

5. WIGRAM RESERVE ACQUISITION AND CHRISTCHURCH CADET TRUST

RR 8859

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The purpose of this report is to consider the acquisition of a local purpose reserve in Wigram on the old airforce base. This reserve would then be leased to the Christchurch Cadet Trust.

INTRODUCTION

The Christchurch Cadet Trust has entered into an agreement to purchase the land on which a building they have purchased for \$30,000 is situated on the old Wigram Airbase from Wigram Aviation Ltd. (Ngai Tahu Property Trust). The Christchurch Cadet Trust has made application to the Christchurch City Council to acquire the land the Trust has agreed to purchase from Ngai Tahu being approximately 2,596 sq metres as part of the reserve contribution for the Wigram development (the draft subdivisional concept plan will be available at the meeting). If the Council approves this request then the Christchurch Cadet Trust wishes to lease the land for as long a period as possible from the Council.

HISTORY

Initially, two Air Training Corps units occupied an old building on a site off Duffek Crescent. When the King Edwards Barracks was closed two Army Training Corps Units joined them.

Prior to the closure of the Wigram Air Base the Trust had asked the Defence Department to include the former Navigation, Air, Electronics and Telecommunication Training Squadron School (NATTS) within the Air Force area for the Trust's use. However the Defence Department was not able to oblige. Ngai Tahu then offered the NATTS building and land to the Trust subject to them agreeing to purchase it. The Trust paid for the NATTS building. The Trust had intended to apply to the City Council for financial assistance to assist them to purchase the land.

BACKGROUND

The Trust negotiated with Ngai Tahu to purchase the NATTS building and the surrounding land (initially approx. 1800 square metres) for a total price of \$170,000. This consisted of \$30,000 for the buildings and \$140,000 for 1800 square metres of land.

This sale and purchase agreement is conditional on the land when surveyed being within 5% in area of the 1800 square metres. A deposit of \$30,000 was paid to Ngai Tahu on 29 May 1998 which secured the buildings. The payment of the deposit gave ownership of all the agreed buildings presently occupying the parcel of land to the Christchurch Cadet Trust.

The land has since been surveyed and found to be 2596 square metres in size, an increase of 796 square metres. Ngai Tahu have indicated that the purchase price will have to be adjusted upwards to compensate for the increased land area. The balance of the agreed purchase price is to be paid by 12 December 1999.

If the Council agrees to the Cadet Trust's application of using part of the reserve contribution accruing from the residential subdivision of the old airforce base for the retention of the 2596 sq. metres of land, the present Sale and Purchase agreement between Wigram Aviation Limited (Ngai Tahu) and the Christchurch Cadet Trust will require altering. Ngai Tahu have indicated that they will support this change in the agreement, and are in full support of this application to the Christchurch City Council.

It is proposed that the 2596 sq. metres of land be vested as reserve under the Reserves Act 1977 as Local Purpose Reserve "Community Buildings", and that it be leased to the Christchurch Cadet Trust for a period of 19 years and 364 days.

CHRISTCHURCH CADET TRUST

At the time of closure of the RNZAF Base at Wigram there were four Cadet Force Units, comprising some 250 cadets operating in premises on the Base (in 1998 there are 320 cadets). It became obvious that alternative accommodation would be required in the long term, to enable the operation of the Units to continue. Interested parties from all four units formed the Cadet Trust to find suitable accommodation. The Defence Department initially indicated that land would be available to the Trust to enable building of new headquarters. In early 1997 the Defence Department informed the Trust that they would not be able to make land available. After the sale of Wigram to the Ngai Tahu Trust the Christchurch Cadet Trust entered into an agreement with Ngai Tahu to purchase the parcel of land that has the buildings on it which are ideally suited to their requirements.

The Christchurch Cadet Trust was registered and incorporated under the Charitable Trusts Act 1957 and on 28 April 1995, was granted Charitable Trust status by the Inland Revenue Department under the Income Tax Act 1994. It administers overall running of the building and is responsible for fundraising on behalf of all four units to meet the initial purchase of the premises and the ongoing costs.

The Air Training Corps (ATC) and the Army Cadet Units have a long standing relationship with the local community, the former being established at Wigram in 1941 as a source of recruits for the Armed Forces during World War Two. Since then the organisation has evolved from being primarily Government funded to being community funded.

The ATC and Army Cadet Corps are a disciplined uniformed youth training organisation for young men and women from all walks of life aged between 13 and 18 with a current membership of 320. For the first time they have the space to cater adequately for the large number of cadets.

The aims of cadet training are to:

- Foster a spirit of adventure, teamwork, while developing qualities, which make good citizens and leaders.
- Instil in youth the importance of personal and collective responsibility.
- Be relative to both local community and the Armed Forces.
- Promote an awareness of the Armed Forces and their role in the community.

