

North Kumutoto Design Brief

September 2012

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This design brief provides direction for development in the area known as North Kumutoto, the northern extent of the waterfront's Kumutoto Precinct (referred to in the Wellington Waterfront Framework as North Queens Wharf). The brief aims to fulfil the general objectives outlined in the Waterfront Framework for this area¹.

The brief sets out the design principles and parameters for buildings and open spaces. In combination with an indicative layout of spaces and buildings and a maximum building envelope, the brief gives a level of certainty as to the location of open spaces and maximum size and layout of buildings. Although the principles and development parameters provide direction and guidance they also allow some flexibility for parties to be creative in exploring ideas for the development in the area.

The principles set out in the brief need to be met in the creation of any site specific guidance and in design development that will occur as part of the development proposal process.

1.1 General design principles

The following vision statement has been adopted for the waterfront:

"Wellington's Waterfront is a special place that welcomes all people to live, work and play in the beautiful and inspiring spaces and architecture that connect our city to the sea, and protect our heritage for future generations".

Unlike the predominantly open space areas of the Waitangi Park and Taranaki St Wharf precincts, this area has a strong connection to the City's Central Business District (CBD). This will be reflected with a stronger sense of the adjacent city form being developed through a higher proportion of buildings than on the rest of the waterfront.

New buildings in this area will have a range of uses and could include recreational, retail, commercial, residential and institutional uses. Generally, the uses need to support a safe waterfront and 24-hour activity.

The character of North Kumutoto includes a network of waterfront promenade and lanes connecting back to the CBD. Movements will be designed primarily for pedestrians with buildings enclosing the water edge on one side and a major urban boulevard on the other. Any new buildings will relate to and be sympathetic to the scale of the surrounding heritage buildings, including Shed 21 at the northern end and Sheds 11 and 13 at the southern end.

Site 8, located to the east of Site 9 and alongside the promenade, is to be excluded from building development and is to be developed as open space. This will help protect views through the Kumutoto area and facilitate public access to the water and pedestrian use of the area. It will also provide an enlargement of the existing open space (referred to as Kumutoto Plaza) established around the Kumutoto stream opening, facilitate views between the water and Shed 13 and allow for a visual connection between Shed 13 and the Ferry Building.

1.2 District Plan

Any works will need to be undertaken in accordance with the District Plan. Resource Consent applications for new buildings in this area will be notified.

1.3 Process

This brief forms a basis on which Wellington Waterfront Ltd (WWL), Wellington City Council's implementation manager for the waterfront, engages designers or developers for development within the North Kumutoto area. Designs are considered and approved by Wellington City Council, taking into consideration advice from the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) and feedback from public consultation on preferred development proposals, before being approved. They are in turn subject to the resource consenting process that anticipates public participation.

¹ The brief is based on the previous North Queens Wharf design brief (2002) but has been updated to reflect the April 2012 Environment Court decision on District Plan Variation 11 (Wellington Waterfront), as well as development progress in the North Kumutoto area.

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1.4 Phasing

Building and open space developments may be phased over time taking into account:

- Economic cycles which influence the timing of commercial development(s).
- The use of development proceeds to fund the development of public space to minimise the impact on ratepayers.
- The need to comply with planning requirements and undertake public consultation.

2.0 SITE SPECIFIC ISSUES

2.1 Site boundaries

This brief relates to development in the North Kumutoto area – the area adjacent to the waterfront between Shed 13, the Meridian Building and Shed 21 – and specifically the development of Sites 8 (as open space), 9 and 10 as depicted on Map 2.

The North Kumutoto area sits within the wider Kumutoto Precinct which covers the area bounded by Shed 21 in the north through to the Queens Wharf Centre in the south; Waterloo and Customhouse Quays to the west and CentrePort's boundary to the east in the northern sector and the water's edge in the southern sector as shown on Map 1.

2.2 Links to the city

North Kumutoto is an important part of Wellington's waterfront and is the northern most part of the waterfront under the management of WWL. It has a strong connection to the City's central business district and important links to the north, including Shed 21 and the Railway Station. It also has an important relationship with the ongoing development of CentrePort land which adjoins the area to the north east.

