

Validity of Redevelopment at 'North' Kumutoto

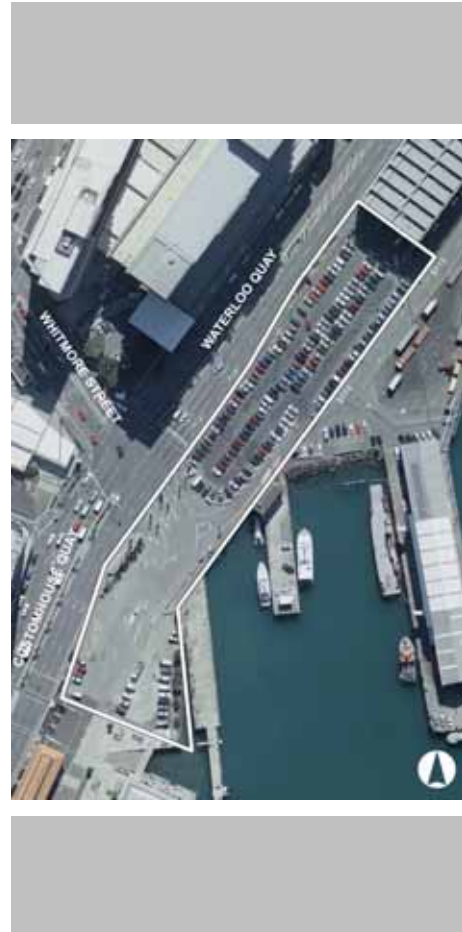
24 November 2008

This report has been prepared to inform District Plan Variation 11 - for the underdeveloped northern part of the area known as Kumutoto on Wellington's waterfront. To distinguish this area, it is proposed to call it 'North' Kumutoto (*at right*) to distinguish it from the balance of Kumutoto which has recently been completed and will be referred to as 'South' Kumutoto.

The report will explore the validity of whether any buildings are appropriate, and if valid the location, bulk and height of buildings. As well, the need for any further guidelines around the quality of development and public space requirements will be considered.

As an urban design assessment this is a holistic analysis which considers the often conflicting attributes of heritage, urban form, architecture, quality of surrounding public open space, access and servicing and how the place is used. All of these attributes need to be considered. The solution is a balance when considered against all these requirements.

This report is divided into three parts. Part 1 is an urban design assessment of the existing North Kumutoto area. Part 2 then assesses the Council policy and other exercises that have informed and shaped the city and waterfront as pertinent. Part 3 outlines issues and draws conclusions.



Part 1: A review of the current site

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- Relationship with waterfront
- The historical context
- Building form

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- The 1998 Concept Plan
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- North Queens Wharf, Bulk and Form Investigation - Urban Perspectives Ltd April 2002
- The North Queens Wharf Brief

Part 3: Issues and Recommendations

- Options for development
- Heritage
- Building heights
- Design excellence

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Part 1: A review of the current site

The site is approximately 0.83 ha and is at the northern end of the publicly accessible waterfront. Further north the waterfront is controlled by CentrePort. Parts of the CentrePort land are being opened up for public accessibility with new office development and surrounding public open space, however these developments are surrounded by operational port functions.

City Relationship

To the east the site is bounded by the water's edge, and to the west the 4-6 laned Waterloo and Customhouse Quays. Adjacent to the site on the city side of the Quays, there are a variety of building forms and open spaces. From the north, the Hotel Waterloo is an art deco building of 7 storeys dating from 1937. The large dominant New Zealand Post Office Headquarters completed 1971 is a podium tower structure. The podium is 5 storeys, with the total building being 13 storeys or a height of 67m.

The rhythm of buildings on the city side of the Quays is broken immediately south of the Post Office building with a small open space on the corner of Waterloo Quay and Whitmore St which is dominated by a number of large Pohutukawa trees (*at right, top*). Across Whitmore St a Shell service station provides a weak edge to the Quays, partly, but unsatisfactorily reinforced by a number of Adshell shelters. Given that Whitmore St meets the Quays at an acute angle, and that Balance Street meets Customhouse Quay on the southern side of the relatively low Shell service station complex, there is large gap – approximately 100m- in the 'wall' of buildings on the western side of the Quays and facing the waterfront .

Maritime Tower (*at right, middle*) completed in 2007 at 17storeys or 69m to the top of the plant room, completes the adjacent buildings along the Quays' edge.

The experience of arrival into the city from the north along Aotea Quay and turning into Waterloo Quay adjacent to the Stadium is relatively open, with proposed new buildings in the CentrePort development to be set back from the Waterloo Quay edge. In this area The buildings are primarily objects in the surrounding spatial system.

This condition changes at Bunny Street where Shed 21, Hotel Waterloo and the Post Office Headquarters Building all make for a more defined urban edge (*at right, bottom*). This marks the arrival into the central city where the building edges are defining the adjacent spatial systems.



Relationship with waterfront

The relationship of buildings and openings along the waterfront side of the Quays reflects the adjacent pattern of city blocks. The adjacent streets meet at the Quays either at right angles or at an acute angle in the case of Whitmore Street. This acute angle of Whitmore Street meeting the Quays is relatively close to Balance Street, so it would be natural that any gap between buildings on the waterfront side would be wider at this point – the Whitmore Street gates - when compared to the gaps at Johnston and Warring Taylor Streets.

