

## **HARUATAI PARK Management Plan**



KAPITI COAST DISTRICT COUNCIL

**HARUATAI PARK  
MANAGEMENT PLAN**

**PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT  
KAPITI COAST DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**August 1993**

**HARUATAI PARK  
MANAGEMENT PLAN**

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## **PREFACE**

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The Kapiti Coast District Council's Parks and Recreation Department is formulating a comprehensive set of management plans for its public reserves. Preparation of these plans enables the Council and the Department to review current management practices and determine future management strategies for individual reserves. It will also assist in identifying priorities and planning the future allocation of resources between the Council's numerous reserves.
- 1.2 Public consultation is an important part of the project, as reserve management needs to be responsive to the needs and concerns of the community. In November 1992, the Council advertised its intention to prepare the first fifteen management plans and invited the public to submit suggestions and concerns for the drafting stage. Draft Plans were then prepared and further public comment invited in April 1993. The concerns and suggestions expressed in the submissions are reflected in the final Management Plans. The Council thanks all those who made submissions for their valuable contribution.

### **2.0 Management Plans**

- 2.1 A Management Plan is a working document which sets out the objectives and policies of management and how these should be achieved. It also records changes and additional information as it becomes available.

Management Plans provide a framework within which all future management will be carried out subject only to review at defined intervals, usually five years. A Management Plan sets out the principles governing the management of an area in a way which will be readily understood by those whose actions or interests will be affected by the plan; if the plan is not understood it will be set aside and ignored.

Management Plans should be the foundation on which all future management practices are based. Simply to record what is currently being done would be to evade the challenge of re-examining current practices.

- 2.2 A Management Plan has several requirements:

- (i) It must be comprehensive. Omission of some aspects may give rise to ambiguity and misinterpretation.
- (ii) It must be practical and it must permit some flexibility yet within prescribed limits. Too rigid prescriptions may be self-defeating.
- (iii) It must be clear, concise and easy to understand, conveying its message in the simplest yet most effective way.



- (iv) To remain appropriate, it must provide for review so that changed or changing circumstances may be taken into account.
- 2.3 A comprehensive Management Plan is a means of ensuring continuity of management. It is also a means of explaining to the general public the reasons behind the decisions made by the Kapiti Coast District Council.
- 2.4 While a Management Plan provides the overall direction for ongoing management, there is generally a need for an annual programme of special works to be drawn up and priorities assigned. An effective way for this to be achieved is for a management schedule to be prepared which would be updated annually and would be available to the public. The management schedule should specifically cover two aspects:
  - (i) A description of the special works to be completed in the year.
  - (ii) A budget with specific costings of works to be completed in that year.
- 3.0 **Management Plan Format**
- 3.1 The Management Plan begins with a basic description of the reserve and its uses. This is by no means exhaustive and additional descriptive information is included where necessary in the later Policy sections. The Aim(s) and Objectives of the Management Plan are then identified, followed by a Policies Section which sets out the ways in which the aim(s) and objectives are to be achieved.
- 3.2 The Policy section has been written so as to provide a complete reference on each particular topic rather than having to refer to several sections to gain a complete understanding. Under each Policy heading relevant background information provides the rationale to the policy statement that follow it. The policies are grouped under three headings: Administration and Management, Management of Resources and Use and Development.

M W Cardiff  
Reserves Superintendent

## **PART ONE: DESCRIPTION**

### **1.1 Legal Description and Location**

#### **1.1.1 Haruatai Park consists of 9.6965 hectares of land comprising:**

- Lot 2 DP 24442
- Pts 82 and 88 Blk IX Waitohu
- Pt 94 DP 32279
- Pt 95 DP 32279.

Certificate of Title GN 650304.

#### **1.1.2 The land is gazetted as a Recreation Reserve under the Reserves Act 1977 but part of it has been designated as a Local Purposes Reserve by the Council under the District Scheme. This has yet to be gazetted.**

#### **1.1.3 The Park is located about a kilometre west of State Highway One with public access off Mill Road, the main road to Otaki township. The surrounding area has a residential zoning but housing adjoins only the southern boundary. To the north is the now deserted Otaki Sanatorium and to the west is the Otaki Maternity Hospital and grounds.**

### **1.2 Physical and Natural Features**

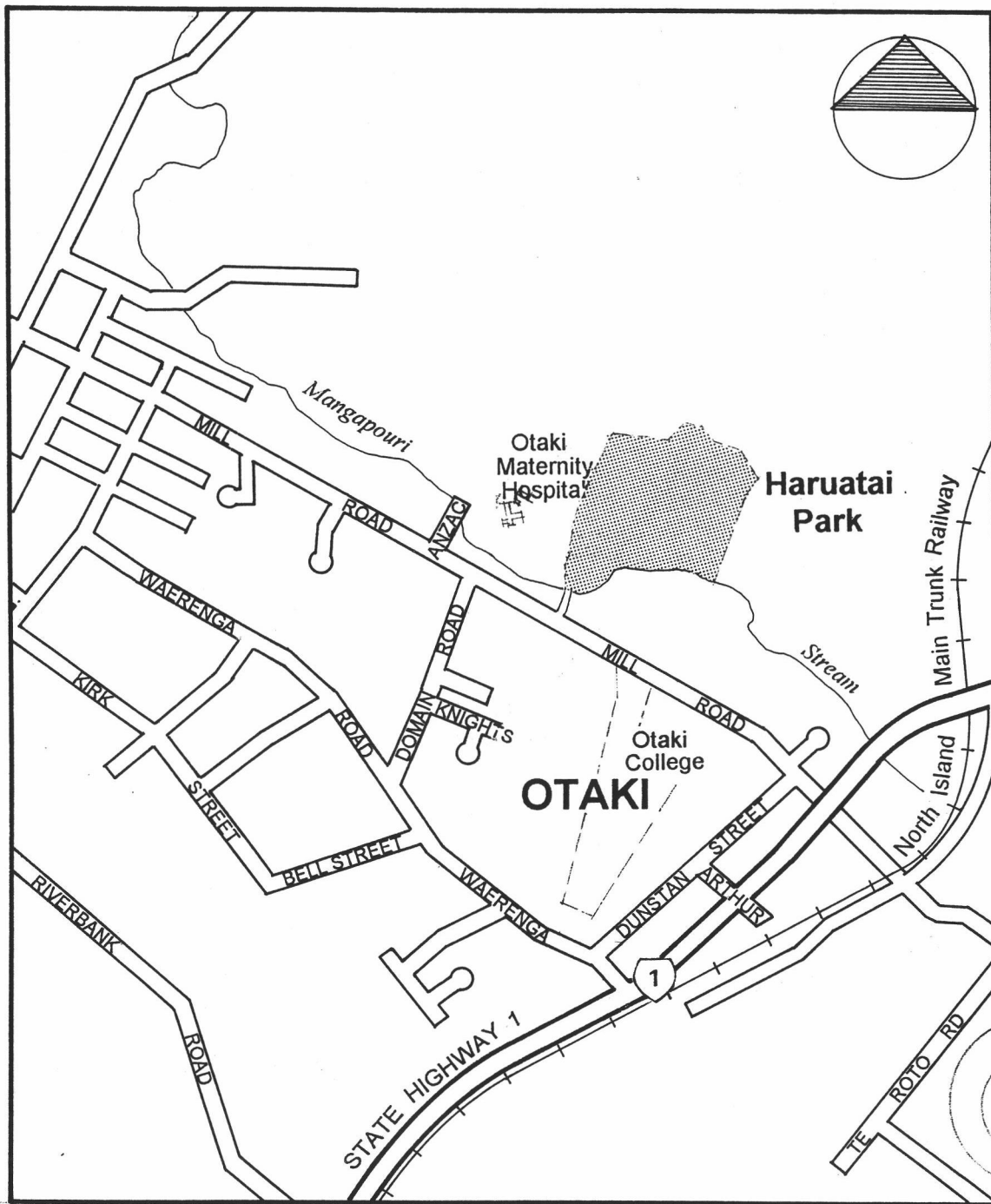
#### **1.2.1 The Park consists of a low-lying area to the south through which flows Mangapouri Stream and an elevated terrace area to the north which is an old stable sand dune formation. A slope separates the two areas. The upper level has been extensively levelled to form playing fields mainly enclosed by steep cut banks.**

