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# WELLINGTON CIVIC TRUST



[www.wellingtoncivictrust.org](http://www.wellingtoncivictrust.org)

## FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Members,

I am honoured to have been asked to Chair the Wellington Civic Trust and I trust I can do my small part in this way to serve this City and its citizens. I accepted the role in full knowledge that there is a fully committed and experienced Board that has a great willingness to take on the important civic quality issues as they arise. I want to pay tribute to my immediate predecessor Di Buchan, and those Chairs before her who have guided the board in its deliberations and decisions. The unstinting dedication of this board has impressed me since I joined it a year ago, and I can well see why we have such a liveable city here in Wellington.

I am pleased to see the regard that City Council staff have for the Trust even when the Trust is challenging City decisions. The Trust is a forum for both concerned citizens and urban planning and associated professionals. It is the means by which the important challenges and opportunities of this city can be debated and advanced. Wellington has wonderful natural assets and a citizenry that is passionate and cares about it. I know the Trust has played a critical role in ensuring sound planning principles prevail, and I look forward to being a part of this continuing process.

Thank you to you, our members, who care and support the Trust,  
Seddon.

### **Update on the Hilton Hearing at the Environment Court**

For the past two weeks this hearing has been underway before the Environment Court. The cross-examinations of expert witnesses have been long and complex and as a consequence the hearing is now running several days behind schedule. The hearing was due to conclude on Friday the 10th but as at that time, Civic Trust and Waterfront Watch had not even begun to put their case.

Two weeks had been set aside for the hearing and at this stage it looks like it will take another 3 days or so. The case has had to be held over until the Court can find a gap in its busy schedule. The Court will reconvene to hear the balance of the submissions and the lawyer's closing arguments at a future date which is yet to be determined.

The time over-run has meant that we are now in the situation where the cost is likely to be significantly more than we had budgeted for. To the many of you who have donated to this cause we once again give our thanks. To those of you who have not yet donated to the Fighting Fund, please consider doing so now. Make the cheque out to the Civic Trust and address your envelope to "Civic Trust Fighting Fund" PO Box 10183 Wellington.

## **Submission on the Draft Waterfront Development Plan 2007/2008**

### **Introduction**

The draft Waterfront Development Plan has been critiqued in light of the guiding principles of the Wellington Waterfront Framework, the historic processes that created this document and developments that have culminated in the waterfront as it is today.

The Wellington Civic Trust appreciates the opportunity to comment on the development plan and present some positive suggestions for future development. This submission focuses predominately on 'Section 6. The Projects', and follows the same format as the draft plan for reference purposes.

In this submission we have acknowledged that some recent developments have been completed to a high standard and have commented on developments that have strayed from the intent of the Framework. We also reaffirm our opposition to the unfortunate decision to support the construction of a hotel on the premier open space of the Outer T on Queens Wharf. The current proceedings before the Environment Court will determine the eventual outcome for this area. We hope the outcome will be the honouring of the Framework – i.e. a design competition for a structure in keeping with this very special site..

While we can do little in the short term to fix the mistakes of the past, we can compensate for those mistakes in the present and allow positive ideas to be integrated into any future development.

### **The Projects**

#### **Waterfront as a whole**

##### *The promenade*

The promenade stretching from the Railway Station to Oriental Bay must have continuity for an unbroken journey along the edge of the sea. Two sections have been identified that are disjointed from this continuum.

From the Railway Station to Kumutoto, the lack of coherent design and the impact of Ferry services impede upon the pleasurable promenade experience. Integrating features such as planters and sculptural design elements along the ferry fence line could soften this utilitarian area and provide shelter from the elements.

The promenade section behind Shed 6 on Queens Wharf could also be improved. The scale and hard edges of Shed 6 creates a perception that this section of the promenade is much narrower. Combined with excessive vehicle use, this section of the promenade experience is severely compromised.

Only essential traffic should be permitted on the promenade. This is especially so on the section around the Queens Wharf Events Centre, next to the children's playground on Francis Kitts Park. The only vehicles that should be permitted to use this area are those needed for emergen-

cies, disabled people and those servicing the restaurants and maritime activities. Taxis should be excluded. The parking area by the Museum of City and Sea is suitable for taxi pick-ups.

#### Road edges and connection to the city.

The Civic Trust encourages the Council to continue improving pedestrian access between the city and sea.

We endorse the recommendations by Jan Gehl to improve connections from the city to the waterfront and to remove two vehicle lanes from Jervois Quay.

