

Friends of Pukekura Park New Plymouth Incorporated ("The Friends")

Assessment of Proposal by NPDC Officers in Conjunction with the New Plymouth Jockey Club as to the plan for a new access road into the Bowl

Please be advised The Friends Executive passed a unanimous resolution at its meeting on Wednesday 4 March 2009, opposing the proposed access way (as detailed to The Friends by NPDC Parks and the Jockey Club).

The Friends oppose the proposal, but suggest an alternative proposal to ameliorate the adverse affects, but also to enable and balance or accommodate the perceived main rationale for the cutting being:

1. New ingress from Racecourse to Bowl away from new stable wing, particularly the proposed No. 2 wing due to be built and ring road.
2. Refurbished access road or upgraded access road to allow better access of trucks and vehicles.

We oppose the proposal, but would support what appears to be an alternative realignment and upgrade with less impact on the ecology and the trees and yet would appear to meet all of the specified rationale for the proposed new access road. This alternative proposal would also most clearly be far less expensive engineering wise and far less intrusive.

Assessment of Proposal

The Pukekura Park Management Plan 2004, Goal 8.1 is;

"To continue to develop the Park to meet changing community needs and expectations in an integrated manner that ensures the Park's long term sustainability and protection and enhancement of its character and values."

Sustainability, protection and enhancement is our greatest worry with respect to this proposal.

There is no doubt under Policy 8.1.3 that this proposed development will have a significant impact. Adverse affects will be on; "the Parks ecosystems, character and water"; the visual integrity of the Park and its landscape values; distinctive and significant ecosystem qualities; historic site; and an extra road into the park, which we believe is unwarranted.

A. Ecosystem Consideration

1. There are clear actual adverse affects of the development. The removal of 12 or more long established canopy trees and undergrowth, and 13 (30-40 year) comparatively recent plantings, and the collective effect of removal of the whole block for cutting of a new road, will not only cause loss and desecration, but threaten the remaining area. [See Appendix **attached** of the particulars and age dimensions of the trees marked for removal and/or affected]. These trees are not mere bush, but significant mature examples of their type. Of significant ages and dimensions. "The US Forest Service estimates that a 70 cm diameter tree has 70 times the ecosystem benefits of a small tree". Each such tree can achieve a multiplicity of purposes: lowering city temperatures, filtering and slowing volumes of stormwater along with aesthetic and social benefits. Refer James Urban, "Up By Roots", American Society of Landscape Architects Medal of Excellence, www.deeproot.com (refer Landscape Architecture New Zealand Issue 01 Autumn 2009).
2. Note the comments in the appendix, regarding the loss of the specimens; particularly the first group - 30-40 year old trees, and the second group - the more aged specimens, particularly the large and

classic old Kohekohe, a threatened tree. Further if the White Maire go, which are earmarked for removal, the only one left in the park, is one planted in 1956 in Kindergarten Gully.

3. Not only the complete removal of these established trees but also the surrounding undergrowth, which provides existing windbreak shelter to the more significant Puriri tree (may be in excess of 200 to 300 years) which will be exposed by the proposed new access cutting. Such exposure of this significant tree and other trees deeper in the Park will no doubt threaten the longevity of those trees, but also, substantially alter the existing character of that particular area.
4. There has been significant degradation of three or four Puriri trees in the area which have been previously exposed by the deforestation and replanting of the Pines adjacent to the Scanlan lookout and it is suggested it is most likely that a similar detrimental affect will occur should the access road be realigned as proposed. This is the consequence of the degrading wind sheer effect. It is submitted shelter planting will not be sufficient to negate the exposure as witnessed by the affect of the degradation around the Scanlan lookout. In the 10 to 15 years that the Pines have re-established themselves, the damage to three to four significant Puriri trees is clearly evident.
5. The northern side of the proposed new batter will create a very narrow buffer zone between the Park and the open ground of the Racecourse. That's less than 15 to 20 metres. That narrow distance will not allow a thick healthy undergrowth for shelter. The new cutting is in the direct line of prevailing north-easterly, easterly winds and will also cause extra exposure to south-easterly winds. It will undoubtedly create something of a wind tunnel, and expose the trees to this new wind shear affect.
6. The breadth of, and depth of the cutting is very considerable indeed, when appreciating the steep gradient.

