

# Auckland's marine events precinct

How a world-class events venue fits into Auckland's CBD waterfront vision



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## 1.0 Seizing the opportunity

Waterfront spaces around the world provide unique reflections of their location's make-up.

The sea is an integral part of Auckland's character, history and culture. The waterfront is where our city began – our gateway to the city's two harbours, its islands and the world beyond.

Our CBD waterfront – from the Harbour Bridge to Mechanics Bay – has the potential to be a beautiful destination that is rich in public open spaces and activities; supports commercially successful and innovative businesses; celebrates the city's sea faring culture and maintains its historic industries.

Auckland City Council is working to realise its long-term vision to improve the waterfront and to make Auckland an attractive host city for international events.

Events bring energy and vibrancy to a city and create positive financial and economic benefits. Large events such as the America's Cup and round the world yacht races create massive interest and enjoyment throughout Auckland, the wider region and New Zealand.

An events precinct close to the heart of the city, the marine industries, hospitality venues and the water's edge have been identified as playing a key role in its success. Situated on Auckland's CBD waterfront, the Viaduct Harbour is the optimum site for developing a precinct that encompasses public spaces, a versatile events centre and water space.

By creating a purpose-built, consistently-available venue with world-class facilities, Auckland will have the ability to host a wide range of events throughout the year. It will also help secure the city's place on the international events calendar and will build on the Viaduct Harbour's current appeal amongst locals and visitors.

## 2.0 What is a marine events precinct?

A marine events precinct is made up of three key components to provide for a variety of uses:

- **Public spaces, such as wide promenades and plazas**

On a daily basis, these will be used for promenading or as part of a waterfront cycle/jogging/walking route. For events, these spaces can be used for temporary exhibition structures and activities.

- **Adaptable buildings**

Covered exhibition and event space to extend the event season beyond the summer months. Covered event/working space for marine and trade exhibitions; back room activities (media centre); race management operations and logistics; hospitality venues; crew staff infrastructure (race team facilities).

- **Berths and pontoons**

Extra water-based space for marine events; berthing of race boats and support vessels; infrastructure to haul boats in and out of the water; hospitality/charters.

These components combine to provide flexibility for a variety of marine-related events (both in terms of size and type of events) but retain capacity for other events and exhibitions to maximise opportunities as an events site.

## 2.1 Types of activities

### Major marine events

Auckland Harbour Festival  
ISAF Class 1 match racing  
Auckland International Boat Show  
Round the world races  
America's Cup

### Regional and community marine events

Dragon boat training and festivals  
Coastal Classic  
Auckland to Suva  
Auckland to Noumea  
Two-handed Round North Island  
Blessing of the fishing fleet  
Kohimarama Youth Regatta

### Ancillary events

Air NZ Fashion Week  
Black Grace  
Air NZ Wine selection tasting  
Emirates Team NZ sponsor functions  
Art Fair



Main photo. Artist's impression: aerial view of the marine events precinct site



## 2.2 A marine events precinct will:

- Be a major maritime destination and venue for other events on the waterfront, utilising the land and water space of the Viaduct Harbour
- Be a stimulus for activity within the Viaduct Harbour and Auckland
- Have an impact on the economies of the region and New Zealand by contributing an:
  - estimated average of \$86m to regional GDP annually
  - indirect economic benefit from a positive effect on the reputation of the marine industry.<sup>1</sup>
- Build on Auckland City Council's existing \$54 million investment in the Viaduct Harbour to date
- Draw people through to Wynyard Quarter by ensuring the events centre is integrated into other activities in the area
- Build on Auckland City Council's commitment to attracting and supporting large events in the city
- Position, promote, market and encourage the use of the Viaduct Harbour so that it is:
  - an iconic destination for Aucklanders, New Zealanders and tourists
  - an attractive location for event organisers to use for a range of events
  - a marine centre of choice.
- Maximise facilities vessel maintenance areas and services such as refits and servicing, commissioning of new vessels and mast stepping and rigging.
- Accommodate appropriate berthing facilities for existing and future use
- Integrate with local charter and fishing fleets as part of a working wharf
- Encourage diverse elements (including educational and environmental) of the marine industry to be based within the area