The length of waterfront buildings and the respective spaces between buildings facing the Quays from north to south are as follows. The heights of these buildings are also noted.

Buildings/spaces along Quays' edge	Length	Building height above mean sea level
Shed 21	75m	21m
Whitmore St	251m	
Shed 13	54m	15m
Johnston St gates	17m	
Shed 11	54m	15m
Brandon St gates	37m	
Queens Wharf Apartments	82m	20m
Queens Wharf gates	24m	
Bond Store	52m	17.8m

*Table 1 shows the 'hole' that currently exists along the waterfront edge
Ground level is taken to be 2.5m above mean sea level.*

Kumutoto

As noted this report is assessing 'North' Kumutoto, however it needs to be considered as part of the wider Kumutoto area, a distinct area as defined in The Wellington Waterfront Framework where it is referenced as North Queens Wharf.

Kumutoto stretches from the northern edge of the building that was known as the Queens Wharf Centre – now Shell Oil - to and including Shed 21. Approximately 60% of this area has been designed and constructed to a high standard of public amenity. This area could be referred to as 'South' Kumutoto.

'North' Kumutoto; the 40% balance of area is vehicle dominated. It is this area that this report addresses, minus Shed 21 and the access way to the east of Shed 21.

'South' Kumutoto

There are four buildings in 'South' Kumutoto:

- The Union Steamship Building
- Shed 11
- Shed 13
- The Meridian Energy building

The Union Steamship Building is a relatively low two storey building that was relocated from Greta Point in Evans Bay and now contains the Loaded Hog amongst other tenancies.

Sheds 11 and 13 (*at right, bottom*) are both listed heritage buildings and originally had a strong relationship with the water's edge being used for port activities. Shed 11 was restored a number of years ago and has been used as a casual gallery space. Shed 13 has recently been earthquake strengthened and restored.



The Meridian Energy building (*at right, top*) is a 5-star rated green office building completed in 2007. It contains on the ground floor; a Mojo coffee bar, Wagamama Restaurant, the Eastbourne Ferry ticketing office, and an empty space that has yet to be tenanted. The relationship of the ground floor to open space is very successful; good transparency, good ground floor to ceiling height and the opportunity for good active edges to the surrounding spaces. The building defines Kumutoto Plaza on two edges while allowing for intermediate and long views into and out of the plaza.



The balance of the area has been landscaped to a high standard. The Kumutoto Stream mouth has been exposed. The stream is an important acknowledgement to Maori settlement in the area. The promenade has been upgraded with a new bridge across the Kumutoto Stream linking the historic tug wharf with the adjacent breastwork.

A new space, the extension of Johnston Street has become highly successful, given that it was not considered to be one of the waterfront's primary spaces.



The Kumutoto Plaza is well used and supported by strong active building edges, making it a new destination in the city's network of public open spaces.

Kumutoto Plaza has been well sited to maximise sun into the space during the critical lunchtime period.

The lane to the east of Shed 11 and 13 (*at right, middle*) is needed to maintain vehicle access but is a shared surface with pedestrians. The narrowness of the lane emulates the width of what would have been the narrow strip of wharf adjacent to Sheds 11 and 13 and the water's edge.



The design and development of 'South' Kumutoto is to a high standard that has been highly commended through a range of awards. The Meridian Energy building has been commended for its green star rating. As noted, the ground floor has a high level of public accessibility which supports the surrounding public open space (*at right, bottom*).

North Kumutoto

In comparison North Kumutoto is pending development. It consists of surface car parking and poorly defined vehicle circulation. It is generally underutilised and unattractive, and this is accentuated by the high quality landscaping that has recently been completed to the south.

The Whitmore St gates are one of the two main vehicle entries to the waterfront. The edge along Waterloo and Customhouse Quay has some soft landscaping and incorporates relocated heritage elements - harbour gates, gate posts and fences along the Quays' edge. The area to the north of the gates operates as a commuter car park, providing approximately 160 car parks. Jan Gehl the Danish urban designer described these sorts of areas in the city as 'invaded' that is where cars are the dominant feature.



At the Whitmore Street intersection, the harbour is at its closest to the Quays and in turn the city (*at right, top*). Boats and small ships can berth as close as 40 metres from the edge of the Quays.

The Eastbourne Ferry Building (*at right, bottom*) is on the edge of the site and is an important heritage building. Other adjacent heritage buildings include Shed 21 to the north and Shed 13 to the south.



To the north, the eastern boundary is adjacent to CentrePort, and the area to the seaside is operated as working wharves, with coastal shipping loading and unloading.

The historical context

The site is on reclaimed land. The majority of the area was reclaimed leading up to 1970. Smaller areas were reclaimed in the late 19th century.

The site has had a number of buildings all of which have been demolished:

Original buildings on site	Description of site	Heights above mean sea level
Shed 15	In the area south to the Whitmore Street gates, adjacent to the Quays.	16.5m
Customhouse	The Customhouse – in the area of the current Whitmore Street Gates	25.5m top parapet 30m apex roof 37.5m top cupola
Shed 17	– In the area to the north of the Whitmore Street gates adjacent to the Quays.	14.2m

Table 2 Original buildings in North Kumutoto

Heights based off height map prepared for WCC in 1982. Customhouse assessed from photos in relation to Sheds 15 and 17

These buildings and Shed 21 were all sited parallel to the water's edge, and provided a very strong built edge to the Quays (*at right*). On the seaward side there was a narrow strip of land/wharf which allowed ships to berth adjacent to the buildings. This narrow strip of open space also connected to the adjacent finger wharves in this area; Waterloo Wharf, the Eastbourne Ferry Wharf and the tug wharf.



