

3. JOHN MCKENZIE MEMORIAL LIBRARY- CONSIDERATION OF FUTURE USE

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PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. The purpose of this report is to seek the Board's recommendation to the Council to consider the future use options for the Council property at 393 Riccarton Road (the property), and to resolve to pursue one of the options.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

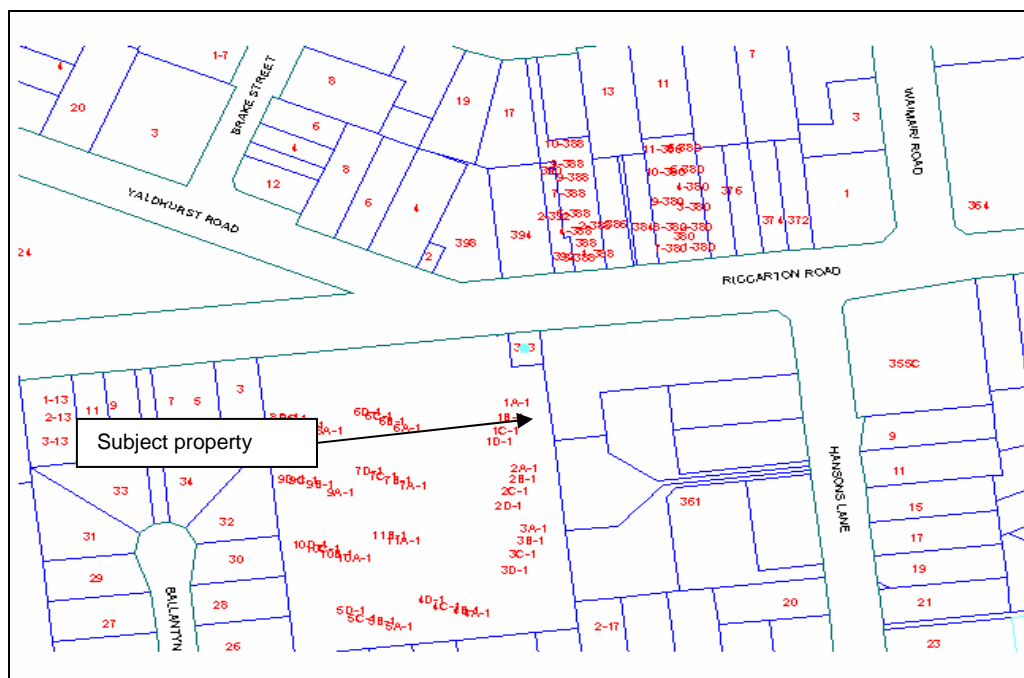
2. The John McKenzie Memorial Library was established in 1958 with the assistance of Riccarton Rotary as a memorial to Sir John McKenzie (a local philanthropist). It was the new home of the Upper Riccarton Children's Library which began life in 1954. The property is no longer required for its previous use as a community library because these services are to be provided from a new library being established jointly with Riccarton High School.
3. A need has been identified from the Riccarton Community research conducted by the Community Development Team (Community and Recreation Unit), for a toy library in this area. The Addington Toy Library (ATL), which currently operates from a Council property in the Spreydon/Heathcote ward, has been identified as a potential user of the site. This proposal has been endorsed by Riccarton Rotary and the family of Sir John McKenzie. This report recommends that Addington Toy Library be invited to lease the property.

FINANCIAL AND LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

4. The property is currently held as a Local Purpose (Memorial Library Site in Trust) pursuant to the Reserves Act 1977. Any change of use from that as a library would require public notification and consideration of objections pursuant to s24 of the Reserves Act 1977. Any sale of the property will require revocation of the reserve classification pursuant to the statutory process. The property was acquired from the Crown and any proceeds in the event of sale will revert to the Crown.
5. Given the likely public opposition and the fact that there is no significant financial benefit to be gained by a sale, the sale option is not recommended. There is limited financial gain from changing the use for some other purpose, which would be likely to meet with public objections, and as there is an alternative library use available the toy library option is recommended.
6. The current annual operating cost is \$1,600. The Addington Toy Library will pay a rental which will offset a significant proportion of the operating costs. The balance will be met by the Council through existing budgets. The Council currently funds the ATL through the Spreydon/Heathcote Board by way of \$3,000 towards salary costs from the Community Development Scheme.
7. The Community Board does not have delegated authority to authorise the preferred leasing option; such a decision needs to be made by the full Council. The Board has, however, recommendatory powers to the Council.

BACKGROUND 393 RICcarton ROAD- CONSIDERATION OF FUTURE USE

- The property is a 185m² site located on Riccarton Road at the Church Road corner and is completely covered by an existing building. The property was transferred from the Crown to the Paparua County Council around 1959, after the Crown decided that it was not required for housing purposes. The exact circumstances surrounding the transfer are not entirely clear but the site was set apart as Reserve in 1959 for a Memorial Library in 'trust for that purpose'. The building was constructed by Riccarton Rotary who contributed to it with the intention of establishing a memorial library to Sir John McKenzie who had been a generous benefactor to various causes in the area. The property has been used as a volunteer children's library since that time. In 1985 the site was gazetted under the Reserves Act 1977 as a Local Purpose (Library) site.



