

Normandale Residents Association

*c/o 301 Normandale Road
Lower Hutt*

SUBMISSION

TO HUTT CITY COUNCIL

on

Western Ward Land review (phase 1) Report No S&P2008/2/1

Summary of submission

The Normandale Residents Association (NRA) wish to note their appreciation of the extensive consultation and background material supplied by the Council and for the opportunity to make a submission on these proposals.

In summary, the NRA submit as follows:

- *That we endorse and support the recommendation that the 80 properties listed in Appendix 2 of the report are gazetted as Reserve with the Reserve categories assigned.*
- *That the inclusion of the old Otonga school playing fields (plot 4A) in the schedule of land for disposal has potentially negative implications for the Oakleigh street entrance to Belmont Regional Park and that any disposal of this site and any subsequent development should be constrained by a requirement to minimise the physical and visual impact on the Park entrance.*
- *That site 3A be retained in its entirety and gazetted as recreation reserve.*
- *That although we do not oppose the disposal of the sites so noted, the NRA is very mindful of the importance of retaining an environment within Normandale that is visually dominated by vegetation both when seen from within the suburb, and when viewed from the valley. Consequently we submit that before any binding decision is made on the sale of any land, the overall impact of the development of all plots included in this category should be assessed and a further opportunity for public comment afforded.*

Key aspects of Normandale

The Western Hill suburbs, particularly Normandale and KoroKoro, where development has been gradual over an extended period of years, retain an environment that is dominated visually by vegetation. Much of this vegetated area also provides the basis for a network of walking tracks, some officially maintained by HCC, many developed and maintained by local residents. Whilst some of this land is owned by HCC, much of the vegetation is retained on private land. In addition much

of the vegetation on both HCC and private land contains mature trees, a circumstance that does not prevail in many if any other wards of the City.

The latest census confirms the Western Ward as containing the population with the highest level of education and income, a situation that has existed for some time. We are convinced that these two factors are causally linked. In other words, it is the qualitatively different atmosphere of these suburbs that is attractive to the socio economic group that the City wishes to attract and retain.

In addition, the visual aspect of the Western and Eastern Hills frame the City, and in both cases lead the eye on to the higher ranges beyond. The NRA would therefore be particularly opposed to any development that would compromise skylines.

Detailed comments on areas within the land review situated in Normandale or on its boundaries.

We note that some of the land within the Review that we would consider being within Normandale, is shown under other areas in the original schedule. We would also like to comment on areas within Maungaraki and Kelson as we believe that these fall within our concern for the overall visual impact of the Western Hills.

Areas recommended for retention and classification as Reserves.

We support the recommendation that plots 5A, 5B, 5E, 5F, 5H, 6D, 6E and 6F be retained and gazetted as Recreation Reserve.

We are particularly pleased to note that the the gazetting of 5A and 5B, restores consistency to the block of HCC land within Belmont Regional Park that includes Belmont Trig and which the majority of residents would consider an essential backdrop to Normandale.

We also support the recommendation that plots 5K, 5L, 5M and 5N be retained and gazetted as reserve

However we do have some concerns over the proposed classification of this part of Jubilee Park as Scenic Reserve. The basis of these concerns is as follows.

Scenic reserves are defined in Section 19.1 of the Reserves Act 1977. This clause is further subdivided into two categories.

Category (a) refers to areas with existing intrinsic worth of “scenic interest, beauty, or natural features or landscape” but this is compromised in section 19.2(a) which states inter alia “...except where the Minister otherwise determines, exotic flora and fauna shall as far as possible be exterminated:”

Clearly this cannot be used to protect an area that was developed as a series of gardens and where much of the intrinsic interest and beauty is derived from the non endemic vegetation many of which have importance as an historical seed bank.

Although Category (b) does not suffer from the restrictions imposed on category (a), its definition as an area “...which by development and the introduction of flora, whether indigenous or exotic, will become of such scenic interest or beauty that their development, protection, and preservation are desirable in the public interest.”

Implies an expectation of active introduction of flora, which again is not only unnecessary but would, we feel be detrimental to the preservation of the Park.

The NRA therefore feels that we can only support the recommendation of Scenic Reserve for Jubilee Park if this is further defined under section 19.1(b), and that a management plan for the Park explicitly maintains a policy of *non nocere* with regard to existing flora.

We also note with pleasure the recommendation to retain and declare reserve those plots numbered 9x and that form the true left bank of Speedy's gully. We believe that these form an essential contribution to the visual aspect of the Western Hills as well as providing a corridor from the valley floor into the heart of Belmont Regional Park for both Fauna and recreation.

We therefore support the recommendation to retain and classify these plots as recreation reserve.

Areas to be considered for part retention and part disposal.

We note that plot 3A which includes the Oakleigh street entrance to Belmont Regional Park, is currently within this category.

We note that this entrance is well used by Normandale residents and contains much of the track to the Korokoro dam, and areas of both regenerating bush and remnant podocarp forest referred to in SNR 26 of the HCC district Plan.

The NRA believes that any removal of land from this parcel for disposal will directly and adversely impact the ability of the public to use the Park, and will also adversely impact on the visual aspect of the Western Hills in general.

We therefore submit that plot 3A be retained in its entirety and gazetted as Recreation reserve.

Areas to be considered for disposal.

The NRA has held a public meeting to canvass local views on the potential disposal of plot 6A, and the adjacent road reserve.

It is the view of the NRA and the residents that these plots form a major contribution to both the visual and potential recreational amenity of Normandale. We have investigated the visual aspect in particular and refute the assessment provided that the plot is "not visually prominent." The land and adjacent areas form a dominant part of the skyline from amongst others, lower Normandale, Christina Grove, and Poto Road. The plot also forms part of the skyline visible from the valley floor.

Seen from above it is also clear that the land forms part of a contiguous area of vegetation.

The NRA believes that the area generally is lacking in recreational amenities for older children, and that this site could be developed to provide both this and a lookout. The kind of facility envisaged would be an area with formed gravel tracks, open grassed areas and both regenerating and mature vegetation allowing a high degree of independent play utilising natural features and with minimal constraints. This should provide an environment where children can explore their own risk taking abilities without formal constraint.

The NRA would like to propose that we undertake a preliminary ecological survey of the area, and we would like to meet with Council officers to discuss the potential for development as described above.

We therefore oppose the recommendation for disposal and submit that this plot be retained in its entirety and gazetted as recreation reserve.

We also believe that plot 4B within Maugaraki should be retained in as Reserve. This plot is a major visual amenity and provides a key component of the Flora within this part of Maungaraki. We note that the owner of the property adjoining the access way to the site from Laburnum Grove has fenced this access way and is currently maintaining it. The NRA suggest that this part of the plot be offered for sale to the neighbour providing a right of way for public access is maintained across it.

We there submit that plot 4B be retained as reserve apart from the access way from Laburnum Grove which should be offered for sale subject to a public Right of Way.

Areas to be considered for retention as Fee simple.

We note that Fee simple would seem the appropriate category for isolation strips and so support the retention of plot 5C with that status.

We submit that the use of plots 5I and 5J for a water reservoir would imply that a status of local purpose reserve would be more appropriate.

We note that local knowledge indicates that plots 6B and 6C were gifted to the Council as Reserve. We also note that plot 6C forms part of a potential road link between Normandale and Harbourview. As you will be aware, views within Normandale on the desirability of such a road differ widely, and in the absence of a consensus the NRA does not feel able to oppose the retention in fee simple of plot 6C. However we see no reason why plot 6B should not be classified as Reserve in accordance with the donor's wishes.

For and on behalf of the Normandale Residents Association

P. Matcham
President