## 3.0 Location: the Viaduct Harbour

- Research by Auckland City Council has shown that there is both public and industry demand to locate a marine events precinct in the Viaduct Harbour.<sup>2,3</sup>
- The Viaduct Harbour is linked to major transport hubs.
- Proximity and accessibility to the CBD, accommodation and hospitality venues.
- The marine events precinct would be supported by, and would help to maintain the marine industry that is currently at the Viaduct Harbour, Wynyard Point and Westhaven Marina.
- The site has fantastic access to the water's edge.
- It would signify and help celebrate the area's rich marine and fishing heritage.
- A marine events precinct would help to maintain the ownership of the Viaduct Harbour by the citizens of the city and region.
- The site is visible from high-use public areas for event sponsorship purposes and for adding to the general visual excitement of the area.
- The ability to host a variety of large events throughout the year will enliven the Viaduct Harbour area, making it an interesting, vibrant place that attracts more people to visit.
- A events precinct will provide an appealing connection between the central business district (CBD) and the waterfront.

1. Howarth Asia Pacific April 2006.

2. Research conducted by Cranleigh Strategic in 2003 into the existing event and conference facilities in Auckland indicated that, notwithstanding the move towards new large event centres under design/construction in Auckland, Waitakere and Manukau cities, there is a gap in the local 3,000-seater facility market, particularly one that enjoys outstanding harbour access. The conclusion drawn from this analysis is that a marine events facility will attract major maritime events.

3. Research conducted by Craig Wilson in 2005 concluded that Auckland requires a major outdoor recreation and events space on the waterfront, located within 1km of the CBD with a variety of multiple use spaces, to reinforce the city's brand identity of being a harbour city, and providing views of the cityscape and the harbour.

## 3.1 Linking people, city and sea

Auckland City Council's vision for the future development of the wider waterfront is to link people, city and sea. To ensure our waterfront is world-class with a distinctly Auckland flavour, the strategy will follow vision principles including:

- improving public access and enjoyment of the waterfront
- maintaining a clean and healthy waterfront environment
- protecting views from the waterfront
- honouring local history and character
- good transport links to and from the waterfront
- ensuring a good mix of uses and activities
- the continued success of the port
- recognising the waterfront's key economic role
- ensuring the successful operation of waterfront marinas.

The concept of a marine events precinct on the CBD waterfront supports several of these principles.

### Transport and linkages

The marine events precinct will support and will be supported by the existing public space in the Viaduct Harbour, Te Wero Island, Eastern Viaduct and the Waitemata Plaza.

The marine events precinct will connect to:

- **The CBD** – A site within a 10-minute walking distance from the CBD is optimal for a successful events venue and one that can also be used on a daily basis by workers and residents. This is a critical success factor for major international events because of the proximity to hospitality, accommodation and transport.
- **A new opening bridge** – This landmark structure will connect the CBD and transport hubs with Wynyard Quarter, providing convenient access for pedestrians, cycles and public transport. The bridge will span the Viaduct Harbour entrance at Te Wero Island allowing easier access to the marine events precinct for visitors and locals, whilst still allowing boats to come and go from the Viaduct Harbour.
- **Transport hubs** – Such as Britomart and bus routes, for ease of public accessibility to an event. Maximum 10-minute walking distance is optimal.
- **Marine industry** – A critical success factor for boat repairs and maintenance, and provisioning and servicing.

- **Waitemata harbour** – Either as the race start/finish line (international events) or proximity to on-harbour racing.

#### The marine events precinct:

- forms part of the 'east/west axis' of experiences from the CBD to Westhaven Marina
- provides continuation of public access to the water's edge
- complements and forms part of the proposed Jellicoe Wharf commercial/retail and recreational hub
- the proposed marine events centre precinct takes into account a new transport connection from Quay Street to Jellicoe Street – an essential component of the development of Wynyard Quarter.

#### The proposed opening bridge and transport corridor will have an impact on:

- the existing public open spaces in the Viaduct Harbour at Te Wero Island and the eastern viaduct, which will be reduced in capacity for events
- the buildings currently occupied by Emirates Team New Zealand as they will have to be demolished
- the nature of the space on the western side of the Viaduct Harbour, as no built structures will be able to be accommodated within a corridor of a minimum width of 20m
- berthage on the western end of Te Wero Island and the eastern side of the Halsey Street bases will be lost.

