

COMMUNITY

OTUAWHAKI VISITORS CENTRE, WHAKATANE

Located on a prominent site at the eastern end of the town's commercial district, the new visitors' centre overlooks the Whakatane river and its mouth to the sea.

The client's simple brief required the relatively small building to be prominent for residents and visitors to the district, but have minimal impact on existing views and the landscaped site on the river's stop-bank. Its main functions were to provide a visitor information centre on the upper level, and public toilet facilities and luggage storage on the lower level adjacent to the tourist coach stop. The centre was designed to maximise the lovely views of the river to the north, while providing sun and wind protection to the outdoor public terrace overlooking the river.

The form of the building is a simple curve responding to both the curving road in front of the site and the meandering river behind. A flat roof limited the height of the building and hence its impact on views. Extensive glazed canopies, verandas and fabric sunshades help bring the building to life and give it the required 'prominence' sought by the brief.

NZIA Resene Waikato, Bay of Plenty Local Architecture Award 2003



Otuwhaki

visitor centre