actively promotes the capital function.

"A capital is more than a city. It is an expression of the country at large and a gathering place for its citizens, including those who work as public servants for the benefit of the country. Thus, Canada's Capital Region belongs to all Canadians. Even more importantly, it represents them; as the seat of government; a place of national symbols; a meeting place for Canadians; Canada's face to the world; a showcase of Canadian culture; and an administrative centre."²

¹ www.nationalcapital.gov.au/about/corporate/publications/corp_plan.asp

² www.canadascapital.gc.ca

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A need to improve the poor physical manifestation of what is a capital city

Development in the area around Parliament was dominated by Central Government until the mid-1980s. The Crown controlled a great deal of property in this area and produced a series of comprehensive plans for an impressive 'Government Centre' which never eventuated.

Over the last 25 years, the Government through the general policy of deregulation, has disinvested in land and buildings, and has preferred to find office accommodation on the open market.

Furthermore, it has been very difficult to get central government to acknowledge the cumulative effects of its development decisions on the fabric of the city.

Crown property sales and an increase in activity by the private sector mean that this precinct is starting to resemble other parts of the central city.

This leaves as the heart of the capital an architecturally diverse set of parliamentary buildings, and other national institutions that have developed through a disparate series of planning and cost cutting exercises.

Also, this area does not connect well to the balance of the city. The Capital Precinct sits at one end of the central city spine. There are a number of main traffic arterial routes that pass through this area with these arterial routes being the main links into and out of the city passing through this relatively narrow area.

In his 2004 study of public spaces in Wellington's central city, Danish urban designer Jan Gehl highlighted the poor integration between the

'Parliamentary Precinct' and the rest of the city. Gehl's study helped draw attention to a part of the central city which has been neglected in recent years. He described the area as "diverse" and "attractive" but "under-utilised" in terms of public life.

Though it houses some of Wellington's main visitor destinations, the precinct suffers from poor physical and visual connections with the rest of the city. The area is less 'user-friendly' than most other parts of the central city. Its fringe location and distinct physical structure limit pedestrian amenity and reduce vitality. These qualities are at odds with the precinct's national importance and with Wellington's claim to be the 'innovative capital'.

Adjacent, neighbouring areas are subject to relatively fast change and these developments create the need for a clearer vision of the precinct's future. Council's 'City Gateway' initiative and CentrePort's 'Harbour Quays' proposal both point to growth in the northern part of the central city. This has the potential to embed the precinct within a collection of new urban neighbourhoods.

Long overdue improvements to regional transport infrastructure will also have major impacts on this area. As these decisions are made, it will be important to have a clear idea of the evolving structure and character of the Capital Precinct. If no direction is set, surrounding development may disadvantage the precinct rather than enhance it.

The traditional roles of central and local government have changed. Whereas the Ministry of Works once directed development in this area, the Wellington City Council is now the chief custodian of public environment and directs how buildings support this environment. Building and open space initiatives can no longer be master planned, but must be controlled through the mechanisms of advocacy, Council's public space upgrade programmes and the District Plan. These mechanisms need to be further developed if the precinct is to retain its distinctive identity.

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2.2 Relationship to other Wellington City Council initiatives

There a range of interconnecting Council initiatives that this Framework relates to.

Council's has an overall vision of **Creative Wellington - Innovation Capital** and this Framework enhances this vision.

An overarching project is the Wellington Regional Strategy that looks to promote and manage growth in the region and is managed as a collaboration of councils in the Wellington region.

Wellington City Council working under this umbrella has developed seven strategies:

- Urban Development
- Transport
- Economic Development
- Environmental
- Social
- Cultural Well-Being
- Governance

This project is most aligned to the Urban Development Strategy which has developed the concept of a growth spine from Johnsonville to Kilbirnie and acknowledges the importance of the central city. The notion of 'Sense of Place' is strongly embedded in this strategy.

There are also strong links to the Transport and Cultural Well-being Strategies.