Large open spaces were not common as part of the 19th century working harbour, in that ships were unloaded by hand with goods being moved to adjacent storage sheds.

Building form

There are a number of built form contextual clues that need to be considered:

- The general city form
- The adjacent buildings along the western or city edge of the Quays
- The rhythm of the 'waterfront edge' to the Quays, i.e. the rhythm of buildings- their heights and lengths and the open spaces
- The relationship of the waterfront buildings immediately adjacent; Sheds 21, the Eastbourne ferry building, the Meridian Energy building and Shed 13

The other aspect to consider is the wharf shed typology – These buildings are usually simple, the footprint is extruded, the heights vary from the usual relatively high one story structure to the equivalent of 3 storeys in the case of Shed 21. Their plan dimension tends to be long and thin.

The table below defines the respective heights of adjacent buildings.

Adjacent buildings	Heights above mean sea level
Sheds 11 & 13	15m to apex of roof 9m to eave
Shed 21	21m to parapet
Meridian Building	19m annex roof 20.25m roof height 21.7m roof plant
Podium NZPO	29.2m
Tower NZPO	67m
Maritime House	69m to top of plant room

Table 3 –Heights of adjacent buildings

Part 2: Past and present policies that have guided proposed development in this area

A substantial amount of consideration and consultation has gone into how this area should develop. This consideration has been tested at a number of stages and has been reinforced at each stage.

This section is a summary of these pieces of work in context of how it can inform the overall buildings and public space in North Kumutoto.

The 1989 Concept Plan

This concept called for a 44m high building in the area south of Shed 21. A landscaped open space with sunken garden park between this new building and Shed 13 was proposed. In front of Sheds 11 and 13 there was a proposed podium tower building with the podium at 25m and the tower at 100m.

This proposal was superseded by later proposals after public concern about the large scaled nature of buildings on the waterfront.

The 1998 Concept Plan

The following table demonstrates the heights for the equivalent of each of the sites as defined in Variation 17.

	Heights above mean sea level
The area between Shed 21 and the Whitmore Street gates	34m
The area adjacent to the quays between Whitmore Street gates and Shed 13	30m stepping down to 21m to the south of the site ¹
The triangular area between the lane and the promenade immediately north of Kumutoto stream.	34m

Table 4 – Variation 17 heights

After widespread community concern, the Council re-evaluated the Variation 17 concept and instigated a new community process to provide the vision for waterfront development.

The current 'policy' for redevelopment and its rationale

There has been a sequence of interconnected exercises that have led to the current development of Kumutoto. The Wellington Waterfront Framework published in April 2001 defined the new key principles for the development of this area. This framework has had wide public engagement and is the Council's current policy for development on the waterfront.

In 2002 the Waterfront Development Subcommittee was appointed to deliver the Framework, and they evaluated and delivered a process for delivery on the waterfront. Based on the Framework's directive that commercial development in this area would help subsidise open space development across the waterfront, an investigation of how building bulk and form should be considered for this area was undertaken. This was the North Queens Wharf, Bulk and Form Investigation undertaken by Urban Perspectives Ltd in April 2002.

This investigation informed the North Queens Wharf Brief that Council officers prepared. The brief was consulted on and feedback from this consultation was provided to the

¹ There appears to be a misprint in the Variation 17 document in the height map which shows the 30 m height adjacent to Shed 13 which is not what is represented in the 3 dimensional drawings of the 1998 concept plan.

Subcommittee on 5 August 2002. The recommendation based on a review of submissions was that there be no changes to the brief.

To put effect to the brief, Wellington Waterfront Ltd commissioned Studio of Pacific Architecture to undertake a master plan exercise for the area.

Concurrently negotiations with a developer were being undertaken to relocate one of the Union Steamship buildings from Greta Point in Evans Bay, the building currently containing the Loaded Hog bar.

The master plan, based on the brief proposed how a series of buildings and open spaces would look for what was now being called Kumutoto. As more detailed design work was undertaken, Isthmus Group was commissioned to look at the open space design, in conjunction with Studio of Pacific Architecture.

The outcome was the development of what was known as site 7, now the Meridian Energy Building, and the surrounding open space.

At all stages the Council's Technical Advisory Group - TAG has assessed and provided feedback on all stages of design and development. A number of their reports are referred to.

District Plan

The waterfront is noted as a special area and the District Plan references the Wellington Waterfront Framework and that the principles and values of the Framework underpin the District Plan's objectives and policies.

The relationship between the city and waterfront is seen as critical. In the District Plan one of the eight guiding principles for steering development in the central city is to 'Enhance City/Harbour Integration'. Section 12.1.7 of the District Plan states:

'The city and sea relationship that characterises Wellington makes for a dynamic cityscape. The waterfront is an integral and defining feature of the city. However accessibility between the city and waterfront, and access to the water's edge itself, needs to be improved so that the waterfront becomes part of the 'pedestrian flow' that extends across the whole city. Better links are needed, including physical connections and visual links such as views and signage. A promenade that connects the different parts of the waterfront and provides a sequence of changing, rich and interesting experiences would enhance people's ability to move around the waterfront itself'

There is a rhythm of view shafts across the central city that link the city with the harbour and hills beyond which support the city's sense of place and legibility. There are two of these view shafts that bisect the site; at Waring Taylor Street at the southern end and at Whitmore Street.