#### **1.2.2 The soil of the lower area contains a significant proportion of alluvial silt and is comparatively slow draining. The terrace soil is variable with areas of free-draining sandy soil and less well-drained peaty ground.**

#### **1.2.3 The climate is characterised by typically warm summers and mild winters. Rainfall is 800-1000 mm per annum, evenly distributed throughout the year. West to north-west winds prevail with quite frequent gales.**

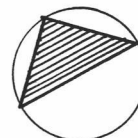
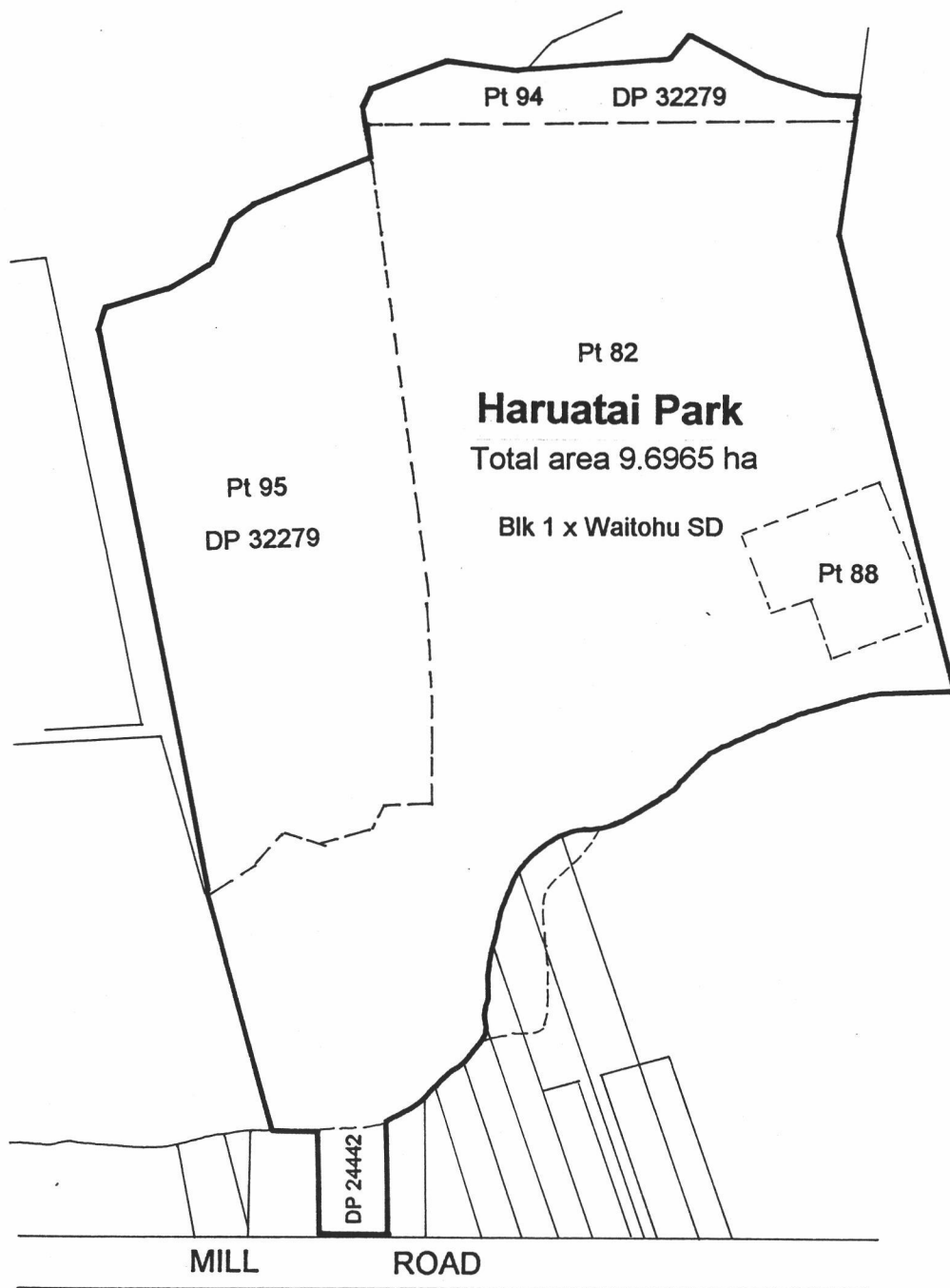
#### **1.2.4 Little remains of the native forest that once covered this area, except for some fine specimens of totara on the bank behind the tennis courts, and a forest remnant adjacent to the north east corner of the Park. Other vegetation consists of:**

- mixed plantings in the playground/entrance area including mature plane trees and black poplar, camellia and rhododendron mixed with native species such as mahoe on the steep bank, some eucalyptus specimens and cassuarinas lining the entrance way;
- young plantings of mainly native species on the bank above the public toilet area;
- willow and poplar on the east boundary;



## LOCATION PLAN





Scale 1:2000  
Legal Description

- young plantings of native species on the bank north of the playing fields including lemonwood, ngaio, dodonaea, hoheria and pohutukawa;
- mixed shrub plantings enclosing the swimming pool outdoor area;
- mature eucalyptus trees on the upper terrace western boundary and area close by.