As part of the central city more detailed work is being undertaken and there is a need to:

- Integrate a Capital Precinct component into the Central City Framework and the Central City Streetscape Plan
- Integrate general principles around context into the Wellington City District Plan's Central Area Design Guide.
- To introduce a Parliamentary Heritage Area into the District Plan. This will ensure that future development respects the area's heritage significance of Parliament and its surroundings.

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3 Vision and Objective

The vision and a set of objectives are to guide change in the Capital Precinct.

3.1 Vision

This precinct is a distinctive place which all New Zealanders visit and treasure as part of their national identity.

It contains a unique collection of buildings, spaces and events which exhibit the values, institutions and traditions underlying New Zealand's government.

It is an essential component of Wellington which contributes positively to the character and amenity of the host city.

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3.2 Objectives

In response to the issues a set of parallel objectives for the capital function have been derived. This parallel approach:

- reinforces the notion of nationhood through the roles of government and democracy.
- emphasises the role of Wellington and how it hosts the capital function.

These parallel concepts also provide a platform with which Government and Wellington City Council can build their partnership role.

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**Overarching objective:
Celebrate Wellington's role as capital city -**

This is done by giving prominence to the legislative, judicial and administrative functions of the capital city; integrating the Capital Precinct more fully with the rest of the central city; and promoting high quality design outcomes.

Objectives:	nation	host city
Identity	Express the values, institutions and traditions which make up New Zealand's system of government.	Integrate the Capital Precinct into the wider city: improve physical and visual connections with surrounding areas including the harbour.
Culture	Create a place which all New Zealanders identify with: reflect the diversity of cultures which make up New Zealand.	Acknowledge tangata whenua and their ongoing stake in the precinct.
character	Recognise and enhance the distinctive character and heritage of major government buildings.	Respect the local identity of areas around Parliament: promote heritage buildings and spaces and their appropriate uses.
context	Improve physical and visual connections between important government institutions.	Coordinate Council public space initiatives to increase amenity and enhance the precinct's identity.
vitality	Promote and enhance visitors' experience of the precinct, balancing the needs of accessibility, amenity and security.	Foster a mix of activities for those that live, work and study in the precinct including appropriate non- government uses.
partnership	Encourage public involvement in the development and management of the Capital Precinct.	Establish ongoing coordination between Government and Wellington City Council.

4 Initiatives

4.1 Government Advocacy

An ongoing dialogue with different government entities at a range of levels is envisaged. It is critical that an ongoing planning and management programme be developed in partnership between Wellington City Council and Government to actively promote outcomes that:

- Deliver on the objectives of this framework
- Manage and co-ordinate the initiatives
- Monitor the success of delivery

For this project to be successful, it needs to have a high profile and therefore will need to have a dedicated resource to manage. Wellington City Council will provide this resource.

4.2 Ideas competition

Given the relevance and importance of this area to the wider nation, there is a need to engage with all New Zealanders to propose ideas as to how this area could express New Zealand's nationhood. This competition would be for New Zealanders to express their ideas on nationhood. Further work would be needed to link these ideas with the public space plan. It is proposed that this initiative will be managed as part of the overall project but it is proposed to be funded by central government agencies.

The competition will:

- Identify creative ways of telling definitive yet inclusive stories about New Zealand's identity and achievements
- Engage with people and communities through out the country
- Include a public exhibition of ideas in Wellington

4.3 Visitor enhancement

The precinct provides an ideal setting in which to tell stories of nationhood, democracy and the role of Government. It can also show how these ideas and institutions fit into a local context which is itself rich in history. The ideas competition will give this initiative direction.

- Work up an integrated plan with key stakeholders such as Historic Places Trust, Positively Wellington Tourism and the Department of Conservation
- It is proposed to work with a range of key stakeholders such as The Tenth Trust and Wellington Girls College to undertake a comprehensive historical study of the Pipitea area
- Review interpretive, marketing and signage opportunities.
- Establish ongoing stakeholder coordination
- Establish a single integrated Interpretive Centre which introduces visitors to all Capital Precinct functions and institutions

A series of scoping meetings have been undertaken with, the st and other key stakeholders.