We endorse the statement made in the Wellington Waterfront Framework (p.13) that “improving pedestrian access across the heavily-trafficked quays is critical to the success of the waterfront development”. The Framework sets out a range of measures to improve access across the quays.

We note with pleasure that the planting of the median strip along Jervois Quay has been done and urge the Council to continue that planting along Cable Street as recommended in the Waterfront Framework. The beautification project of the Quays median strip could expand into a safe midpoint (median refuge) for pedestrians attempting to cross this gauntlet of speeding traffic.

The Framework also calls for an increased number of controlled pedestrian crossings along Jervois and Customhouse Quays and for more bridging across the Quays and Cable Street. This together with shortening the light phase for traffic (especially those on the Cable Street/Tory Street intersection) is important for improving the city to water connections.

#### Parking

A re-assessment of parking requirements should still be guided by the Waterfront Framework, which states that parking should be removed as the waterfront is developed (p.28).

The decision to allow the rowing club parking space on Taranaki Wharf was disappointing. The Civic Trust suggests that a review of parking underneath Francis Kitts Park be undertaken to allow for rowing club vehicles to park there after dropping off boats and equipment. The present situation, which has absorbed public space should be compensated for by increasing public space in other areas of the waterfront. This could be achieved by decreasing the footprint of future buildings.

#### Berthage strategy

Sailing and rowing have a long association with the Taranaki wharf and Clyde Quay areas. The Civic Trust supports the traditional use of the waterfront for recreational maritime activities and for commuter boats which help to relieve traffic congestion on the Hutt motorway.

**Waitangi Precinct***Waitangi Park*

The Civic Trust congratulates the Wellington City Council and Wellington Waterfront Limited on the successful completion of Waitangi Park to date. Trust members have expressed their appreciation of the interaction of the various landscapes and celebrate in the positive energy that is expressed by young people using the various amenities.

Any further buildings in this area will need to be very carefully designed so as not to close off views and sun from the park or to increase the amount of at-grade parking. We expect the resource consent process will ensure that these potential adverse effects are avoided.

**Overseas Passenger Terminal (OPT)**

With increased pedestrian movements in this area, public transport to waterfront locations must be improved to alleviate traffic congestion and to reduce the need for at-grade parking.

It is conceded that Chaffers Marina berth holders and the marine industry require vehicular access to transport large and heavy equipment. However many weekend sailing crew currently using OPT car parks are only carrying personal gear and therefore do not require vehicular parking.

It is acknowledged that apartment dwellers, utility vehicles and the disabled will all have vehicular requirements and finding a balanced solution should be a priority. The Trust recommends that Wellington Waterfront Ltd consider adopting a permit system to ensure that parking spaces are kept available for those that need them.

**Taranaki St Wharf and Lagoon**

The Civic Trust congratulates Wellington Waterfront Ltd on the sensitive redevelopment of the Brewery, and St Johns Ambulance heritage buildings. As you will be aware through previous correspondence, we are very disappointed at the lack of respect given to the historical qualities of the Odlins building in its redevelopment. We hope that any future renovations are undertaken in a more sensitive manner. There is little point in retaining historic buildings if the qualities that give them value are destroyed in the process.

The anticipated Wharewaka development will hopefully retain some of the popular grassed area next to the lagoon. The Civic Trust looks forward to being consulted on the new design proposals.

**Francis Kitts Park***Redesign of Park*

The Wellington Civic Trust requests that a representative from the Trust be appointed to the design competition jury. Since 1981, the Civic Trust has been an active participant in the development of the waterfront. A Civic Trust representative would make a positive contribution in helping to select a successful design. This design may include the re-orientation of Francis Kitts Park to make better use of the seascape and reduce exposure to the traffic on Jervois Quay.

However the Civic Trust is of the strong opinion, that due to Wellington Waterfront's stretched financial situation, the proposed Breakwater and redevelopment of Francis Kitts Park be delayed rather than seeking further funding from the Council which will add to the pressure on

ratepayers. Time should be utilised to engage in wider consultation as to the most suitable location for the Chinese Garden.

### **Queens Wharf**

#### *TSB Arena Remodeling/Shed 6*

Vehicular traffic around shed 6 significantly impacts on the pedestrian promenade experience. We recommend that all vehicles use either the loop around the Museum of City and Sea or the Queens Wharf underground carpark.

#### *Outer T*

The Civic Trust maintains its opposition to the Hilton Hotel proposal. We wish to express our concern at the apparent conflict of interest, articulated by statements from Wellington Waterfront Ltd, attributing its financial shortfalls and loss of income to delays in the Hilton Hotel development.

