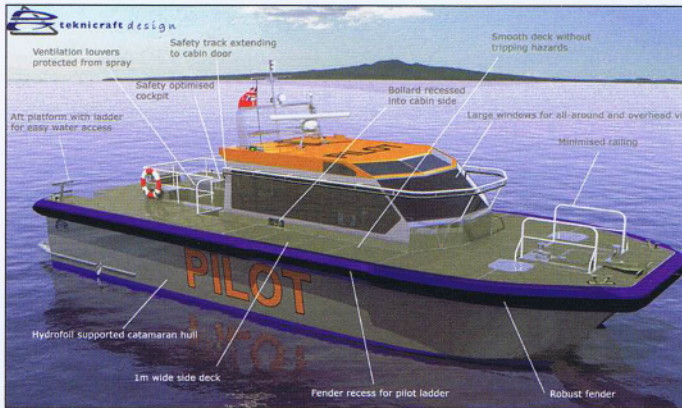


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Q-West begins work on catamaran pilot boat for Ports of Auckland

Whanganui-based Q-West Boat Builders has a long and established history of producing pilot vessels, some of which are still in use after over 26 years of continuous operations.



While foil assisted catamarans are not a new type of vessel for Q-West to construct, the Teknicraft Design catamaran currently under construction for Ports of Auckland in New Zealand is the first they have built specifically as a pilot vessel. In its specifications for a new pilot vessel, Ports of Auckland required a craft to meet its exacting pilotage requirements in all weather conditions, something its existing vessels are not always capable of.

Foil assisted catamarans are ideal for ports which involve long distances to deliver pilots as they offer significantly lower fuel consumption and higher operational speeds. With a 30-knot operational speed and pilot transfer speed of up to 14 knots, this innovative design also offers exceptional stability, sea keeping, large deck areas and manoeuvrability. Using existing Teknicraft catamarans, it has already been demonstrated that this hull is significantly more predictable and stable when coming alongside a ship, and can hold station and depart without having to counteract interference forces between the pilot boat and the ship.

The vessel is fitted with a lightweight composite fender system and a combination of Scania marine engines and Hamilton water jets with the Blue Arrow control system.

Blue Arrow allows operators to harness the full maneuvering benefits of waterjets by providing simple control of engine throttle, gearbox and waterjet reverse and steering deflectors. The system incorporates single or twin waterjet units, jet control interfaces, engine throttle and gearbox control interfaces, together with helm station control devices.

Waterjet propulsion is becoming a generally accepted versatile system for pilot boats. In particular, the pin-point accurate manoeuvring control that the system offers enables the launch master to keep the pilot boat at a pre-determined distance from the ship significantly enhancing safety during pilot transfer.

Q-West Boat Builders has been quick to adapt new technologies and innovations in aluminium vessel construction, especially where these can impact on a vessel's 'whole-of-life' operating cost.

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