4.4 Public space plan

The Parliamentary Centre has a less than optimum relationship with the surrounding city. This initiative promotes more effective linkages between Parliament, the surrounding streets and the wider city. The public space plan will be a masterplan that directs the ongoing programme of Public Space Enhancement Works.

As a precursor there is a need to undertake a *Traffic Flow and Transportation Planning Study*.

There are potential conflicts between the area's role as Capital Precinct and its function as the major thoroughfare for traffic entering and leaving the central city. These conflicts need to be identified and resolved before robust public space initiatives can be developed. The aims of study are:

- Evaluate the existing situation
- Identify pedestrian and motorists needs
- Investigate changes to traffic management

Consider options for transforming Molesworth Street into a more pedestrian-oriented street

The public space plan will:

- Link this precinct into the larger central city
- Establish an overall character and structure for open spaces directly adjacent to Parliament
- Establish design principles and standards including materials and details for paving, planting, furnishing and lighting

- Resolve the character and structure of open space immediately to the west of Parliament
- Develop techniques to improve intersection design
- Resolve paving, planting, furnishing and lighting detail in the precinct
- Resolve the character and structure of open space immediately to the west of Parliament
- It is proposed that this masterplan will be undertaken in 2006-07 with Council working closely with Parliamentary Services and other key stakeholders.

There are a number of key areas to be included in the Public Space Plan:

Molesworth Street enhancement

Molesworth St links the national institutions with the local village. It is also a major traffic route out of the city.

Enhancement will:

- Maintain the integrity and continuity of the street
- Associate the block between Lambton Quay and Aitken Street more strongly with Parliament
- Treat the central and northern blocks of Molesworth Street as the centre of an 'urban village'.

Secondary Street, pedestrian pathways and crossings enhancement

Cross streets provide important pedestrian routes and provide visual connections between national institutions. Informal pathways increase permeability and help to overcome the effect of Thorndon's very large blocks. Enhancement will:

- Address the aesthetic quality of Aitken Street
- Improve the edges of Murphy Street with landscape and/or buildings

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- Create a network of walkways in the blocks between Molesworth and Murphy/Mulgrave streets

Parliament harbour link

Throughout the CBD, the relationship between city and harbour makes an important contribution to sense of place. The link between Parliament and the water is an essential feature of the precinct. The link will:

- Develop Whitmore St as a major boulevard and a primary view shaft joining the harbour and the Beehive.
- Develop a unified open space centred on Bunny Street
- Consider long-term options for enhancing the blocks between Whitmore and Bunny along with the adjacent section of waterfront.

Pipitea precinct enhancement and development plan

This area was the site of Pipitea Pa – one of the main settlements prior to the arrival of European settlers. This is an important area to tangatawhenua and there is need to acknowledge this relationship in this area. Enhancement will:

- Determine overarching objectives for the area
- Establish design principles in the form of site specific briefs.

This initiative needs to be developed in partnership with the Tenth Trust.

Public art and monument plan

Public art and monuments are valuable components of public space. Because of their association with government, the precinct's monuments and statues also commemorate important people and events. New monuments and art works may be developed in response to the proposed Ideas Competition. The plan will:

- Establish principles for placement of artworks and monuments
- Establish an implementation plan
- Assist public interpretation

This plan needs to be developed in conjunction with the Ministry of Culture and Heritage and the Wellington Sculpture Trust.

5 Context

The sense of place is about the points of difference of a place, what is important about a place and where it has come from. An understanding of context is fundamental when managing change in an area.

This section describes the history and the existing conditions of the precinct so that these opportunities, which are ingrained in the objectives of this framework, and can be enhanced and protected when future work is progressed in this area.

5.1 History and heritage

Each of the following sections establishes aspects of the past that will be instrumental considerations in shaping the future.

Maori custodianship and history

Pipitea Pa was one of the more strategically important places at Ponake prior to the arrival of the European as it was 'sentinel to the inner harbour'. It was one of only two areas of flat land in the vicinity and the abundance of kaimoana made it an ideal place to live. Around the mouth of the stream Pipitea and to distance not far off shore there were extensive pipi, mussel and wet fish areas.

