

7. CANTERBURY SOCIETY OF MODEL AND EXPERIMENTAL ENGINEERS LEASE APPLICATION FOR ADDITIONAL BUILDING

Officer responsible Parks and Waterways Manager	Author Rod Whearty, Parks and Waterways Area Advocate, DDI 941-6510
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The purpose of this report is to approve an application from the Canterbury Society of Model and Experimental Engineers (CSMEE) to lease approximately 2375 square metres of Halswell Domain on which to construct a storage/workshop and scale railway platform. In addition to the proposed lease area the report also contains a proposal to grant the CSMEE a Licence to lay track in other areas of the park. The Community Board have the delegated authority from Council to make this decision.

INTRODUCTION

CSMEE has made an application to the Parks and Waterways Unit for a lease/licence to develop a ground level model railway track on Halswell Domain within part of the area previously leased by the Halswell Pony Club. The current proposal is the first stage in a multi-staged project that would ultimately see the CSMEE relocating their entire operation from Andrews Crescent in Spreydon to Halswell Domain, over a number of years.

BACKGROUND AND PREVIOUS COUNCIL APPROVAL

On 13 April 1999 the Area Parks Officer reported to the Spreydon Heathcote Community Board recommending that CSMEE be granted a lease over part of the Marylands Reserve. The Society had outgrown the site in Andrews Crescent, which they have occupied for the past 50 years. Although CSMEE is the largest model engineering club in New Zealand, Christchurch has never been able to host the biannual National Model Engineers Convention due to insufficient space and facilities.

The intention was to initially establish basic facilities and a ground level 7.25 inch rail track, and transfer other activities from Andrews Crescent as time and finances permitted. The Spreydon Heathcote Community Board's recommendation, was approved by Council on 22 April 1999.

The Board report gave the reasons for the move as increasing membership (currently 170), larger and more complex models being made by members and most importantly an inability to accommodate the increasing numbers of public visiting the complex during open weekends, normal Sunday running, and conventions.

The Society has some \$400,000 worth of development and facilities built up over 50 years which would be quite impractical, both physically and financially to move in one operation.

The CSMEE current lease at the Andrews Crescent site has 15 years to run and the intention was, and still is to select a new location close enough to be able to operate both sites during a staged transfer which could take place during the remaining term of the lease. Marylands was seen as a suitable location being only a few minutes from Andrews Crescent.

EVENTS SINCE COUNCIL APPROVAL

Council approval was subject to the standard set of conditions i.e. Resource Consent, Building Consents, Reserves Act approvals etc and by May 2000 the Society had obtained a Resource Consent approval for their Marylands Reserve proposal.

Having met the Council's conditions they applied for and received approval to host the 2004 National Convention. As it would take some 3 years to develop facilities at Marylands Reserve to convention standard, materials for these were ordered and work was ready to commence by June 2000.

In July 2000 the Property Unit (formalising the lease agreement) advised that Marylands Reserve was owned by Transit NZ and Council could not grant the Society a lease. All work on the relocation ceased at that point.

The background to the above is that Marylands Reserve was part of a joint development by the Waimairi District Council, the Catholic Church and Transit NZ in the 1970s. Waimairi administered the reserve prior to amalgamation but never obtained title as Transit were unwilling to transfer the land until all the work on this part of the Southern Motorway is completed.

This setback, due to a Council error, partly caused by a Government Gazette technicality, was accepted, with concern by the society. The Council Legal Services Manager, Peter Mitchell, suggested a temporary lease or licence to cover the situation until title was obtained but this was not acceptable to either the Society or Transit.

The CSMEE advised they had arranged for a North Island group to host the 2004 Convention and provisionally offered to host the 2006 Convention and are continuing to work towards that. In the meantime resources, (made up track) are being stored until suitable land is found.

The CSMEE recently held a meeting of its members where it was agreed that the society would make a formal application to commence establishing their activities at Halswell Domain. The CSMEE is hopeful that the Council will look favourably on their current application and wish to emphasise the following points.