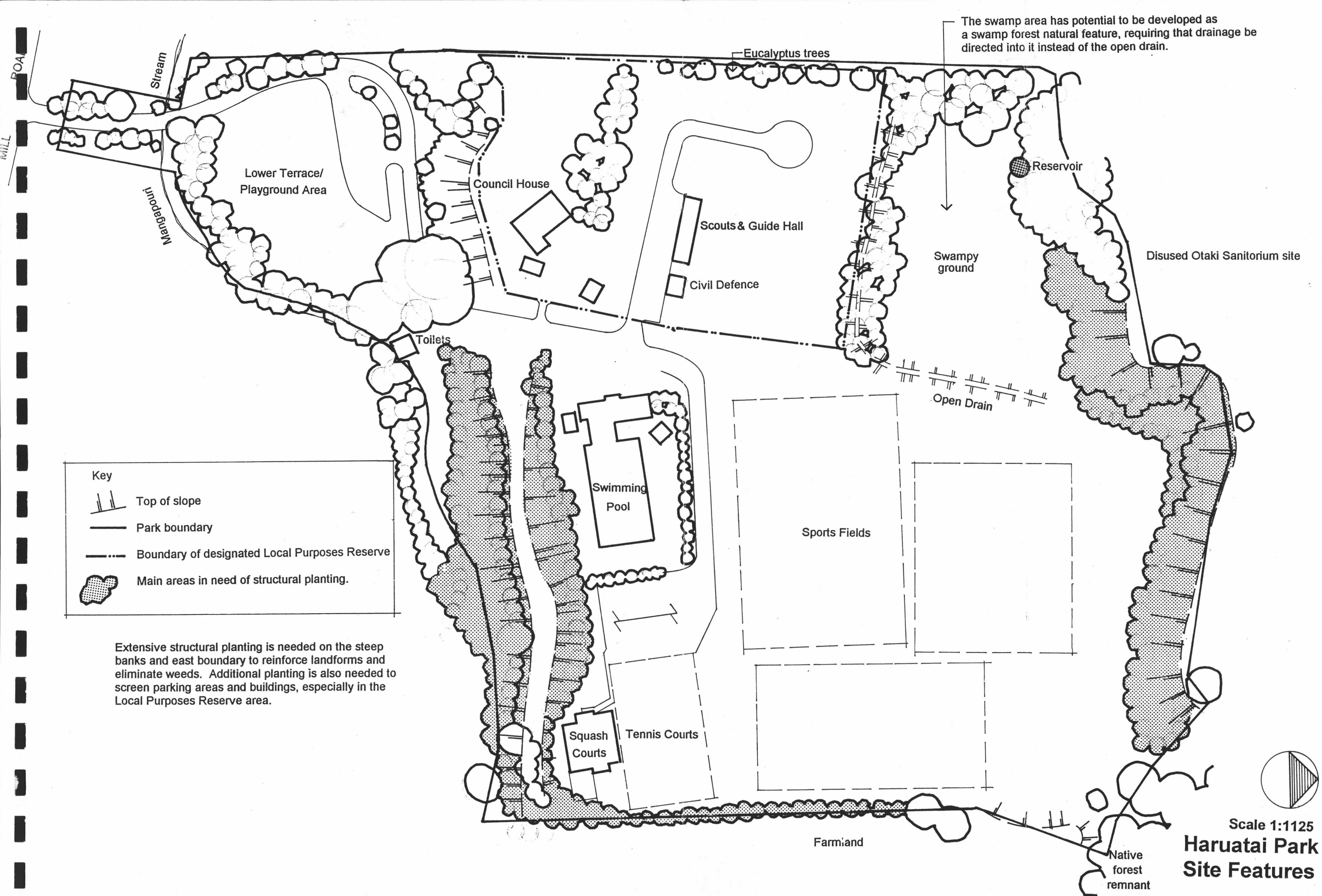
Blackberry and gorse is widespread in less frequently maintained parts of the site.

### 1.3 Park Use

1.3.1 Little is known about the early development of the Park, but existing facilities include:

- (i) The lower southern area: a playground, public toilet building and parking area.
- (ii) The upper terrace area:
  - Otaki Swimming Pool, built in 1973 and covered over in 1990;
  - tennis and squash courts with combined squash and soccer clubrooms, built in 1976;
  - full size soccer fields and a junior soccer ground;
  - car parking;
  - a residential house which Council rents out.

1.3.2 In 1990 the Kapiti Coast District Council approved a proposal to designate part of the Park as a Local Purposes Reserve. A Civil Defence Building and Scout/Guide Hall were subsequently moved into this area and additional vehicle access and parking developed. A Council Parks and Recreation Department depot and Montessori Pre-School are also proposed for this area.



## **PART TWO: AIM AND OBJECTIVES**

### **2.1 Aim**

- 2.1.1 The aim of this Management Plan is to manage and develop Haruatai Park primarily for public enjoyment and recreation, with limited community-based local purpose uses.

### **2.2 Objectives**

- 2.2.1 To develop and enhance the Park as a significant open space in the Otaki area.
- 2.2.2 To provide appropriate facilities to encourage compatible multiple use of the Park for organised and informal recreation and appropriate community service uses.



## **PART THREE: POLICIES**

### **ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT**

#### **3.1 Administration**

- 3.1.1 Haruatai Park is administered by the Parks and Recreation Department of the Kapiti Coast District Council under the direction of the Reserves Superintendent. Administration includes not only the organising of day-to-day management but also Park financing and long-term development planning. Specialist expertise may be sought on occasion to provide advice or specialist service on specific management issues such as tree maintenance or sports ground development.
- 3.1.2 As Haruatai Park is a public reserve the Kapiti Coast District Council recognises that liaison with the local community and user groups is an integral part of its management, enabling the Council to be responsive to user needs and local concerns. Interested and affected parties include sports clubs with formal use arrangements, local residents and informal Park users such as parents whose children use the playground.
- 3.1.3 It must also be recognised that Otaki is a small community with a limited rating base. Consequently, funds available for maintenance and development of its reserves are limited. Community involvement in special projects, such as planting programmes, will greatly extend the Council's resources whilst also fostering community pride in the Park.

#### **Policies**

- i The Park shall be administered and managed by the Parks and Recreation Department of the Kapiti Coast District Council.
- ii Specialist expertise shall be sought when required to ensure a high standard of Park management.
- iii Local residents, Park users and interested community groups shall be consulted about management issues and their participation in Park protection and special projects encouraged.
- iv The management plan shall be reviewed regularly and amended where necessary in accordance with the requirements of the Reserves Act 1977.

#### **3.2 Interpretation of Policies**

- 3.2.1 The Policies Section of this Management Plan (Part Three) sets out the policies required to achieve the Aim and Objectives identified in Part Two.

Each policy area has descriptive paragraphs (eg, 3.7.1) followed by specific policy statements (eg, 3.7, i, ii, iii, iv). The policy statements are to be read and applied in the context of the preceding related descriptive paragraphs.



- 3.2.2 To make the text of the Management Plan more readable the full name of the Kapiti Coast District Council is generally shortened to "the Council" or "Council".

### **Policies**

- i No activity or action that is contrary to the descriptive paragraphs shall be undertaken without the express permission of the Reserves Superintendent and the Otaki Community Board or its authorised delegate.
- ii Where the text in the Policies Section (Part Three) refers to "the Council" or "Council" this means the Kapiti Coast District Council.

### **3.3 Reserve Status**

- 3.3.1 Haruatai Park is currently classified as a Recreation Reserve under the Reserves Act 1977 but designation of an area in the south-west corner of the upper terrace as a Local Purposes Reserve was approved by the Council in 1990.

It was considered that Haruatai Park was under used because of its relatively isolated location and lack of extensive road frontage. The area in question was redesignated to accommodate compatible community uses which would raise public awareness of the Park and encourage its use.