The area behind the pa, named Haukawakawa supported extensive cultivation as it was well watered being crossed by numerous streams. The principal stream was Pipitea. The streams from the west to south west were the Waipaekaka, Wakahukawai, Tiaki-wai, Pipitea, Waipiro and Tutaenui.

The Mein Smith survey of 1840 shows extensive areas of native reserve in this area, primarily in the area around Pipitea St and the area to the northern end of Hobson and Murphy Streets. Almost all of these Native Reserves went to develop college sites and for hospital endowments.

There is a claim being negotiated with the Crown through the Office of Treaty Settlement.

Currently Pipitea Marae on Thorndon Quay and the new Waititi Park on Lambton Quay are the only references to this history of the area.

Illustrate with 1840 map including reserves and location of settlement

European settlement

When the New Zealand Company's Agent, William Wakefield, first identified Pipitea Point as the site for a town, he had a rather modest proposal in mind. He envisaged a small port occupying no more than the 50 or so acres of flat or gently sloping land in the area now called Thorndon. Some weeks later, Captain William Mein Smith – the Company's surveyor – arrived with far more ambitious plans.

The company directors in London hoped their first settlement on Cook Strait would become the colony's capital. However, this aspiration did not find expression in the plans prepared by Col. Wakefield and his surveyor. Nor was this objective shared by colonial officials in Auckland. When Felton Mathew, the governor's chief surveyor, finally arrived to inspect the new settlement, he reported finding a superb harbour but sufficient land for a town of only "moderate extent".

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The New Zealand Company had set aside sites for government and other public purposes. Mathew described these as “insufficient in number” and “very limited in extent”. The largest of the reserves was located at Thorndon overlooking Lambton Harbour on land now occupied by Parliament Grounds. On these five acres, Col. Wakefield built his own house. But he offered the settlement’s most favoured site to Hobson, should the governor choose to relocate to Wellington. Mathew described the land at Thorndon as “overlooked from every part” and “totally unfit for a ‘Government Domain’”.

Growing city

Deficient flat land was augmented by reclaiming land from the harbour. This process began almost immediately. After the government relocated to Wellington in 1865, the imposing Government Buildings were located on reclaimed land making the city’s new status evident. Completed in 1876, they initially housed a majority of government departments.

More state-sponsored reclamations were to follow. The largest of these served port expansion and the introduction of rail infrastructure. By the first decades of the twentieth century, Thorndon was completely ‘landlocked’, and its topographical identity as a coastal promontory was masked. However, the new port and rail facilities visibly connected the centre of government with other parts of New Zealand and with a wider world. They also compensated for early Wellington’s asymmetrical layout. While business gravitated to Lambton Quay and population centred on Te Aro, the rail head’s location meant that Thorndon remained the city’s most important ‘front door’ for long distance travellers and for a growing number of metropolitan commuters.

Until the latter half of the twentieth century, government departments were located somewhat haphazardly in the

northern blocks of the central city. Thoroughfares like Stout Street and Whitmore Street took on a discernable ‘public service’ character. Monuments like the Cenotaph (a Council initiative) and the Railway Station helped to give the area a civic character. However, beyond the confines of parliament grounds itself, there was no recognisable group of buildings and spaces which could be called a ‘Government Centre’.

At this time, the centre of Thorndon had few associations with government. In contrast to elite residential enclaves on Hobson Street and Tinakori Road, the area between Molesworth Street and Mulgrave Street was composed of an untidy mix of housing and industry being the site of Thorndon Brewery. This part of Thorndon was regarded as one of the Wellington’s less salubrious addresses. Its reputation can be partially explained by proximity to the port and by the disproportionate number of public houses once found here.