Improving pedestrian access across the heavily trafficked 'quays' is critical to the success of the waterfront development. Wellington City Council has undertaken a quays improvement project and opportunities to link with these improvements should continue to be made. The 'greening of the quays' project is enhancing the Wellington waterfront route from Aotea Quay through to Oriental Parade. The improvements relating to the Kumutoto Precinct include significant planting of street trees, a central median providing refuge for people crossing between the central business district and the waterfront, an increased number of signalised pedestrian crossings along Jervois and Customhouse Quays (including at Waring Taylor and Johnston streets), and increased shelter from the weather for pedestrians.

The main entrance for vehicles on to the waterfront in this area is at Whitmore Street. Access is also possible via the entrance at Bunny Street to the north and Brandon Street in the south.

2.3 Heritage and contemporary culture

This area has been long associated with both Maori and European settlement with the Kumutoto stream exiting in this area. The majority of the North Kumutoto area was reclaimed as late as 1970. Opportunities to acknowledge that this process has happened should be considered in future designs. An example of such historical connection is present in the Kumutoto Plaza where the stream mouth is highlighted through the use of concrete and timber terraces that step down to the water. Another example is at the Taranaki Wharf where the original wharf configuration has been re-exposed.

Other aspects of history should also be acknowledged. This should include not only the remaining waterfront buildings, but artefacts such as the wharf gates and wharf structures, and the evidence of past industrial and maritime usage. An example of this has been the restoration of the heritage gates at the Waring Taylor, Johnston and Brandon street entrances to the area. These features are irreplaceable indicators of the history of the area, and while some may be damaged, they substantially enrich the experience of the waterfront. Physical evidence of age and occupation are manifestations of the history of the waterfront, and are fundamental in retaining and strengthening the identity of the area.

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With the change in emphasis of the area from a working port to a recreational, cultural and employment area, there are opportunities for public art to be used to express the history of the area. Public art should be coordinated with the design of new buildings and space and reflect the waterfront context.

2.4 Pedestrian access

Pedestrians have priority over vehicles on the waterfront. There are a number of ways of making the waterfront safer, more comfortable, convenient and inviting for people on foot, and there have been significant improvements made in recent years. These include additional pedestrian crossing points across the quays, development of the promenade, new landscaping, lighting, surface treatments, signage and accessibility enhancements.

Although opportunities for further enhancements to pedestrian access and accessibility are limited given the improvements already made, consideration of improvements in key locations, particularly the public spaces surrounding buildings and between buildings and the Whitmore Street extension, should form part of future designs.

2.5 Parking and vehicle access

Any parking on the waterfront is to support people who visit, live and work on the waterfront. The number of car parking spaces to be provided depends on the uses of the new buildings. These needs will be covered in resource consent applications.

Vehicle access needs to be provided to assist access for the less able and to service the buildings, wharves and parking areas. Pedestrians, cyclists and private, service and emergency vehicles may all share the same internal access space, while still giving pedestrians priority.

2.6 Views

Connections between the precinct and its wider context include the views and the glimpses of the harbour and hills beyond and the views along the city streets. The panoramic views from the promenade and water's edge out to the harbour are also important to the character of the precinct. Conversely, the views from the harbour and hills back to the city over the waterfront area are of importance to the city as a whole.

Existing views from the city streets towards the harbour and hills should be considered in the design of new buildings and spaces. These views can be framed by buildings to increase the sense of drama and to reinforce the sense of distance and scale.

2.7 The Promenade

The promenade is continuous, stretching from the Railway Station to Oriental Bay and follows the water's edge for most of the distance. There is a need to keep a consistency of treatment along its length, so that the promenade is clearly defined.

The promenade exists in different states in the different areas of the waterfront. In the North Kumutoto area it forms two paths; a waterside path along the Tug Wharf and Queens Wharf breastwork, and a landside path alongside the reclaimed edge. Opportunities should be taken to provide shelter, seating and activities along the route, including integration with buildings on the landside edge.