Policy 12.2.6.7 states:

'Protect, and where possible enhance, identified public views of the harbour, hills and townscape features from within and around the central area.'

The District Plan acknowledges that there could be intrusions into these viewshafts based on assessing against a set of criteria, including whether the development frames the view horizontally or vertically from the edges of the viewshaft.

The Central Area Urban Design Guide, Plan Change 48 notes:

'The lower height development along the waterfront completes the stepping down from the higher hills to the harbour's edge'.

"Building design and appearance has a direct bearing on the visual quality of the public environment and the distinctive nature of the Central Area. By

way of example, buildings typically define the edges of public space in the Central Area'.

'The waterfront...embodies rich cultural, heritage and recreational values. This includes a strong emphasis on public accessibility as a pedestrian-dominated rather than vehicle access routes. Ongoing development along the waterfront is guided by the principles set out in the Wellington Waterfront Framework'.

The Wellington Waterfront Framework

The Framework had this to say about North Queens Wharf or what is now referred to as Kumutoto:

The vision for this area as defined in the Framework was:

'North Queens Wharf has a strong connection to the city's Central Business District. This will be reflected with a stronger sense of the city form being developed in this area through a higher proportion of buildings than on the rest of the waterfront.

The character of the area will be of squares, lanes and new buildings in scale with the heritage buildings, such as Shed 21 at the northern end and the Queens Wharf Apartments and Sheds 11 and 13 at the other end'.

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Heritage The area will have a maritime character, with fishing and recreational boats continuing to moor alongside the Tug Wharf.

There will be opportunities for small boats to access and berth at this area.

Pedestrian Access Buildings can provide a protected sheltered route from the Railway Station along the quays.

New Buildings could include a colonnade on the quay edge to continue the line of the colonnade proposed at Shed 21.

Parking and vehicle access. A large underground car park that would service the individual buildings is the preferred option and could be connected into the existing car park under the former Retail Centre.

It is recognised that this might not be practical or economically viable. An alternative that could be considered is above-ground parking in a building on Site 102, next to Shed 21.

Vehicle access need to be provided to access parking areas, but the principle that pedestrians come first needs to be taken into account.

Orientation Views of the waterfront and harbour down Whitmore, Johnston and Waring Taylor Streets will be preserved and improved where possible.

At-grade pedestrian crossing points should be enhanced at each of these intersections.

Promenade the waterfront promenade in this area works as two paths.

There is the protected colonnade as part of any future buildings fronting along the inner water's edge. The promenade also passes along the Tug Wharf. The need to refurbish the Tug Wharf offers the opportunity to widen the promenade and emphasise the original part of the finger wharf. The character of the area can be enhanced by encouraging fishing boats and other craft to berth at the wharf by the promenade.

Open space Successful squares are characterised by spatial definition, sunshine, areas of shelter, activity around the edges, views in and out and connections with other spaces.

Open spaces usually contain a feature or focal point that gives them a distinctive character. To avoid barrenness, obvious use and activity is important, particularly around their edges.

Streets and lanes are the primary space form within the adjacent central city, and this space type appears in the North Queens Wharf area. These linear public spaces are destinations as well as pathways or access routes. Successful streets and lanes are usually well-defined, unified spaces with their own recognisable character and have activity and vitality at their edges.

Building relationship to open spaces as part of the connection to the open spaces, all ground floors of building will be accessible to the public.

Building edges that face onto the major open spaces should enhance activity in these spaces.

New buildings in this area will have a range of uses, and could include recreation, retail, commercial, residential and institutional uses. An option to be further explored in this area is the idea of a contemporary maritime museum.

New building in the North Queens Wharf area will be sympathetic to, and relate to the scale and size of, the heritage buildings at the southern end. They will also be designed in a coherent fashion so they relation to and complement each other.'

North Queens Wharf, Bulk and Form Investigation - Urban Perspectives Ltd April 2002

To inform the Waterfront Development Subcommittee on how, and what sized buildings could be located in the North Queens Wharf area, Deyanna Popova from Urban Perspectives was commissioned to investigate possible bulk and form scenarios for the North Queens Wharf area.

The following key principles in the Framework were noted as the basic parameters to direct where and how buildings would be located in this area:

- Key views
- Two part promenade
- Service lane/s
- Sheltered route from the Railway Station
- Open space principles
- Buildings relating to the scale and size of existing heritage buildings

From these principles a series of building blocks were defined as follows:

- Area 1 - The area between Shed 21 and the Whitmore Street gates
- Area 2 - The area adjacent to the quays between Whitmore Street gates and Shed 13

- o Area 3 - The triangular area between the lane and the promenade immediately north of Kumutoto stream.
- o Area 4 - Site 7 or the Meridian building
- o Area 5 - The site of the relocated Union Steamship building

Open space design principles were proposed as follows:

