

24. ELY STREET – PROPERTY PURCHASE

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Corporate Plan Output: Neighbourhood Reserve Purchase	

The purpose of this report is to seek the Council's approval to purchase the property at 44 Ely Street as an addition to Moa Reserve. The property will provide a new large open frontage to Moa Reserve, and open up a relatively secluded area of the park providing a safer environment with greater recreational appeal.

PARK LOCALITY AND CATCHMENT

Moa Reserve (2008m²) is situated between Ely, Moa and Melrose Streets without a large road frontage on Ely and Melrose streets, the reserve is relatively secluded and small. Situated in a high density housing area the existing reserve was created in 1990 to help compensate for the loss of open space associated with urban renewal of the area. High density apartment redevelopments continue to be popular in this inner city area.

Moa Reserve is an important local park in an area still increasing in population with in fill housing, it serves a local catchment area bounded by Salisbury Street and Madras Street.



RESERVE USE

As a small "pocket park" Moa Reserve main feature is its pleasant walking connection between Moa, Melrose and Ely streets, a small playground area is located opposite the Moa entrance. The park provides an important quiet refuge from the busy roads and small living areas of the surrounding apartments. The local community comprises a mix of young professionals and retired people and some families.



The southern reserve entrance on Ely Street is off-set from the main park area and has a narrow 3m connection (see plan), the addition of 44 Ely Street would not only increase this connection by 17m giving a clear view into the park and also add 566m² to the 2008m² reserve.

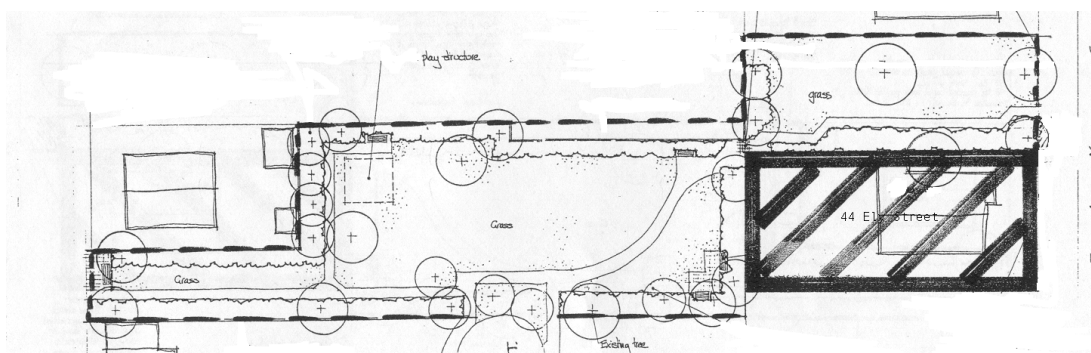
The alignment of the section with the main reserve means the effect of the property purchase would be to enlarge the park quite dramatically. The existing secluded area of the park will be opened up and provide a safer environment with greater recreational appeal.



PARK LAYOUT AND SAFETY

The Park is relatively enclosed by neighbouring residential properties. The layout is contrary to the Council's "Safer Parks" objectives and is an example of what we are trying to avoid in terms of new park layout and design.

Existing Moa Reserve with 44 Ely Street shaded.



The Ely Street and Melrose Street ends of the park are set some distance back off the remaining park and has very poor sight lines which allows a little casual surveillance from people passing by, this area has been left undeveloped for this reason to date. Security from properties surrounding the Park has increased, however with recent infill town houses being built with formal living areas that overlook this area. With the Ely property used as a larger open frontage security will increase.

COMMUNITY CHANGES

Increasingly the local community is changing in terms of older houses with larger sections being replaced with multi-unit developments with very small areas of open space. There does need to be an investment of open space to offset these changes, in essence the reserve is the large “back garden” for the whole neighbourhood. Moa Reserve is a more community-based park where local residents can spend time in a more friendly garden type where social interaction can take place outdoors. A place where large trees can be planted.

PROPERTY PURCHASE

To assess the property’s value the Council engaged the services of Ford Baker, Registered Public Valuers and following discussions with the owners agreement has been reached to acquire the property subject to Council approval. The details of the settlement are covered in the Public Excluded section of this report.



SOURCE OF FUNDS

Provision has been included within the Neighbourhood Reserve Purchase Fund for the purchase of the property in the current financial year. Overall the fund for this year is has \$340,000 left if the Scarborough purchase proceeds.

CONCLUSION

The Parks and Waterways Unit has been aware of the undesirable layout of Moa Reserve for some time property acquisition to improve the layout, safety and usage of the reserve. Purchase on the grounds of the "Safer Parks" policy is justifiable and it is one of the areas of relatively low open space provision it is important to note that opportunities do not always arise in the highest priority areas first with changes in the local community. As a consequence of greater infill housing occurring it is paramount that we re-invest reserve contributions taken from unit developments and provide more space for the local community where greater levels of social engagement can take place.

The Parks and Waterway Unit recommends that the property at 44 Ely Street be purchased as an addition to Moa Reserve, to improve the design and layout of the existing park thus providing a safer more attractive park environment for all users.

Recommendation: That the Board recommend to the Parks and Recreation Committee:

1. That the property at 44 Ely Street be purchased for the purpose of Recreation Reserve in accordance with the settlement details outlined in the Public Excluded section of this report.
2. Subject to (1) above the Council resolves to classify the reserve pursuant Section 16 of the Reserves Act 1977 as a Recreation Reserve under Section 17 of the Act.

Chairman's

Recommendation: That the recommendations be adopted.