### Working waterfront

The Viaduct Harbour is part of a working waterfront – an essential support for a marine events precinct. The area also provides for yacht race competition bases, which are accessible by both land and water.

The area provides:

- berthage of race boats, support vessels (including media vessels), hospitality charters, owner/sponsor vessels
- haulout capacity for repairs and maintenance for race boats.

This industry is supported by other marine-based hubs in the upper harbour at West Park, The Landing, Bayswater and Gulf Harbour at Whangaparaoa. The existing buildings in the area can also be used for the infrastructure necessary for events, displays, a media centre, race offices, and corporate hospitality.



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## Heritage and local character

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- The Viaduct Harbour reflects Auckland's maritime history.
- The waterfront and the Viaduct Harbour is home to Auckland and New Zealand's earliest ship building industry.
- Wynyard Quarter is home to a unique cluster of marine industries including design, construction, storage, sales, servicing and maintenance of vessels. These industries have a combined annual turnover of \$1.26 billion of which \$525 million is exported. Some 25 per cent of the region's marine industry is in Auckland and one-third is currently based at Wynyard Quarter.<sup>4</sup>
- Part of the character of the area has been created by the growth of customised large recreational vessels (superyachts) which have both a significant economic value and are a visitor attraction in their own right.
- The Marine Industry Association supports the development of a marine events precinct in the Viaduct Harbour as an opportunity to showcase marine industry skill and concentrated activity.<sup>5</sup>
- Proximity of marine industries for repairs and maintenance support and provisioning is a critical element of marine events.
- The retention of a working waterfront and marine focused activities clustered with access to the water edge is essential to retain the unique character of this part of the city.

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## America's Cup

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- The development of the Viaduct Harbour was triggered by Team New Zealand winning the America's Cup in 1995.
- The area was home to the successful hosting of the America's Cup in 2000 and 2003.

- The America's Cup events coincided with enormous growth experienced internationally in superyachts. The Viaduct Harbour provides ideal berthage facilities and environment for super yachts.
- There is a need to retain the option to host the America's Cup again should Emirates Team NZ win in Valencia in 2007.
- Work is currently being undertaken to consider site options should we host the next event in 2010/2011. This builds on work initially started in 2002 before the loss of the 31st America's Cup in 2003.