- o Range of diverse and well connected open spaces
- o Types – streets, squares and lanes
- o Open space qualities
 - o Spatial definition
 - o Sunshine
 - o Areas of shelter
 - o Activity around the edges
 - o Views in and out
 - o Connections to other spaces
 - o Flexibility of use
- o Distinctive character – a special feature or focal point
- o Identified key views of the waterfront preserved/improved
- o At-grade pedestrian crossing points enhanced

A set of building design principles were suggested:

- o New building that support the use and occupation of public space and sustain activity in their own right
- o New building in scale and character to adjacent buildings and surrounding spaces
- o Ground levels of new buildings accessible to public
- o Frequent connections/visual links between ground level interiors and adjacent public spaces
- o Colonnade integrated into new buildings along the inner water's edge of the promenade
- o Protected sheltered route from the Railway Station along the quays, as part of the new buildings
- o Servicing facilities integrated into the building and/or located along secondary frontages

The North Queens Wharf Brief

The above work led to the North Queens Wharf Brief which was signed off by the Waterfront Development Subcommittee 5 August 2002 and is the Council's policy to the quality and how the buildings and spaces are shaped in this area.

The purpose of the brief was to:

Give direction for development in the North Queens Wharf (NQW) area and allow Lambton Harbour Management Ltd (LHML) – now Wellington Waterfront Ltd – to engage with respective developers.

The brief noted that there was an emphasis on performance criteria to *allow for flexibility for parties to be creative in exploring ideas for the development in the area.*

The brief proposed six key open spaces and five building sites. It also outlined a series of principles.

The six open spaces are described as follows:

Space	Location	Description	Issues	Further comments
A	The promenade	Linear movement space	Primarily water edge based movement space to relate to promenade along rest of waterfront	The promenade still needs to be considered adjacent to Site 10
B	Whitmore St	City	Major entry point to	This space still needs to

	<i>extension</i>	<i>connector space</i>	<i>waterfront, conflict between vehicles and pedestrians to be resolved, definition of space needs resolution</i>	be constructed.
<i>C</i>	<i>Warring Taylor St extension</i>	<i>City connector space</i>	<i>Part of the visual link between the city and harbour</i>	This is effectively been completed, the major element being the exposure of the mouth of the Kumutoto stream and new bridge along promenade. This public space provides the southern boundary of the North Kumutoto area.
<i>D</i>	<i>Johnston St extension</i>	<i>City connector space</i>	<i>Part of the visual link between the city and harbour</i>	Space completed
<i>E</i>	<i>Area north of Queens Wharf centre</i>	<i>Link space</i>	<i>Relationship between new development and existing buildings and spaces needs careful consideration</i>	Space completed
<i>F</i>	<i>Service lane alongside harbour side Sheds 11 and 13</i>	<i>Linear movement space</i>	<i>Shared surface where pedestrians emphasis to be shared with primary servicing space from North Queens Wharf</i>	Lane to be continued from that current completed adjacent to Sheds 11 and 13 to join the Whitmore St extension

Table 5 North Queens Wharf Brief – public space descriptions

These were supported by a set of principles which in brief are:

- Open spaces are to be interlinked
- To support a wide range of diverse uses
- Spaces to have spatial definition
- Concealment and entrapment to be minimised
- Spaces to be responsive to changes in use

Five potential building sites were proposed;

Area	Location	Site coverage	Indicative height	Max heights in metres above MSL	Issue	Equivalent Blocks
1	Site 102, north of Whitmore St gates, south Shed 21	100%	6 storeys	29.5m	Strong relationship with Shed 21 southern end could form part of 'gateway' at the end of Whitmore St	Block A
2	Site to the south of Whitmore St gates alongside Customhouse Quay	100%	5 storeys step down to 3 to south	25.3m	Northern end could form part of 'gateway' down Whitmore St	Block B
3	Site to the of area 2, alongside promenade	100%	4 storeys	21.1m	Defines landside promenade edge	Block C

4	<i>Site to the east Shed 13, alongside promenade</i>	70%	2-4 storeys	21.1m	<i>Opportunity for mid block connection scale relationship with Shed 13 important</i>	Meridian Energy building
5	<i>Site to the east Shed 11, alongside promenade</i>	70%	2-4 storeys	21.1m	<i>Opportunity for mid block connection scale relationship with Shed 11 important</i>	Union Steamship building

Table 6 North Queens Wharf Brief – building descriptions

Heights in the brief are defined in storeys. The maximum floor to floor height is 4.2m except the ground floor which may have a maximum height of 6 metres. Ground level at Kumutoto is taken to be 2.5 above mean sea level.

Wellington Waterfront Ltd has identified three potential undeveloped building sites in this area and these are known as Sites 8, 9 and 10. These sites preserve the 'rule' that a minimum of 60% of Kumutoto remains open space.

Part 3: Issues and recommendations

There are a number of drivers that shape what and how development should happen in North Kumutoto. Part 3 reviews these drivers, considers a number of other matters that need consideration and concludes with a number of recommendations regarding how North Kumutoto should develop.

Options for development

There are three options to consider for the future of the North Kumutoto area:

1. The status quo
2. As a landscaped open space
3. A combination of buildings and open space

1. The status quo

The current activity - surface car parking containing 160 surface car parks - provides a low quality environment, in particular when it is considered in the central city context where surface car parking is a less than desirable outcome. Therefore this option is discounted.

