

8. DUNCAN PARK HORSE DRESSAGE ARENAS

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The purpose of this report is to gain approval from Board members on the shifting and development of three horse dressage arenas to the entrance of Duncan Park, which are in a different location to that shown in the Duncan Park Management Plan (distributed with agenda).

BACKGROUND

Duncan Park (formerly known as Mary Duncan Park) is located adjacent to the Avoca Valley at 237-239 Port Hills Road. It is classified as a recreation reserve, and is managed by the Parks and Waterways Unit according to the Duncan Park Management Plan 1999. The Ferrymead Pony Club have a twenty-year lease over a good proportion of the Park, and this is defined in Appendix C of the Management Plan. Since 2000, an informal working group consisting of Ferrymead Pony Club members, Christchurch City Council staff, and Avoca Valley Stream Care Group members have been meeting on a regular basis to further the development proposals for the Park and the adjoining Avoca Valley Stream. The Working Group and Council staff have agreed to the shifting of the arenas, and funding is available for their development. A copy of the full Duncan Park Hearing report is attached for information.

PROPOSAL FOR NEW DRESSAGE ARENAS

The Ferrymead Pony Club approached Christchurch City Council in 2000 with a request to establish two main dressage arenas at the front entrance of the Park, in the area known as the Hospital Paddocks. The Pony Club proposed two 20 x 40 metre arenas (plus run-out areas), along with retention of the existing arena in the far south-west corner of the Park. A key reason for the Pony Club proposal in the frontage of the Park, rather than in the south-west corner identified in the Management Plan, was to better ensure the safety and security of young riders (through surveillance from Port Hills Road traffic), and to upgrade facilities required to host competitive horse eventing.

Council staff reviewed the proposal from the Ferrymead Pony Club and concluded that the placement of the arenas, plus a further arena (which would see all dressage arenas now moved to the Hospital Paddocks), was in keeping with the objectives of the Management Plan, including the need to open up the Park to the general public. Because space is limited at the Park frontage and the area is not considered as useful for access to the general public compared with the land in the south-west park, it was agreed to use the Hospital Paddocks for dressage arenas, ensuring, however, the retention of sufficient space for a cycle-walkway linkage to Horotane Valley and appropriate planting to complete full landscaping of the frontage (linked with the plantings at the Duncan Park entrance pond).

Discussions were also progressed with the Ferrymead Pony Club about the need to secure land between Horotane Valley and Duncan Park. Part of the proposed link is in private property to the east of the Duncan Park entrance pond. The owners have sought a "lease for lease" agreement with Council in order to secure an area of pines on the eastern slopes of Duncan Park, in return for the Council gaining land for the cycle-walk linkage in the frontage adjacent to the pond. The Ferrymead Pony Club have agreed to release to Council the area of pines which fall in their lease. More details on this proposal will be given in a separate Board report when negotiations have been completed. The Pony Club were also more willing to concede greater public space in the south-west as a consequence of the arena area being moved to the Port Hills Road frontage.

PROPOSED SITE WORKS

Council staff have proceeded to work with the Pony Club and working group on the dressage arena proposal, to secure resource consent, and create a design that meets the Management Plan objectives. Consultation has included neighbours and representatives from the Pony Club and Avoca Valley Stream Care Group.

The design of the arenas necessitates removal of some trees around the cottage (located near the pond entrance). These trees have been assessed by the Council's arborists as being of limited value, except for one younger, smaller oak of greater value on the western side of the new arena. Unfortunately, this single tree is situated within the proposed arena and cannot be retained for safety reasons. It will be replaced by a new oak in an appropriate area elsewhere in the frontage.

TIMING OF WORKS

Tenders will be called for works next month, and work will commence on site in late August/early September 2003. Once the arenas are completed, the Council will carry out further planting along the frontage consistent with the natural/historical features of the Park, retaining good visibility into the Park, and completing landscaping of the frontage. Improvements will be made to the public walking track around the perimeter of the Park, signage (including a good map) will be put in place, and the Park will be made more available to both Pony Club members and the general public.

Staff

Recommendation: That the Board approve the Working Group's agreement to move the location of dressage arenas to the entrance of the Duncan Park.

Chairman's

Recommendation: That the officer's recommendation be supported.