- 3.3.2 A Scout Association/Girl Guides Hall and Civil Defence Building have subsequently been located in the area and a Montessori School is planned (see 3.16.3 below). The site is also one of several options being considered for a council Parks and Recreation Department depot.
- 3.3.3 To comply with the Reserves Act the Local Purposes Reserve area must be reclassified by Gazette Notice as soon as possible.
- 3.3.4 To comply with the classifications under the Reserves Act the Council's rental house should also be managed within the Local Purposes Reserve. Therefore, the designated area will be extended to include the house and associated garden.

### **Policy**

- i The area of the Park that has been designated for local purposes as well as the Council's rental property shall be reclassified as a Local Purposes Reserve in accordance with the requirements of the Reserves Act 1977 as soon as possible.

### **3.4 Adjacent Land Use**

- 3.4.1 Haruatai Park is located in a residential area although only a few residential properties directly adjoin it at present. Concerns can arise for local residents about noise levels, user behaviour, fencing requirements and environmental effects of park vegetation. Open communication between the Council and local residents can do much to alleviate such concerns.
- 3.4.2 Currently, the Park is also adjoined by farmland and the disused former Otaki Sanatorium. The Park must also be protected from possible adverse effects of adjacent land uses; - most particularly from grazing stock entering the Park. Adequate stock-proof fencing must be maintained.

#### **Policies**

- i The Parks and Recreation Department of the Council shall maintain regular communication with local residents over Park issues.
- ii The Council shall negotiate fencing covenants with adjoining land owners as required to ensure the privacy and protection of adjacent land and protection of the Park.

### **3.5 Leases, Licences and Contracts**

- 3.5.1 General policies about leases and related funding arrangements are currently being reviewed by the Council. The issue of exclusive uses in reserves and the Council's funding for these uses, which is a matter of community concern, is to be addressed in the review. The following points reflect existing policies and lease holders will be notified of any changes that affect them.
- 3.5.2 Leases, licences and management contracts relating to public reserves are issued for uses considered compatible with the aims and objectives of the particular reserve. They are subject to conditions set down by Council policy including standards of behaviour and maintenance and are reviewed annually. There are also Council Parks and Recreation Department requirements for lessees, licence holders and contract holders to comply with reserve management standards, including maintenance of buildings, colour schemes for buildings, design and maintenance of equipment such as flood lights and clean-up operations after events such as sporting fixtures.
- 3.5.3 Council policy requires leases and licences to have common tenure periods and anniversary dates to aid administration. Existing leases and licences on Council's reserve lands are gradually being brought in to line with this policy.
- 3.5.4 Currently leases are held by the Otaki Sports Club for use of the squash clubrooms and by the Girl Guides/Scouts Association for their building. The swimming pool is operated under a management contract and the Council house rented out as a source of revenue for the Park.

## **Policies**

- i Leases and licences shall be negotiated on terms to encourage use of the Park's recreational facilities.
- ii All leases and licences shall have common tenure periods and anniversary dates and shall be reviewed annually.
- iii Lessees, licence holders and contract holders shall be required to comply with the Council's requirements for maintenance and management of buildings and equipment, rubbish disposal and management of special events.
- iv Operation of the Otaki Swimming Pool shall be contracted out on terms to ensure a high standard of service and safety to the public.

### **3.6 Water Use**

- 3.6.1 Irrigation needs at the Park are minimal at present but if there is demand for organised summer sport on the playing fields, irrigation may be needed to upgrade the summer playing surface.
- 3.6.2 It is Council policy that water needed for extensive irrigation of reserve land should not be taken from the town water supply. Instead separate wells are to be drilled to supply irrigation needs. The taking of ground water is subject to water right permits issued by the Wellington Regional Council.

## **Policy**

- i In the event of extensive irrigation being required, the Council shall apply for permits to drill a well and extract ground water thereafter.

### **3.7 Environmental Controls**

- 3.7.1 The extent and type of public use and the condition of the Park needs to be monitored and appropriate action taken to ensure the enjoyment and safety of Park users and protection of the Park itself.
- 3.7.2 The general appearance and upkeep of reserves, particularly in suburban locations, is a common issue of public concern. This is reflected in the submissions about reserve management that were received in response to the Council's notification of intention to prepare Management Plans in 1992 (see Preface). Aspects of mowing, rubbish disposal, weed control, drainage and ground conditions were frequently mentioned. High standards of maintenance are required to facilitate safe and enjoyable use and to promote pride in the Park.
- 3.7.3 Council must also set an example of sound environmental management on reserves, including the control of noxious and invasive plants, control of noxious animals, skilled tree maintenance and planting techniques.

Maintenance methods must be carefully considered and controlled to ensure the safety and protection of Park users and adjacent residential areas; in particular, the use of herbicides, pesticides and fertilisers, and the use of heavy equipment. Sound planning and design should be employed to obviate the need for chemicals, eg, revegetating steep slopes where noxious weeds are prevalent to eliminate the site conditions in which weeds flourish.

- 3.7.4 In exceptional circumstances it may be necessary to close the entire Park from the public to protect public safety or to protect the Park environment. For example, flooding, reparation of extensive damage (such as storm damage) or major redevelopment.

### **Policies**

- i The Park shall be maintained regularly to a high standard and damage or environmental problems attended to promptly.
- ii Rubbish bins shall be provided in high use areas and shall be emptied regularly. Additional rubbish receptacles and disposal shall be provided for special events.
- iii Activities that are damaging to Park resources shall be restricted while appropriate protective measures are taken or prohibited if incompatible with the Park's aims and objectives.
- iv In exceptional circumstances, the Park shall be closed to the public, at the discretion of the Reserves Superintendent.
- v Noxious animals shall be controlled and, if possible, exterminated.
- vi Noxious, invasive or unwanted weeds shall be controlled and, if possible, eliminated.
- vii The use of herbicides and pesticides shall be used as little as possible and shall be strictly controlled. Where particular safety concerns arise, local residents shall be consulted prior to use.
- viii Alternative methods to the use of chemicals in controlling weeds and pests shall be given priority, subject to resources available.

### **3.8 Signs**

- 3.8.1 Signs are necessary in public parks to:

- identify places and routes;
- inform about public use and safety;
- in some cases, provide information of interest about the site or locality. (This is generally referred to as interpretation).

These signs are the responsibility of the administering body.

Two other types of signs are also to be found in Kapiti Coast District Reserves:

1. Signs used by lessees and licence holders. These may be to identify their facilities (eg. club room names) or may provide information about concession or similar operations (eg. swimming pool charges and opening times).
2. Advertising hoardings, usually erected at sports grounds to promote sponsors.

3.8.2 Well designed signs, used sparingly in well chosen locations, can be inviting and complement a park's image and intended use. Proliferation of different signs can, on the other hand, be obtrusive and off-putting. Signs in many Kapiti Coast District reserves have been erected on a rather ad hoc basis, with unco-ordinated styles and physically scattered messages. To remedy this situation, a unified Parks and Recreation sign system is to be designed for use throughout all reserves and a replacement programme implemented as resources permit. There are several advantages:

- A well designed standard sign system will enhance the Council's public image.
- Standard construction is more economic and allows for rapid replacement of damaged signs.
- The effectiveness of existing signs can be reviewed during the replacement programme and new signs adapted to current needs. For instance, speed restriction signs at the entrance are not needed as judder bars on the access road effectively control vehicle speed but night-time lighting of the entrance sign should be considered to aid Park identification (see 3.17.3).