2. As a landscaped open space

- Environmentally the site is exposed and not conducive to occupation
- The site is relatively narrow and the vehicle movements from the Quays would potentially be obtrusive to users of the space
- Good city spaces need to be supported by strong active building edges, and the linear nature of the site suggest building edges would only be available at the narrow northern and southern ends of the site
- The site would be split by the vehicle entry at Whitmore Street gates as this is the main vehicle entry onto the waterfront

In conclusion the current site is not appropriate to be developed entirely as an open space.

3. A combination of buildings and open space

The inappropriateness of the first two options suggests that some form of building and open space would be appropriate on the site. There are a number of generators which suggest how the spaces are to work in this area, and as a consequence where buildings could go.

- The water's edge promenade needs to be continuous through this area as large numbers of pedestrians and cyclists move through this site in a north south direction.
- Vehicle access needs to be allowed for through the Whitmore St Gates. Access needs to be able to serve sites both to the north and south of the gates. To the north, vehicles need to be able to connect to the east side of Shed 21 and exit adjacent to the Railway Station. To the south vehicles need to be able to connect to the lane to the east of Sheds 11 and 13 which exits at Brandon Street.
- The two view shafts that bisect the site; at Waring Taylor Street at the southern end and at Whitmore Street.

This leads to the proposal that there are 3 individual sites where buildings are appropriate, which is in line with previous exercises in how development should be shaped for this area. These sites are:

- One larger one to the north, between Shed 21 and the Whitmore Street gates to be called Block A,
- a smaller site to the south, adjacent to the Quays between Shed 13 and the Whitmore Street gates – Block B
- a smaller triangular site to the north of the Meridian building and adjacent to the waterfront promenade – Block C



An assessment of each of the blocks suggests the following characteristics:

Block A

- This block would not make for a good open space due to:
 - Poor environmental conditions; there are wind and shading issues
 - It is a narrow site with poor edges; Waterloo Quay to the west and the working port to east
- Historically this site contained a building – Shed 17
- A building would allow for the continuation of the Shed 21 building typology - Shed 21 was originally designed as part of collection - not as building to be viewed in the round
- The scale of building could allow for larger 'event' type uses
- Currently there is a lack of shelter for pedestrians moving through this area
- A building would provide a strong edge to Waterloo Quay
- A building will support and define a memorable space at the Whitmore Street entry
- A building would allow to frame views from the city to the harbour at Whitmore Street
- A building would provide occupation that will support existing and new public relevant uses at ground level.

Block B

- As an open space the site is extremely narrow with poor adjacent spaces -the Quays and the lane which are both vehicle dominated
- Historically this site contained a building – Shed 15
- A new building would set up a strong rhythm with the buildings along the Quays including Sheds 11 and 13
- The adjacent Maritime Tower across the Quays has a very dominant height and a building would act as a transition to the waterfront
- A building will support and define a memorable space at the Whitmore Street entry.
- A building would allow to frame views from the city to the harbour at Whitmore St
- A building would provide a strong edge to Customhouse Quay
- A building would provide occupation that will support existing and new public relevant uses at ground level.

Block C

- As an open space it is neither too large nor too small to make work. It has no built edges, and it is not big enough to have its own identity or function, this in comparison

to Kumutoto Plaza which has two strong built edges as provided by the Meridian building.

- A new building would make use of a space that can be described as classic; space left over after planning -S.L.O.P.
- A new building can be a foreground building as viewed from the promenade and harbour – it could be more public focused as it has vehicles only on one side compared to buildings on Block A and B which are potentially constrained having vehicle movements on two sides
- A new building would frame entry into the lane from the north – giving the lane more legitimacy
- A new building would give an edge to the promenade
- A building would define the edge of Kumutoto Plaza and provide shelter
- A building would provide occupation that will support existing and new public relevant uses at ground level.

There are a number of issues that need further consideration:

- Heritage
- Building heights
- Design excellence
- Views and viewshafts

Heritage

The heritage values of this area are an underlying theme to be considered for future development in the North Kumutoto area.

The Framework also acknowledges the duality of historical and contemporary culture:

'The waterfront is an intensely-used area at the very centre of the city. Parts of it remain a working port. There is a need to refer to the natural ecology, the Maori history and the industrial maritime heritage as well as the central city in determining the character of the respective areas and the components and elements that make up those areas. By acknowledging its history and layering the area with contemporary culture the identity of the waterfront can develop and grow.'

There is a formal recognition of the heritage value of buildings and structures in this area:

- Sheds 11 and 13; Category 1 listed with the NZHPT.
- The gates and fences; Category 2 listed with the NZHPT.
- Sheds 11, 13 and 21 and the Eastbourne Ferry building are listed in the District Plan.

Heritage conservation architect Jeremy Salmond in his evidence to the Environment Court in the Hilton Hotel case stated:

*'Many central C.B.D. areas in New Zealand can be characterised as shared landscapes, and this is an inherent quality of any historic area in New Zealand – if only by virtue of layering of pre and post-contact occupation. This demonstrates how heritage is effectively integrated into the day to day life of the evolving community. It is clear that this process calls for careful reflection, leading to thoughtful design, if heritage values are to meaningfully preserved. On this site, where there has already been very great change to inherited landscape of the waterfront, I consider that it is important to take a wider view of the task for a new building, and to take account of the wider landscape of the city.'*²

In his evidence, when talking about Queens Wharf, Salmond noted: *"my observation of the wharf and its environs suggests to me that the historical setting has been seriously and irretrievably altered by historic and comparatively recent development"*³

² Paragraph 3.11

³ Paragraph 3.8, Evidence of Jeremy Salmond, Environment Court, Hilton Hotel case

Russell Murray of R & D Architects prepared a report summarising the heritage values of the Kumutoto Area.

