

13. CHINESE GARDENS, HALSWELL QUARRY PARK

Officer responsible
Parks and Waterways Manager

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The purpose of this report is to inform the Community Board and the Parks, Gardens and Waterways Committee on the Chinese Gardens at Halswell Quarry Park.

SUMMARY

It is proposed to relocate the Chinese Gardens from their current location behind the old stone Singlemen's Quarters, to a new site on the northern flank of the Park.

Discussions are being held with the Christchurch-Gansu- Friendly Relations committee to progress this proposal, and a PIL will be produced to inform key stakeholders and the wider public.

CONTEXT

The Chinese garden is one of the six Sisters Cities Gardens established by the Sister Cities Gardens Committee of Turning Point 2000. The garden site is immediately behind the historic stone Singlemen's Quarters, which is now used as the information centre. The area has a heritage rating under the City Plan. The Christchurch-Gansu- Friendly Relations committee has been working with the Parks and Waterways Unit to construct a Chinese style gate on this site since the gardens' establishment. During this time a number of structural re-designs and proposals have taken place to attempt to fit the proposed structure in the site without detracting from the heritage and landscape values. This has not been achievable to the satisfaction of the committee or Parks staff. The current proposal is to relocate the Chinese gardens to a site that is removed from the historic buildings.

CURRENT PROPOSAL

The new site proposed is adjacent to the Seattle and Kurashiki gardens on the north eastern side of the Park. This new site for a Sister City garden has the advantages of:

- Less conflict with heritage values,
- Better soils, plants are of such a size they are able to be transplanted to the new site
- Growth is expected to be quicker due to more available moisture
- New garden design is possible
- No removal of significant plants is necessary
- The garden can be created here without impacting on the access up and down the valley
- The garden is still contiguous with the other sister City gardens, allowing good access from one garden to the other.

The site currently occupied by the Chinese garden would be managed to reflect the heritage values, ie plans would be developed to reinstate the garden once grown by occupants of the old stone cottage.

Halswell Quarry Park is used and valued by residents throughout the City and locally. There are a number of groups, in addition to the Christchurch-Gansu Friendly Relations committee, which need to be informed on this proposal; (because it is beyond the scope of the management plan and because the council will be funding the relocation of the garden). They include the recently formed Friends of Halswell Quarry Park, Kennedys Bush Association, Halswell Residents' Association, the Christchurch Chinese community and other Sister City committees. Thus a communication plan will be developed to inform people on the proposal. The plan is likely to include a meeting with key interest groups, a media release and the production of an information leaflet.

CONCLUSION

The Christchurch-Gansu Friendly Relations Committee has worked with Parks and Waterways staff to attempt to make the proposed gate and courtyard fit into the existing allocated site, without impinging on the integrity of the gate design, and impacting on the heritage values of the Park. However this has not been possible and a solution is now proposed. This is to relocate the Chinese Sister City gardens to another site within the Park.

Before any further work is carried out, and the fundraising for the capital involved in the proposal is progressed, it is recommended that the community is now consulted.

The following recommendations will be considered by the Parks, Gardens and Waterways Committee and comment from our Community Board has been invited.

- The investigations continue to relocate the Chinese Garden to the North eastern sector of the Park
- That a communication plan be prepared to inform key stakeholders and the general public on the proposal
- Comments are to be sought city-wide as this is a metropolitan park that is used by residents throughout Christchurch.
- That the results of the consultation are brought back to the Parks, Gardens and Waterways committee.

Chairman's

Recommendation: That the report be received and any member's comments will be passed on to the Parks, Gardens and Waterways Committee.