3.8.3 Development of interpretation signage should also be considered to encourage public use of the Park and foster understanding of special Park features and management projects. This would include:

- a map showing Park features and walking routes both within the Park and connecting to adjacent areas (see 3.20);
- information about the proposed swamp forest feature and its relationship to the adjacent forest remnant (see 3.9.2);
- temporary information about revegetation projects in the Park.

3.8.4 The sign system will also provide guidelines about the design of signs used by lessees and licence holders which will relate to size, style and colour schemes.

3.8.5 Generally, advertising hoardings are not to be permitted on public reserves. However, where a sports club relies upon sponsorship to fund fixtures or facilities, temporary advertising signs may be permitted for specified fixtures provided that they are appropriate to the event, do not obstruct the public or damage the Park and are removed promptly after the fixture.

## **Policies**

- i      Sign requirements shall be reviewed and signs upgraded in accordance with a standard Council Parks and Recreation Department sign system.
- ii     Signs shall be designed, constructed and maintained to a high standard.
- iii.   Advertising hoardings shall be permitted on a temporary basis only, at the discretion of the Reserves Superintendent.

## MANAGEMENT OF RESOURCES

### 3.9 Landscape Character

There are two distinct character areas within the Park:

#### 3.9.1 The Playground/Entrance Area

This is a low-lying area sheltered by the steep terrace edge to the north. Mature plane trees and black poplar give the area an "English park" character, a theme which can also be seen west along the stream in the hospital grounds.

This English park character, which provides an attractive setting for the passive recreation use of the area, needs to be preserved and reinforced. Existing planting needs to be assessed in terms of this character. The camellia and rhododendron plantings on the bank, for instance, are a typical association with deciduous tree planting. The cassuarinas and golden macrocarpa are of quite a different character and a programme for their removal and replacement should be prepared. Formal planting of the plane/black poplar trees along the entrance way would give a more consistent character and eventually provide tall landmark trees to highlight the narrow Park entrance.

#### 3.9.2 The Elevated Terrace Area

This is essentially an amphitheatre defined by banks or vegetation around the open central area. Its elevation affords expansive views inland and south. The forest remnant adjacent to the north-east corner and the mature plantings around the Council-owned house to the south-west provide significant elements of enclosure to the central area.

Extensive structural planting on the banks and east boundary is needed to reinforce the amphitheatre effect of this area. This should be primarily of native species, which were formerly typical of the area so that something of the natural character is restored and species adapted to local conditions are used to aid plant establishment. Against this basic framework, fast-growing specimen trees such as the eucalyptus already on site can be used for shade and screening.

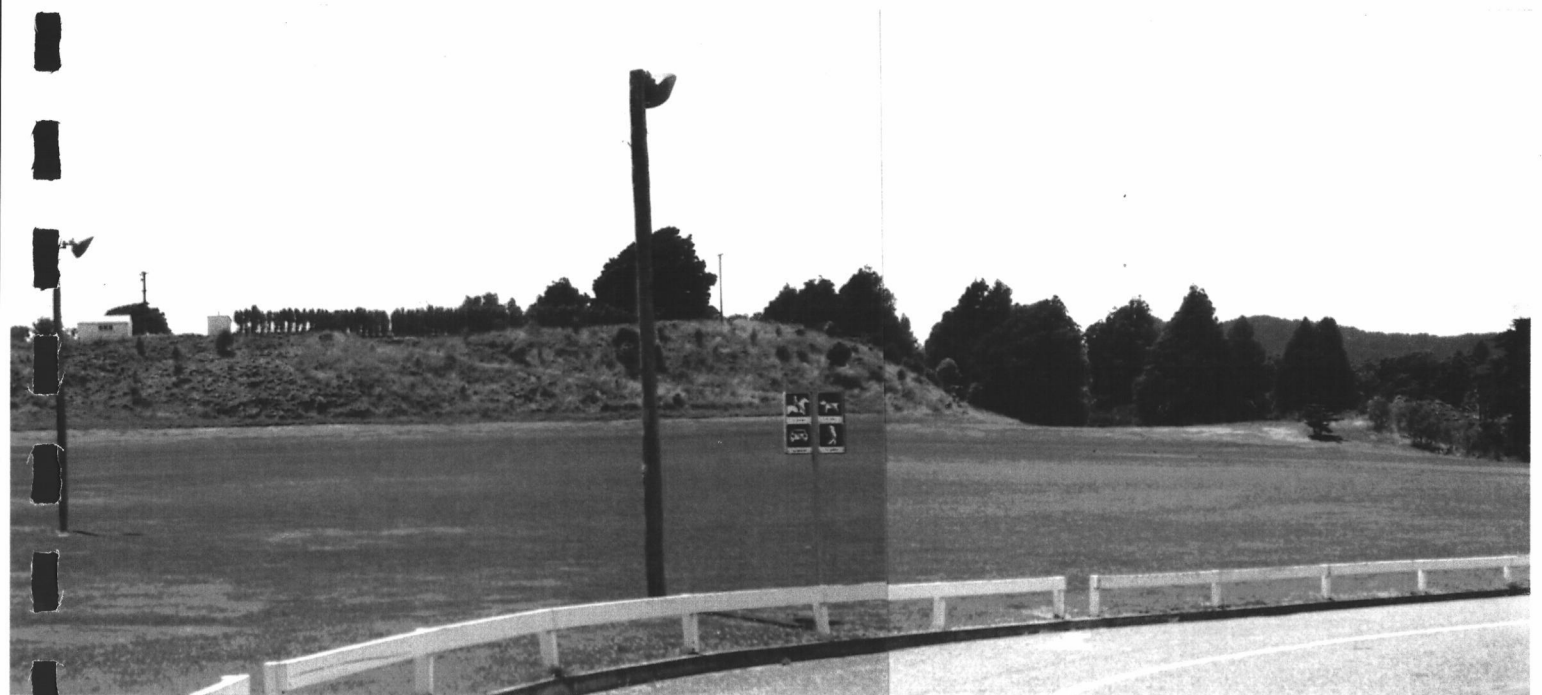
Structural planting is also needed to screen and shade the extensive parking areas and to visually set the buildings into the site. In particular, the new buildings in the local purposes area need planting and co-ordinated colour schemes to reduce their visual impact.

At the western end of the playing fields, a swampy area cleared of a former eucalyptus stand is now giving way to noxious weeds. This provides an ideal opportunity to develop a "natural feature" area by planting with species typical of the swamp forest type which once occurred here and maintaining the swampy ground conditions. This would complement the adjacent kahikatea/pukatea swamp forest remnant which is visible at the north-east corner.



Mature plane trees  
give the Playground/  
Entrance area an  
"English Park"  
character. ▷

Structural planting is  
needed on the  
banks enclosing the  
upper terrace. The  
adjacent native  
forest remnant (at  
right) is a significant  
visual and conservation  
feature. ▽





- 3.9.3 Following public notification of Council's intention to prepare a management plan, a very comprehensive submission with detailed proposals for landscape development was received from a group of local landscape architects. The overall concept has been adopted in this Management Plan and future involvement of the group who made the submission is to be encouraged.