This report rightly acknowledges the importance of the waterfront to Wellington's development and noted Kumutoto as an area of high historic and social significance. However he went on to put this in context in the wider setting noting: *'The wider area centred on Queens Wharf (1862) is of particular importance as the nucleus of the historic working waterfront. As one of the most vital elements in the development of Wellington City, this area has high historic value'*.

Salmond noted how much the historical setting has changed. Which suggests that Kumutoto can not be considered only as a 'historic waterfront'. The new work at South Kumutoto shows how the 'contemporary culture' can integrate successfully alongside the historical and develops one of the key themes of the Waterfront Framework.

Murray's report proposes that no buildings be built on Block C. *"Keeping this areas clear would effectively protect views through the Kumutoto area, preserve a surviving aspect of the former relationship of Sheds 11 and 13 to the sea, and would avoid encroaching on the ongoing use of the wharves, public access to the water and pedestrian use of the area"*.

This view is not supported as the relationship between Shed 11 and 13 and the sea has been highly modified. As noted, there originally was a narrow strip of wharf/land to the sea side of these sheds. This width would not be dissimilar to the width of the current lane. A building here, in my view would not "encroach on the ongoing use of the wharves, public access to the water and pedestrian use of the area", as suggested in Murray's report.

Views of Shed 13 are important to the experience of those moving along the promenade. The lane width between Block B and C should be wide enough to allow glimpse views of Shed 13.

However the views of Sheds 11 and 13 are from the Quays. Their wharf building typology helps signal or demark the traditional boundary between the city and waterfront.

Building Heights

There are a range of concepts that have driven issues around height in Wellington's central area including:

- Protection of daylight to buildings. Street width to building height ratios to allow sufficient day light to reach a particular building were managed through ordinances dating back to 1908.
- Intrusion into views from surrounding hills to the harbour where 'protected views are public, not private' (this was noted in a study, *View Protection and Urban Form Study: Wellington Inner City – 1985*). For the first time, the wider context of the city was being considered.
- Visual impact of buildings in the landscape. This developed into a high city low city concept, which incorporated the amphitheatre effect – the relationship between harbour, hills and buildings. (The High City/Low City introduced to Council at Environment Committee –District Plan Workshop 8 September 1993.)
- Concerns regarding affect on micro climate, wind and shading in the local area.
- Concern about new buildings being out of scale existing buildings.

The High City/Low City concept is the key driver for urban form in the city. In *Understanding the District Plan (WCC 2003)* this is spelt out: "To preserve this well established urban form (High City/Low City), the District Plan controls building height (and in some cases, height thresholds) beyond which certain design conditions apply."

As noted, buildings in the Central Area are located within an amphitheatre formed by hills and ridgelines to the west and the harbour to the east. This analogy encourages a balance so that the built environment does not dominate the natural environment.

It is the topography that delivers the amphitheatre effect of the central city. It is not the built environment, or even the proposed heights in the District Plan. However the District Plan height supports this amphitheatre effect.

There is not a consistent stepping of buildings from a low height at the water's edge to high at the back against the surrounding hills. In some ways this mirrors the natural topography in and around the harbour's edge - there are areas where the hills rise steeply from the harbour, and ridgelines drop into the sea.

The High City heights range from 55-95m which are at their highest around the lower Willis Street – Lambton Quay corner. The surrounding low city heights range from 50m to 10.2m, at the extremities, adjacent to the residential areas. The most prominent low city height is 27m.

There are a range of height conditions along the waterfront. Adjacent to North Kumutoto heights are set at 60m with adjacent buildings higher. To the south the low city heights are set at 27m to reflect the limited areas of flatness such as Te Aro Basin.

In reality there is not a seamless cloak of staggered building heights across the city. The way the city has developed has produced differing adjacent building heights, such as the dominant Majestic Centre whose context is generally a lot lower.

There are a number of factors that influence the design, height and footprints of the buildings in the three proposed blocks:

- The adjacent city building context
- The adjacent waterfront built context
- The spatial context
- The principles and objectives of the Waterfront Framework

Different heights are appropriate for each of the blocks. Note all heights referred to are above mean sea level:

Block A:

- The NZ Post Office podium is very dominant in this location at 29.2m with the tower at 67m
- The adjacent Shed 21 is at 21m
- The North Queens Wharf Brief proposed a building of maximum height of 6 storeys – equivalent to 29.5m
- The 1998 Concept Plan proposed at a maximum height of 34m

A maximum height of 29.5m⁴ would be appropriate – this could be rounded to 30m

Block B:

- The adjacent height limits across the Quays are set at 60m
- The dominant Maritime tower is 69m
- There is a large open space at the Whitmore Street and Quays' intersection therefore supporting a higher edge condition
- Some form of stepping would be appropriate from the High City to the waterfront
- A strong edge to the Whitmore Street gates is desirable
- Recognition of the height of Shed 13 is needed
- The North Queens Wharf Brief proposed a maximum height of 25.3m stepping down to 16.9m at the southern edge
- The 1998 Concept Plan proposed a maximum height of 30m stepping down to 21m at the southern edge

A maximum height of 25.3m would be appropriate with recognition in the design guide that some form of transition to Shed 13 is appropriate. This could be rounded to 25.5m.