- It was in 1997 approximately that the initial approach was first made to the CCC for a site.
- Marylands was initially offered by Council as their preferred option.
- The Society has met the previous Council conditions for a lease.
- They have incurred the following costs
 - \$1500 Resource Consent
 - \$12,000 materials for facilities (Currently in storage).
- While some grants have been used to purchase materials there is a \$40,000 grant outstanding from the Community Trust which will be lost if not uplifted by April 2003. The loss of the Community Trust grant would be disastrous for the CSMEE and would result in having to forgo the 2006 Convention.
- Having had to decline one convention in Christchurch it would save considerable embarrassment not to have to cancel the 2006 one, but time is running out as there is a 3 year lead time required.
- The CSMEE is not seeking any financial assistance from Council, just the land.

LOCAL IDENTITY

The Model Engineers have had an association with the south of the City for almost 60 years. For practical and historically reasons mentioned above, they seek Council approval to ensure they remain in the area. They have previously negotiated in good faith for a larger site but due to circumstances beyond their control this has not been possible after approximately 5 years.

Although material costs have been incurred, these will still be able to be used when a suitable location is found.

SITE CRITERIA

CSMEE have considered several alternative sites for their development over the years. Examples included Ferrymead and Travis Wetland and more recently the former A and P site at Canterbury Park. However these sites were not considered suitable for a variety of reasons. Any potential site must be within a reasonable distance of their existing facilities at Andrews Crescent and have the potential for further development in the future.

Halswell Domain meets the CSMEE's main criteria of proximity to their present location with potential for further development. The natural contours of the Halswell Domain site, which includes a retention basin, lends itself to providing a very attractive route for a scenic model railway.

CLUB ACTIVITIES AND OPERATING HOURS

The CSMEE was established in the late 1940s at its existing site in Andrews Crescent and currently has around 170 members. Over the years the society has expanded and at one point they purchased the neighbouring property with their own funds and gifted the property to Council to be amalgamated with the existing reserve. During this time members have developed a model railway based on a 3.5 inch and 5 inch track on the site which includes extensive tracks, tunnel, bridge, boating pond, plus clubrooms, boathouse, covered steaming bays and two covered stations.

Members of the CSMEE interests are predominantly 'railway' (particularly scale live steam) but also include steam road vehicles, all aspects of miniature and model engineering, tool making, clock making and scale model boats.

CSMEE usually operates two Sundays per month with two major weekends a year, to which the public are welcome to attend. The society often provide activities and rides for children's birthday parties etc for no charge, unfortunately they are unable to accommodate every request, because the demand far exceeds the societies resources and available time. Occasionally there may be exclusive club functions but these are generally rare. Club days may change if they go to Halswell Domain to take advantage of the sporting activities, which generally take place on a Saturday.

The worldwide trend for model railways is towards a larger 7¼ inch track and without one, the CSMEE will find it difficult to attract new members or hold national conventions. They are not able to build a 7¼ inch track upon their present site because it is too small and fully developed.

SITE SUITABILITY

The Parks and Waterways Unit proposes to develop the area previously leased to the Halswell Pony Club predominantly for passive recreation opportunities. The Halswell Domain and Sports Association is made up of representatives from all the sports clubs based on the park, and in addition includes representatives from the Halswell Residents Association. This group has had regular meetings with Parks and Waterways Staff and elected members over the past 2-3 years providing feedback and input into the design and layout of the park. The passive recreation focus is endorsed and supported by the Halswell Domain and Sports Association.

The CSMEE presented their proposal to the Halswell Domain and Sports Association at the Halswell Bowling Club on 2 July 2002. The CSMEE outlined their proposal for the site, which was well received. The model railway concept and associated activities in this part of the park was unanimously supported by those present and seen as in keeping with the passive concept for that part of the park.