The promenade is a shared pathway, designed to accommodate a range of uses including strolling, cycling, skating, push-scooters, push-chairs and wheel chairs. The promenade not only serves the waterfront but is also part of the wider pedestrian network for the city.

The promenade at the water's edge is being continuously enhanced to allow people of all abilities to access the water at various points. This is not a natural edge and therefore it contributes to the urban waterfront experience in different ways, for example bridges, sea walls, pontoons, piers. Access and berthage for small craft should be provided along parts of the water's edge. This is important to support the use of the inner harbour for recreational water activities such as boating.

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3.0 THE OPEN SPACES

Streets and lanes are the primary form of public spaces within the adjacent central city. Within the Kumutoto area, lanes are used for movement and congregation - linear public spaces designed to be destinations as well as pathways and access routes.

Successful streets and lanes are well defined, are unified spaces with their own recognisable character and have activity and vitality at their edges.

Three distinct public open spaces have been developed in the Kumutoto Precinct area, the working names of which are Kumutoto Plaza, Wharf Plaza and Brandon Plaza. The plazas are connected by a lane (Kumutoto Lane) that runs through the precinct. These public spaces link city to sea, extending the line of city streets across Customhouse Quay through to the waterfront. These spaces are summarised as follows:

Location	Description	Importance
Kumutoto Plaza (Waring Taylor St extension)	City connector space	Part of the visual link between the city and harbour.
Wharf Plaza (Johnston St extension)	City connector space	Part of the visual link between the city and harbour.
Brandon Plaza (between Steamship Wharf and the Queens Wharf centre)	Link space	Enhances the relationship between buildings, links to the harbour, servicing space, and access to the Queens Wharf underground car park.
Kumutoto Lane (service lane alongside harbour side of Sheds 11 and 13)	Linear movement space	Shared surface where pedestrian emphasis is shared with primary servicing space for North Kumutoto.

Key public open spaces proposed for development or subject to ongoing/further development are summarised in the following table.

Location	Description	Issues
The promenade	Linear movement space	Primarily water edge based movement space. To relate to promenade along rest of waterfront. Connection from the Meridian building through to Shed 21 and the Railway Station to be improved.
Whitmore St extension	City connector space	Major entry point to waterfront, conflict between vehicles and pedestrians to be resolved, and the 'space' needs to be better defined. Buildings on sites 9 and 10 can provide a gateway and define the open space. This is subject to protection of the viewshaft contained in the District Plan (VS 4 - Whitmore Street).
Site 8 - water edge, north of Kumutoto Stream	Activity space	Generation of and support for activity and public occupation, connections to the water, spatial definition, integration with spaces and routes around, positive relationship with Kumutoto Plaza open space.

3.1 Open space principles

- The open spaces in this area (including Site 8) are to be interlinked and are to be designed in a coherent fashion that relates to the waterfront and the wider city context.
- Public spaces should support uses that can contribute to the vitality, safety, recreational potential, shelter, comfort and social inclusiveness of the waterfront.
- Diversity of use will support diversity of opportunity, of occupation, and extended use of the waterfront.

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- Successful public spaces are characterised by spatial definition, sunshine, areas of shelter, activity around the edges, views in and out and connection with other space. They usually contain a feature or focal point that gives them a distinctive character.
- The potential for concealment and entrapment needs to be minimised. Public open spaces should be designed to maximise personal safety in line with the Council's Guidelines for Design Against Crime and best practice in Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED).
- Public spaces that are flexible in design allow for multiple and changing activities. Often these activities are unforeseen. Possible activities include all those typically seen in city streets and open spaces and might also include performance art, children's play, vending, public meetings, fishing, picnicking, rollerblading and any other waterfront recreational event.
- Public spaces that are responsive to changes in use are desirable to ensure continued activity and vitality on the waterfront.

3.2 Site 8 considerations

Site 8 is an important site in the North Kumutoto area. It is to be developed as public open space. The space needs to be a recognised destination with a positive relationship to the Kumutoto Plaza open space. Like the spaces created by extruding Whitmore, Waring Taylor and Johnston streets on to the waterfront, the space needs careful consideration in order to support diversity, richness and activity.

