

**4. CANTERBURY SOCIETY OF MODEL &
EXPERIMENTAL ENGINEERS APPLICATION
TO LEASE PART OF MARYLANDS RESERVE**

RR 9651

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The purpose of this report is to seek Council approval for the Canterbury Society of Model and Experimental Engineers (CSMEE) to lease 1100 square metres of Marylands Reserve on which to develop a ground level model railway track on the southwest part of the Reserve.

Introduction:

Marylands Reserve is located between the southern arterial motorway and Birmingham Drive, Middleton. It is a large reserve, being 5.34 hectares in area part of which is classified as a recreation reserve under the provisions of the Reserves Act 1977. The balance of the Reserve is owned by the Council for “Better Utilisation” under the Local Government Act 1974 and is zoned Open Space 2 in the New City Plan. The Reserve is situated in an industrial area.

The Canterbury Society of Model and Experimental Engineers Inc (CSMEE) has made application to the Christchurch City Council for a lease to develop a ground level model railway track on the western part of Marylands Reserve.

**Canterbury Society of Model and
Experimental Engineers Inc. (“CSMEE”)**

The CSMEE was established at its existing premises at 26 Andrews Crescent, Spreydon in the late 1940s. Over this period members have developed a model railway based on a 3.5 inch and 5 inch track on the site which includes extensive tracks, tunnel, bridge, boating pond, plus clubrooms, boathouse, covered steaming bays and two covered stations.

Members of the CSMEE interests are predominantly ‘railway’ (particularly scale live steam) but also include steam road vehicles, all aspects of miniature and model engineering, toolmaking, clockmaking and scale model boats. Membership has remained at about 120-140 for the past decade and although aging, it has been observed that new members are coming from the middle aged and those retired or approaching retirement.

The worldwide trend for model railways is towards a larger 7 ¼ inch track and without one, the CSMEE will not be able to attract new members or hold national conventions. They are not able to build a 7 ¼ inch track on the present site because it is too small and is fully developed, hence their request for another site within close proximity that can be utilised in conjunction with their current Andrews Crescent site i.e. Marylands Reserve. The present CSMEE site at Andrews Crescent has an estimated investment of \$250,000 due to the large number of purpose-built structures for the existing model railway.

Site Criteria

CSMEE have considered a number of possible alternative sites for development. Examples include Ferrymead and Travis Swamp. However these sites are not considered practical due to their distance from the existing site at Andrews Crescent. Marylands Reserve meets the CSMEE's main criteria of proximity to their present location with room for further development. The natural contours of the Marylands site, which includes a dry water course, lends itself to what can be made a very attractive route for a scenic model railway.

Site Suitability

Marylands Reserve is located in an industrial area, being a considerable distance from residential housing. It is to the north of the southern arterial motorway with vehicle access being obtained off that part of Birmingham Drive that services the adjacent industrial area. The Reserve is zoned O2 in the Proposed City Plan which allows for sports parks and pavilions and wide recreational uses. Resource Consent is required as the track is a non-permitted activity under the Transitional City Plan.

Canterbury Canine Obedience Club ("CCOC")

Currently Marylands Reserve has a fairly low level of public use apart from cyclists and the CCOC.

The CCOC regularly uses Marylands Reserve and have their clubrooms situated on a footprint ground lease on the Reserve. The lease has approximately 6 years left before they exercise their 21 year right of renewal. They use the middle and eastern end of the Reserve for club activities on Sundays of most weekends. Because of its contour and distance from the clubrooms the western part of Marylands Reserve is unlikely to be used at any stage by the CCOC. The CCOC access their clubrooms from the eastern entrance into Marylands Reserve from Birmingham Drive whereas the CSMEE propose to access the Reserve off the western entrance from Birmingham Drive causing no conflict in the proposed joint use of the Reserve.

Two meetings have been held between the CSMEE, CCOC and Parks Unit staff at Marylands Reserve during December and January to discuss the co-existence of both clubs on the site. Through discussion the CSMEE and CCOC have reached agreement for joint use of the Reserve. An initial plan as been subsequently modified to suit both parties (attached).

A demonstration of the model railway has been made by CSMEE at Marylands Reserve on Sunday 24 January 1999 with CCOC members, Board Representatives and Parks Unit staff in attendance that resulted in the attached letter being written by the CCOC.

Model Railway Impact on Surrounding Land Users

Marylands Reserve is located within an industrial area. CSMEE Club running days are usually two Sundays per month with two major weekends a year, to all of which the public are welcome. Occasionally there may be exclusive club functions but these are generally rare. The southern boundary of the Reserve is the southern arterial motorway. The operation of the model railway during the weekend will have no impact on the operation of the surrounding businesses that operate predominantly during the Monday to Friday working week.

