

5. STYX RIVER RESERVE PURCHASE

Officer responsible Parks & Water Services Manager	Author Bill Morgan, Property Consultant, DDI 941-8581
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The purpose of this report is to consider the purchase of a property at 51 Lower Styx Road for Esplanade Reserve and wetland habitat purposes.

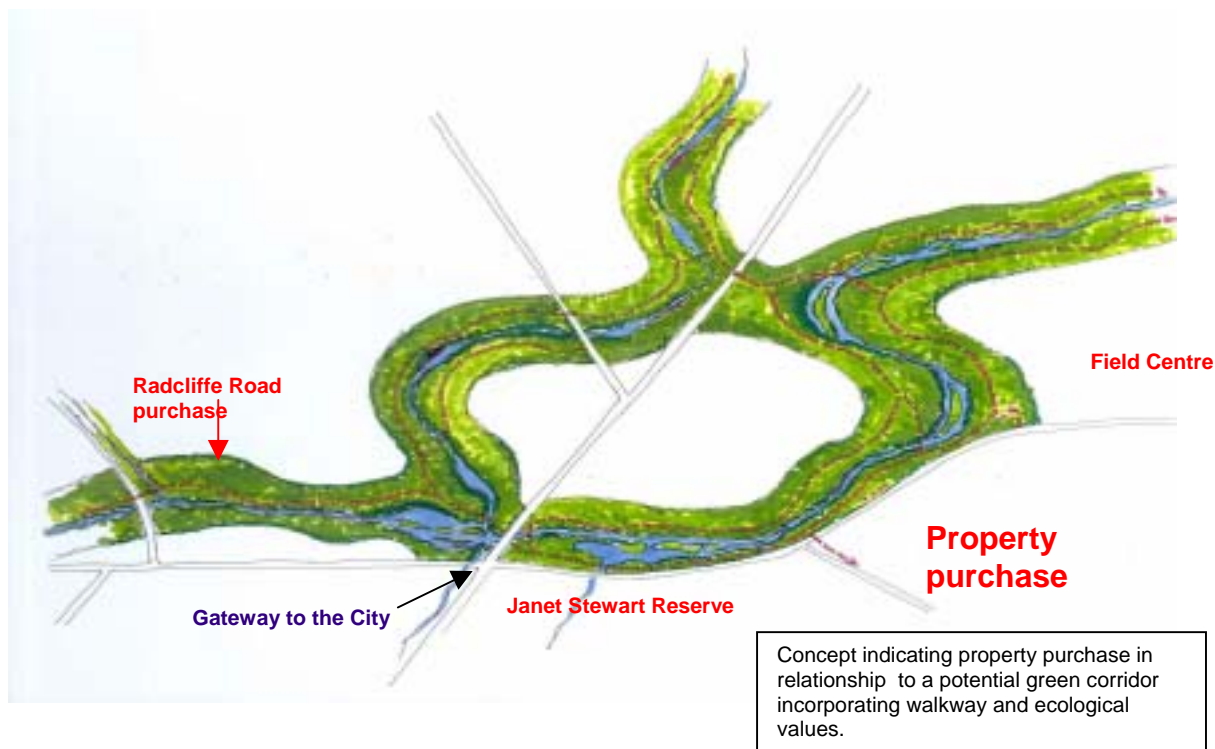
BACKGROUND

The Styx River, its associated tributaries and artificial waterways constitute one of the three major spring fed river catchments in the Christchurch area. The Styx River itself is 23.8 kilometres in length, extending from Nunweek Park to the east and flowing north-eastwards to the sea via Brooklands Lagoon and the Waimakairi River. The upper catchment flows partly through suburban areas but the majority flows through rural industrial (particularly S.M.A.C.K.S and Kaputone streams) and rural land uses. The largely rural landscape character associated with the Styx River gives this river its uniqueness. It also forms an important function as part of the natural drainage system of the northern part of the city. Various investigations indicate that it has high ecological landscape, recreational, cultural and heritage values.

The Styx River is given priority in the Strategic Open Space Strategy and the Waterways and Wetlands Natural Asset Strategy.

PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

The property is located on the north western side of Lower Styx Road 300 metres east of the intersection with Marshland Road.



Surrounding development comprises the Janet Stewart Reserve area to the immediate west, whilst to the north are a number of newly created lifestyle subdivisions. The total area is 6829m² with the property being irregular in shape with an extensive frontage to Lower Styx Road and the western boundary adjoining the Esplanade Reserve and the Styx River. Currently the owner of the property utilises the Esplanade Reserve which is fenced in with his property. The residence is sited to the southern end of the property and below the road level but is elevated sufficiently to avoid flooding and

has a pleasant outlook to the north over the river. The property is subdivided into three large paddocks and has adequate landscaping around the house.

The house contains a total floor area of 191m² being a two story gable roughcast residence, approximately 60 years old with the upper area being a more recent addition. The house contains a large open plan family room, a formal lounge, kitchen, main bedroom, bathroom and toilet with the first floor accommodation including four double bedrooms and a separate shower room and toilet. The property has been extensively refurbished in the past year, containing excellent fixtures and fittings. Other improvements on the property include a double and single garage, together with a carport, a covered swimming pool and two hay barns



Paddock indicating flooding during storm event (28 June 2002).
The photo has been taken from Lower Styx Road. The house is located in the top left hand corner.

GENERAL

The purchase of this property is consistent with the Waterways and Wetlands Asset Management Strategy and the Vision 2000-2040 for the Styx River both having been adopted by the Council.

Vision 1, the creation of a source to sea experience indicated under Key Actions the need to identify and protect suitable walking routes along the Styx River. The purchase of this property will enable the progressive development of a walkway along the Styx River. It will link up with other Council owned property, both upstream (Janet Stewart Reserve) and downstream of the property (Styx Field Centre).

Vision 2, the development of a living laboratory identifies the need to develop an on-site research centre through the acquisition and development of a building that can provide a laboratory suitable for analysis of results, facilities for class and student visits, library, interpretation facilities and plant nursery. The buildings located on the adjoining property which was purchased last year will provide a suitable site for such activities. In the long term the house situated on the property under consideration could form part of the Styx Field Centre Complex, due to its close proximity to the building at 75 Lower Styx Road.

Concept



A steering group consisting of representatives from the Christchurch City Council, Environment Canterbury, NIWA Landcare Research, University of Canterbury, Lincoln University and the Guardians of the Styx are currently developing a long term management structure and research programme that will involve tertiary and school students as well as the wider community. The group is also investigating ongoing funding to ensure the long term viability of the project.

VALUATION AND SETTLEMENT

The property is currently on the market through Harcourts Real Estate with the owners looking for a reasonably long possession date in order to enable them to complete the building of their new home. To assess the property value the Council engaged the services of Ford Baker, Registered Public Valuers, the details of which are included within the Public Excluded section of this report. Agreement has been reached with the owner to acquire the property on the basis of a 10% deposit being payable once the contract becomes unconditional with the balance being payable on 3 July 2003. Following settlement the owner has reserved the right to remain in the property under a tenancy agreement at a rental of \$400 per week.

SOURCE OF FUNDS

Sufficient funds are available in the 2002/2003 programme for the deposit payable with the balance being available from the 2003/2004 budget.

Ongoing property costs including insurance, rates and maintenance will be offset by the rent and any additional sums provided from the operational budget of Parks and Waterways.

Staff

Recommendation: That the above property be acquired on the terms and conditions outlined above and on the terms and conditions contained in the Public Excluded section of the report.

Chairman's

Recommendation: That the above recommendation be adopted.