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## Round the world races

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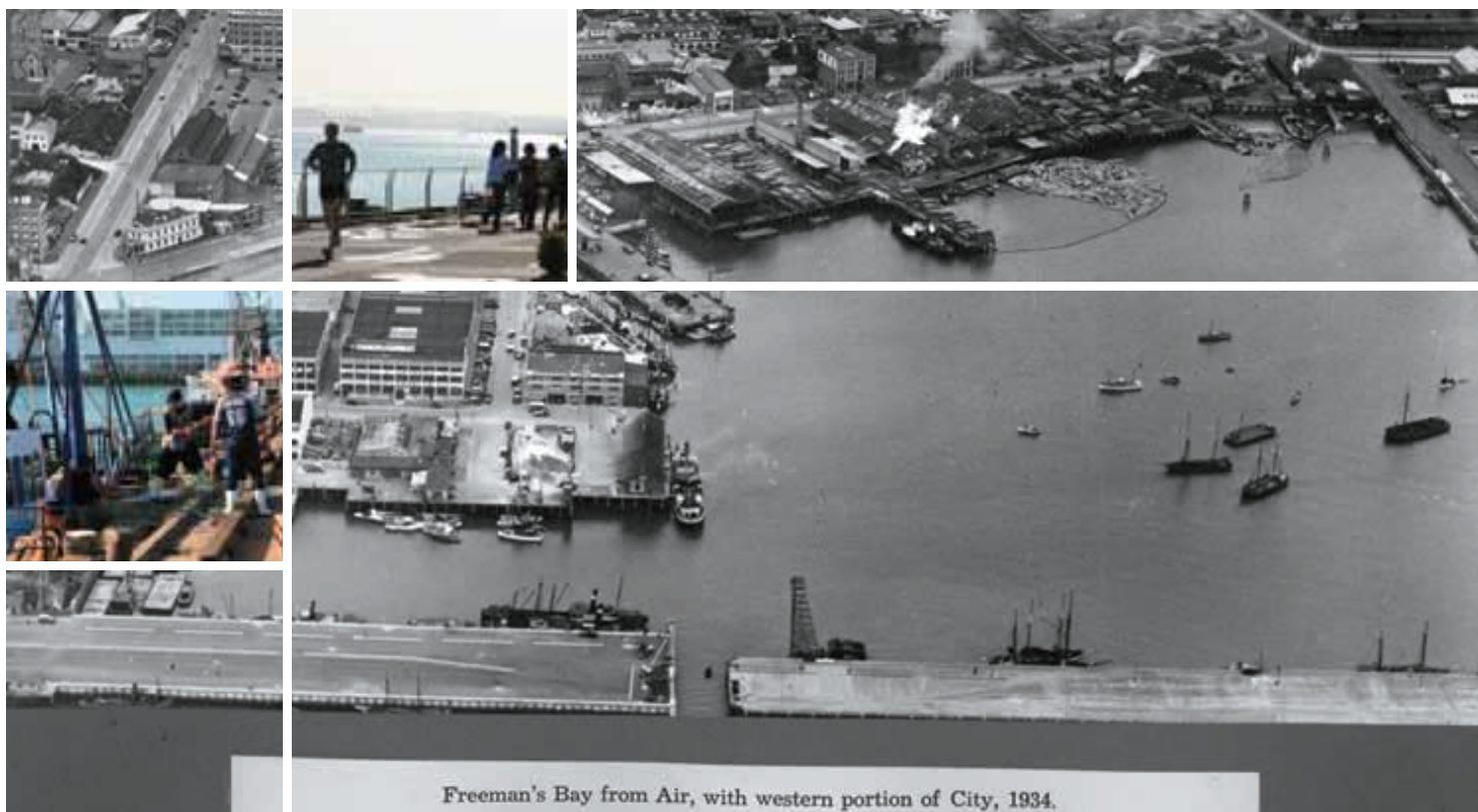
- The Viaduct Harbour has hosted the Whitbread Round the World yacht races and its successor, the Volvo Ocean Race.
- Round the world alone races, Global Challenge, and other international races have been hosted at the Viaduct Harbour.
- The export of Kiwi sailors everywhere in the world and participating in every class of sailing event has put New Zealand on the international sailing map. Auckland is still known as the City of Sails.

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## Fishing industry

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- Sanford's fisheries has operated in the area since the early 1900s. They recently invested \$15 million in a new fish market development.
- Inshore fishing fleet was accommodated before, during and after America's Cup events.
- The fishing industry is a visible and tangible link to the heritage of the working waterfront.



4. *Auckland Waterfront Vision 2040* (published in December 2005 by Auckland City Council and Auckland Regional Council). *Market Economics, 2003, New Zealand Marine Industry Survey – Current Situation and Future Prospects.*

5. *The need for major outdoor events space in Auckland CBD*, Craig Wilson, Quality Tourism Development, June 2005

## 3.2 Auckland City Council's events strategy

The events strategy adopted by Auckland City Council in May 2005 aims to enliven the CBD through events and other activities.

The Viaduct Harbour is an important public open space and entertainment area in the CBD. As such, it will be a core component of achieving the objectives of the events strategy. Maritime events are one of the four key themes in Auckland City Council's events strategy. The strategy proposes 10 signature events annually.

Signature events make a significant contribution Auckland's events calendar. They help build a sense of place as a Pacific city. Signature events bring economic benefits and an international profile. They also contribute to building strong communities and people's connection to the city.

As part of the events strategy existing maritime events such as the Auckland International Boat Show will be helped to grow, while opportunities for new events will be identified and supported.

**The strategy also contains two venue-related actions:**

- Develop a purpose-designed large outdoor event space on the waterfront where events are the priority use.
- Develop and manage a marine events centre on the site of some of the former America's Cup bases and adjoining water space.

Research<sup>6</sup> shows that characteristics of an ideal outdoor events space for Auckland are:

- waterfront location
- available for daily recreation, e.g. jogging at lunchtime (part of an open space network)
- emotionally owned by Aucklanders, which can be reinforced by public art and design
- within the shadow or direct view of Auckland's icons, eg Rangitoto, the Sky Tower and the Harbour Bridge
- safe
- clear demarcation between vehicles and people
- recognised as the events space in Auckland city
- supported by permanent commercial infrastructure, eg food and beverage outlets, tourist operations
- not restricted in its use by residential development
- flexible to use, eg as an amphitheatre with tiered seating as well as flat space
- easy transport access, public transport (ferry, train and bus) and convenient parking
- providing necessary utilities (power boxes with single and three phase) and water.

