

DESIGN AND LOCATION

LOCATION

After many months of public consultation and investigation of international best practice the consultants and the governance panel announced the recommendation for the location of the theatre. The recommended site is behind the old Hamilton Hotel on Victoria Street, between Sapper Moore-Jones Place and Embassy Park.

The site is a 5,395m², medium stepped, sloping site, located near the top of the Waikato River Bank, with pedestrian access from Victoria Street and vehicular access from Sapper Moore-Jones Place.

The optimal location for the theatre is fundamental to the project. The process of selecting the site reflected the overall transformational vision of the theatre project, making it an anchor tenant in the city, creating day-time and night-time activity seven days a week, opening the way for growth of the cultural community through regeneration of the city centre, including improved quality of adjacent streets, linkages between the city and river and complimentary activities such as educational facilities and performance spaces.

The site has a rich history and strong relationships to Victoria Street and the Waikato River, with excellent accessibility to restaurants, hotels, public transport, residential areas and private parking facilities.

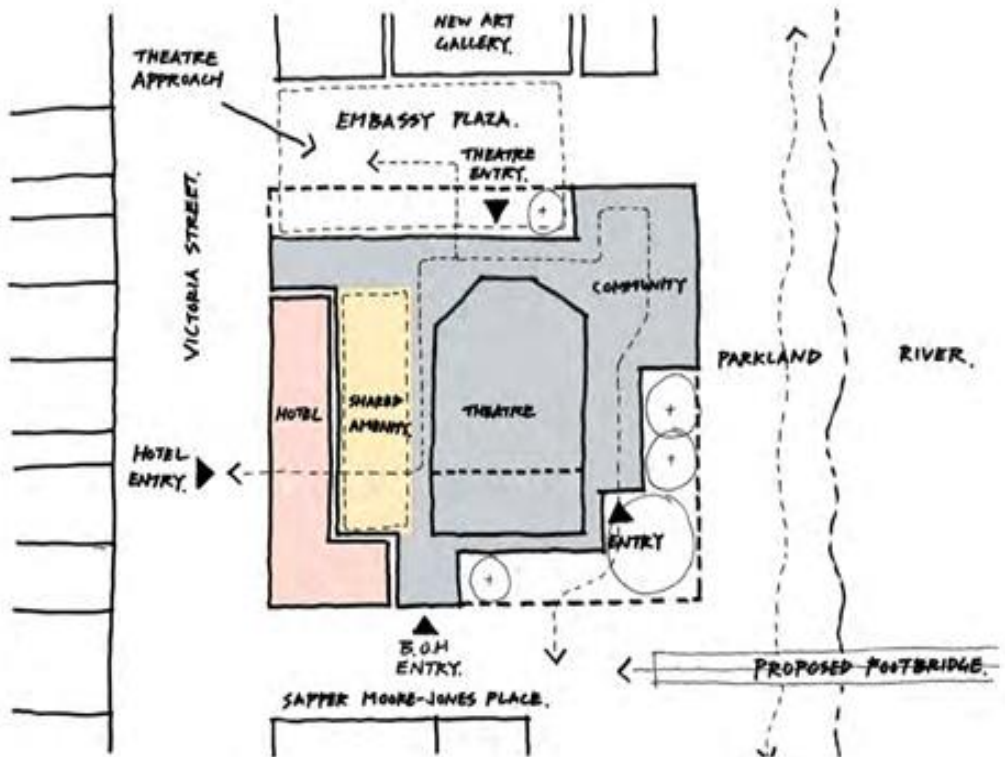
The location provides an opportunity to have a new look at a familiar history based around performance, art and hospitality traditions. These traditions have had a long association with the site, and this project is an opportunity to rediscover and rebuild their influence on the city's identity and integrate them with the heritage, landscape, urban and social character of the region.

A site at the heart of the emerging entertainment-based downtown responds to this vision for urban renewal. Bringing a potential 1,100 people into a city centre every weekend will generate new development, new business and new jobs. A city centre location suggests availability to a broader demographic and age range. Perceptions that the city centre is unsafe will be changed by greater foot traffic, not only by those attending, arriving at or leaving the theatre, but also those taking advantage of related attractions at all times of the day.