We call upon the Wellington Waterfront Limited and the Wellington City Council to honour the Waterfront Framework which recommends a design competition for the Outer T. The Framework recommends that an integrated approach to the development of this site be undertaken. (p.33). The Outer T should be considered as a whole in a way that respects the special qualities of this site as noted in the Waterfront Framework (p.33).

The Civic Trust looks forward to helping with the Outer T design competition in the future.

### **Kumutoto**

Consultation on the development of Sites 8, 9 and 10 should not be undertaken between mid December 2007 and the end of January 2008. To compensate for this period the consultation period should then be extended into February 2008.

It is hoped that the developed designs will integrate more green elements – trees and grass areas into the public spaces, to soften the hard wind swept edges of buildings and concrete.

The promenade from Kumutoto to the Ferry Terminals and Railway Station is a vital part of the Site 10 development concept and the Kumutoto area.

### **Financial Plan**

The Civic Trust holds the position that public amenity values should not be compromised in any of the proposed developments and especially in the event of any financial downturn. The Civic Trust endorses the position taken in the Waterfront Framework that a longer period be taken to complete the waterfront rather than compromising quality or placing unnecessary burden on ratepayers.

The assumed revenue from the Hilton Hotel is also of major concern when the development is contrary to the Waterfront Framework and hinges on the outcomes of a legal process before the Environment Court.

### **Conclusion**

The Waterfront Framework contains the key principles for developing the waterfront. While some developments have been guided by this document and achieved good outcomes others have fallen short of expectation. We urge Wellington Waterfront Ltd and the City Council to abide by the Framework – not only in the letter but also the intent, in all future development decisions.

The Civic Trust looks forward to working together with all stakeholders on a pragmatic long sighted vision, inclusive of current public opinion and with opportunity for future generations to contribute to the jewel that is Wellington's waterfront.

### **Wellington's Northern Gateway**

The book of Proceedings of the 21<sup>st</sup> April 2007 Seminar is near completion, and copies will be sent to all registrants in a few weeks' time.

In May, the Board approved these Principles to summarise the outcomes of the Seminar:

1. Successful port, railway and highway operations in this area are essential to the well-being of Wellington. Continued growth in traffic by rail and through the port must be assumed and not constrained by alternative land uses.
2. Emphasis should be placed on developing this area as the front door to the city in terms of its location between the harbour, the hills and the compact CBD. Unlike most other cities the working port and railway functions are right next to the CBD, in a superb geographical setting – this should be celebrated in the area's land use and urban design.
3. Quality transport and pedestrian links are needed between the cruise ship terminal on Aotea Quay and the CBD. The impressions formed of our City by visitors using this approach to Wellington are highly important.
4. Resources to ensure that the general cleanliness and tidiness of the area is significantly improved should be allocated now. The visual amenity of this area from the adjoining roads and passenger rail lines could be greatly improved with relatively little cost.
5. The co-location of the proposed new Indoor Sports Stadium close to the Westpac Stadium was supported because of the synergies that could be gained in terms of parking facilities, proximity to transport hubs and marketing.
6. There is a clear need for improved pedestrian and cycle pathways through and across the area.
7. The termination of the railway system at Bunny St should not be seen as inevitable. Its extension further south into the city should be actively considered.
8. The Harbour Quays area should be "mixed use" rather than an "Office Park."

To assist the known timelines of the City Council's Central Area Review (Plan Change 48) which covers this area, we sent this summary to the major stakeholders in May. The timelines of the commercial land negotiations between OnTrack, Toll and CentrePort were then (and still remain) unknown, but we felt that the principles would be of value to major stakeholders by noting issues of wider community interest which affect any land changes proposed for this area. In the covering letter, we noted that:

"The Civic Trust fully appreciates that the current negotiations between the principal landowners in the City Gateway area will have a focus that is primarily commercial. We understand from earlier discussions that a major factor driving these negotiations is the 2003 Crown/Toll agreement developed with Treasury which requires Toll to maximize surplus land yields as part of the nationwide reinvestment package for rail upgrades.

The Civic Trust's emphasis on the other hand is on protecting and enhancing the traffic and transport services and amenity values in this area for current and future citizens of Wellington. The Trust believes that these two different perspectives (commercial services and amenity) are by no means incompatible; indeed, each can be enhanced by the other.

The Wellington Civic Trust will continue to maintain its interest in the City Gateway area. We look forward to working with your organizations to help achieve a showcase for public transport and urban design which will set the standard for other cities. For most of its existence, this area has been regarded as an industrial area of no great amenity value. We hope that you will share our belief that it can be transformed into a superb "Gateway to the Creative Capital" which reflects well on all stakeholders".

