

<b>Officer responsible</b> Community Advocate	<b>Author</b> Ruth Evans, Community Development Adviser
Corporate Plan Output: 6.4.8	

**BACKGROUND:**

Avebury House is located in Evelyn Cousins Avenue close to the northern boundary of the Hagley Ferrymead Ward. Its geographic position is very close to two other community board areas, Burwood/Pegasus and Shirley/Papanui. This fact presents an opportunity for a joint project between these three community board areas.

Demographics of the area surrounding Avebury House indicate a neighbourhood that is rapidly changing with an increase in unit (or infill) housing and new high density housing complexes.

The area south of North Avon Road contains large areas of state housing and low rental accommodation. Residents in this area have limited access to facilities outside of the area. The area north of North Avon Road is also expanding with current properties being replaced with new high density housing units. The area houses many people on limited incomes, single parent families and is experiencing an increase of refugee and migrant families.

Following the closure of the YHA Hostel in July 1997, notice was circulated to council business units calling for any council interest in using the building. No expressions of interest came forward as a result of this.

During October the property was put out to the community in the form of a "Request for Proposal for a House".

Two proposals were received at this stage: a proposal from Drug Arm Christchurch which was subsequently turned down by Council, and a proposal from Leisure and Community Services Unit through Janet Luxton Community Arts Worker, for a Community Arts Centre.

The Council Proposal for the development of Avebury House as a community arts project for the Eastern suburbs was developed by council officers late in 1997 in response to identified community needs at that time.

The proposal involved partnerships with two community agencies, Step Ahead Trust and Pacific Underground and aimed at facilitating the development of the arts; providing workshop spaces for local artists and creating an environment for community gatherings and events utilising the adjacent park space.

Seven major social service organisations were surveyed in the area; none of these groups provided specialised assistance to people interested in the arts as a recreational pursuit, employment activity or as a tool for community development processes.

The proposal was presented to Hagley/Ferrymead, Burwood/Pegasus and Shirley/Papanui Community Boards. Hagley/Ferrymead allocated \$15,000 towards the project, the other two boards declined the proposal.

Janet Luxton left council employ several months after this, and the proposal lay dormant at this time.

In September 1998 a report written by Lewis Burn (Property Unit) and Ruth Evans, (Community Activities Officer, Linwood), was presented to the Hagley/Ferrymead Board, seeking further comments to be conveyed to the Parks and Recreation and Community Services Committees.

This report included the following objectives which had been agreed upon by an Intra Unit Working Party.

- i) To retain the house in accordance with the intention of the original acquisition by the Council in 1948 ie as part of an open space to be used for passive recreation.
- ii) To identify options for a suitable sustainable long term function / use for Avebury House consistent with the provisions of the Reserves Act and the Council's social, cultural, amenity and heritage objectives and policies.
- iii) To establish a use consistent with the objective laid out in (ii).
- iv) To declare the house title a reserve under the Reserves Act 1977 and to classify the reserve as appropriate to the identified and approved use of the house.

The Community Services Committee did not support residential use of Avebury House and advocated general community use.

Late in 1998 the Community Activities officers from Linwood, Shirley and Papanui met with the Community Arts worker and the Maori Community Arts worker to revisit the original proposal for a community arts centre and devise a strategy for future use of the facility. It was decided at this meeting that community needs analysis be carried out to clearly define the most appropriate use of Avebury House.

A further meeting was held on 22 December 1998 between Community Advocates from Linwood and Shirley, Lew Burn Property Unit and the Community Development Adviser, Linwood. This confirmed the need for a community needs analysis.

**FUTURE STRATEGY:**

- Brief for needs analysis established
- Needs analysis contracted out
- Findings reported to July's Board Meetings
- When results of needs analysis finalised expressions of interest will be sought from general community.
- Three Boards – Linwood, Shirley, and Papanui will each seek \$10,000 cash from 98/99 project funds

To date, five formal and several casual expressions of interest for using the facility have been received from community organisations. Whilst several of these are well thought out and researched, the Council needs to ensure that the future of Avebury House is well planned, possible uses fully investigated, and that services delivered from the facility best meet local community needs.

Council needs to consider its own policy objectives and make the most effective use of its resources.

**Recommendation:** 1. That the information be received.

2. That the Hagley/Ferrymead Community Board give consideration to the provision of \$10,000 from its 1999/2000 Project Funds.

**Chairman's  
Recommendation:** For discussion