

6. ENSORS ROAD RESERVE: SEATING AND ENHANCEMENTS

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PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. The purpose of this report is to seek an alteration to the Board resolutions of 25 March 2004 (pre-public consultation) and 29 July 2004 (post-public consultation):

That the landscaping include white roses and colourful bedding plants (March - with reference to the proposed publicity plan.)

That staff be requested to investigate the inclusion of colourful annuals in the planting scheme (July - with reference to implementation. The seating and enhancements as a whole were approved).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2. The seating and enhancements are intended to increase the amenity and environmental quality of the area (see attachment) and complement the 'Joy of Eternal Spring' sculpture already present on the site. Requests for these works stem from the Charleston Neighbourhood Plan. This plan sets out a long-term urban renewal strategy for the neighbourhood. Developing the plan involved extensive public consultation and identified the need to enhance open spaces in Charleston to encourage informal contact between neighbours.

The site was chosen for the site of the 'Joy of Eternal Spring' sculpture because of its simplicity. As such, over-filling the space with 'stuff' would introduce clutter and detract from the sculpture. This would result in less enjoyment of the site (advice from Marlene LeCren, CCC Arts Adviser, January 2005).

Locals have requested the seat to sit and enjoy the sculpture, but it is now proposed to delete from the plan the planting beds and post/rail fencing - and to move the seat slightly from its original location, back towards the trees. All these changes are to eliminate 'clutter' and maintain lines of sight to the sculpture.

Instead the alternative planting is intended to achieve a soft foreground to empathise the sculpture in the background. The focus is on creating the right environment for the sculpture. At the boundary between the site and the Ensors Road footpath, it is now proposed to have very low simple planting. Some boundary definition/planting is important as children play on the sculpture/site, which is next to a busy road. This view was reinforced by consultation feedback.

It is now proposed to plant the site with bulbs - so each spring the sculpture will stand amidst a floral blaze of colour. This is in-keeping with the sculpture's title the 'Joy of Eternal Spring' and is also intended to meet the Boards wish to see colour on the site.

The suggested plants, white roses and beds of colourful annuals are not appropriate. Their position and foliage would be too dominating for the site and its sculpture. Following investigations into alternative planting, the following are nominated:

- (a) Spring bulbs.
- (b) Thickly planted daffodils and blue bells (to fit in with the existing exotic trees on the site).

To be planted along the boundary between the site and the Ensors Road footpath

Predominately *Hebe obtusata* (Manukau Hebe) broken-up with other small, simple plants to stop a "hedge-like" appearance. *Hebe obtusata* is a small, spreading shrub (height and spread of 45 x 75 cm) with small thick leaves. It is a useful groundcover plant noted for 'spilling over' banks and walls. Also chosen for its small, subtle white flowers (from late summer), it is intended to meet the Boards wish to see white flowers on the site.

FINANCIAL AND LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

3. The bulbs will cost less than maintaining annual bedding plants. The 'living' fence of low simple planting will cost less than the proposed 'post and rail' style fencing with "Charleston-style" bollards.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Board revoke their earlier decision on plant types and approve the alternative planting.

CHAIRPERSON'S RECOMMENDATION

That the recommendation be adopted.