The space could include defining elements which can be recognised from a distance and may include structures that provide shelter from the weather and can support activity in the area and promote the use of the space (e.g. playground equipment, performance art, coffee vending) throughout the year, throughout the week and throughout the day.

3.3 Furniture guidelines

The Waterfront Furniture Design Brief will need to be consulted at the developed design stage.

The brief states that the furniture on the waterfront needs to reflect the industrial and nautical elements of a the working wharf. It recommends the use of metal and timber as preferred materials and the elements used to connect them such as bolts, chains and plates. These are expressed on the waterfront in four main forms:

- planks (ship/wharf decking)
- balls (buoys, bollards)
- plates (cranes, ship hulls)
- masts (cranes, ship masts) .

All elements are strong, bold and robust. Salvaged timber and materials are used where available, to maximise their effect and as appropriate to their purpose.

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4.0 NEW BUILDINGS

The development of the Kumutoto Precinct has seen buildings developed on Site 7 (the Meridian building) and Site 6 (Steamship Wharf).

There are two remaining sites defined as being appropriate for new building developments. The building heights and maximum site coverage are outlined below. The heights relate to the scale of adjacent heritage buildings. The height of buildings on either side of the Whitmore Street entry to the waterfront can be higher to form a 'gateway' to this part of the waterfront.

Location	Site coverage (max)	Indicative height	Issue
Site 10, - north of Whitmore St gates, south of Shed 21	100%	22 metres (4 storeys)	Strong relationship with Shed 21. Southern end could form part of 'gateway' at end of Whitmore St. The building form should read as more than one building, with a setback of at least 9m on the seaward side for much of its length to allow for pedestrian and vehicle movement.
Site 9 - to south of Whitmore St gates alongside Customhouse Quay	100%	19m and 16m at south end (4 storeys step down to 3 to south)	Northern end could form part of 'gateway' down Whitmore St. Height to relate to Site 10.

Storey: means a floor (full or mezzanine) or level of a building including the ground floor level. It is envisaged that the maximum floor to floor height per storey is 4.2 metres, except the ground floor which may have a maximum height of 6 metres.

As outlined, Site 8 (to the east of Site 9 and alongside the promenade) is to be excluded from building development and is to be developed as open space.

4.1 New building principles

- New buildings will be sympathetic to, and relate to the scale and size of, the heritage buildings, bearing in mind that Shed 21 at the northern end is higher than the heritage buildings at the southern end.
- Primary facades are to face on to the major public open spaces. Secondary facades to provide for a level of servicing, but not be dominated by these servicing activities. All facades to provide a level of active edge.
- Buildings will be designed in a coherent fashion that relates to the waterfront context, and have a good compositional relationship with neighbours so that they relate to and complement each other.
- Building types that would be responsive to change of uses over time are preferred.
- The buildings, including tops and roofs, need to provide the character and complexity appropriate to their prominent waterfront position, given that there are numerous vantage points overlooking this area.
- Buildings need to have visual interest with recognition of different viewing distances and duration.
- Buildings will be required to display exceptional architectural design including innovation, creativity and imagination, responsiveness to context, environmentally sustainable design and be an expression of contemporary culture

4.2 Building relationship to open space

- Buildings should contribute to the open spaces of the waterfront.
- Buildings should be of a size and shape that relate to the spaces around them, the neighbouring buildings and the water's edge.