As a first stage, the CSMEE intend to construct a single track laid on a base course of crusher dust 1 metre wide for 5 inch and 7 ¼ inch locomotives extending about 600 metres (as shown on the attached plan). In the longer term it is envisaged that clubrooms/toilets and steaming bays (where locomotives prepare for running) be developed and the model railway track extended a further 600 metres. Then further improvements will be the subject of a report to council detailing the proposals at the time the club wishes to proceed with improvements.

The proposed CSMEE clubrooms, locomotive storage and steaming bays would need to be fenced for security reasons. It is estimated that this will encompass an area of approximately 500m². As with similar tracks in New Zealand and overseas the bulk of the track is on public land over which the public has continual access.

It is proposed that the model railway track pass through the cycle way located on Marylands Reserve. Cycleways Co-ordinator, Alix Newman has expressed no concern regarding this proposal on the condition that the path remains open to public use for cycle and pedestrian access and recommended the need for some form of warning system for path crossing when the trains are in operation. It is therefore recommended that signs are placed to the side of the cycle track to make cyclists aware and stop signs on the railway to ensure all train drivers are aware to stop and give way to all cycleway traffic. Barrier arms will not be necessary as the trains travel at a maximum speed of 8 km per hour and can easily stop for pedestrians or cyclists.

The proposed model railway track will be located to the north of the southern motorway. Tony Spowart from Transit NZ has identified the model railway to be an appropriate activity for the site. If however, motorway users were distracted by the activity then planting for visual screening would need to be provided.

Health and Safety Auditor, Donna Burt has inspected the Marylands site and CSMEE's current operation at Andrew's Crescent. Relevant safety issues have been discussed with CSMEE and Ms Burt is satisfied that there are no problems with the proposal to install a model railway track on Marylands Reserve, which will be available for general public use.

Proposed Lease Agreement

It is proposed that an area of approximately 1100 square metres be leased to the CSMEE on Marylands Reserve 500 square metres of which is for exclusive use to enable the construction of clubrooms/storage building, toilet, and steaming bays. The first stage will be the construction of 600 metres of model railway track with a further 600 metre extension constructed as stage two. The site would be leased to the CSMEE, on terms to be negotiated by the Property Manager in consultation with the Area Parks Officer (Consents), for a period of 19 years and 364 days subject to the following conditions:

1. Public notification and subsequent approval by the Minister of Conservation;
2. The area covered by the lease agreement, except for the 500 square metre area set aside for buildings, to be available for public use at all times;

3. The CSMEE to obtain the necessary Resource and Building Consents before any development commences on the site;
4. Before any tenders are let or work commences on the site discussions are to be 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;
5. The leased area being maintained by CSMEE in a safe and tidy condition at all times;
6. All costs associated with the issue of the lease, development and subsequent maintenance of buildings, track, structures or amenities on the site are to be paid for by the CSMEE;
7. The CSMEE is not to commence operations until they have an Occupational Safety and Health Hazard Plan in place;
8. Any future extension to the track layout as shown on the attached plan or construction of buildings etc is subject to the Council's prior approval after consultation with CCOC;
9. CCOC activities are not to be impeded by members of the public attending open days conducted by CSMEE;
10. CSMEE is not to hold public open days during Show Weekend. (This is to ensure that the CCOC have full and unrestricted use of Marylands Reserve for their NZ Kennel Club Championship Show during this weekend.)
11. If Transit New Zealand request that planting be provided to screen CSMEE activities from the view of motorists using the southern motorway, the Club will be required to pay for the planting.

Conclusion

The CSMEE have a very successful model railway facility located at Andrews Crescent, Spreydon. The site is not able to accommodate a 7 ¼ inch railway; therefore the Society has made application to use Marylands Reserve in conjunction with the existing Andrews Crescent site. Marylands Reserve is ideally suited for a model railway due to its isolated location within an industrial area, undulating contours and current relative limited use.

The CCOC currently utilise Marylands Reserve for dog training and they lease a small area for their clubrooms. Through discussions and an on site demonstration of the model trains, both the CCOC and CSMEE agree that the combined use for dog obedience training and the model railway on Marylands Reserve is compatible.

John Beauchamp of the CSMEE will be in attendance at the Board meeting and available to answer any questions regarding this application.

Recommendation: That the Board recommend that the Council (pursuant to Section 54 (1) (b) of the Reserves Act, and Section 601 of the Local Government Act) grant the Canterbury Society of Model and Experimental Engineers Inc. a lease for a maximum term of 20 years less one day for the purpose of constructing and operating a model railway track and associated improvements on approximately 1100 square

metres of Marylands Reserve and the adjacent Council land held for better utilisation subject to conditions 1-12.