8. HALSWELL QUARRY PARK, MANAGEMENT AND STRUCTURES

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The purpose of this report is to:

1. Present options to the committee for the future management of Halswell Quarry Park

2. Obtain approval to consult the community on the installation of two structures within the Park

3. Obtain approval to consult the community on the proposal to install a Gansu Gate, flight of stairs and 'flying horse' sculpture in the Park.

BACKGROUND

The management of Halswell Quarry has recently been questioned on several fronts.

- There are issues of the maintenance standards of the park.

- Issues have been raised by some members of the local community about the installation of structures within the park, which are not consistent with the management plan.

- Two Sister City Committees serviced by the International Relations Team have commissioned two art works that have been built and gifted to the city for installation in the Sister City Gardens, within the Halswell Quarry park. These have not yet been installed.

- The Christchurch Gansu Friendly Relations Committee has made an application to the Greenspace Unit to proceed with the construction of a Chinese Gate and associated features, including a flight of concrete stairs and a 'flying horse' sculpture. The existing management plan does not anticipate structures of this nature.

- A legal opinion has been given by Peter Mitchell, General Manager Regulation and Democracy Services, stating that the Halswell Quarry Park Management Plan 1998 is not a statutory document under the Reserves Act 1977, but because it is a document that has been agreed to with the community, the Council is bound to follow it. However, the management plan can be reviewed at any time. (Refer to Mr Mitchell's opinion, Halswell Quarry Park, Erection of Sister City Structures dated 29 April 2004, attached).

- The Environment Committee of the Riccarton/Wigram Community Board at its meeting on 24 February 2004 recommended to the Board that a moratorium be placed on any future Sister City structures being installed in the park until the vegetation is of sufficient stature that such structure can realistically "sit within" that landscape, as set out in the Halswell Quarry Management Plan 1998.

1. REVIEW OF THE HALSWELL QUARRY PARK MANAGEMENT PLAN

The management of the park is currently guided by the Halswell Quarry Management Plan 1998.

The Primary Goal and Objectives are as follows:

To optimise the potential of the physical, biological and historical characteristic for a wide variety of recreation activities and public uses and enjoyment, consistent with its location at the foot of the Port Hills.

"1. To progressively develop the park for various extensive recreation uses, both active and passive, compatible with the area's character and historic amenities.

2. To enhance the landscape qualities, biological and ecological diversity of the site and to retain its rural atmosphere.

3. *To promote an awareness and appreciation of the historic significance of the area for the early growth of Christchurch, and to preserve the historic areas of the Quarry, the farmland and buildings.*

4. *To continue to restore the Halswell Quarry Park to allow safe public access, and to develop its recreational and educational purposes.*

5. *To develop the reserve in a way that is consistent with past activities and neighbouring land uses."*

The Plan then sets out a number of policies to give effect to those objectives and of particular relevance are:

4.1.2 The Halswell Quarry Park shall be classified "Passive Recreation Reserve" and shall be developed according to the approved Landscape Development Plan.

4.1.5 The Council will continue to liaise on matters of design and management with the Kennedy's Bush Road Residents' Association, Halswell Lions Club and other appropriate organisations, groups or individuals.

4.1.7 The Landscape Development Plan shall be reviewed and amended where necessary in accordance with the procedures outlined in the Reserves Act 1977.

4.1.10 Halswell Quarry Park shall be declared an archaeological site and a permit shall be sought from the Historic Places Trust.

4.3 The Halswell Quarry Park has a rural character and contains a wide variety of landscape types. This diversity and rural ambience should be protected and enhanced. The rural informality of the area and the "natural aspect" of some parts are significant qualities worthy of retention. In addition the quarry provides a unique record of the geological formation and industrial archaeology of the area and is of considerable educational value.

4.3.1 The rural and informal character of the Halswell Quarry Park shall be maintained.

4.3.7 Any buildings, structures, roading, furniture, viewpoints etc shall be designed to a high standard and be compatible with the landscape character and the historic buildings of the site.

