

12. PURCHASES FOR ADDITION TO RESERVES HUNTSBURY & MT VERNON PARK

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Corporate Plan Output: Reserves Purchases and New Assets	

The purpose of this report is to consider the purchase of two property severances on upper Huntsbury Avenue for reserve and waterway protection purposes.

This report is also being referred to the Parks and Recreation Committee for its recommendation to the Council.

BACKGROUND

As early as 1992, when negotiations on the Council's Huntsbury Spur development and zone change were being undertaken, consideration was given to the possibility of the Council acquiring the lower portions of numbers 141 and 151 Huntsbury Avenue for the purpose of protecting the existing watercourse gully on these properties and to extend walking tracks in the area. While the owners were aware of the Council's interest, the acquisitions were not pursued at that time mainly because of funding constraints.

The opportunity is now available for both acquisitions to proceed, with the Council funding one purchase for addition to Huntsbury Domain and the Port Hills Park Trust Board funding the other purchase for addition to adjoining Mt Vernon Park.

The area has high aesthetic qualities and is described as being a "little canyon". It has traditionally been used as a natural hillside playground being close to residences on upper Huntsbury Avenue. There is already an informal walkway from Albert Terrace to Mt Vernon Park and the proposed acquisitions will formalise this use and enable linkage to Huntsbury Domain. The gully and cliff areas adjoining the proposed acquisitions are also of some local significance, containing the feature known as Albert Rock which has been used for rock climbing for many years by recreational users.

Victory Stream has two contributing valleys. Victory Stream branch is the western valley stream, and originates on the northern slopes of Mt Vernon Park. It descends in a series of flat grades and waterfalls to the back of Albert Terrace. The sides of the valley are steep and apart from grazing by animals and plantation planting, are unmodified by man and close to their original shape. A portion of the valley sides has been planted in pinus radiata, but the remainder of the valley is in grass and surviving native vegetation. The steep sides of the valley are highly erodable and planting of the slopes would be desirable in order to stabilize the stream and protect the downstream development in the valley floor from dam burst type flooding that can result from landslides. The addition of this part of the stream to land already protected by the Port Hills Park Trust Board will allow the stream to become an important feature of the park and improve stability of the stream banks.

PROPERTY DETAILS

The proposed areas of acquisition are as follows:

Part 141 Huntsbury Avenue	1.1983 hectares shown as Section 1 on plan S3514/1 attached to the public excluded section, being part of Lot 30 DP 28817, CT 11K/66. The land adjoins Mt Vernon Park on its eastern boundary and Huntsbury Domain to the north.
Part 151 Huntsbury Avenue	1.2908 hectares shown as Section 2 on plan S3514/2 attached to the public excluded section, being part of Lot 29 DP 28817, CT 11K/164. This land adjoins Mt Vernon Park on its eastern boundary.

Both property severances are in the Rural H zone of the Proposed City Plan, are steep in contour and include pine trees in the lower valley sections. The lower parts include a substantial gully and steep cliff-face on the eastern boundary.

AGREEMENT AND SOURCE OF FUNDS

The Council engaged Ford Baker Valuation to assess the value of the property severances. Agreement has been reached with both owners and details of the valuations and settlements are included in the public excluded section of this report.

The basis of the agreements is that the Council will purchase the severance from the property at 141 Huntsbury Avenue and amalgamate it as recreation reserve with the Council's adjoining Huntsbury Domain. The Parks Unit will fund this purchase in the current financial year.

The severance from the property at 151 Huntsbury Avenue will be purchased by the Port Hills Park Trust Board and amalgamated with their adjoining property, Mt Vernon Park. The Trust Board has expressed interest in the acquisition of this area, particularly in respect of the Albert Rock feature which they had previously understood was part of Mt Vernon Park. The property negotiation has been undertaken by Council officers on behalf of the Trust Board which currently holds funds to apply to this purchase. The Parks Unit supports this acquisition for amalgamation with Mt Vernon Park as it has a continuing relationship with the Trust Board in regard to consultation and co-operation on park management matters in the area.

- Recommendation:**
1. That the Council acquire the severance from 141 Huntsbury Avenue as recreation reserve for amalgamation with Huntsbury Domain on the terms contained in the public excluded section of this report.

2. That the Council support the acquisition by the Port Hills Park Trust Board of the severance from 151 Huntsbury Avenue for amalgamation with the adjoining Mt Vernon Park on the terms contained in the public excluded section of this report.
3. That the Port Hills Park Trust Board be thanked for its contribution to the extension of Mt Vernon Park and public open space in this area.