

21. JOHN BRITTEN RESERVE CONCEPT PLAN - RESULTS OF COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

General Manager responsible:	General Manager City Environment
Officer responsible:	Greenspace Manager
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PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. The purpose of this report is to advise the Board of the results of the community consultation undertaken on the draft concept plan for John Britten Reserve and seek the Board's approval of the revised concept plan(refer attachment 1), amended following the community consultation.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2. At its meeting on 23 February 2005, the Board considered a report on the draft landscape plan for John Britten Reserve and resolved:

"That the landscape plan, as presented to the Board be released for public submissions and that the results be reported back to the Board"

3. The draft concept plan was distributed to local residents and interested stakeholders, including at the Mt Pleasant Community Centre and Ratepayers Association meeting and was available from local libraries and service centres. Information was provided in local newspapers, on a noticeboard on site and via the Council website, including visual and audio recordings of the proposed Aeolian harp. An open day was held on site which around a dozen people attended and at the home of the Aeolian harp creator, which attracted around 20 people.
4. 49 submissions were received on the draft concept plan. Feedback was encouraged in the areas of conservation management; tracks, car parks and picnic areas; Memorial to John Britten: Aeolian harp; Weirs Lookout: Plane table and the Upper Major Hornbrook Road linkage and these issues are discussed separately below.

5. Conservation Management

There was overwhelming support for the conservation management practices proposed, with one person objecting to the part removal of the macrocarpa shelter belt. The amount of dead and dying trees that will have to be removed has been reassessed at approximately 50% of the current shelter belt and has been amended on the revised concept plan. There were a number of offers to assist with any community planting days held.

6. Tracks

There was support for the tracks proposed, particularly the links they will provide to other parks and walkways in the Eastern Port Hills. There was almost completely even support and opposition for the tracks being shared use for walking and cycling. It would be likely that a much more extensive track would be needed for the shared use track to be sustainable in the long term and after considering that cyclists would have to join the road below John Britten Reserve anyway, it is now proposed to only designate the track parallel to Summit Road shared use and retain the two tracks down John Britten Reserve for walking only. The track parallel to Summit Road links with other cycling tracks in the area.

The main track to Weirs Lookout is to be called the Kenton Track (John Britten's middle name).

A rough track sidles along the side of Scotts Valley Reserve to link Major Hornbrook Reserve and John Britten Reserve, but many walkers take a short cut across private land instead. Depending on the future subdivision of this land between the two reserves, and decisions on the Major Hornbrook Road realignment, it may be desirable to obtain additional reserve land and a better walkway connection along the connecting flat saddle. But acquiring this land for an off road car park is no longer proposed, particularly as cars have been burnt here recently until earth mounds were built to prevent this. This acquisition was supported by some submitters.

7. Car parks and Picnic Areas

There was very strong support for providing a number of small car parks scattered around the park. A couple of submitters considered that the car park by Summit Road/Broadleaf Lane is too small, especially if more people are going to be attracted to Weirs Lookout. It is considered extremely difficult to create more parking here without building onto the flat area of the reserve, which was not supported. Instead access from the Summit Road/Mt Pleasant Road car park would be facilitated via the proposed track from this location. This will be the only enhancement to this car park. A couple of submitters were concerned about the use of car parks at night or wanted additional parking at the end of Major Hornbrook Road or near Longridge Drive (if land was acquired here). With the substantial on road parking available on Upper Major Hornbrook Road, it is not considered necessary to provide more parking on reserve land. Picnic areas were supported as a way of encouraging families to the reserve.

8. Memorial to John Britten: Aeolian Harp

There was mixed support for the installation of an Aeolian Harp as a memorial to John Britten. Approximately 35% of respondents, who also lived near the reserve, were vehemently opposed to the harp, mainly due to the sound it would create. Another 10% did not oppose the installation but were concerned about the effect it would have on close neighbours.

Approximately 33% of respondents supported the harps' installation. Supporters thought it would be a unique attraction for visitors to the Port Hills and become an asset for Christchurch. The remaining 22% did not respond.

