

3. KENNEDYS BUSH ROAD – QUARRY MANAGER’S HOUSE & GARDENS

Officer responsible Property Manager	Author Pam Ellis, Property Services Manager
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The purpose of this report is to obtain the Council’s approval to seek expressions of interest for future use of the former Halswell Quarry Manager’s house and gardens located in Kennedys Bush Road within the Halswell Quarry Reserve.

A separate report will deal with issues regarding the future use of the adjoining 1 hectare of land uphill of the Quarry Manager’s house.

INTRODUCTION

The Quarry Manager’s House, which is located in a prominent position close to the entrance of Halswell Quarry Park, is a substantial stone villa built in 1927. Known as “Patterson’s House”, it was the home of Ned Patterson who was a long-time Quarry Manager. The house once had a magnificent rock garden, traces of which are still visible. The house and garden are registered as a Category II historic place under the Historic Places Act. The house was for many years tenanted for residential purposes.

The house, while being part of the Halswell Quarry Park, is held as a Restricted Property Asset in the Property Unit’s Asset Management budget .

The 1991 Management Plan identified this site for disposal along with the adjoining open land. However, in the updated 1998 Management Plan it was decided to retain the house site and gardens in Council ownership, but recognising its potential for a use to complement the recreational activities of the Park. Objectives in the updated 1998 Halswell Quarry Park Management Plan include “promoting an awareness and appreciation of the historic significance of the area and to preserve the historic areas of the Quarry, the farmland and buildings”. The Plan’s policies recognise the inclusion of commercial activities in the Park development and “establishment of permanent commercial activities under a negotiated lease with the Council”.

The Halswell Quarry Park is also the site for the Sister Cities Garden Park and the Patterson House and garden will be formed as the Christchurch-England Garden containing a combination of three garden styles: formal, herbaceous and woodland. A copy of the landscape concept plan is attached, together with a photograph of the house taken in the early 1990’s and an architectural drawing of the house.

The house and garden is a high profile elevated site which lends itself to a commercial or other use which will complement the Quarry Park activities and at the same time retain the historic and botanical nature of the house site.

In accordance with Council policy, business units and Community Boards were circularised for possible registrations of interest for a proven need. The Kennedys Bush Neighbourhood Association, through the Riccarton-Wigram Community Board, registered an initial interest for retention of the Quarry Manager’s House for an unidentified “community use”. The Association subsequently undertook a community survey to canvass the need for such use. The survey responses (about a 9% return rate overall and 25-33% in the immediate hill area) indicated insufficient justification to retain the house solely for a community centre but there was some support for a café proposal possibly in conjunction with a community use. The Association asked that if the house was to be leased for a café then controls be placed on noise and off-street parking and that the gardens be available for public access and use.

DISCUSSION

The Quarry Manager’s house is not now used as a residence and the internal facilities are basic and in poor condition. However because of the heritage classification, any alterations or upgrading for a changed use will need to meet the requirements of the Conservation Plan which has been prepared in draft form, and resource consent conditions. In addition, while the area of the grounds to be used may be negotiable, these will also need to be retained essentially in accordance with the landscape concept plan for the Christchurch-England Sister City Garden.

The response now received from the Kennedys Bush Neighbourhood Association indicates conditional support for a commercial use which meets the criteria contained in the current Halswell Quarry Park Management Plan. Because of the relatively small size of the building and its heritage and garden restrictions, it is difficult to predict what commercial interest there may be for a café or any other commercial use of the Quarry Manager's house. It is therefore recommended that public expressions of interest be sought for a suitable commercial activity.

A commercial lease could be granted pursuant to Section 572 of the Local Government Act 1974.

- Recommendation:**
1. That public expressions of interest be sought in respect of the Quarry Manager's House at Kennedys Bush Road for a commercial activity which will complement the Halswell Quarry Park activities, retain the historic and botanical nature of the site retain reasonable public access and if possible incorporate an element of community use.
 2. That the Property Manager report back to the Committee in due course with a recommendation on a proposed commercial use of the house property.

Chairman's Recommendation: That the Officer's recommendation be adopted.