However, Thorndon also played host to a large number of non-government institutions, and these helped to convey a more dignified character. The Anglican and Catholic Churches both established their main centres in this area. Church property holdings extended to schools, residences and diocesan offices. The religious facilities joined those of long established state schools and, at various times, a museum and a small hospital. Victoria University is a recent addition to Thorndon’s education ‘cluster’. Today, these institutions add to the functional diversity of Thorndon. They leaven the concentration of public servants, and their campuses introduce a welcome ‘middle scale’ which sometimes mediates between the large government office blocks and the remnants of nineteenth-century housing.

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Parliament

Parliament was initially housed in the adapted Wellington Provincial Chambers which was then subjected to a myriad of alterations and extensions over the latter years of the 19th century. Fire in 1907 led to the construction of the present Parliament Buildings. At the same time, Sydney Street West was closed and the site was comprehensively replanned into a single block. Construction of the current main building began in 1914 and continued into the 1920s. The current executive wing, The Beehive, built to the 1965 design of Sir Basil Spence, was occupied in 1979. This incremental development contrasted with the planned formality of the seats of government in many other places.

Parliament is the legislative, judicial and administrative heart of the nation and has associations with most of the personalities and events that have shaped New Zealand as we know it today. The forecourt and steps of Parliament are open to all New Zealanders and is the setting for events important in our democracy. It is here that ceremonies are performed, visitors are welcomed, submissions are received, and protests are made, all in the most overtly public of manners.

This is a venue for the celebration of democracy with debate and protest common and accommodated. Demonstrations on the steps of Parliament and in the newly created expansive grounds in front of these were noted during the 1920s and 30s and are often timed to coincide with the opening of Parliament. Parliament is the end-point for marches that originate from Civic Square, other parts of the city, and from other parts of the nation.

Molesworth Street performs a complementary ceremonial function, accommodating processions entering Parliament

grounds and providing access to St Paul's Cathedral for official events.

While Government Departments are distributed around various parts of the city, this area continues to be associated with the Justice Sector including the Supreme Court of New Zealand, the Court of Appeal and both the Wellington High and District Courts together with accommodation for other offices of government.

Sequence of plans and projects

For all its grandeur and significance, Parliament and its surroundings create an area characterised by eclecticism, rather than a grand plan. Subsequently, a number of plans have been proposed, but none of these have been more than partly completed. Because none of the proposals were formalised, Parliament and associated government activity has an informality that sits comfortably with the adjacent Thorndon neighbourhood centre area.

In 1973 the Ministry of Works developed plans which called for removal of existing buildings and replacement with new structures and a new system of streets and open spaces. This and other plans for radical change were not realised. Instead, incremental development occurred with only a few persistent organising features such as the park-like setting for Parliament and view linkages down to the waterfront. Council plans also emphasised these qualities and some key elements and relationships were included in the Wellington City Urban Design Strategy of 1994.

Also in 1994 the Government introduced the Parliament Centre Bill. This bill was initiated: "to establish a Parliament Centre Commission and to confer certain authority and powers on that Commission for the purpose of ensuring that land within the

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Parliament Centre is maintained and developed in an appropriate way". This bill did not go past the first reading, partly because of the change in direction of Government and the apparent level of intervention being proposed of the then recently deregulated government sector.

Illustrate with extracts from two or three selected plans

- *The Cenotaph*
- *The Thistle Inn*

Heritage buildings and their settings

Despite their diverse architectural styles the Beehive, Parliament Buildings and the General Assembly Library are among the most important groups of heritage buildings in the country. Sitting above lower Lambton Quay they have significant townscape and landmark qualities. The grounds of Parliament which is a listed heritage area in the District Plan also contain a number of statues of former parliamentary leaders including Richard John Seddon. The Cenotaph is also a national war memorial and plays a central role in commemorative ceremonies.

The area is unique for its concentration of significant buildings relating to a century and a half of this area being the centre of government. There are both heritage listed and non-heritage buildings. Examples include:

- *Parliament Buildings including the Beehive*
- *General Assembly Library*
- *The Old Government Building*
- *St Paul's Cathedral*
- *Cathedral of the Sacred Heart*
- *High Court Building*
- *National Library*
- *National Archives*

Other significant buildings and monuments include:

- *Old St Paul's*

5.2 Existing conditions

Land form

Interpretive diagram including:

- *Contours*
- *Watercourses*
- *Reclamations*

Street patterns

Street patterns in 1840 and 2005 reveal both the persistence of Wellington's original plan and the massive changes which have affected this part of the city. All the early streets remain in use, and many of the original blocks – some of which were very large – have been subdivided with an ad hoc collection of side streets, lanes and cul-de-sacs. The exception is the eastern portion of Sydney Street which disappeared when Parliament Grounds were extended to meet Hill Street.