A landscape development plan is needed to ensure a consistent approach to future development.

### Policies

- i The landscape character and scenic value of the Park shall be protected and enhanced.
- ii A planting programme shall be planned using species and design appropriate to the local character and the recreational use of the Park.
- iii The planting programme shall aim to establish a framework of native vegetation as a consistent theme to unify the Park's character using local species appropriate to site conditions.
- iv Existing trees that are inappropriate to the character of the Park shall be gradually removed and replaced with more appropriate plantings as resources permit.

### 3.10 Vegetation

- 3.10.1 The mature plane, black poplar and eucalyptus trees in the Park are important for the shelter and visual amenity that they provide. These trees must be protected and managed to maintain their health and ensure their longevity. Pruning should only be for reasons of safety and tree health and must only be carried out by skilled personnel.
- 3.10.2 Planting needs to be carefully planned and maintained to maximise plant survival and growth rates. Planting of native species has been carried out on some of the steep banks but the plants are competing with rank grass and blackberry. Interplanting of these sites and mass planting at closer spacings on new sites must be considered as an alternative approach. In addition, species which quickly establish into a bushy form, such as mahoe and lemonwood, should be used extensively. The plants close over the ground more quickly, if closely planted, reducing maintenance, providing shelter for each other and achieving visual impact sooner. Adequate site preparation and ongoing maintenance for several years is essential for success. Reference should be made to techniques which have now been well tested and documented for revegetating sites with native species.
- 3.10.3 The Parks and Recreation Department has many reserves to maintain and limited resources to do so. Therefore, planting may have to be carried out on a progressive basis over a number of years. To achieve maximum

impact, each year's planting should be concentrated in a particular area or areas rather than distributing plants thinly throughout the Park.

## **Policies**

- i The mature trees in the Park are a significant landscape feature and shall be protected and maintained for good health.
- ii Sound horticultural practices shall be applied to the maintenance and management of the Park's vegetation.
- iii A planting programme shall be implemented as soon as possible to conform with an approved landscape development plan.
- iv Planting techniques shall be reviewed when planning the Park's planting programme. In particular, revegetation techniques using native species shall be considered.

### **3.11 Stream Management and Drainage**

- 3.11.1 Overall management of the Mangapouri Stream is administered by the Rivers Department of the Wellington Regional Council as part of its responsibility for management of the Otaki River Floodplain. The Rivers Department must be consulted about any significant changes to the stream or its banks.
- 3.11.2 The Stream must be managed to minimise water quality, siltation and flooding problems downstream. The banks must be protected with appropriate riparian planting or well maintained sward to hold soil. Planting should be kept clear of undergrowth and the stream kept clear of debris to avoid flood obstructions. The stream also needs to be recognised as a feature of interest in the lower area of the Park with areas of well-maintained grassy banks to facilitate public access and varied stream conditions to encourage aquatic life.
- 3.11.3 The playground area becomes wet in winter. The extent to which this affects recreational use needs to be assessed and measures to improve drainage implemented if necessary.
- 3.11.4 Ground drainage has been modified on the upper terrace to develop the playing fields. The fields drain into an open drain which flows west into a culvert under the road. This drain is poorly maintained, blocked by debris and holding areas of stagnant water. The drainage system here needs to be reassessed and alternative options considered to the open drain method. For instance, there is the opportunity to recognise natural conditions by directing drainage into the adjacent swampy area. This could benefit the establishment of a swamp forest feature here, with ecological and aesthetic benefits.

## **Policies**

- i The Kapiti Coast District Council shall consult with the Rivers Department of the Wellington Regional Council over stream management issues.
- ii The Mangapouri Stream shall be managed and maintained to protect water and soil values whilst providing a natural feature for public enjoyment.
- iii The need for improved drainage of the children's play area shall be investigated.
- iv Alternative options for managing drainage from the playing fields shall be investigated. In the meantime, the open drain shall be maintained to improve flow.

### **3.12 Sportsgrounds**

- 3.12.1 The playing fields are used for competition play during the winter and are also used for informal touch rugby and ball games. If there is future demand for organised summer sport, the fields will need upgrading and irrigation. In this event, an irrigation well will be drilled. A high standard of maintenance is required to ensure the ground is suitable for competition play. Monitoring is essential to ensure that drainage is adequate and to prevent inappropriate use and over-use.
- 3.12.2 The tennis courts are used for both club and informal play. The paved surface needs to be maintained in good order and the court markings periodically re-done by the Otaki Sports Club.
- 3.12.3 The Council's Parks and Recreation Department undertakes the responsibility for maintaining the grassed playing surfaces for sports groups but the provision of equipment such flood lights is the responsibility of those groups.
- 3.12.4 The management and maintenance of the squash courts are the responsibility of the Otaki Sports Club.

## **Policies**

- i The playing fields and tennis courts shall be maintained to a high standard suitable for competition play.
- ii The condition of the playing fields shall be regularly monitored. Training sessions and sporting fixtures shall be restricted or cancelled at the discretion of the Reserves Superintendent to protect the playing surface.
- iii Equipment used for sporting activities including goal posts, screens and floodlights, shall be installed and maintained by the ground users and, where the equipment would interfere with the next season's sport, shall be dismantled within 14 days of the end of the season.

### 3.13 Children's Play Area

- 3.13.1 The design and location of children's play areas should provide stimulating and safe play opportunities for a range of ages, with both play structures and open space for ball games and exploration. Where possible, site features such as varied ground forms should be incorporated into the design to extend play opportunities. The site should also provide an environment which encourages year-round use with adequate sunlight, shade, shelter and seating for supervision.
- 3.13.2 The play area at Haruatai Park includes various standard types of equipment including swings, see-saws and climbing structures, and a skateboard ramp. As the play equipment has now been in place for some years, a comprehensive review of its safety and design is required in terms of the New Zealand Standard for Playgrounds and Play Equipment 1986. Immediate consideration must be given to:
- the provision of appropriate safety surfacing under all equipment from which there is potential for children to fall;
  - detailed inspection for faults and damage.
- 3.13.3 The design, suitability of equipment and additional opportunities should also be reviewed to assess the need for longer-term upgrading. For instance, the timber balancing structure is poorly constructed, the skateboard ramp is in need of repair and much of the equipment needs re-painting. It should be noted that a range of modular play equipment is now available which is increasingly used in public playgrounds. This equipment incorporates a range of materials and colour and is designed to meet the New Zealand Standard specification.

#### Policies

- i The playground equipment shall be maintained to a high standard of safety and repair to conform with the requirements of New Zealand Standard 5828, 1986.
- ii Appropriate safety surfacing shall be installed under all play structures as soon as possible.
- iii The playground equipment shall be inspected regularly and thoroughly for damage and faults and any necessary remedial work carried out promptly.
- iv The need for upgrading the play area shall be assessed in consultation with playground users. Involvement of the local community in monitoring and upgrading of the playground shall be encouraged.
- v The Building Department of the Kapiti Coast District Council shall be consulted about the design of any new play structures or alterations to existing structures, to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Building Act 1991.