## 3.3 Public ownership of the Viaduct Harbour

The proposed marine events precinct stakes a claim on the Viaduct Harbour for public use and ensures the water's edge is secured as a public domain. All research undertaken on the waterfront shows improving public access to the waterfront is a strong community desire.



6. *The need for major outdoor events space in Auckland CBD*, Craig Wilkson, Quality Tourism Development, June 2005

## 4.0 What will a marine events precinct consist of?

- A unique mix of public space, built facilities, berths and water space.
- An active water's edge as part of a working waterfront.
- Its spaces will cater for a whole host of moderate to large events.
- A people place, with public access and involvement at the forefront of its design.
- An accessible area, connected to the CBD and transport hubs.
- A venue that will attract a wide variety of events, exhibitions and functions throughout the year.

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### Design

Flexibility of the public water and building space is critical to the success of the marine precinct as an appealing events venue.

The precinct's water spaces, public space and buildings need to provide what's required for:

- a mix of covered and open events and exhibitions, working space, media centres, sponsor and hospitality areas
- a back room event operations and management
- an on-the-water events and exhibitions.

The precinct's flexibility will be enhanced by the use of temporary and permanent structures for:

- displays, trade shows and exhibition space
- performance space
- media centre and other backroom event activities
- sponsor hospitality.

It must meet the unique needs of every event. The following are just some of the facilities that a large event such as an International Boat Show would have to consider providing.

#### Public

- Exhibitions
- Grandstands/concert stage
- Toilets
- Children's activity zone
- Food and beverage outlets
- Berths for public

#### Crews

- Sailing compound
- Race boat berthage
- Media centre
- Media vessel berthage
- Race management offices

#### Sponsors

- Hospitality
- Charter berthage
- Exhibitions
- Exhibitor parking

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### Location

To make this purpose-built venue a success for marine-related events, the precinct will be located right on the waterfront on the site of Halsey Wharf and the Western Viaduct Wharf. The beautiful harbour views at this location are also expected to attract a variety of non-marine events.

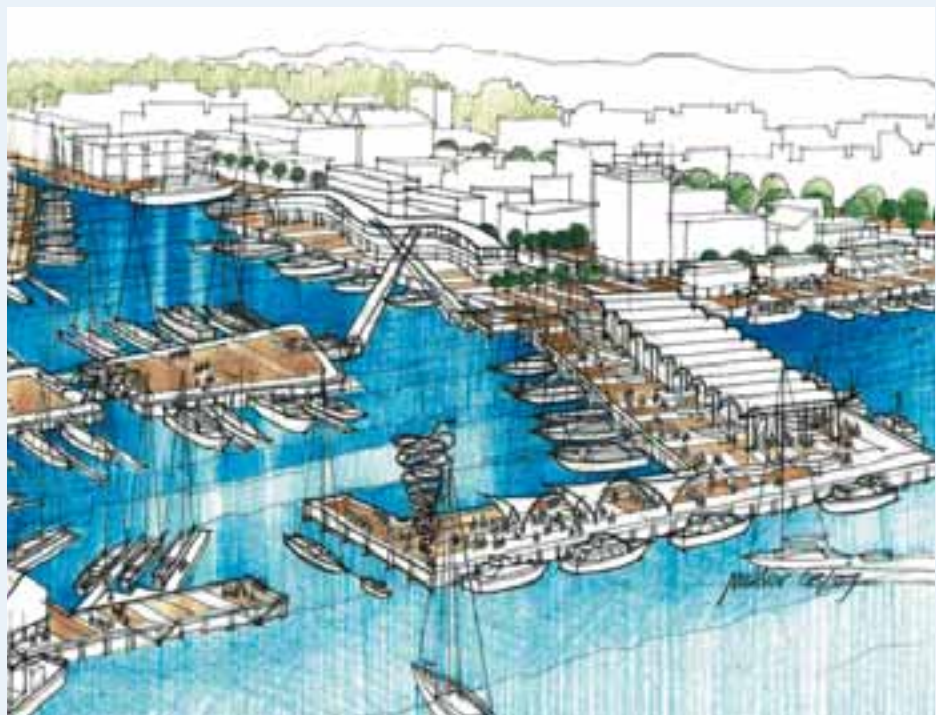
This location will also be next to the newly developed Wynyard Quarter – with its planned retail areas and parks – and the Viaduct Harbour's restaurants and accommodation.