B. Historic Consideration

At the top of the slope through which the proposed access road would be constructed has been planted with trees in circa 1970 including a Kauri to commemorate Professor William Roy McGregor of Auckland whose efforts were primarily responsible for saving the Waipoua Kauri forests from milling. An account of this commemorative Kauri is included by Cory Smith and George Fuller in their *The Notable Trees of New Plymouth*. Apparently it was originally planted at Brooklands Zoo by local members of the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society. It was moved from there to prevent degradation by the then zoo deer, it would now be considered rather disrespectful to now consider exposing that tree and felling its near neighbours for the sake of a new access road. This is not only somewhat ironic but also concerning that the very tenants of preservation are now threatened by this proposal. Consider the implication wherein NPDC has recently suggested its readiness to join the municipal movement for the protection of native trees and enhancement and encouragement of them.

C. Re Public Access and Enjoyment; Engineering Consideration

1. It is to be considered, if money is to be spent on establishing the new access road, would it not be a more economic and of less threat to the Park's ecosystem and existing trees to seriously consider an amended part realignment and the upgrading of the existing access road. Work on the existing road that would have a far less detrimental affect on the very steep banked land and ecosystem. The nature of the vegetation on the southern side that will be affected is not as significant as the trees earmarked for removal.
2. It is considered that the avoidance and mitigation of the identified adverse affects would be best mitigated by the upgrading of the existing access road and part realignment at the northern end of the existing access road, and yet enable the Racecourse redevelopment.

The Friends Proposal

The Friends propose:

1. A part realignment of the existing access road. [See sketch map attached].
2. Upgrade of the existing road.

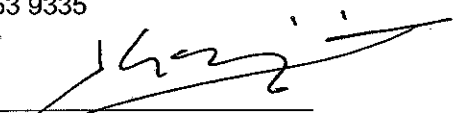
The benefits of this proposal in conjunction with an upgrading of the existing access road on the southern side at some key points, particularly out from the existing Puriri, would achieve greater future safety and engineering of the existing access road. Why have two roads when one can have one good upgraded one, which is already there, and has been there since the late 1950's.

We welcome and invite the Councillors to further explore the alternative and consider and view personally the very detrimental affect to the ecosystem that this proposed new access road will have.

We would like to make a verbal presentation and request to be heard by the appropriate decision considering committee and the full council prior to any decision being made.

Dated 5 March 2009

From and on behalf of
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Appendix 1

Survey of native trees on the site of a proposed new access carriageway between New Plymouth Raceway and the Bowl of Brooklands. They are threatened with destruction should the proposal proceed. The survey commences at the upper level where the proposed carriageway from the new stable area intersects with an existing fence line.

The first group are all young trees planted in a block above the path to the Scanlan Lookout at various times since 1970.

Identification coding used in location plan:

- K. Kauri (*Agathis australis*)
- L. Lacebark (*Hoheria populnea* var. *aurea variegata*)
- M. White Maire (*Nestegis lanceolata*)
- Mgo. Mangeao (*Litsea calicaris*)
- R. Rimu (*Dacrydium cupressinum*)
- T. Tanekaha (*Phyllocladus trichomanoides*)

The baseline commences at the present boundary fence of the Raceway and descends in a slight curve corresponding closely with the centreline of the proposed cutting and proceeds down toward the bend in the existing carriageway.

The second group are all aged specimens in good condition which have reached average canopy height for this locality and form a contiguous protective stand at the northern edge of a dense community. They form a distinctive overhanging block between the existing carriageway and the path to the Scanlan Lookout.

There is one large old mahoe (*Melicytus ramiflorus*) on the lower edge of the path leading to the Scanlan Lookout.