5.4 *Sister Cities Garden Park*

Halswell Quarry Park has been identified as a site with great scope for the establishment of (collections of botanical species)

There will be opportunities for appropriate icons or features from each of the Sister Cities but they will sit within the informal nature of the plantings and not place an undue maintenance burden for the future.

Since 2000, there has been development of botanical collections and the erection of various art works and structures. These developments have not always been consistent with the management plan.

The legal opinion given by Peter Mitchell concludes that *"The Council should take steps to vary the 1998 Management Plan through a public process if it wishes to continue to place Sister City structures in the Halswell Quarry Park."*

He also recommends that a more formal and transparent process be developed for the installation of structures within the park.

Design Guidelines were drawn up to provide a process for the installation of structures in the park. These guidelines hold no authority and need to be reviewed to be consistent with the management plan. Greenspace staff support reviewing design guidelines in consultation with the Marketing Unit who administer the Sister City groups to provide a clear and transparent process for any new structures to be installed in the Halswell Quarry Park.

Reserve Gazettal

The park is currently held as fee simple with a Conservation 2 (Historic and Garden City Parks) proposed City Plan zoning. Some of the land and buildings are listed as Group 2 Heritage items. These are located on the land south of the access road in the park, all of which are identified as a heritage place. The current management plan states that park is to be classified as a reserve.

The current management plan has no legal standing under the Reserves Act 1977 because the reserve must be classified before the proposed management plan is publicly advertised which was not done in the case of the present plan. However, if the reserve was classified as a reserve in accordance with the requirements of the Reserves Act 1977, then the Council is legally required to have a management plan for the park.

Upon classification of the reserve, the management plan becomes a legally enforceable document with the right of review at any time in the future.

Staff are requesting confirmation to continue with a public commitment to declare the park a reserve under the Reserves Act 1977. It is recommended that the park be classified as a Recreation Reserve. Such a classification means that the land is reserved for the primary purpose of providing areas for recreation and sporting activities and the protection of the natural environment and beauty of the countryside, with emphasis on the retention of open space (Reserves Act 1977). Other values - scenic, historic -- indigenous flora and fauna shall be managed and protected to the extent compatible with the primary purpose of the reserve. Thus the historic and other values of the park are given protection.

Maintenance Standard

The park is currently maintained to a standard that reflects the policy that: *The rural and informal character of the Halswell Quarry Park shall be maintained.* Staff resources and budget have been allocated to this effect. From time to time public submissions have been made expressing concern about the standard. If the management plan were to be reviewed, this policy is one that would needed clarification. If the standard is to be changed to a more formal manicured look, there would be budget implications.

2. **STRUCTURES**

In recent years a number of structures have been installed in the park at the request of the Sister City groups. Reference to the management plan indicate that there are major problems of compatibility between these structures and some of the policies of the management plan. In addition, three new structures have been proposed for the park, some of which may have an impact on the character of the park.

The Seattle Sister City Committee has had constructed a totem pole for installation in the Seattle Sister City botanical collection.

The Kurashiki Sister City Committee has gifted to the city a carved stone canoe.

Approval is sought to have both these structures installed following consultation with the community. The management plan in one of its policies states that the Council will continue to liaise on matters of design and management with *"appropriate organisations, groups and individuals"*. An appropriate recommendation is sought from the Parks, Gardens and Waterways Committee regarding the installation of these structures.

Proposed Gansu Gate, flight of stairs and Flying Horse structures

The Christchurch Gansu Friendly Relations Committee and staff have worked for a number of years on developing the built structures within the Gansu Sister City botanical collection.

The garden collection, previously sited adjacent to the historic singlemen's cottage, was determined to be on an inappropriate site and is now in the process of being moved to the northern part of the park, not within the heritage part of the Conservation zoning.

The committee have recently submitted a proposal for the installation of a 5m Chinese style gate, a 20 x 10m courtyard, a 2m pool, two 2.5m high lion sculptures and a 150m concrete stairway leading to a 5m high plinth and flying horse. The staff assessment of this proposal is that it is of a size and scale that would be very dominant in the park and that it would be visible from the park entrance and to local residents on and near Kennedys Bush Road.

