

A DECISION to replace old and dying trees at the Liardet St entrance of Pukekura Park with young kauri trees could be proven to be a bad one in time, says the park's former curator.

The New Plymouth District Council will spend \$30,000 replacing old and dying silver birch and puriri trees along Liardet St with 16, 2½-3m kauris.

NPDC senior parks planner Anthony Joines said the old trees had become a hazard.

"The trees that are there are suffering and becoming unsafe. There are a lot of dead sections within the trees — particularly the puriri, which could split and break in a good wind."

The trees were planted long Liardet St, between Gilbert and Fillis streets, about 40 years ago.

Mr Joines said a lack of root space meant the trees had struggled to grow.

Seven of the 18 trees originally planted had died and the remainder — a mix of puriri and silver birch — had only grown to a quarter of the size they should be for their age.

But George Fuller, curator of Pukekura Park from 1966-90, said there was the potential for the kauri to grow to huge sizes, which could create big problems for residents in the future.

He accepted the old trees were past their use-by-date and had to be replaced. But the decision to use kauri was questionable.

"In 100 years' time there could be some very annoyed people, kauri grow to be enormous. I can only say the agency responsible for planting kauri like that will be cursed in time.

"If a kauri grows well, and one hopes they will, they'll grow to be huge."

Unlike puriri, kauri could not be kept within limits, he said.

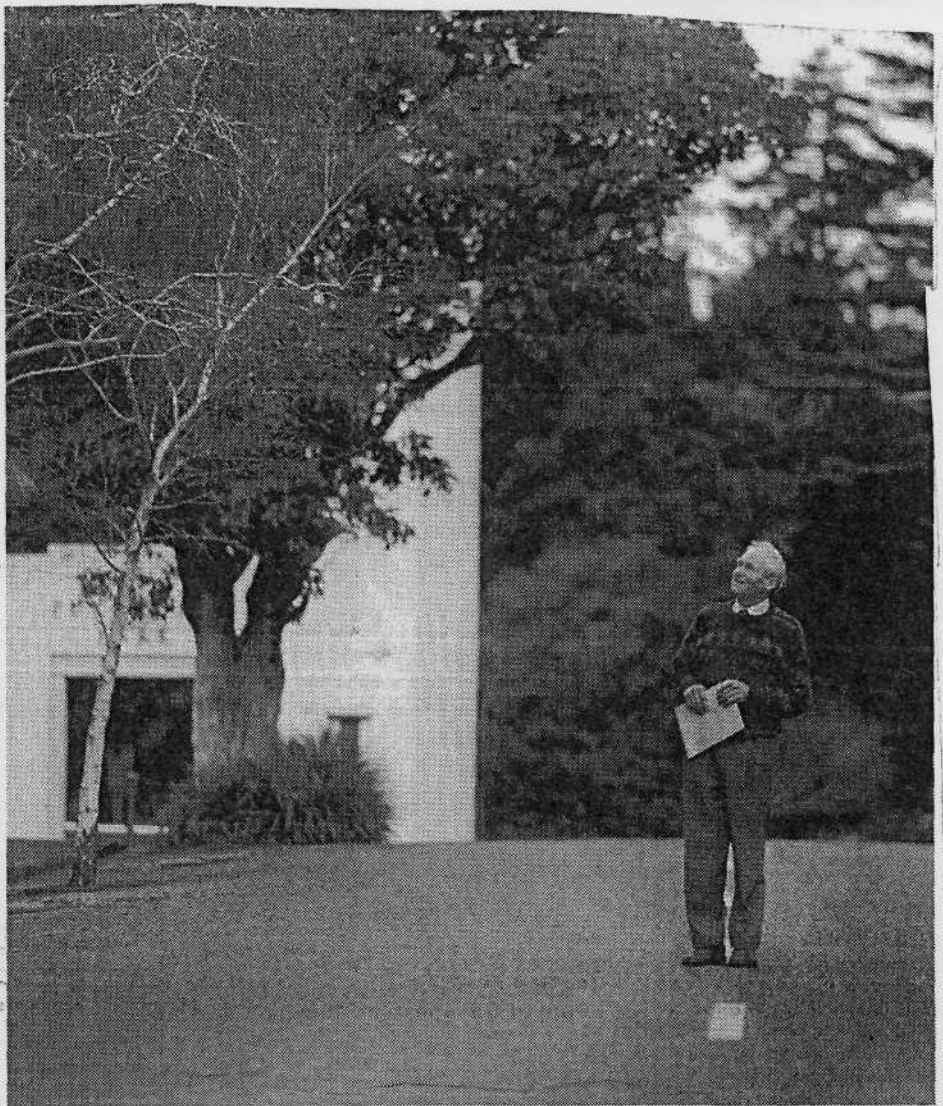
Mr Fuller said the young kauri would face a variety of hazards as they grew, including vandalism and knocks from vehicles.

He favoured using lancewood trees, which were robust and could be grown to a decent size in a nursery before being transplanted in Liardet St.

Mr Joines said the possibility of vandals attacking the kauri was a risk, as it was with any council planting.

Kauri trees were specifically chosen for the entranceway project, he said.

"Kauri will be the most significant tree in Pukekura Park in the future —



GROWING CONCERN: George Fuller, former curator of Pukekura Park, looks over the trees which line the Liardet St entrance to the park. The puriri and silver birch trees are to be replaced with kauri trees. Photo: MAARTEN HOLL

we've got hundreds of kauri trees planted in the park and they are replacing the pine as the sky-line tree.

"Also, their growth is very upright, so they're not going to create visibility problems for the residential neighbours and they'll allow cleaner views of the park."

Once the old trees were removed the

ground would be prepared to allow the kauris to thrive. Planter boxes will be installed at the base of each tree.

Car parks and footpath space would be retained.

Once work begins, it will take up to six weeks to put the kauri in place. Mr Joines said the work-affected section of Liardet St would remain open.

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