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### Size

The marine events precinct will consist of a versatile building for hosting the events, a large public plaza in front of the built facility and temporary outdoor display areas.

- Total marine events precinct area: 17,000 m<sup>2</sup>.



Artist's impression: Viaduct Harbour and marine events precinct, Moller Architects

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## Building concept

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Auckland City Council is looking to design an attractive, semi-transparent building to allow light into the precinct and to reflect its maritime location.

Therefore, the concept for the permanent events building has to be versatile enough to meet different requirements.

The idea is to split the building into two main areas:

- The plaza-end of the building is likely to have two to three floors to help accommodate a range of event facilities such as media centres, small corporate functions and exhibitions, toilets, food and beverage outlets and viewing balconies.
- The harbour-end of the building is likely to be its full 11m height. This enables it to house race yachts and large boats, as well as cater for events such as the Air New Zealand Fashion Week or food and wine, travel, cultural and fishing expos, or corporate events and sporting functions that require a significant amount of space.

Balconies around the outside of the building will overlook the plaza and the water. This will make it easier to watch match racing, or simply enjoy the coming and goings of the marina and the stunning views of the surrounding harbour.

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## Timeframe

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Auckland City Council aims to have the city's marine events precinct ready for the start of the Rugby World Cup in 2011.

Buildings constructed on the site would contribute to the staging of the 2010 America's Cup, including pre-cup regattas in Auckland should Emirates Team New Zealand be successful in Valencia.

Concept designs will be on display over the next few months and feedback sought from the public.

Given our deadline, we expect construction to start around 2009 and we will be working towards completing the work by 2010.

## 4.1 Who will own the marine events precinct?

As part of the development of Wynyard Quarter, Auckland City Council will have ownership of the marine events precinct site, which includes the building and its forecourt. The council will also own the water space adjacent to Halsey Street Wharf and will continue to manage the water space around Te Wero Island.

## 4.2 Access to water and public spaces

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### Public spaces

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Another factor crucial to the marine events precinct's success will be opening up the public access to the waterfront.

- Wide boardwalks will encompass the precinct and make the area more accessible to visitors to the events.
- The promenades will make the area more appealing for local runners, walkers and cyclists
- A large plaza at the entrance to the events centre will create an attractive open space. It will also be able to hold temporary structures such as:
  - market stalls and outdoor cafes
  - marquees for exhibitions such as cars and boats
  - event support space and displays
  - public exhibitions and concerts
  - education programmes.
- During events, a lively atmosphere can be created within the plaza by filling the space with entertainment such as such as acrobats, jugglers and bands.
- A striking sculpture will mark the entrance to the Viaduct Harbour.

