

6. CHINESE GARDENS, HALSWELL QUARRY PARK

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The purpose of this report is to seek the Council's approval, as landowner, to the relocation of the Chinese Gardens at Halswell Quarry Park.

It is proposed to relocate the Chinese Gardens from their current location behind the old stone single men'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 parks information leaflet will be produced to inform key stakeholders and the wider public.

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 single men's quarters, which are now used as the information centre. This part of the park is an identified heritage rating in 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 were established. During this time a number of structural re-designs and proposals have taken place to attempt to fit the proposed structure on the site without detracting from the heritage and landscape values. This has not been achievable in such a way as to meet City Plan heritage requirements, nor 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 following advantages:

- It is not part of the heritage listed site
- 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 at the existing site 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 Council will be funding the relocation of the garden and the Sister City Committee will remain responsible for the gate.

The site currently occupied by the Chinese Gardens 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 which was not anticipated by the management plan. 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, the Council as landowner needs to give its approval.

Recommendation:

1. That the Council, as landowner, approve the relocation of the Chinese Sister City Gardens or any part thereof to an area within the land parcel PT RS 37434 as shown on the tabled plan.
2. That the Parks and Waterways Unit continue to work with the Christchurch-Gansu Friendly Relations Committee to relocate the Chinese Gardens to the northeast sector of the park.
3. That a communication plan be prepared to inform key stakeholders and the general public on the proposal.