Moving the Aeolian Harp further away from residential housing would reduce the aural impact on neighbours to the reserve, but would not address other concerns raised including its visual impact, compatibility with a natural environment, ongoing maintenance and vandalism potential. A landscape assessment commissioned by Christchurch City Council did not support the installation of the Aeolian Harp any higher on the reserve although the John Britten Reserve Trust disputes many findings of that report.

Although some submitters suggest naming the reserve after John Britten is enough of a fitting memorial, an artwork to commemorate him is considered appropriate here. Some form of Interpretation to inform visitors about John Britten and the reserve are also identified as needed in this location. Any interpretation design needs to be mindful of the real threat of vandalism.

The John Britten Reserve Trust have been invited to submit other artworks that would be more acceptable here, but wish to have the Aeolian Harp proposal decided on formally by the Board and Council before they consider whether they want to pursue any other memorial options. The Trust considers promoting artworks in Christchurch is always controversial and that a bold decision is needed. They believe installing a switch preventing the Harp from operating at night would address the submitters concerns.

9. Weirs Lookout: Plane Table

Approximately 14 submitters supported the plane table at Weirs Lookout, another two supported it either here or at Mt Pleasant, two preferred it only at Mt Pleasant and two suggested having one at each location. One submitter thought it should be installed in honour of John Britten. A couple of submitters were concerned about its maintenance and vandalism potential. The plane table was proposed to be installed at ground level, so as not to impact on the natural rock outcrops of Weirs Lookout. One submitter queried this as thought it would be more legible at waist level. It is now proposed to be installed slightly west of Weirs Lookout, on an imported stone at around thigh height.

10. Upper Major Hornbrook Road linkage

Approximately 30% of submitters supported linking Upper Major and Major Hornbrook Road. Some of the reasons for supporting this were that sharp bends would be eliminated, alternative access would be provided in the event of fire or slips, that it would take some pressure of Mt Pleasant Road, that residents in St Andrews Hill could better access John Britten Reserve and that it may allow for future bus routes.

Approximately 13% of submitters were extremely opposed as they thought it would increase traffic volumes, speeds and decrease safety. There were also concerns about the effect on natural values of the reserve and the sheer rock face that would be created. Further consultation was requested.

A couple of submitters suggested that if any land was lost for a road, that additional reserve land should be provided. It is important to note that although called the John Britten Reserve, this land has deliberately not been vested as reserve, until the decision on a road realignment has been made. The Hagley/Ferrymead Community Board earlier supported the realignment of Major Hornbrook Road. Therefore compensatory reserve land is not anticipated.

One submitter stated they did not want the triangle of land created if the road alignment does proceed to be sold. Although this is a possibility it is proposed that this be vested as reserve and not sold.

It is proposed that the development of John Britten Reserve allows for the realignment of Upper Major Hornbrook Road through the reserve if confirmed as necessary through a thorough consultation process led by Council's Transport and City Streets Unit but that any land isolated from the main John Britten Reserve through this process be designated as reserve. This process would also be the appropriate process to determine if a street name change was necessary.

11. Other

Other issues raised by submitters were:

- To include Maori heritage values. Ngai Tahu representatives were advised of the proposal and were invited to comment on the plan.
- To build a playground with swings and a tennis court on the reserve between Clearview and Ridgeview Lanes. This land is proposed to be retained for reserve purposes but not developed in this manner.
- To install rubbish bins. Regional Parks policy is to encourage recycling and visitors to take their own rubbish home.
- To preserve old stone walls. These will be left as they are.
- To build a footpath on Mt Pleasant Road. This is outside the scope of this reserve concept plan but will be forwarded to City Streets and Transport for consideration.

12. The attached concept plan has been revised to take into account the majority of the submissions received on the draft plan and is recommended for approval.

FINANCIAL AND LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

13. The concept plan will be implemented as funding allows, with work, where possible, implemented by Regional Park Rangers.

14. John Britten Reserve will be proposed to be classified as a scenic reserve.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Board approve the amended concept plan for John Britten Reserve.

CHAIRPERSON'S RECOMMENDATION

For discussion.