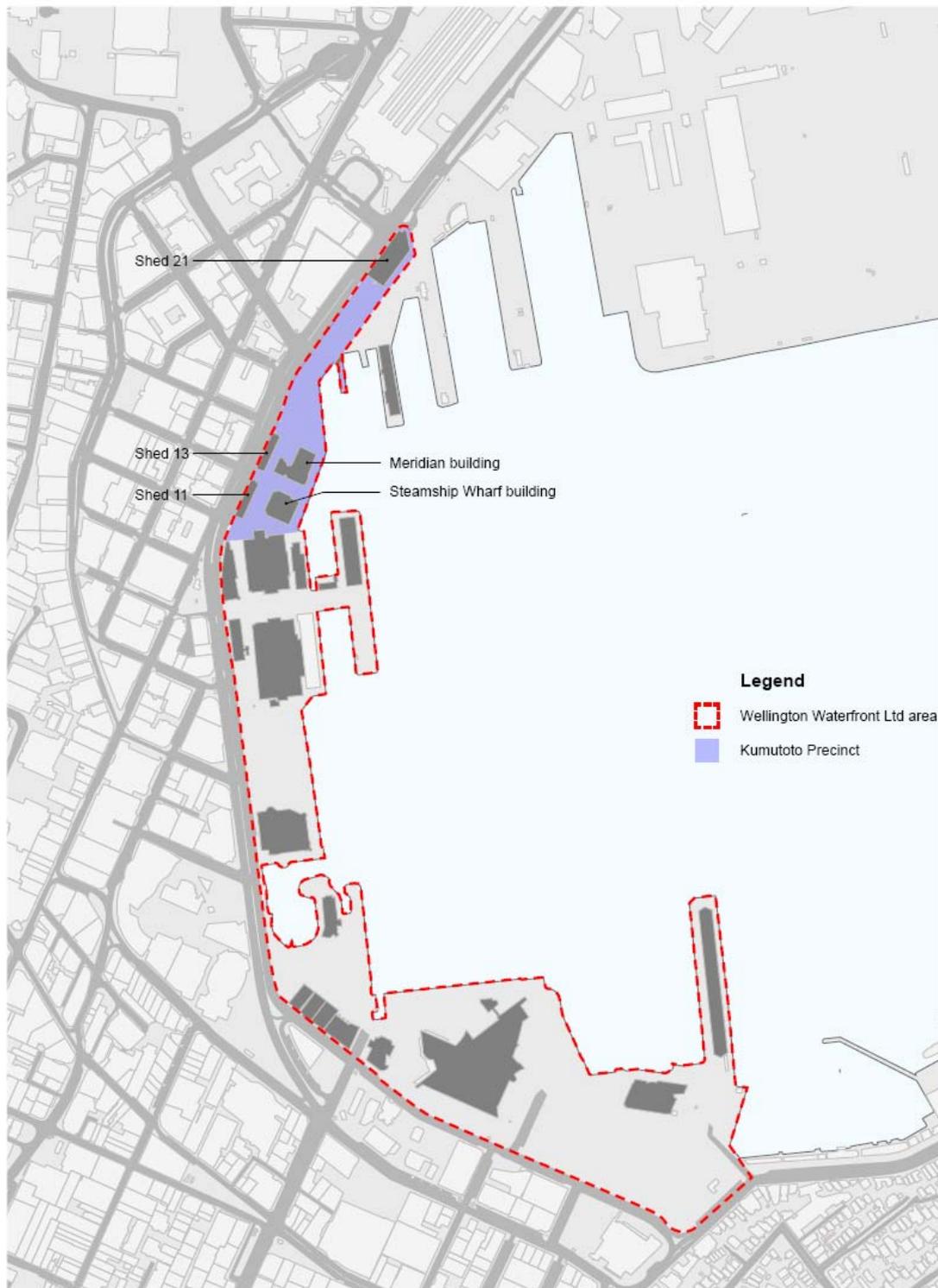
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- Buildings can provide enclosure and shelter to adjacent spaces. Buildings are to provide a protected sheltered route along the quays and are to contribute to providing shelter along the promenade.
- Buildings may become landmarks and add character to public spaces.
- The buildings that face onto the public spaces should help define these spaces, provide for natural surveillance and allow for activities that engage people using these spaces.
- The ground floors of buildings should be predominantly and clearly accessible to the public, adding to the overall vitality and activity of the waterfront. This can include commercial activity provided it is aimed at the general public.
- Buildings should have 'active edges' by providing frequent entries. Windows and doors at ground level should allow visual links between ground level interiors and adjacent public spaces and allow people to interact with activities within the building.
- Servicing facilities need to be integrated into the building and/ or located along secondary frontages.