⁴ Note the proposed heights are calculated based on a 6 metre ground floor height and 4.2m inter floor height above this ground floor.

Block C:

- A transition from Block B to the promenade and the water's edge is appropriate
- Given the nature of the promenade is some way from any building edge, this edge will not be so dominant
- The southern edge of the building will complete the Kumutoto Plaza edge
- The North Queens Wharf Brief proposed a maximum height of 21.1m
- The 1998 Concept Plan proposed a maximum height of 34m

A maximum height of 17.2m would be appropriate. This could be rounded to 17.5m.

A minimum height for each of these blocks is also appropriate.

The proposed building heights are as follows:

	Heights above mean sea level	
	Minimum	Maximum
Block A	21.4m	29.5m
Block B	17.2m	25.3m
Block C	13m	17.2m

Table 7 –proposed maximum and minimum heights
- based on the maximum of 6m ground floor height and 4.2 m inter floor height

There is a degree of complexity as to how heights should be considered for these blocks. There is a need for flexibility in setting these heights as the design of the individual buildings; their size, height, bulk - their morphology will all influence the degree of comfortableness as to how a new building may fit into this context.

An extruded form that reflects the wharf shed vernacular – where the footprint of a building is extruded vertically, would potentially suggest a height closer to the minimum height. The larger the building the concept of design excellence needs to be stronger. Where the building is more sculptural then a building at the maximum height is appropriate.

Design Excellence

The waterfront is the 'jewel' of the city. Any development should be of as a high quality as the precinct of previous work undertaken in the adjacent area of South Kumutoto and the wider waterfront.

By incorporating exceptional architectural design, design excellence can be achieved to complete this part of the waterfront.

A project will display exceptional architectural design if it provides an optimal response to all of the following:

- **Creativity and imagination:** Realisation of the potential for buildings on these sites by their conceptual design quality and exquisite resolution to complete the waterfront and elevate the city's reputation as a centre of creativity. Architectural creativity and imagination should be linked with conceptual clarity, conviction and control, and the cleverness of response to the project programme and site. Exquisite resolution will come about through the quality of detailing, and the appropriateness of materials rather than their cost.
- **Responsiveness to context:** Recognition of the particularities of site in a considered and convincing way, complementing and enhancing other waterfront and adjacent buildings, spaces and activities as well as the broader city context. This could be by employing consistency or contrast or both.
- **Expression of contemporary culture:** Extent to which the design proposal is of the current time as well as place and relates to international as well as local culture.
- **ESD:** Extent to which the design incorporates principles of environmentally sustainable design insofar as these are compatible with programme and site.

- **Functionality:** Quality of accommodation, environmental conditions appropriate to function, efficiency of spatial relationships, safety and security, provision for flexibility of use, and resolution of access to, through and within the building.
- **Feasibility:** Extent to which the design proposal is able to reconcile conflicting criteria to be financially, technically and politically feasible.

Views and viewshafts

Views will change. Any development will have an impact on the existing situation. As noted the links between the city to the waterfront – the hills to the harbour are important to support the city's sense of place. The impacts on views into and out of the city from the waterfront need careful assessment as to how they can be enhanced.

In regards the space adjacent the Whitmore Street Gates, this space should be framed by the buildings on either side. Buildings should define the space and frame the views from the city to waterfront. The shaping of the space solely by the defined Whitmore St viewshaft may not produce the best outcome for this space.

The District Plan does not presume to protect private views.

Recommendations

- Three building sites are appropriate. A maximum footprint should be defined with guidance on an appropriate height. These buildings would be in the areas of the Blocks A, B and C as described above.
- The building edges to either side of the Whitmore Street Gates to provide a strong edge and frame the view from the city to the waterfront.
- In regards the space adjacent the Whitmore Street Gates, this space should not be solely there to serve a vehicle entry to the waterfront.
- The buildings to provide strong edges to define and support the adjacent open spaces
- The treatment of the edge along the Quays is critical as it is the demarcation between central city and waterfront.
- Exemplary design is appropriate for this site, based on the precedent of South Kumutoto
- The open spaces are primarily for pedestrians rather than vehicles
- The buildings and specifically the publicly accessible ground floors of these buildings are there to support and enhance these public spaces by providing activity and shelter.
- These new buildings need to be sympathetic to, and relate to the scale and size of the adjacent buildings
- The new buildings need to be designed in a coherent manner so that they complement each other as well as the existing heritage buildings and the new Meridian building.

A design guide is proposed as part of Variation 11 to give guidance to achieve high quality buildings and spaces in the Kumutoto precinct of the waterfront that meet the principles and objectives as set out in The Wellington Waterfront Framework 2001.

The proposed objectives of the design guide are:

- To deliver design excellence in the form of buildings and public space
- To compliment and maintain the sense of place and waterfront character
- To provide buildings that are robust enough to allow mixed use development and possible changes over time
- To enhance the pedestrian links and experience in the area.
- To design and develop buildings that enhance new and existing public spaces
- To provide a strong built edge to the quays.

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24 November 2008.