The Location Study Report included a summary of the detailed assessment of 25 sites around Hamilton City, including the existing Founders Theatre site. The assessment framework included factors such as urban design, site area, access, transport, mana whenua, landscape design, site history and development controls.

Stakeholder feedback showed a clear preference for enhancing the city centre, making the most of the proximity to

the river and the city's visual assets. The consultants also worked with stakeholders to identify what elements would be needed to form a creative precinct around the theatre. This also informed the site selection.



DESIGN

The Waikato Regional Theatre project offers an exciting opportunity to create a new cultural precinct in the city. One that will help regenerate the city centre and inspire the wider region.

The success of the design relies on the integration of public open spaces, and the integration with the landscape and the streetscape with the proposed building. The design sets out a framework for improving the urban fabric, activity onsite and the theatre as an 'anchor tenant' in a creative precinct with co-location of complimentary services. The building design will be a dramatic and distinctive icon for the city, drawing inspiration from the river.

ELEMENTS OF THE DESIGN PROCESS

1. City and River

The masterplan allows for the street and the river to connect, encouraging pedestrian flow through the site, and new paths are being considered on the river side to encourage access to the street level on the site.

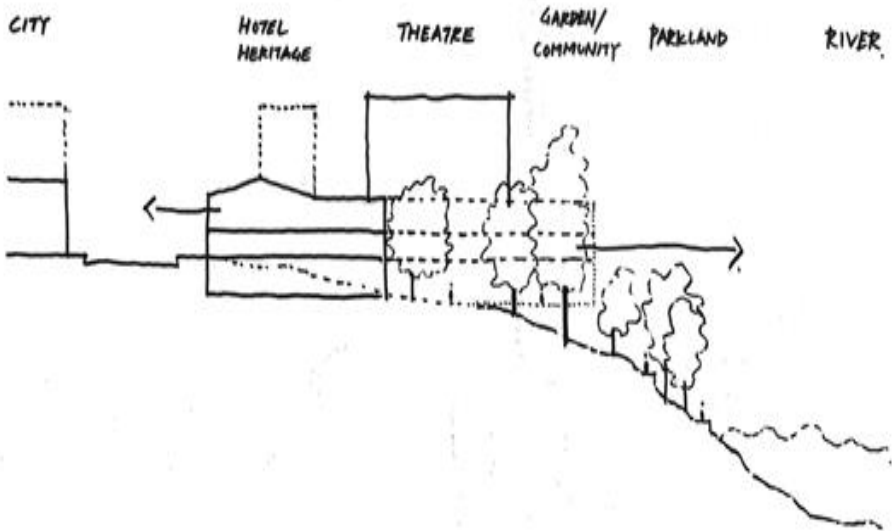
Consideration is given to how people will circulate through the site at different times of day.

2. Heritage

There will be consideration of the heritage on site. The features that will be focussed on are the old hotel, the garden, the protected trees and the archaeological site, as well as the wider cultural significance of landscape features.

3. Community
The design proposes high quality plaza spaces for communal engagement. The co-located activities ensure 24/7 activity, and a home for a creative industry to flourish.
4. Garden and Parkland
The design will reference the sites history with a series of courtyards, gardens and terraces around the site and within the building. The courtyards will be used to hold events as well as informal performance. The gardens will provide the transition between the building and the existing parkland.
5. Screens
The screen will wrap around the building, visually linking the river to the city. The screen is a distinctive and dramatic feature that hovers over the river like a fine mist hanging in the air.
6. Towers
Urban markers with a visual association to the tall trees on the site. Back lit to provide the dappled light closely related to the dappled light of the trees.
7. Spatial Organisation
A dramatic arrival and entry sequence that progresses through a series of performance spaces; plazas, courtyards, foyers and the formal auditorium.

DESIGN RESPONSE



SPATIAL ORGANISATION