The ten large kohekohe (*Dysoxylum spectabile*) are of diverse stem diameter but all reach collective canopy-height normal for the area.

One extra large and classic old kohekohe is leaning across the full width of the existing carriageway and entangling its branches in those of yet another fine specimen of the same species on the opposite side. The threatened tree is host to not the usual one, but three robust specimens of the native perching plant puka (*Griselinia lucida*). The diameter of the trunk at 1m from the base is 1.070m including the clasping root of the puka which itself is 0.230m in diameter.

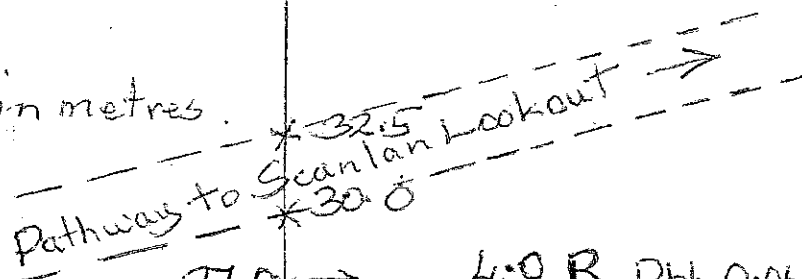
This makes a total of 12 mature threatened specimens.

The overall tally of threatened trees is 12 from the original forest cover and 13 from comparatively recent upper plantings plus one marginal of the latter.

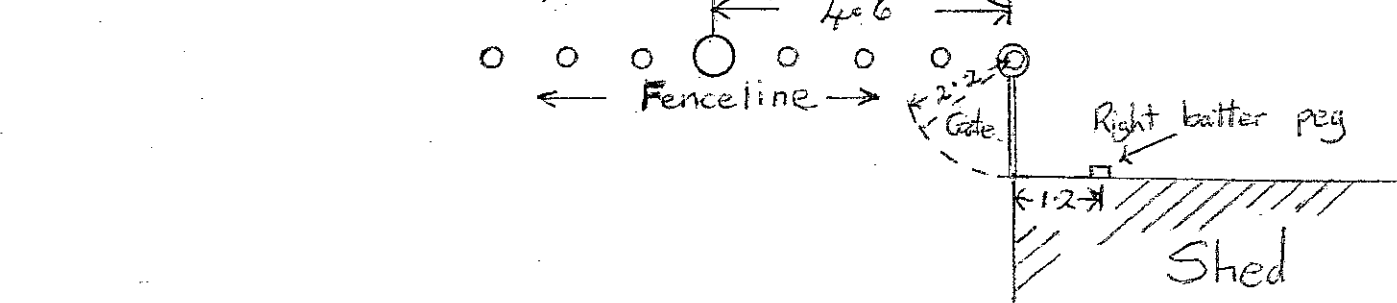
Prepared for Friends of Pukekura Park by George Fuller assisted by David Medway, 2 February 2009.

Location Plan.

All measurements in metres.

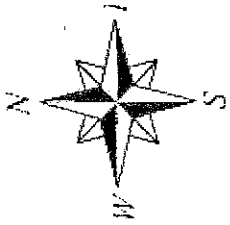


- 27.0x → 4.0 R. Dbh 0.064
- ← x 23.4
- 22.6x → 9.2 K. Dbh. 0.494 On margin of r. batter
- 20.5x → 2.3 K. Dbh. 0.494
- ← x 19.5
- 15.2x → 1.3 M. D@ 0.9 0.312
- ← x 13.9
- 13.6x → 6.3 K. Dbh 0.452.
- ← x 11.9
- 11.5x → 2.2 M. D@ 0.6 0.360
- ← 11.0. M^cGregor K. Safe beyond ^{left} batter ← x 8.3
- ← x 6.3
- ← x 5.3
- ← x 2.6
- ← x 2.2 m.