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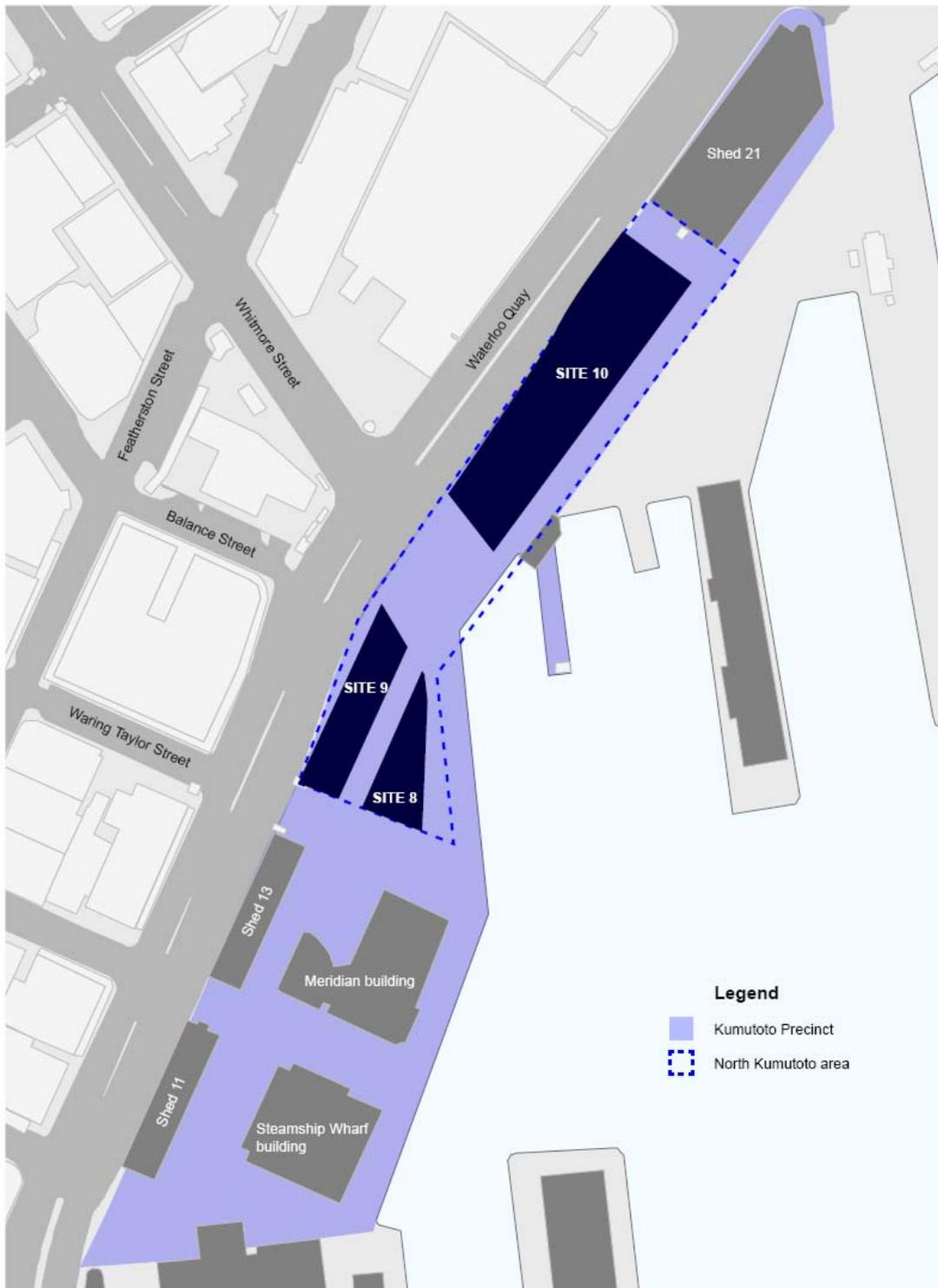
Map 1 – North Kumutoto location and context



MAP 1 KUMUTOTO PRECINCT PLAN

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Map 2 – North Kumutoto: Sites 8, 9 and 10



MAP 2 NORTH KUMUTOTO DEVELOPMENT AREAS