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Resource Consents Team
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30 June 2016

Resource consent application: Redevelopment of Frank Kitts Park

Location 29 Jervois Quay, Wellington (Frank Kitts Park)
Service Request Number 358352
Name of Applicant Wellington City Council
Applicant's Address for Service C/- Urban Perspectives Ltd, PO Box 9042, Wellington
Email: alistair@urbanp.co.nz

Waterfront Watch Inc opposes the application. We ask that the Council declines the application.

We wish to be heard in relation to this submission.

Contact details:

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Submission:

Our opposition primarily relates:

- a) to the removal of the amphitheatre, and
- b) to the location of the proposed Chinese Garden.

Amphitheatre:

The heart of the existing park was designed, explicitly, to create a sheltered, complex space which the public could use for many, varied activities. It remains popular for a variety of uses, including:

- by school groups as a quiet place to gather for lunch between the City Museum and visiting Te Papa,
- charity events,
- concerts, and
- courting lovers.

The design provides shelter from the prevailing wind off the harbour; even in a blustery Northerly the seats on the harbour side of the Promenade wall, facing the sun with the warmed concrete behind, are protected from the wind.

Suggestions that the amphitheatre structure was designed to accommodate the waterfront car race, and is therefore now redundant, are not correct. The Park design was part of the Waterfront Development Company's 1987 Waterfront plan which covered the whole of the Waterfront and made no provision for a car racing track. The Park was designed as the green focal point of the Waterfront, with a focus on features for community use. The original design objectives of the Park are as relevant today as they were when it was built.

The bronze plaques on the wall, especially those relating to the American Marines and the Polish refugee children, are particularly meaningful to guests off the cruise ships walking to Te Papa along the Promenade; if the plaques were moved, as proposed, to the Jervois Quay side of the Park they would not be seen.

In its current form Frank Kitts Park is an important feature of the waterfront and the central city. Its loss would destroy its amenity value.

The Applicant is asserting that the loss of existing amenity through the removal of the amphitheatre would be compensated by the amenity value that the proposed square, flat lawn would have for accommodating a large marquee for events.

In its existing form Frank Kitts Park frequently accommodates multiple tents on its sheltered lawns for events such as the dragon boat races and the Cancer Society's Relay for Life.

If the Council believes the demands for larger tents are greater than can be accommodated on the main lawn at Waitangi Park there is a better alternative location than destroying the amphitheatre at Frank Kitts Park. The area of Waitangi Park lying between the Graving Dock and Te Papa, identified in the park's design scheme as the "transition zone" is currently marked out for at-grade carparking as an interim use pending decisions on its future.

If the Council has an occasional need to accommodate large marquees the transition zone should be used. It would meet all the needs being sought through the demolition of the amphitheatre without destroying an existing amenity.

Chinese Garden

The proposed Chinese Garden should not be located in Frank Kitts Park.

Waterfront Watch supports the concept of a Chinese Garden being built in Wellington, but not at this site. It would be better located either within the Botanic Garden or incorporated into the grounds of the new Chinese Embassy to be built in Rugby St, between Government House and Pukeahu Park. If it must be on the Waterfront, the previously agreed site East of Te Papa could also accommodate the Pacific Cultural Garden long-planned to be associated with the Chinese Garden. That site would be more appropriate than Frank Kitts Park and would not impact on any existing amenity.

Waterfront Watch opposes the proposed Chinese Garden because of its impacts on the amenities of the Waterfront, including:

- The walled garden, with gates to be locked each night, would remove the area from the existing open space on the Waterfront
- The garden's walls, trees and roofs would reduce views from Willeston Street along the designated viewshaft
- The garden would remove the existing pathway aligned with Willeston Street that provides a major link between the central city and the Promenade. This would contradict the "Pedestrian First" principle agreed in the Waterfront Framework.

Basis of Waterfront Watch's Opposition

Waterfront Watch has consistently expressed our opposition to the proposed "redevelopment" of Frank Kitts Park on many occasions since it was first proposed in 2004. Our opposition to the changes has been confirmed by resolutions passed at several of our Annual General Meetings over the period.

Our views were reflected in the Council's 2004/5 waterfront development plan which said: "Although this [the remodeling of Frank Kitts Park] has not been seen as a priority, and its necessity has been questioned in public consultation [emphasis added], there was considered to be merit in reviewing the area in the context of the remodelling of the Events Centre building and its relationship to Shed 6, and access issues across Jervois Quay to the City. The water's edge would be a key element in this. A design brief for the work will be prepared." Note that the objectives of improving access across the Quay and to the water, as originally set, have not been achieved in the proposed redevelopment.

We believe that the Council's efforts to determine public opinion through "consultation" have been inadequate, and the responses misinterpreted. In particular, we cannot agree with the statements in the May 2015 report to the Council that:

- "General support for the proposed redevelopment of Frank Kitts Park exceeded opposition by 3:1", and
- "General support for the Chinese Garden in Frank Kitts Park only marginally exceeded opposition".

Waterfront Watch has made a survey available on-line since 17 May 2016 to sample the views of our members and the public. Of the 95 respondents to date, 79% described themselves as "members or supporters of Waterfront Watch" and 21% were not – we believe that this ratio is reflective of the general Wellington population.

The findings of the survey included:

- **82% opposition** to the removal of the amphitheatre
- **85% opposition** to locating the Chinese Garden in Frank Kitts Park (with 65% support for siting it at the Chinese Embassy or 56% within the Botanic Garden)
- **75% support** for enlarging the children's playground with new equipment suitable for children of different ages.

These results reflect the value that the public places on the amenities of the existing park in comparison with those of the proposed new features.



Patrick McCombs
President
Waterfront Watch Inc