Broken terrain and a succession of reclamations give rise to no fewer than six different street grids within Thorndon and adjacent parts of the CBD. Continuous routes are relatively rare. They follow natural features such as the shoreline (Lambton Quay/Thorndon Quay) and the Wellington Fault escarpment (Tinakori Road), or they result from major public works such as the Bowen Street/Whitmore Street corridor and, more recently, the motorway.

The motorway is perhaps the most conspicuous addition to the plan. While some surface streets like Molesworth

Street have been widened or reconfigured, they remain recognizable. In contrast, the motorway has introduced a new type of thoroughfare on an unprecedented scale. In combination with the terrain and the dislocated street pattern, the motorway has created two Thorndons: a larger entity centered on Molesworth Street and a smaller district focused on the Tinakori Road shops.

Illustrate

Building patterns

The Capital Precinct brings together three quite different building patterns. Along the precinct's southern edge, the 'City Core' is solidly built up and is characterised by strongly defined street corridors.

On the northern side of the precinct, there is a much looser urban fabric. This might be described as the 'Village' because it differs markedly from the 'City Core'.

Here, buildings are strictly aligned with the local street grid, but few structures fully occupy their sites. Instead, they appear as free-standing forms set within a matrix of public and private open space which includes car parks, landscaped forecourts and the remnants of domestic gardens as well as streets.

Between these two, there exists a third building pattern which comprises the heart of the Capital Precinct and is possibly unique in Wellington. This zone includes nineteenth and twentieth-century monuments such as Old Government Buildings, the Beehive, the General Assembly Library and potentially the old Supreme Court along with their expansive grounds. These landmarks are augmented by the results of a Post-War experiment

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in modernist planning which produced the Bowen State Building, the Vogel Building, the Charles Fergusson Building and Rutherford House. The latter group differ in scale and character, but they share the same 'Buildings-in-Grounds' format as their more celebrated neighbours. Together, these two groups of buildings create an extensive 'field' of open space in which the street pattern is suppressed and large structures are experienced 'in the round'.

The 'Buildings-in-Grounds' pattern focuses on Parliament Grounds, but it is currently emblematic of the entire Government Centre. In part, this pattern is the product of a particular era of state ownership and planning. While the landscaped settings of Parliament Buildings, the Old Government Buildings and the Supreme Court are secure and may be further enhanced, the forecourts and plazas surrounding government office blocks may not survive sale to the private sector. As new owners redevelop these sites, buildings and streets here may begin to look more like those in other parts of the central city. Whether this matters or not is a moot point. On the one hand, a distinguishing feature of the Capital Precinct may be lost. On the other hand, windy forecourts and lifeless street edges may become a thing of the past.

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Activities

Parliament is bordered by office buildings to the west and south, some of these housing Government departments. Activities to the east and north are primarily institutional, including the judiciary, tertiary education and churches.

A concentration of secondary schools for girls, a primary school and the Victoria University Pipitea campus bring students of all ages into the Precinct.

- National institutions (in stand alone buildings)
- Thorndon Village (*shops, schools, offices, residential*)
- *Supermarket – busiest activity*

Existing ownership

Diagram showing multiple ownerships in this area

Views

There are a number of significant views within the Capital Precinct. These views are important as they reinforce the character of the area and provide amenity to buildings and open spaces. The *District Plan* identifies five viewshafts within the Capital Precinct and its environs. These views fall into two categories:

- Views of Parliament
- Views which connect the city to the waterfront

Several other visual connections are significant even though they are not highlighted in the *District Plan*. They contribute to the legibility and cohesiveness of the precinct or connect the area with the surrounding city. These views include:

- Connections up and down Whitmore St
- Connection between Parliament steps and the Molesworth, Hill St intersection.
- Connections between the lower end of the terrace and the 'back lawn' of parliament
- The view from Bowen St down to the waterfront – signaling entry to the area.