The operation of the model railway during the weekend will have no adverse impact on other sporting activities on the park. A site plan showing the proposed leased area will be tabled at the meeting.

CURRENT PROPOSAL

As a first stage, the CSMEE propose to install a single track laid on a base course of crusher dust 1 metre wide for 5 inch and 7 ¼ inch locomotives with a total length of approximately 700 metres (a plan will be tabled at the meeting).

The Halswell Rugby League Club has offered CSMEE the temporary use of their building, which they recently purchased from the Halswell Pony Club to assist the society becoming established upon the park. Following the installation of the initial track they propose to construct a workshop and associated steaming bays as well as a small railway platform area.

In the longer term it is envisaged that clubrooms facilities, additional tracks and a boating pond will be developed as the club gradually shifts its activities on Halswell Domain. Future developments will be addressed through specific reports outlining the specific proposal details at the time of the proposed additions.

The Parks and Waterways Unit proposes to grant a lease to the CSMEE only for the areas occupied by their buildings and the area immediately surrounding those buildings. This will require around 2375 square metres by the time all the clubs activities are relocated to the park.

The remainder of the area and associated tracks will remain open and freely available to the public. This is the same as many other parks in New Zealand and overseas where the bulk of the track is on public land over which the public has continual access. Barrier arms will not be necessary as the trains travel at a maximum speed of 8 km per hour and can easily stop for pedestrians or vehicles.

PROPOSED LEASE/LICENSE AGREEMENT

The intention is to lease the total area that will ultimately be required by the CSMEE for their activities when they have relocated their total operation to Halswell Domain and this is the only area that will be fenced. The total proposed leased area is approximately 2375 square metres. This will allow the CSMEE to undertake developments within the leased area during the relocation phase without the need to re-notify lease extensions and the associated advertising and Ministers Consent.

There are still safe-guards with this approach as all proposals to construct buildings within the leased area will still require Council approval at the time of the proposed development. The first stage is the locomotive storage and steaming bays/marshaling area which will cover an area of approximately 150 square metres.

The total area previously occupied by the Halswell Pony Club to be reintegrated back into the park is 4.2 hectares. The CSMEE proposed leased area of approximately 2375 square metres does not unduly compromise the original 4.2 hectare site. The Parks and Waterways Unit does not believe there will be any detrimental impact to other recreational opportunities or park users through granting a lease for exclusive use over the 2375 square metre area.

The other areas of the park where the CSMEE will be laying their tracks will be covered through a license agreement. The license will give the society the ability to lay tracks in areas of Halswell Domain as approved by the Parks and Waterways Manager. This is similar to sports clubs usage of parks where the lease covers the building only and the clubs use of the playing fields are covered through a ground allocation. This has the major advantage of allowing maximum public usage of these areas outside the times of normal club activities.

The Parks and Waterways Unit proposes the following Lease/License terms and conditions.