In another development since the Seminar, it was reported in the DominionPost of 8<sup>th</sup> August that "Vibrant Wellington" had dropped its High Court action to stop CentrePort's Harbour Quays, and that "a big factor in the group pulling out was the mixed uses proposed for the site in the Council's draft District Plan". On August 11<sup>th</sup> CentrePort was advertising a new post of General Manager for CentrePort Properties Ltd, which it is "poised to establish [as] a wholly-owned subsidiary...the portfolio for this business currently comprises of Harbour Quays and the Seaview industrial area".

The Seminar's outcomes were also used by the Trust in the letter sent to the Mayor and Councillors in August about the siting of the new Indoor Sports Stadium (see p.xx)

**Alan Smith 11/8/07**

### For Love of This City

Published on the occasion of the Wellington Civic Trust's 25th Anniversary this book gives a fascinating and detailed account of the people and issues that have formed the basis of the Trust over the last 25 years. Copies are available for \$20 plus postage. Please ring Anne Phiri at 3840116

### **Indoor Sports Stadium**

The Wellington City Council's recent decision to site this off Cobham Drive, in Kilbirnie, has attracted some media controversy. The Board has sent this letter to the Mayor, Councillors and CEO to set out its position:

Dear Kerry

The Civic Trust notes the recent Council discussion, as reported in the media, about whether the planned Indoor Sports Stadium would be best located at Kilbirnie or in the Gateway area close to the Railway Station and to the Westpac Stadium. There seems to be wide agreement that the Gateway site would be best; but that the delays and costs involved with land use and ownership changes there make the earlier availability of the relatively "green field" Kilbirnie site a pragmatic solution. It is appreciated that changes in land use in the Gateway area are still complicated by the uncertain outcome of negotiations with the Crown and CentrePort over "surplus rail lands". This points to the continuing value of an integrated approach to the whole development of the Gateway area (such as that initiated by the Mayor in 2002) so that the best solution for all of Wellington is not compromised by a series of ad-hoc decisions.

A clear view from the Trust's seminar on The Northern Gateway held on April 21<sup>st</sup> this year was that the interests of the city would be best served by locating any new Indoor Sports Stadium close to the Westpac Stadium. Not only would it add to the general "vibrancy" of the Gateway, but synergies and cost-savings could be gained by sharing facilities such as car-parking and retail services with the stadium. A summary of the outcomes from the April seminar, including this point about the Indoor Sports Stadium, was sent to the Council in May.

The Westpac Stadium has demonstrated the importance of placing such regional event-based facilities close to public transport hubs. From this perspective, it is hard to imagine a more unsuitable location than the Kilbirnie site. A sports centre in Kilbirnie is likely to have a significant detrimental impact on much of the city as people travel to the Centre in private vehicles rather than by train or bus – or, from the CBD, by walking.

The Civic Trust believes that the longer-term urban quality of the Gateway area is of strategic importance to Wellington, and that the location there of an appropriate Indoor Sports Stadium would add to this.

The Civic Trust urges Councillors to bear in mind the full range of costs and benefits (social and environmental, as well as economic) including the synergies with other facilities when making a final decision about the siting of the Indoor Sports Stadium.

Yours faithfully

Seddon Bennington  
Chair



## DISTRICT PLANNING

**This year the Trust has taken a close interest in two Plan Change initiatives by the Wellington City Council.**

### **Plan Change 48: Central Area Review**

This was a major exercise undertaken by a dedicated team at the Council. It was prompted by:

- \* a growing dissatisfaction with the poor quality of some of the new development occurring in the central city;
- \* The adverse impact of some new development on neighbouring properties and townscape generally. Safety, sunlight, views and the convenience of neighbours and the public generally were all issues to a varying degree.
- \* the adverse impact and in some cases the complete loss of buildings or areas of historic significance.

The Trust was one of the many parties consulted as the plan change was being formulated and was one of several that made a formal submission to the Council. In the main the Trust strongly supported the intentions of the change and argued that if the main proposals were endorsed it should lead to an improvement in the scale, character and pleasantness of the central area.

We did however suggest that the needs of pedestrians (over traffic) should be given more prominence in the CBD and that there was a need for a few more well located, sheltered and sunny "pocket parks" between Midland Park and the Civic Centre.

We supported the creation of a number of heritage areas but suggested that the proposed Parliamentary Precinct (confined to Parliament and its grounds only) could be usefully extended to include such important national buildings as The Cathedral, the National Library, the Court of Appeal and Turnbull House.

