

2 June 2006

Re: Waterfront Development and Overseas Terminal

This submission is from the Wellington Architectural Centre, a group which represents both professional and non-professionals interested in architecture and design, and in the promotion of good design in Wellington.

Regarding issues of conflict of interest, we have treated these as two separate submissions. Members who are involved in the design of, or work for firms involved in aspects of the Waterfront Development, have not had input into the Architectural Centre response to the Waterfront Development proposal. Members who are involved in the design of, or work for firms involved in the proposed design of the Overseas Passenger Terminal, have not had input into the Architectural Centre response to the Overseas Passenger Terminal.

Waterfront Development

1) Support for the Proposal

The Architectural Centre fully supports the Waterfront Framework. We endorse the continuation of the principles of the first Waterfront Framework, and have no problems with alterations to the time schedule of development. We support moving the Chinese Garden, as the previous location was in our opinion ill-conceived. The garden needs to be in a location sheltered from the wind.

Overseas Terminal

1) Support for the Proposal

The Architectural Centre supports this proposal. We encourage the revitalisation of the wharf as an important development in relation to Waitangi Park and the Herd St Post and Telegraph Building, and also because it maintains public access to the wharf which will have a positive effect on the regeneration of this area.

a) The Design

Overall this is a good design. It importantly retains the pedestrian promenade around the building, and achieves excellent permeability across the building at ground level. The development will make important links with Waitangi Park, Chaffer's dock and the waterfront promenade. We do however suggest that the design could be a less literal interpretation of a boat.

While the general bulk of the existing building is referenced in the new design, the building clearly increases in size. We are concerned that the proposed maximum heights are labelled "conceptual," and we recommend these be fixed as maximum heights, and the idea of "conceptual" maximum heights be disregarded.

We acknowledge the need to address structural issues in the wharf and Overseas Passenger Terminal, and we support the proposed provision of underground car-parking built into the structure of the pier to reduce the visibility of cars, and to ensure that the wharf remains primarily a pedestrian public space.

b) Function

The proposal provides the potential for a good mix of activities and we encourage functions and activities which will support interactions between a diverse range of cultural, age, and socio-economic groups within Wellington. This diversity and the inclusion of apartments and restaurants and bars etc. will encourage activity at all hours



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on the wharf, not just during business hours. This will be both key to the success of the area, but will also require astute management of noise control, particularly through the construction of the apartments, and management of residents' expectations of apartment life.

The success of much of the rest of the waterfront is in its pleasureable juxtapositions between old and new design, and between the picturesque texture of port activities and the slickness of new design. As such we strongly endorse the continuation of such balance in the waterfront's design, and the ongoing accommodation activities such as the marina businesses and services. These functions of the wharf, and other maritime activities (fishing etc), must be the predominant ones. These will determine meaningful links to the waterfront's past, and to other spaces around the promenade.

We strongly oppose making the wharf an exclusive play-ground for wealthy apartment owners. Physical accessibility must be matched with a design which connects with and welcomes a diverse range of people. The Overseas Passenger Terminal should not become a Wellington version of Auckland's Via-duct Basin. In this respect, we encourage the inclusion of affordable housing in the apartment proposal. The danger with apartments exclusively for elite socio-economic groups is that this sector of society often own two or three other residences and may only spend one weekend a month in their Wellington flat. Affordable housing both provides diversity and ensures continued day-to-day occupancy in the building, making the area more vibrant and safe.

We also request that the Council provide a long-term commitment to ensure public access to the full extent of the wharf, and the ground floor of the building. Likewise we recommend that the scheme provide free public viewing decks on the roof, and make available function rooms for social events and use by local clubs.

2) Conclusion

The Architectural Centre supports both the proposed Waterfront Development Framework, and the proposed rebuilding of the Overseas Passenger Terminal. This second project will be a productive contribution to Wellington, but only as long as truly public access is maintained through the support of marina activities, encouragement of non-commercial activities and events, and the maintenance of public access, both around the whole wharf, and to key observation points in the building. Diverse public access must be protected and encouraged in the long term. With this caveat, we support the proposal.

Yours sincerely

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President
The Architectural Centre