

Submission by Wellington Civic Trust Waitangi Park : Application for Resource Consent

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Wellington Civic Trust supports in principle the proposal subject to the conditions proposed.

. Relationship with Proposal for Restoration of HSPO Building

- 2.0 The major issue for the Trust is the dividing of the area into three sections and the subsequent implications for the interfacing and sequencing of the work in each section.
- 2.1 The Trust is pleased that an application for a resource consent for the refurbishment of the former Post and Telegraph building in Herd Street has been issued. The Trust recommended in its previous submission that the hearings for this and Waitangi Park be heard concurrently. This has not been accepted. The consequence of this is to place much greater on the importance on the interface issues being identified and accounted for in this hearing.
- 2.2 The Trust notes that the Waitangi Park design is complex and contains elements of technical and financial risk. The same can be said of the refurbishment of the Herd Street building, particularly in the development of the underground car park. The Trust believes therefore that to introduce certainty, reduce risk, and avoid unnecessary cost to all parties the interface matters must be fully known before work commences on the Park. It is not certain that the access plans for the Herd street re-development are in fact optimum and it appears this could well be an issue in the HSPO consent. It is normal practice for landscaping work to occur after building construction is completed. The Herd Street refurbishment is a major operation involving the demolition of a substantial building and a major excavation. Logically this should be carried out before the development of Waitangi Park to allow the building work to proceed without the constraints and hence costs that would occur if the park was completed first. This sequencing would eliminate any risk of incurring damage to the newly developed park which, while capable of mitigation through conditions for restoration being placed on the HSPO developers, represent the imposition of costs which would not be necessary if the building reconstruction was done first.
- 2.3 The objective of the waterfront development is surely to achieve the optimum outcome for the least cost. The Civic Trust does not believe there is any valid reason for the work being carried out in a less than optimum sequence. This area has languished for so long that arguments for something to be done urgently cannot be justified as a basis for a departure from best practice.

The Wellington Civic Trust submits that as a condition of consent, development of Waitangi Park in the areas affected by the Herd Street Post Office Building refurbishment should not commence until all major construction works on the Herd Street site have been completed.

3.0 Te Papa.

3.1 The Trust notes paragraph 5.2.1. of the Resource Consent Application which states :

“Meetings have been conducted on numerous occasions. Effectively these consultation discussions have focussed on the area which is at the transition to Te Papa – outside the scope of Area One. The process of discussion continues. The responses to the areas of interest from Te Papa have been iterative and continue.”

3.2 The Civic Trust believes that what occurs in Area Two is of major significance to the development of this area and that the statement above indicates that no agreement on the form this will take has yet been reached. The submission by Te Papa lists the matters which have yet to be resolved. In sum these are significant and agreement could well lead to a result quite different to what is shown on the indicative plan for Area Two attached to the Resource Consent Application. This could require amendments to those plans which are the subject of this consent application.

3.3 The Civic Trust believes it would be imprudent on grounds of technical and financial risk to proceed until the interface between Areas One and Two has been agreed with Te Papa. The Trust believes that attempting to proceed with Area One development before an agreement with Te Papa is reached, could result in less than optimum development for what is a critical area of the waterfront. It is a complex matter and no basis for proceeding in haste has been identified.

The Wellington Civic Trust submits that as a condition of consent, no work on Waitangi Park should commence until the interface between Areas One and Two has been formally agreed with Te Papa.

Ian Hunter
Deputy Chairman.