### **3.14 Buildings, Structures and Site Furniture**

- 3.14.1 The design and location of buildings, structures, paving and site furniture can have a major impact upon the visual appeal of a reserve, either positive or negative. Many public reserves suffer from ad hoc development where poorly placed structures and unrelated styles and materials are unnecessarily obtrusive.

As a general principle, constructed features should be complementary to the open space qualities of a reserve, achieved by:

- design appropriate to the site and unified throughout;
- locations chosen to reduce visual impact or to enhance natural features.

#### **3.14.2 Buildings**

The buildings at Haruatai Park are of inconsistent style and painted in pale colour schemes which make them stand out in the Park setting. The tennis/squash building, Civil Defence building and Scouts/Guides hall are placed starkly on the site with little use of ground form or planting to provide visual settings. A co-ordinated colour scheme for all buildings in the Park is needed to give some continuity. The colour scheme needs to be of more recessive tones to contrast less with surrounding vegetation and darker roof colours are needed to visually set the buildings down on their sites. Planting around the buildings linking in with the proposed structural planting is also needed to integrate the buildings with the Park setting.

Proliferation of buildings must be balanced against the objective to preserve the Park's open space qualities. The need for and placement of new buildings must be considered in terms of:

- facilitating appropriate Park uses;
- whether the building will attract more use than the Park can withstand;
- the space required for associated access, parking, planting etc.
- the potential to meet additional needs through the multiple use of existing buildings.

Any new buildings should be of a low profile with continuity of design appropriate to the Park and should be sited so that they can be set in against the proposed structural planting. Stark pre-fab buildings such as the Guides/Scout hall are to be avoided. New buildings should also be located in the existing "building zone" so that the main open space areas are preserved.

#### **3.14.3 Site Furniture**

Site furniture includes such items as seating, vehicle barriers, and rubbish bins. Although small in scale, these elements can produce visual clutter so careful thought must be given to both their design and placement. Rubbish



Co-ordinated colour schemes and associated structural planting are required to reduce the visual impact of these buildings in the local purposes reserve area.



bins, for instance, must be easily seen and placed where they will be used, but can be less obtrusive if placed on existing structures or close to planting. The white painted vehicle barriers are visually obtrusive and should, in the long-term, be replaced with the timber log barriers generally used in Kapiti reserves which are of an informal character more appropriate to this site. Specimen tree planting associated with the barriers would reduce their visual impact.

#### 3.14.4 Fencing

The location, style and functional requirements of fencing should be reviewed in the landscape development plan. In particular, there is potential to make fencing around the tennis courts and swimming pool less obtrusive. The adequacy of stockproofing boundaries next to grazing land should also be assessed.

#### 3.14.5 Maintenance

Poorly maintained buildings and structures can detract from a reserve's image and attract anti-social behaviour such as vandalism. This applies not only to the standard of repair but to the cleanliness of changing rooms and toilets.

### **Policies**

- i All buildings, structures and site furniture shall be of a high design standard and shall be maintained in a state of good repair.
- ii Changing facilities and toilets shall be regularly maintained to a high standard of cleanliness.
- iii The Council's Parks and Recreation Department shall endeavour to achieve unity of constructed Park features which complement the Park's character through co-ordinated colour schemes and consistent design styles appropriate to the setting.
- iv New buildings, structures and site furniture shall be sited to complement the Park's character while meeting functional requirements. The addition of new buildings shall be subject to planning approval under the Kapiti Coast District Scheme and shall be considered against the objectives of preserving the Park's open space qualities and providing for recreation.
- v All new buildings and structures, and alterations to those existing, shall comply with the requirements of the Building Act 1991.
- vi The visual impact of existing buildings shall be reduced with appropriate planting.
- vii Fencing shall be maintained in a state of good repair and its visibility reduced with the use of planting and/or landform.
- viii Fencing requirements and design shall be reviewed in the Park landscape plan.

## **USE AND DEVELOPMENT**

### **3.15 Recreation**

3.15.1 With its extensive area and varied land form , Haruatai Park offers diverse opportunities for both organised and informal recreation.

3.15.2 The basin in the upper level amphitheatre provides the venue for organised sport including the swimming pool operation. It must also be recognised that this area is a valuable open space for informal recreation such as social ball games, walking, kite flying and children's play. Use for organised activities must be managed so that the playing field area is also freely available for these other needs including some weekend and evening times.

3.15.3 The lower level is the main area for informal picnicking and children's play. There is potential to extend opportunities for informal recreation such as walking and jogging by developing a walking route around the Park linked in with the proposed framework of vegetation.

### **Policies**

- i A compatible balance between the needs of organised and informal recreation shall be maintained.
- ii Compatible multiple use of the playing fields and sports buildings shall be encouraged to maximise efficient use of resources.
- iii Events and activities of a recreational nature or value to the local community such as fetes, festivals and sports competitions shall be encouraged provided that they do not damage the Park, excessively conflict with recreation use or cause unacceptable disturbance to local residents. Such events shall be subject to prior approval of the Reserves Superintendent.
- iv Short term commercial use shall be permitted provided it does not cause damage nor unnecessarily conflict with recreational use and enjoyment of the Park. Such uses shall be subject to prior written approval of the Reserves Superintendent.
- v The Reserves Superintendent shall administer a bookings system for formal use of the playing field and facilities building and shall give notice of restrictions and cancellations by way of agreed avenues. (e.g. radio announcements).

### **3.16 Non-Recreational Use**

3.16.1 The Local Purposes Reserve Area has been designated to accommodate compatible community uses which will encourage use of the Park. With its narrow entrance and comparatively isolated location on the edge of the



housing area, Haruatai Park has been under-used. The Council wishes to raise public awareness and encourage greater use of the Park.

- 3.16.2 The Scout Association and Girl Guide hall will attract more use in the evenings and may foster community involvement in Park management. For instance, at other Reserves, Scouts have participated in clean-up and planting projects as an aspect of their Scout programme
- 3.16.3 The Montessori Pre-School is also to be re-sited in this area as its existing site will soon be unavailable. Montessori schools are run on a non-profit basis and have traditionally been located on Council reserves in the Kapiti area on the basis that they are a valuable community resource. The school will operate at off-peak times for other sporting uses so that conflict for parking space should not be a problem. It is hoped that increased use of the playground, swimming pool and open space will be generated by bringing local families into the Park.
- 3.16.4 The Civil Defence building was previously sited in Otaki Domain, which lies within the floodable area of the Otaki River. It was therefore necessary to relocate it to a site where it would be unaffected by a flooding emergency.
- 3.16.5 The rental house is also to be included in the Local Purposes Reserve. The Council intends to continue renting the property as a residential presence in the more secluded upper terrace area is an aid to Park security. The rental income is also an additional source of revenue for the Park.
- 3.16.6 A Council Parks and Recreation Department depot has also been proposed for the local purposes area. The existing depot is much larger than required for the Department's Otaki operation and has disproportionate overhead costs, which eat into the limited funds available for managing Otaki's reserves. The depot would be a small building providing basic toilet and cafeteria facilities for the five-member staff and garaging for a tractor and mower.

