

惠靈頓林園協會

Wellington Chinese Garden Society Inc.

8 November 2012.

Submission to the Wellington City Council Strategy and Policy Committee

Thank you for the opportunity to make this presentation today.

The Garden Society has worked for many years with Wellington Waterfront Ltd.(WWL) and has established a very constructive dialogue with them. The design of this Garden is very complex and must not only meet the objectives expected in an inner city park but must also address the aspirations that the people of Wellington have for the wider waterfront and recognize the presence and contribution of the Chinese community to the history and development of Wellington..

The concept of a contemporary Chinese Garden that also reflects the story of the Chinese community in Wellington has been challenging to say the least. We are now in the position where Wellington Waterfront Ltd., The Wellington Chinese Garden Society and Wellington's sister cities in China have reached agreement on the design concepts. Any disruption to the dynamics that have been forged between these parties has the potential to undo much good work and jeopardise the goodwill of our sister cities in China.

This is of particular importance when consideration is given to the cultural context within which we are working and in the understanding that all parties, particularly Wellington Waterfront Ltd have now established. Continuity is very much valued by Chinese in working partnerships and relationships.

Over the years there have been a number of visits to Wellington to consider the site and designs by our sister cities' landscape designers and engineers and the Garden has been extensively discussed during visits to China by Mayors, Councillors, staff members of the Wellington City Council, Wellington Waterfront Ltd., our landscape design consultants and the Wellington Chinese Garden Society.

The Memoranda of Understanding resulting from these visits have reinforced the common commitment to establish a Chinese garden in Wellington. The design for the Garden has now been approved by all parties and contributions by way of materials and labour will be made by Xiamen, Beijing and Tianjin.

It should be noted that commitment to help with the Chinese Garden in Wellington has featured in MOU's with the sister cities for a number of years. We emphasize the significance of this Chinese garden, with its highly symbolic and unique design, to the sister city relationships with China and indeed to the wider relationships that New Zealand shares with China.

The Wellington Chinese Garden Society Inc. wishes to express our deep concern that the implementation of the waterfront project may be transferred from the waterfront company to and undertaken by the City Council and we are concerned that this change may be effected sooner rather than later.

Our Concerns are based on the following:

1. Continuity and stability

The maintenance of continuity and knowledge for the Chinese Garden project is of prime importance

The design process is now well advanced towards the establishment of the long awaited Chinese Garden that is now to be sited as an integral part of Frank Kitts Park, and the plans for both projects are inseparable. Several goals have been achieved already and there are strong reasons for it to be more appropriate that the Chinese Garden Society continue working with Wellington Waterfront Ltd.

Very good rapport and communication has been established with Wellington Waterfront Ltd. and the Waterfront company has an excellent understanding and appreciation of the concepts of Chinese gardens. We need continuity on the current policies and the agreed principles - policies which have been developed over the years.

There are a number of complex aspects and commercial interests to fundraising for the building of the Garden and it is more appropriate to deal through a separate and corporate body rather than with the Council as a whole.

2. Loss of Knowledge

Through many meetings of WWL with all parties, including designers, engineers, sister city experts and Society members, among others, WWL have gained a very good understanding of the technical aspects and concepts of the Chinese Garden – this expertise will be lost in their absence. They also know the history of the project from the early days of seeking sites including the proposed siting above a car park building in Waitangi Park to its present day integration as a feature in a redeveloped Frank Kitts Park. It is important to retain this knowledge as the project develops.

The Chinese Garden Society considers that the retention of the present structure and continuance of Wellington Waterfront Ltd. is important until 2016 and that the integration of the company into Council be delayed till then or until the Chinese Garden has been established.

WWL as structured has the right skills and capacity to manage and assess the complexity and scale of the demands and projects, and as a separate structure has fewer distractions (competing issues) and conflicts of interest to handle.

Whilst we recognize that it may be considered appropriate for Wellington Waterfront Ltd to go to Council control, the Wellington Chinese Garden Society does not believe it is appropriate to make changes at this point.

The Wellington Chinese Garden Society urges the City Council to take our submission into account.

Thank You for listening to our submission.

Esther Fung, **Secretary.**