This proposal does not fit within the current Management Plan objectives that state *"icons and features - will sit within the informal nature of the plantings".* The Council will become responsible for the maintenance costs of the structures and the costs have yet to be determined. The Christchurch Gansu Friendly Relations Committee feel that plantings in the long term will absorb the visual impact, however it is anticipated that there will be significant public comment about the visual impact of the structures within this park and landscape.

Public feedback has indicated concern at the perceived loss of the informal and rural character, as defined in the management plan. At its meeting on 24 February 2004, the Environment Committee of the Riccarton/Wigram Community Board recommended to the Board that a moratorium on any future Sister City structures be placed in the park until the vegetation is of sufficient stature that such structures can realistically "sit within" that landscape.

Halswell Quarry Park Planning Options

The major issue facing the park is that of its future character. The current management plan emphasises a park where the historic and informal rural qualities, enhanced by planting, are the dominant features to be enjoyed for the recreation benefit of the public. A Sister City concept with emphasis on botanically representative aspects has been accommodated within the management plan. However, the management plan did not anticipate the development of the Sister City concept that has developed over the last few years. Hence, the current dilemma of determining how to place sister city related structures into a park with a planning framework designed to achieve different objectives. In addition, the current guidelines on the placement of structures in the park are largely incompatible with the management plan objectives and policies and need to be reviewed

The acceptance by the city of two of the above mentioned proposed structures also adds to the dilemma, because these gifts have undoubtedly been donated with the best of intentions. However, due to their potential incompatibility with the management plan objectives, they should not be installed until a public mandate is given

OPTIONS

Option 1

The Council modify the existing management plan for public consultation with policy and objectives compatible with an enhanced Sister City concept for the Halswell Quarry Park.

This option needs to be undertaken at some stage irrespective of Sister City issues because the plan contains some provisions that potentially could increase the administration requirements needed to manage the park and the current guidelines for structures do not sit comfortably with the plan's intent.

With existing resources, current commitments on staff time would not allow this to occur until the 2005-06 financial year. Review of the management plan is likely to cost in the vicinity of $60,000 in staff and/or consultant time. It is desirable that the wider community have input into this process.

Option 2

The Council complies with the requirements of the plan and only accepts/installs those structures which complement the objectives of the plan.

Provided a proposed structure can sit comfortably within the park's anticipated rural character, it should be possible to proceed with installation of minor structures associated with the Sister City Gardens. Any other structures should be put on hold until the management plan is reviewed.

Option 3

The Council proceeds with gazettal of the park as a reserve and proceeds with a formal management plan process.

While this option is similar to Option 1, it will increase the time taken to achieve a result due to the time requirements necessary to change the status of the land from park to reserve and to classify it.

CONCLUSION

The preferred option is to undertake a review of the current management plan, including policies covering the enhanced Sister City Garden proposals. Current proposals that have already been constructed need to be evaluated to determine if they can be fitted into the current garden designs without unduly compromising the 'rural' qualities of the park. This is best done in consultation with the community. As the Council has no mandate to move beyond the objectives and policies of the management plan without public consultation, it is suggested that other proposals of a larger scale be put on hold until the management plan is reviewed.

Staff Recommendation: That the committee decides either:

1. (a) That the Halswell Quarry Park be managed as previously agreed with the community and set out in the 1998 management plan as an historic park with Sister City Gardens within it.

   (b) That, in addition, an improved system for future installation of structures within the park be developed by the Greenspace and Marketing Units.

   (c) The Council continue with its public commitment to declare the park a reserve under the Reserves Act 1977.

   (d) That the park be managed so the rural and informal character is maintained.

Or

2. (a) That the Management Plan be reviewed to clarify and include the design guidelines of the Sister City Gardens features (eg art works and sculptures) and to generally update the plan to include land added since 1998 and the proposed community and education use of Paterson House.

   (b) That the community be consulted about the installation of the two structures that Sister City groups have had constructed; the Gansu Gate and associated structures and a Seattle totem pole and the results of the consultation be bought back to this committee.

Chairman's Recommendation: For discussion.