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### Working water space

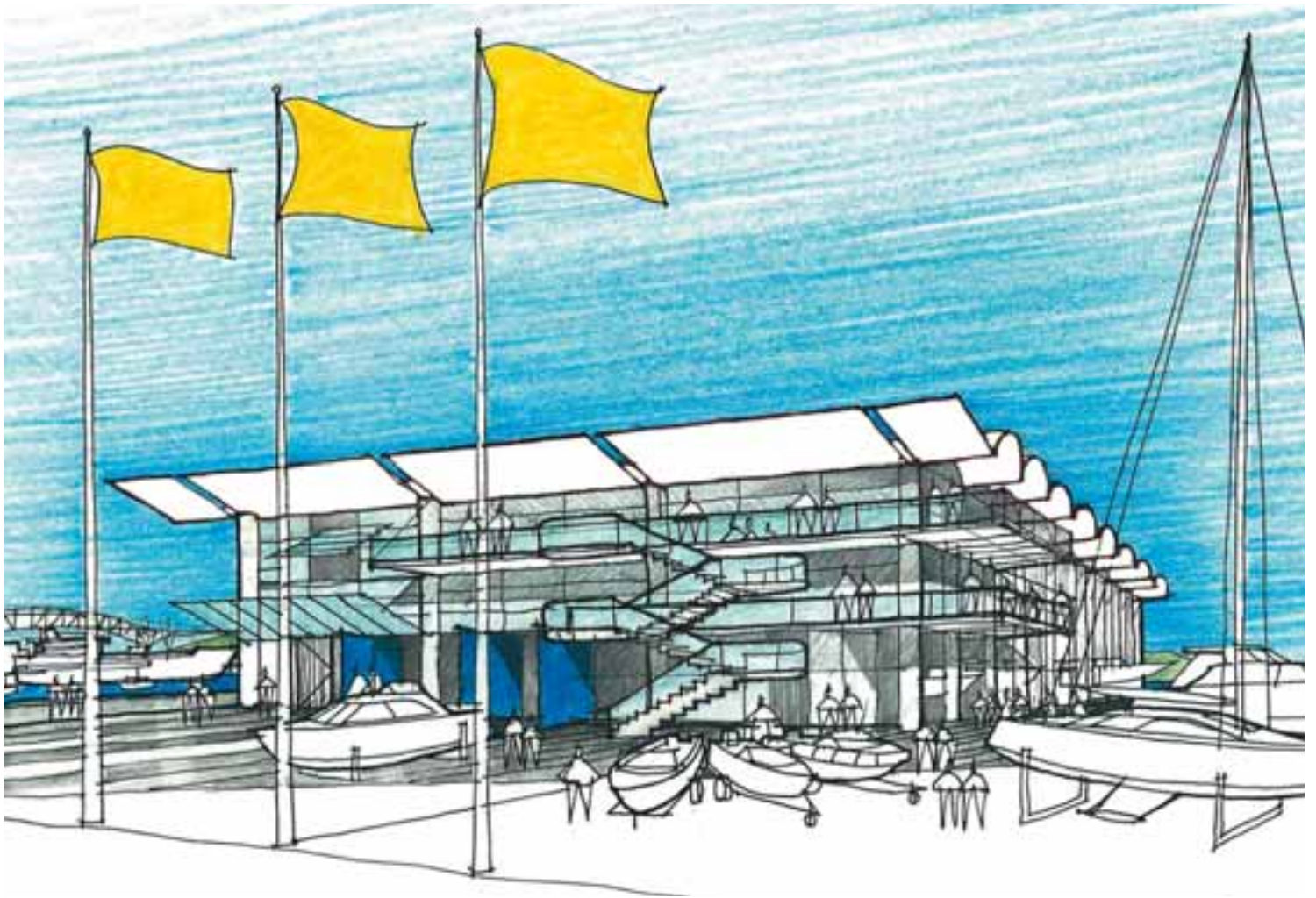
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The water space in the Viaduct Harbour is sheltered and close to the city. It provides easy access to the Waitemata Harbour and the Hauraki Gulf. The precinct's berthage and pontoons will:

- provide extra water-based space for marine events
- accommodate appropriate berthing of race boats, support vessels and luxury and super yachts
- provide infrastructure to haul boats in and out of the water
- be a working yard for race boat maintenance.

The marine events precinct will also:

- maximise the room for vessel maintenance, refits and commissioning of new vessels, mast maintenance close to the precinct
- remain in close proximity to the marine servicing industries
- integrate with local charter and fishing fleets as well as tourism operators as part of a working wharf.



Artist's impression: plaza at the entrance to the marine events centre, Moller Architects.



Artist's impression: side view of the marine events centre from Te Wero Island, Moller Architects.

## 5.0 Conclusions

A world-class marine events precinct in the heart of the city will secure Auckland's place on the international marine events calendar.

- It will enhance the vitality and identity of Auckland's CBD and its waterfront.
- This venue will provide increased activity around the Viaduct Harbour area, enable attractive and easy access to the waterfront and will contribute to an event-friendly, exciting city.
- The precinct will showcase Auckland's maritime history and internationally renowned marine industry.
- Auckland City Council has secured a key waterfront location for the public.

CITY OF SAILS

53 VOLCANOES

ALL THAT  
LOW LAND  
+ HIGH SKY +  
WIDE WATER

PROJ  
2009  
06/07