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Appendix

Steering Group

Stakeholder consultation was carried out by forming a Steering Group comprising representatives of selected stakeholders. This group gave advice, direction and feedback to the project at a series of regular meetings held in 2005.

Membership of Steering Group was:

- Wellington City Council
- Wellington Tenth Trust
- Parliamentary Services
- Victoria University of Wellington
- Ministry of Justice
- Ministry for The Environment
- National Library
- Capital Properties
- Wellington Cathedral of St Paul
- Archdiocese of Wellington Catholic Centre
- Wellington Civic Trust

Further to the Steering Group meetings a number of individual meetings and discussions were held with various stakeholders to gain additional information.

Community survey

Methodology

A survey was carried out during July and August 2005 to find out the views and record the suggestions of the people who live, work, visit or attend school in the Thorndon/Government Centre part of the city.

The questions asked in the survey were:

1. Which three qualities or things do you value most about the physical environment of this part of the city?
2. Which three things would you most like to see changed or improved?
3. What suggestions or recommendations for improvements would you like to make?

Attempts were made to obtain the views of the full range of users in the local community and respondents were asked to indicate their connection with Thorndon and/or the Government Centre.

Survey forms were distributed by canvassing on the street and there were 52 responses to the street survey. Forms were also delivered to the nominated user groups. They were distributed electronically to a number of Government Ministry buildings and 38 responses were received. Forms were distributed to St Mary's, Wellington Girls' and Queen Margaret's Colleges. 83 responses were received from the schools with the majority of these from students. A mail drop to residents in the area received 23 responses, however further numbers of residents completed survey forms that they had received by other means.

Number and type of respondents

A total of 196 people responded. Around 40% of people surveyed were students, with a similar proportion of office workers. Most of the remaining respondents were residents, and less than ten visitors were surveyed.

Summary of key findings

The following summarises the main findings in each category, listed in descending order of priority.

Valued qualities:

- Historic buildings and character
- Parliament grounds and attractive park and open areas for recreation
- Trees and greenery
- Variety of shopping facilities

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Suggested changes and Improvements:

- Greater variety of cafes, food outlets and other shopping facilities
- More parking
- Enhanced pedestrian access and facilities
- More parks and recreational areas
- More trees and greenery
- More public outdoor seating
- Sheltered outdoor areas
- Control building heights and styles

Design Workshop

A workshop was held on the 30 August 2005 with key architects, landscape architects, a traffic engineer and an events manager that all have some connection to the area. The following key features were highlighted:

- The context is the whole country as well as the city – it is “Wellington plus”. The precinct must reflect both these entities. The area is set in the distinctive Wellington topography so it inevitably has that character. Must reflect both. Wellington is the host for government.
- It is important that the area gives an impression of having something to do with the government but it is bigger than just government.
- The Capital Precinct is a combination of stately buildings in grounds and a ‘village’ which serves a wider community including that of the schools.
- New Zealanders liked the juxtaposition of the chip shop and parliament grounds.
- Ordering idea of landscape is important. E.g. idea of government centre landscape extends to opposite of Molesworth Street and Hill Street right up to the building edge.

- The connection from parliament to the waterfront is important. It is the main organising open space. The second major space is parallel to the front of Parliament and terminates at St Paul’s Cathedral.
- The stories that need to be told are critical. The story of nationhood. The story of democracy. There is a story about Maori occupation. A story about reclamation. A story about education. A story about history including an unofficial or forgotten history.
- The ‘Framework’ has to have sufficient flexibility to have longevity.
- There is an issue of design quality. A well designed building might be able to sit next to the cathedral whereas a poorly designed one could not.
- Extra support for every development is required as part of the resource consent process. The design review panel that Auckland City Council operates could have potential.