WIGRAM YOUTH ISSUES

An assessment of the need for an appropriate type of youth services in the Riccarton/Wigram Wards of the city was undertaken by Health Research Services in 1996. The aims of the ATC and Cadet Corps are to provide strong leadership programmes as well as life skills whilst providing the opportunity to experience positive forms of social interaction for local and city wide youth. These issues were highlighted in the study as being particularly important for the Riccarton/Wigram area.

BUILDING DESCRIPTION AND CURRENT USE

The NATTS building is L-shaped and consists of four storerooms, three classrooms, four officer areas, a training room, a planning room, committee room and parents lounge. Parents often wait for their children rather than returning home for a short duration, and therefore one room has been designated as the parent's room having tea and coffee making facilities. The building is ideal for the Trust's requirements, and will easily cater for the increase in members expected in 1999.

The Corps currently use the building four nights per week and day and night during the weekend. The building is therefore available for use by other community groups during weekdays. The Trust is currently seeking interest from other groups wishing to use the facilities during the week. These negotiations have not been completed.

PLANNED SITE IMPROVEMENTS

Part of the present building encroaching on the site is owned by Ngai Tahu, and is to be demolished by Ngai Tahu in the near future. Located in this building proposed for demolition are the current toilets which are situated on an adjacent property. The Christchurch Cadet Trust therefore plan to construct a toilet block for their building on the site.

The Trust has plans to construct a sealed parade ground with floodlights, and a sealed area for car parks outside the NATTS building. These improvements will not be commenced until the financial position of the Trust allows for these developments to be completed. The Trust wishes to obtain approval for the proposed toilet block and sealed car park at the time of signing the lease. The Christchurch Cadet Trust will meet all the costs of the above improvements.

WIGRAM FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

Ngai Tahu are keen to develop the Wigram Base for residential housing as soon as possible. Additional reserve contribution for further development will require addressing at a later stage when zoning issues are finalised. It is believed that while potentially reducing the reserve contribution towards the Village Green site by 2596 square metres, this will not significantly effect the value of this reserve.

The ongoing development of the urban area of Wigram will provide another local park and a larger sports park in the longer term; therefore the loss of 2,596 square metres is not significant.

PROPOSED LEASE AGREEMENT

It is proposed that the site be leased to the Christchurch Cadet Trust for a period of 19 years and 364 days subject to the following conditions:

1. The lease terms being negotiated by the Property Manager in consultation with the Parks Manager.
2. The Christchurch Cadet Trust obtaining the necessary resource and building consents before any building commences on the site.
3. Before any tenders are let or work commences on the site discussions being held with the Parks Manager's designate, the Area Parks Officer-Sockburn, to ascertain the Council's requirements through the development phase of the construction of the facility.
4. The area being maintained in a safe and tidy condition to the satisfaction of the Parks Manager or his designate at all times.
5. All costs associated with any development and subsequent maintenance of buildings on the site being paid for by the Christchurch Cadet Trust.

CONCLUSION

There is a trade off between community benefit and the size of the proposed Village Green at Wigram. If the Council approves this application to acquire the land by reserve contribution then the Christchurch Cadet Trust will enter into a contract to lease the land from the Christchurch City Council. The Cadet Trust has requested that this be for a greater period than 19 years 364 days.

There is a financial benefit to the Christchurch Cadet Trust to lease the land surrounding the NATTS building from the Council, rather than purchase it outright for their own use. There is no doubt the NATTS building is a significant asset catering for youth in the Wigram and wider metropolitan Christchurch being ideally suited for the Christchurch Cadet Trust's requirements. The ATC has a strong affiliation with the Aviation Museum, which is situated, close by. The Christchurch Cadet Trust is an organised group with strong, increasing membership which provides valuable training and leadership for the city's youth. By purchasing the building the Trust has shown its commitment to the future of the Cadet Corps.

While the Parks Unit's priorities are normally public parks and buildings ancillary to park use, the Christchurch Cadet Trust is a metropolitan group which it is considered provides value to the community which offsets the small investment in public open space in this case. This application is therefore supported by the Parks Unit subject to conditions-1-5 as outlined above.

The above report was considered and endorsed by the Riccarton/Wigram Community Board at its meeting on 18 November 1998.

- Recommendation:**
1. That the Council accept the vesting of 2,596 square metres of land being part of the reserve contribution from the residential development of the Wigram Base Stage II site as Local Purpose Reserve "Community Buildings".
 2. That the site comprising 2596 square metres be leased to the Christchurch Cadet Trust for a period of 19 years and 364 days subject to conditions 1 to 5 as outlined above.