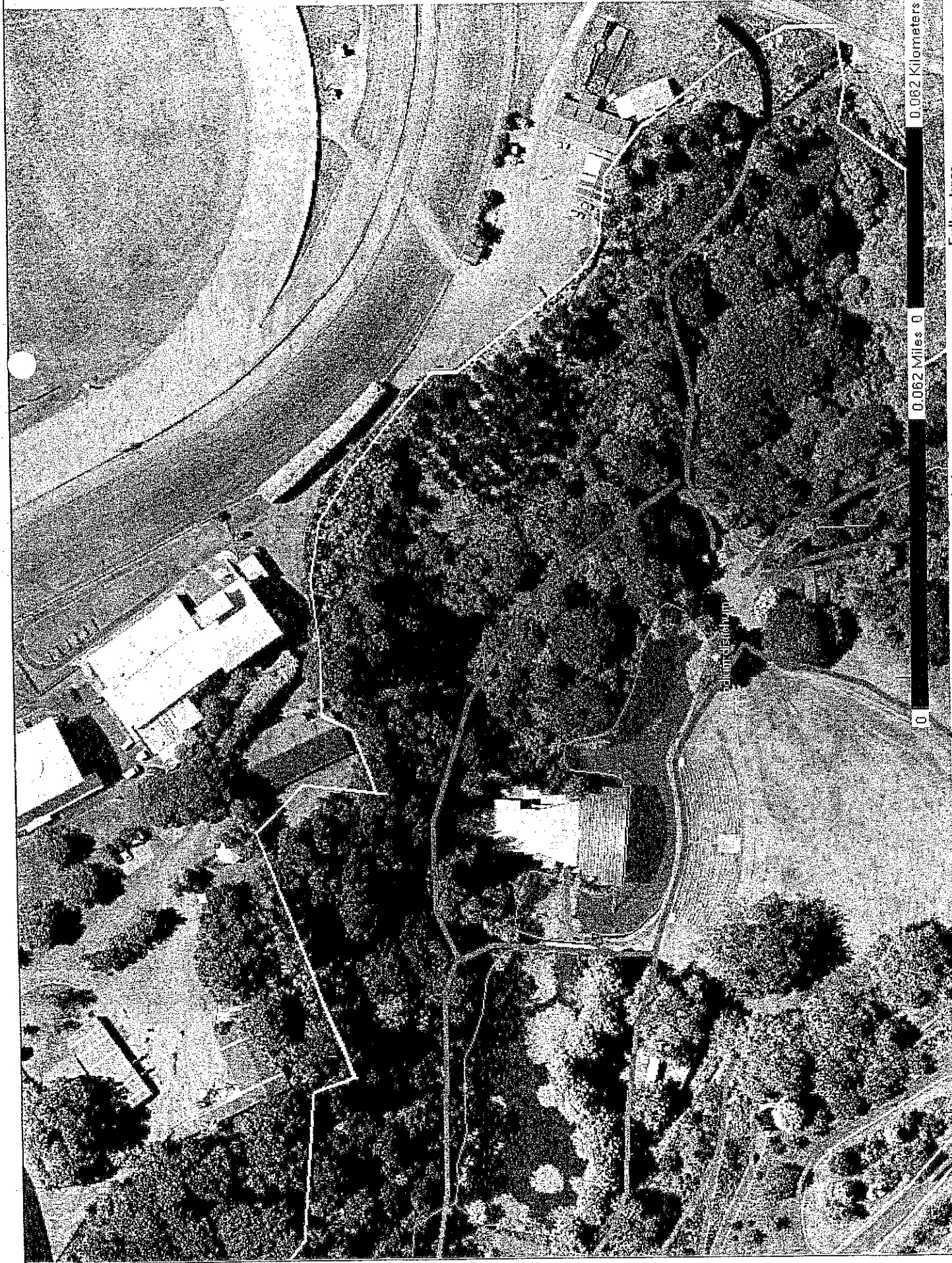
Not to scale.

George S Allen.
2nd Feb. 2009.



Bowl access
contours 02 2009

*Approx.
Proposed Atank
route.*



0.062 Kilometers

0.062 Miles

Fuller_trees

Lakes

Park

streams

paths