At this stage, the depot's future location is still undecided and other possible sites in Otaki reserves are also being considered. Location at Haruatai Park must be weighed against the Aim and Objectives of this Management Plan and the factors identified in 3.14.2 above. Any definite proposal will be subject to Council planning approval and public consultation.

## Policies

- i Non-recreational uses that have a community base and are likely to encourage compatible use of the Park shall be permitted in the Local Purposes Reserve area.
- ii The Council's house shall continue to be rented out for residential use and managed as part of the Local Purposes Reserve.
- iii Relocation of the Council's Otaki Parks and Recreation Department depot to the Local Purposes Reserve area shall be investigated in comparison with other possible sites and in consultation with the local community.

### **3.17 Access and Parking**

- 3.17.1 The limited road frontage and layout of the Park necessitates vehicle access into the Park. This is provided by a sealed access road with parking areas at the playground and sports/local purposes facilities. Speed control is a necessity for safety, imposed by judder bars and the narrow width of the road. Most of the parking areas have been laid out and marked for efficient use but parking at the swimming pool entrance and the playground needs rationalisation.
- 3.17.2 A footpath beside the access road and through the playground to the upper level provides for pedestrian access into the Park. Otherwise, pedestrian access is informal. There is potential to extend walking opportunities by developing a walkway east around the stream, connecting up to the terrace level and then around the perimeter of the amphitheatre. This needs to be associated with the proposed planting framework to provide a pleasant walking environment and should be planned for appreciation of the extensive views afforded from the elevated banks. In the long-term, the potential to extend the walkway into adjacent open spaces needs to be recognised (see 3.20 below).
- 3.17.3 The Park entrance needs some redevelopment to make it stand out better from the residential housing frontages along Mill Road. Commemorative entrance gates built by the Lions Club define the entrance but need to be supplemented by an avenue of tall "English Park" character trees along the access road to provide a distinctive landmark (see 3.9.1). As the Park attracts considerable use after dark (eg, Scout/Guide Hall and Swimming Pool) appropriate lighting of the entrance sign should be considered so that the Park can be more easily identified at night.

#### **Policies**

- i Public vehicle access shall be restricted to a defined access road and parking areas.
- ii Parking needs shall be monitored and additional parking provided if necessary.
- iii The parking at the swimming pool entrance and playground shall be rationalised.
- iv A walkway around the Park shall be developed as resources permit.
- v Opportunities for extending walking opportunities beyond the Park shall be investigated in long-term planning.
- vi Appropriate measures shall be taken to make the Park entrance more obvious.

### 3.18 Controls and Prohibitions

3.18.1 Public parks inevitably attract activities which are incompatible with management objectives. Although the Council seeks to encourage multiple recreation use of the Park, it must impose certain controls to protect it from damage, maintain safety standards and promote its compatible use. The controls and prohibitions are a response to management problems that have consistently arisen over a period of years and are not simply a standard set of rules.

Two issues here require some additional explanation:

#### 3.18.2 Prohibition of dogs

Uncontrolled dogs and dog fouling frequently detracts from the enjoyment of other Park users. This is particularly so in playgrounds and on playing fields where ground hygiene and child safety are concerns. The Council has, therefore, adopted a policy that dogs will be prohibited from these areas. Walking and exercising dogs is recognised as a genuine recreational pursuit, however, and the Department endeavours to accommodate this where possible. Therefore, dogs will be permitted on the walkway when it is developed provided they are on a leash. This policy will need to be adequately explained on Park signage and will be introduced on a trial basis.

#### 3.18.3 Anti-social behaviour

Anti-social behaviour and vandalism is, to a large extent, beyond the control of the Council. However, it is generally recognised that poorly maintained public areas tend to attract these kind of problems. High maintenance standards and rapid repair of damage may, therefore, have some effect in counteracting such behaviour.

It is also recognised that this type of problem occurs less where the local community is actively involved in park projects and management. Community involvement and consultation is another avenue which may be explored, therefore.

### Policies

- i Public vehicle access shall not be permitted in the Park except in defined road and parking areas.
- ii Dogs shall not be permitted in the Park until such time as a walkway is developed. At that time, dogs shall only be permitted on the walkway and must be on a leash at all times. This policy shall be enforced under the appropriate by-law at the discretion of the Reserves Superintendent.
- iii Horses, golfing and other recreation activities which may damage the Park's surface or compromise public safety shall not be permitted.
- iv Littering and rubbish dumping shall be prohibited and offenders may be prosecuted under the Litter Act 1979.

- v The lighting of open fires shall not be permitted but portable barbeques may be used for special events at the discretion of the Reserves Superintendent on condition that no fuel is sourced from within the Park.
- vi Measures to reduce and, if possible, eliminate anti-social behaviour and vandalism shall be investigated and, where appropriate, actioned.

### 3.19 Development

- 3.19.1 Development, whether it is planting, new buildings or changed uses must be considered in terms of the Park aim and objectives and, specifically, the likely effects upon landscape character, adjacent properties, patterns and levels of use and opportunities to enhance open space qualities.

#### Policies

- i Only development that is in accordance with the aim and objectives of the Management Plan shall be permitted.
- ii Future development shall be subject to an approved landscape development plan.

### 3.20 Open Space Opportunities

- 3.20.1 Haruatai Park is strategically located adjacent to significant open space areas. There is potential to link the Park into a local open space network by extending walking opportunities and seeking to preserve significant landscape features in these adjacent areas.
- 3.20.2 To the west, the Otaki Maternity Hospital grounds extend along the terrace edge. The grounds have a character very similar to the lower area at Haruatai Park due to the same mature plane and poplar trees growing there. The trees in both areas combine to form a distinctive local landmark. Appreciation of this area and the preservation of its landscape qualities would be fostered by permitting a walking route to be developed from the Park, ultimately linking through to the cemetery beyond. The Council cannot afford to purchase additional land but may be able to negotiate terms (such as assisting with grounds' maintenance) to permit public access.
- 3.20.3 Adjacent to the north-east corner of the Park is a remnant of kahikatea-pukatea native swamp forest which was once extensive in this area. This has been identified as a remnant worthy of protection under the Department of Conservation's Protected Natural Areas Programme.

The Otaki Borough District Scheme, which is now administered by the Kapiti Coast District Council, has an open space objective:

"To protect and develop the landscape of the Borough (both natural and man-made) as an important contribution to the quality of the environment."

The remnant in question is a significant natural feature in the Otaki area for its rarity and is a significant part of the visual setting at Haruatai Park. It would therefore be appropriate in terms of the District Scheme and the Park's management to seek to protect this vegetation.

Again, the Council cannot afford to purchase the land, but should encourage the land owner, in consultation with the Department of Conservation, to protect the remnant by way of an open space covenant. It may also be possible to negotiate public walking access into the area as an extension of the Park's walkway for the educational opportunity it presents subject to an impact assessment.

#### **Policies**

- i The Parks and Recreation Department shall consult with the management of Otaki Maternity Hospital to investigate the feasibility of allowing a pedestrian walkway through the hospital grounds.
- ii The Department shall co-ordinate with the Department of Conservation and the land owner to seek protection of the native forest remnant adjacent to Haruatai Park.