

**Resource Consent Application – Waitangi Park**  
**Submitter: Wellington Architectural Centre**

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.

In the preparation of this submission, members of the Architectural Centre who are associated with the Waitangi Park design, or who are associated with firms involved in the Waitangi Park design (and hence may be seen to have a conflict of interest), have had no input, or involvement of any kind, into this submission.

The Architectural Centre supports this application for Resource Consent for Area 1 of Waitangi Park. We support this application because we believe that the proposed design is an important and appropriate contribution to Wellington's waterfront, and that approving this application is essential to enable the construction and continuing functioning of Area 1. We consider that the current design of the park provides a good structure, which will be able to accommodate the changing nature of Wellingtonians' needs for recreational space in the future.

Given this, we anticipate that the functional requirements and scope of the park will need additional facilities in both the short and long term. Permanent architectural structures and buildings will need to be provided to ensure that the full potential of the park is realised. These functional and programmatic issues are raised in more detail below where appropriate.

**The design of Waitangi Park is important and appropriate for several reasons, including the following:**

- 1) The integration of the cultural, historical and environmental programmes in the design.
- 2) The accommodation of a wide range of activities to enable maximum public involvement and use.
- 3) The integration of a range of experiences of the sea and of the city, and the relation of Waitangi Park to other spatial and recreational experiences along the waterfront.
- 4) The accommodation and the design of the children's park area, and the accommodation and the design of the skateboarding areas.
- 5) Circulation and Carparking Design

As such we support this application for resource consent. We have provided more detail in the following pages. If you have any questions about this submission do not hesitate to contact us.

Best regards

Mary Daish  
Co-President  
Wellington Architectural Centre

### **1) The integration of the cultural, historical and environmental programmes in the design**

A significant feature of the park is the sophisticated integration of the cultural, historical and environmental programmes in the design. These issues are discovered in the fabric of the landscape and, because of this, are unable to be seen as tokenistic or superficial additions. The design both recovers the physical past of the site and offers new interpretations of the cultural, historical and environmental values of the park.

The richness this brings to the design provides the added extra of an educational value to Waitangi Park, suggesting that the park could support an education or visitors' centre to highlight the significance of these aspects of the park. This may also establish the park as tourist attraction, and as an educational resource for city schools.

We believe that cultural, historical and environmental values are integral to the design of Waitangi Park and that the design could become a model for future civic developments in Wellington and New Zealand.

### **2) The accommodation of a wide range of activities to enable maximum public involvement and use**

The design of Waitangi Park anticipates a full range of activities including: the use of waka and other boats, an open market, concerts, petanque, BMX bikes, skateboarding, and other diverse cultural ceremonies and events. We envisage that, with appropriate shelter and lighting design, such activities will successfully occupy the park in different seasons during the year, and at different times during the day and night. Such use is important to ensure the revitalisation of the area, and to establish the park as a safe and secure area.

In terms of shelter this site requires the consideration of several important, and sometimes conflicting, demands. The prevailing northerly, and the variable weather of Wellington, mean that Waitangi Park will need to provide wind-shelter, protection from the sun, and the more obvious impact of rain. The provision of shade to protect the public (especially young children), from sunburn is an important, but often overlooked, requirement of outdoor space. As such, consideration of appropriate and varied shelter will enable much needed flexibility for events and activities. In the short term, for example, there is a need for temporary built structures to provide shelter until trees have matured.

The proposed kiosk is an example of the sort of support structures that we envisage will be needed to ensure the activities of the park are sustainable. The kiosk will need to provide appropriate space for seated eating to attract family useage of the park, and will, for example, facilitate supervised play of children. Wellington has a number of good examples of the integration of eating and playground facilities, for example Chocolate Fish Cafe in Seaton makes use of seating on the seaward side of the road to enable the close proximity of seated eating and recreational spaces. Other uses, such as the Open Market, would be well supported with built amenities. Melbourne has a market culture which could be seen as a model for such amenities.

The design of Waitangi Park extends the range of recreational experiences available to Wellingtonians along the waterfront, and we believe that the opportunities this design provides should be maximised.

### **3) The integration of a range of experiences of the sea and of the city, and the relation of Waitangi Park to other spatial and recreational experiences along the waterfront**

The extent of Area 1 encompasses the Harbour Edge Activity Zone through to the City Edge Activity Zone, providing a rich range of spatial experiences.

The 1939 Post and Telegraph Building on Herd St and Te Papa defined the identity of Chaffer's Park in terms of framed and select views of the sea. The southern area of the park opened out towards the city, identifying the space of Chaffer's Park as an urban park. In contrast, the seaward side of Herd St Post Office provides a generous open seascape.

The design of Waitangi Park hence reminds us of the historical importance of this site as both a park in an urban context (sheltered from the prevailing northerly and looking toward the city), and a sea-edge which privileges the seaview. The importance of the more intimate experience of the park at the ground level, and its distinct spatial identity, is reasserted in the design of Waitangi Park with the focus on the large contained space of the field. The seaward view hence gains its particular importance and impact because it is in contrast to this urban-facing field. The design hence values and preserves the mutually-dependent successes of the different viewing and spatial conditions in this area.

In addition, the strategic use of a peripheral promenade along the street edge provides a visual, and acoustic filter to nearby traffic while defining the park's physical limit. This aspect of the design reinforces the role of Waitangi Park as a permeable sea-to-city edge. In addition to providing physical links to the remainder of the waterfront, the design also recalls other experiences along the waterfront, without resorting to the simplistic and crude repetition of design forms. An example of this occurs with the use of bridges to move through the site, recalling the vertical relationship between ground and sea established in other waterfront locations.

#### **4) The accommodation and the design of the children's park area, and the accommodation and the design of the skateboarding areas**

The children's play area has been carefully designed to allow for different age groups to play in close proximity, accommodating a wider interrelation of developmental progress than is conventional practice in the design of play areas in New Zealand. This overlapping of the play areas for different developmental ages means that the design will make the supervision of different aged children in a family much easier. The play area is conceived as a miniature "landscape," which enables the extension of children's imaginations and recognises children as "small citizens" in a space which is strategically connected to other areas of the park. As such it provides an alternative approach to play which will complement the playground at Frank Kitts Park.

The provision of facilities to assist in the supervision of play, and which highlight the educational value of the park, will enhance this aspect of the design. Examples of these facilities include the provision of seated eating and an education or visitors' centre, as discussed above.

The design of Waitangi Park acknowledges skateboarding as a positive force in public space. The skatepark is appropriately located with other youth culture based activities. Skateboarding in the park and along the waterfront promenade is astutely managed through design. Where skating is able to take place architectural elements are designed to be robust enough to accommodate it, but where skating is in conflict with other uses detailed materials selection and the composition of elements will ensure that skating is deterred.

#### **5) Circulation and Carparking Design**

Waitangi Park's edge condition provides a series of circulation routes filtering into the central park space for ease of access into, and transit through, the park. It successfully manages a wide range of traffic circulation needs (pedestrian, dog-walkers, bicycle, rollerblading, skateboarding, boats, and cars), to ensure maximum accessibility and transit through the park-space, where appropriate. Multiple, and often conflicting, traffic needs are intelligently dealt with. An example of this is the subterranean accommodation of car-parking which is physically integrated into the landscape. This is a "double-useage" of the existing land area, which has been proven to be an appropriate location for car-parking. Its design is unobstrusive and provides much needed wind shelter as well as contributing to the physical shape of the park terrain.