1. The site containing their buildings would be leased to the CSMEE, on terms to be negotiated by the Property Manager on behalf of the Parks and Waterways Manager, for an initial period of 10 years with the right of renewal for a further term of 10 years less one day subject to the following conditions:
 - (a) Public notification and subsequent approval by the Minister of Conservation;
 - (b) The CSMEE to obtain all necessary Resource and Building Consents before any development commences on the site;
 - (c) The design, appearance and construction of any CSMEE buildings are to be approved by the Parks and Waterways Manager or her designate prior to construction commencing upon the site.
 - (d) The CSMEE is to be responsible for any landscaping (if any) that is required by the Parks and Waterways Manager or her designate, around the building at the Club's cost.
 - (e) CSMEE is to show proof of having obtained \$1,000,000 public liability insurance (copy of policy) to the Parks and Waterways Policy and Leasing Administrator, which is to be kept current during the entire lease/licence period.
 - (f) The CSMEE is to liaise with the Parks and Waterways Unit's representative (Parks and Waterways Area Advocate, Sockburn) to ascertain site requirements prior to letting any tenders for the construction of the new facilities at Halswell Domain Park.
 - (g) The CSMEE, or successful contractor is to pay a \$2,000 bond to the Christchurch City Council via the Parks & Waterways Area Advocate – Sockburn, prior to obtaining access to the site to construct the Workshop/Station/Steaming Bays. The bond less any expenses incurred by the Council will be refunded to the payee upon completion of the site work, which includes leaving the site clean and tidy.
 - (h) The leased area being maintained by CSMEE in a safe and tidy condition at all times;
 - (i) All costs associated with the issue of the lease, development and subsequent maintenance of buildings, track, structures or amenities on the site are to be paid for by the CSMEE;
 - (j) The CSMEE is not to commence operations until they have an Occupational Safety and Health Hazard Plan in place;
 - (k) This approval is to lapse if the CSMEE has not relocated or made substantial progress on the development of the site within three years of approval being granted.
2. A site use licence would be granted to the CSMEE for the purposes of laying model railway tracks subject to the following conditions.
 - (a) Public notification and approval by the Minister of Conservation.
 - (b) The CSMEE is not to erect tracks or other structures on the site without prior consultation with and approval of the Parks and Waterways Manager.
 - (c) That the CSMEE to maintain a 600 mm mown strip on both sides of the track or in any other areas around the track which the Parks Maintenance Contractor is unable to access. The mown strip is to be maintained to the same standard as other grass areas immediately adjacent as specified in the Parks Maintenance Contract.

- (d) The CSMEE is to maintain all permanent tracks or structures within the licensed area in a safe and tidy condition at all times.
- (e) The licence agreement is to include a clause, that the CSMEE indemnifies the Council and its servants from all claims or demands of any kind, and from all liability in respect to any damage or injury occurring to any person or property as a result of their activities upon the site.
- (f) That CSMEE is to show proof to the Parks and Waterways Policy and Leasing Administrator that the \$1,000,000 public liability insurance policy does cover it for use of the public ground allocated area.
- (g) The Council reserves the right to alter the ground area allocated to the CSMEE from time to time to recognise changes in recreational needs and use of the area.
- (h) That CSMEE is to obtain a building consent, or obtain a structural engineers certificate before commencing construction of any structures (bridges, viaducts, tunnels etc) as approved by the Parks & Waterways Manager.
- (i) This licence will be automatically revoked upon the surrender, or withdrawal of the lease associated with this application.

CONCLUSION

The Parks and Waterways Unit has instructed City Solutions Senior Landscape Architect to draw up a detailed concept plan for this part of the park aimed at focusing on the passive recreation opportunities including the integration of the CSMEE activity within that part of the park.

In New Zealand and overseas there are many examples where model and narrow gauge railways are successfully integrated into passive recreation areas, as is model boating. Reserve areas can be considerably enhanced through good landscape design and enhancement providing alternative recreational opportunities and experiences for other park users and local residents alike.

The Parks and Waterways Unit supports the CSMEE application to relocate to Halswell Domain and will be putting the following recommendation to the Riccarton/Wigram Community Board for approval.

- Recommendation:**
1. That the Riccarton/Wigram Community Board approve the Canterbury Society of Model and Experimental Engineers Inc. application to lease approximately 2375 square metres of Halswell Domain pursuant to Section 54 (1) (b) of the Reserves Act, for an initial term of 10 years, with the right of renewal for a further term of 10 years less one day for the purpose of constructing and operating a model railway track and associated activities subject to conditions 1(a) – 1(k) as outlined in the report.
 2. The Riccarton/Wigram Community Board approve the granting of a site use licence under section 54 (1) (c) of the Reserves Act 1977 to the CSMEE for the purpose of laying tracks in the areas allocated to them by the Parks & Waterways Manager, subject to conditions 2(a) to 2(i) outlined in the report above.

Chairperson's

Recommendation: That the officer's recommendations be adopted.