- In December 2004 several members of the original Library Committee initiated a change to the reserve classification to that of 'Local Purpose Library Site in Trust'. This was done in the knowledge that the library services were to be provided from a new location at Riccarton High School and the intention in initiating that change of classification was to preserve the site as much as possible for library use and to ensure that it remained as a memorial to Sir John. The Council agreed to the revised classification "in the interests of assuring the original founders of the Council's good faith concerning the land and buildings".
- In July 2005 the property was circulated as available for use throughout the Council in accordance with the property decision making flow chart. Only two possible users were identified: Canterbury Home Educators (CHE) and Addington Toy Library (ATL). The CHE provides resources and a venue for educational activities to parents undertaking home education. The ATL provides hire of safe and educational play equipment to low income households in lower socio economic areas. The Community and Recreation Unit assessed both potential users, applying a set of criteria developed for community group use of Council facilities. The possible uses were also assessed by the Property Consultancy Team in terms of the criteria established for registrations of interest to retain a property. These criteria include: the service provided, hours of use, community need, link with Council Policy/Outcomes and ability to run the service proposed.
- After consideration of both possible uses, officers advise that ATL are best placed to utilise the property for provision of a community service. A detailed needs assessment was undertaken including preparation of "The Riccarton Community Needs and Facilities Profile" by Dr Lesley MacGibbon.
- Community and Recreation Unit staff advise that a need for a Toy Library in the area has been identified. They have expressed a preference that the property be retained by the Council and that the ATL be invited to transfer their operation from the current site at Manuka Cottage (Spreydon/Heathcote ward) which is insufficient for their purpose.

13. The current annual operating cost is \$1,600. The ATL will pay a rental which will offset a significant proportion of the operating costs. The balance will be met by Council through existing budgets. The Council is currently funding the ATL through the Spreydon/Heathcote Board by way of \$3,000 towards salary costs from the Community Development Scheme.
14. The proposal to invite the ATL to operate from the site has been endorsed by Riccarton Rotary and the family of Sir John. Riccarton Rotary has requested that the name 'Sir John McKenzie Memorial Library' be retained and shown on the placard at the front of the building.

Property Issues

15. The property is classified under the Reserves Act 1977 as a Local Purpose Library Site in Trust.

Change of Use

16. A statutory change of use is required if the site is to be used for anything other than a library site. This involves public notification and consideration of all objections. If the use is for anything other than a community use (eg commercial use), then resource consent will also be required. A valuer has considered the site and advised that because of the inherent limitations, achieving a viable commercial use is questionable.

Sale of the Property

17. We have been advised by Legal Services that the site was originally acquired from the Crown, and as such if the Council was to sell the property the following statutory process would need to be followed:
 - Council decision to publicly notify the change of use proposal
 - Public notification
 - Hearings panel in the event of objections
 - Consideration of objections by the Department of Conservation
 - Ministerial approval of change following consideration of the above.
18. All sale proceeds would go to the Crown, and therefore the only financial benefit to the Council would be the saving of ongoing operating costs which are \$1,600.
19. It is likely that there will be opposition from Riccarton Rotary and members of the original library committee to both a change of use of the building to something other than a library, and sale of the property. Formal consultation of the wider public in regard to these options has not been undertaken but it is possible that there will be opposition within the wider public at least to sale of the site.
20. Use for a Toy Library will fall within the existing reserve classification and will not require completion of any statutory process. It is also a complying use within the City Plan Zone.

OPTIONS

21. The following options have been considered:
 - (a) Use the property for a purpose other than a Library
 - (b) Sell the property
 - (c) Retain the property and lease to the Addington Toy Library.

PREFERRED OPTION

22. There has been no interest expressed by a Council Unit for any use other than for a library purpose. A valuer has advised that the site presents limitations in terms of commercial use. There is no significant financial benefit to Council through sale of the property. Both options require public notification involving consideration of objections which are almost certain to be received. Options (a) and (b) are therefore not favoured.

23. The recommended use fits with the existing Reserve classification and also has the approval of Riccarton Rotary and founding committee members of the original library. It is anticipated that this use will meet with the approval of the wider community, and option (c) is therefore recommended.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Board recommend to the Council that:

- (a) The Addington Toy Library be invited to lease the John McKenzie Memorial Library site at 393 Riccarton Road.
- (b) That the Corporate Support Unit Manager and Community and Recreation Unit Manager be delegated authority to negotiate a lease with the Addington Toy library on similar terms and conditions to comparable Community group leases.
- (c) That the building retains the name 'Sir John McKenzie Memorial Library'.

CHAIRPERSON'S RECOMMENDATION

That the staff recommendations be supported.