Di Buchan, our chair at the time, presented our submission to the Council's hearings committee and we now await Council's decisions on the Change.

### **Plan Change 56: Infill Housing.**

This change was introduced by the Council to tighten some of the existing rules and standards to give greater control over infill housing and thus minimise some of the adverse effects on neighbouring properties.

The Trust supported the Change. At the same time Council released a discussion document which suggested a "targeted" approach to infill housing in which the higher density housing needed to meet the changing population structure of the city would be encouraged to locate in those areas where there are good connections to existing main services and public transport, and discouraged in fringe areas where services are inadequate or would be costly to provide.

The Trust supports an approach on these lines and hopes to be involved in on-going discussions prior to any introduction of detailed policy proposals.

### **A Report on The Civic Trust Seminar on Social Housing**

I was personally gratified by the remarks made by various participants about the success of the Civic Trust Seminar on Social Housing, which we held last year. I think that all of those who attended the WCC presentation knew of our seminar and most had been participants. Those who had attended spoke very positively about the important contribution made by the Trust in running such an event. Community groups had found it very useful to have the opportunity to come together and get such an excellent overview of the issues. They were particularly pleased to hear what was going on in Auckland and Christchurch, particularly the latter. A key issue arising from the Christchurch presentation was the fact that all profits from the housing stock went back into city housing. It is interesting to note that this is now also a requirement for Wellington. I felt proud to be associated with the Civic Trust. It was quite clear from the comments made that in providing an independent forum for public discussion on a matter of civic concern we had fulfilled one of our key objectives as a Board.

**Margery Renwick 18/05/2007**

### **New Board Members**

The Civic Trust Board has two new members Callum Strong and Michael Dudding.

A Wellingtonian by birth, Callum began presenting developmental concepts to the City Council as an independent artist. His interest in photography provided the basis for exploration of the urban environment. He studied architecture and art history at Victoria University which "opened up a world of possibilities for creative, green, alternative designs" Callum works as a researcher at the Wellington city Archives. "In order to prepare for the future we must look to the past. There is a tangible history of creative forces that have shaped Wellington. I believe the Civic Trust plays an important role in inspiring participation and debate on the development of our beautiful city".

Michael comes to the Wellington Trust as a representative of the Wellington Architectural Centre (WAC). The WAC is an independent group of Wellingtonians who seek to promote interest and provide a forum for debate on issues concerning architecture and the built environment in Wellington. It shares with the Wellington Civic Trust the core objective of ensuring the high quality of built environment in which Wellingtonians can live, work and play. Michael teaches in Architectural and Urban History at Victoria University School of Architecture, and is currently engaged in PhD research post World War II New Zealand architecture. He has lived in Auckland and London, and has visited most European capitals – but it is Wellington that he returns to with delight; the compact but exquisite jewel, held within a perfect setting....

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**APPLICATION TO JOIN THE WELLINGTON CIVIC TRUST**

**Name:** .....  
**Address:** .....  
 .....  
**Telephone (home):** ..... **(work):** .....  
**Email:** ..... **Fax:** .....

**Please tick the category of membership**

**Individual: \$20**

**Family: \$30**

**Corporate: \$100**

**School: \$50**

**Please return with your cheque to:**

**Membership Secretary, Wellington Civic Trust, PO Box 10 183, Wellington 6143**

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<b>Wellington Civic Trust 2007</b>	
Chair:	Seddon Bennington
Deputy:	Di Buchan
Secretary:	Alan Smith
Treasurer:	Di Buchan
Membership Secretary:	Peter Baillie

<b>SUB-COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES 2007/8</b>	
<b>Northern Gateway</b>	
Alan Smith (Chair)	Chris Watson
Duncan Joiner	Peter Reilly
Neville Beach	Blair Badcock
Anthony Cross	Di Buchan
<b>Government Centre/Capital Precinct</b>	
Peter Brooks (Chair)	Alan Smith
Duncan Joiner	Blair Badcock
Michael Dudding	
<b>District Plan Changes and Resource Consents</b>	
Tony Town (Chair)	Others as required depending on the particular issues.
<b>Waterfront</b>	
Seddon Beddington (Chair)	Diana Shand
David Pucher	Callum Strong
Di Buchan	
<b>Publicity and membership</b>	
Seddon Bennington	Margaret Clark
Callum Strong	Peter Baillie
<b>Newsletter</b>	
David Pucher	
<b>Traffic and transport</b>	
Chris Watson (chair)	Neville Beach
Anthony Cross	Diana Shand
Michael Dudding	Alan Smith