

WATERFRONT FURNITURE DESIGN BRIEF

PURPOSE

This brief provides a framework for the design of furniture for the public open spaces on the waterfront.

The principles outlined provide a basis that could be expanded for each area in terms of seating, lighting, bollards and barriers. How shade and shelter devices can be incorporated will need to be considered. Any new elements need to relate to a “family of elements” for the waterfront as a whole, with the main link being the consistent furniture along the length of the promenade.

THE FRAMEWORK

The Wellington framework has a number of inter-linking themes that need to underpin all development on the waterfront, these include:

- Historical and contemporary culture
- City to water connections
- Promenade
- Open space
- Diversity

The furniture needs to relate to these themes in particular the historical and contemporary culture theme. “There is a need to refer to the natural ecology, the Maori history and the industrial maritime heritage as well as the central city in determining the character of the respective areas and the components and elements that make up those areas”.

The framework is also clear about the detail of furniture on the waterfront:

“People are more likely to occupy a space if seating, lighting and other furniture is provided.

Furniture should be seen to be consistent throughout the waterfront and used to enhance the identity of the area and the city as a whole. There should be a range of different seating types.

Lighting is an integral part of the public space design. It gives the opportunity to create special night-time effects within the waterfront. Functional lighting to meet safety standards is important, but specifically designed lighting is desirable throughout the waterfront. Consideration should be given not only to the night-time lighting effect but also to the day-time appearance of lighting standards, which may also be used to support banners or signs to enrich the public environment. In addition to observers on the waterfront, lighting design should consider people observing the area from other vantage points around the harbour and surrounding hills”.

STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

The furniture on the waterfront needs to reflect the pre 1840 history of the area as well as the industrial and nautical elements of a working wharf on the edge of a city. It employs the elements of metal and timber 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) and;
- Plates (cranes, ship hulls)
- Masts (cranes, ship masts)

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

CHARACTER AREAS

On a broad scale, there are two main elements of the waterfront. These can be expressed in terms of their relationship with the water as either;

- The promenade which is at the water's edge and is seen as the spine of the waterfront. It is of maritime character, often expressed in a robust industrial manner.
- The individual areas which are maritime in nature but they also need to relate back to the city and form a transition between the water and the city.

Within this, there will be other micro-spaces which have their own identity and need to be expressed in the furniture elements and the materials used.

The pre-1840 history could be referred to by looking at Maori maritime references. Examples could include anchors, which could be used as seats, triangular sails which could be incorporated into shelter.

The promenade is characterised by:

- Robust, "chunky" elements with a nautical theme
- The promenade at waterfront edge is emphasised with simple, repeated elements
- Ground surface materials which reflect where appropriate the timber wharf sub-structure underneath (use of asphalt between timber edges, rocks, stones)
- Benches at the waters edge generally open to the sea (with backs to the city side)
- Vertical lighting elements using masts/plates/cranes theme for lighting of large areas
- Feature lighting incorporated into elements such as bollards, bridge beams (more subtle use of lighting to illuminate individual spaces)
- Railings (where required) at the waters edge similar to ships railing

These individual areas are characterised by:

- Elements which relate to the proximity of the city which they are adjacent to, and may include hard paving, grass, trees etc
- Lighting to reflect this setting
- A variety of seating of a less chunky nature, which can be used by different people. Heights of seats and the inclusion of backs to be considered.
- Use of the original waterfront gates/fences where appropriate as a transition between the waterfront and the city

MATERIALS AND DETAILS

Material and details should reflect the identity and history of an area, to emphasise its waterfront relationship to the city. Materials along the water's edge should generally be large section, robust and industrial in nature, whereas those in the rest of the areas should be more urban in scale and appearance.

Waterfront materials could include:

- Paving/ground surface – timber decking/edging, web grating, asphalt, rocks, stones
- Railings and bollards – timber beams (at waters edge), metal railings (similar to ship railing), original gates and fences (at interface with the land), metal balls
- Benches/seating – timber beams
- Lighting – metal frames with plates

More urban materials could include:

- Paving – unit paving, concrete, asphalt, exposed aggregate finish
- Bench seating, more urban form relating to city with references to waterfront
- Railings/fences (including original gates/fences at waterfront/city interface)

The attached sheet¹ shows the elements which have been used to date in the promenade area at Taranaki St Wharf.

A family of elements needs to be developed for each area while relating to the wider waterfront to create a strong waterfront identity.

¹ "Lambton Harbour Street Furniture Elements, Dwg No. 98.42 sk 1a, prepared by Athfield Architects Ltd"