

***** PUKEKURA PARK ... POSSIBLE FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS *****

A.D. JELLYMAN.

25/3/68.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES:

The overall development of Pukekura and Brooklands Park, must be looked at in its ultimate use rather than the needs of the present. With this point in mind the development considered must be forward looking and perhaps optimistic. For this reason while considering the Parks as one entity we must fully recognise that it should include expansion of the area to include the whole of the racecourse area. My proposals will be based on this ideal which will greatly influence them.

The principle on which I base my suggestions is that I believe that a park of this nature should be the centre of recreational activity for the city and as many activities and facets of recreation ^{as possible} should be catered for in the one area. This means that the park should provide passive, active and educational activities for all members of the community to encourage family usage.

This will become of much greater importance as autonomy influences over everyday lives and we have a lot more leisure time. Leisure time will have to be spent and whilst the affluence of our greater society will tend toward many people seeking avenues further afield there will continue an increased usage of public parks, particularly if the range of facilities are attractive.

To this end an endeavour should be made to make provision for as many activities as possible and keep room in each selected location to make it flexible and enable application to other uses as times and tastes change.

ENTRANCES AND PARKING:

These two aspects should be considered together because the more extensive the use of alternative entrances, the less congested parking will become. All public entrances to the park should, be conspicuous, be appealingly landscaped, be inviting to people, tell people where the various points of interest are and how far it is to get to them. This should be the criterion to strive for in the development of entrances. Layout maps could be posted at main entrances as is already planned and at lesser entrances sign posts stating the features that individual pathways lead to. The racecourse provides the best parking areas which are close to the centre of the park. The Rogan Street entrance needs landscaping and developing as an entity with the Bandroom right from Rogan Street itself. The entrance near the Racecourse custodians house could be redesigned to allow car access to part of the area in bush and a picnic area on the eastern hillside.

For alternative parking at Pukekura Park emphasis should be placed on increased use of the Rogan Street and Racecourse entrances where considerable parking facilities could be provided.

DIRECTIONS AND SIGNPOSTING:

Every entrance should give information to the visitor if full use is to be made of it. Direction maps should be placed conspicuously at the principal entrance ways and at all others, highway type signs need to be posted giving distances to various attractions. In addition a brochure which could include a photostat copy of the main direction map should be printed and made available for a small fee at various stations.

PICNIC AREAS:

These should be set up in a number of areas, particularly where people tend to gather. The sunken lawn near the Kiosk, the Eastern Hillside with access from the racecourse and below the proposed road loop at Brooklands Bowl. Tables and seats should be provided for and barbecue/incinerators. The sunken lawn area near the Kiosk should be raised about one foot and paved with informal paving. Trees on both sides should be thinned to enable more sun penetration and better drying. The bank on the western side could be converted and planted as a dry wall using cushion species of plants. The water flow from the lake could be harnessed to operate a hydraulic ram which though a relic of the past, would create something with perpetual movement and historical interest. The picnic tables and chairs here could be made with children in mind and a fantasy character, the aim.

On the Eastern Hillside and sheltered by the planting of native tree species on its spur, is a sunny area set aside with a picnic area in mind. This area can be reached on a level plane from near the custodians house at the racecourse and it would be worthwhile to remove the undergrowth, raise the canopy of branches to enable vehicles to drive into the edge of the trees and park by the picnic spot. Vehicles could be prohibited from going further into the park, by placing a line of posts around the margin of the areas.

HATCHERY LAWN:

The scheme as suggested by Mr. Fuller in an earlier report has merit. I would like to see the stream formed along the eastern side of the lawn to retain the maximum possible open area. Very large boulders should be placed first to determine the directional flows of water to form the key stones of the stream and then place the smaller boulders to suit. The main aim in placing any boulders along the stream beds is to exemplify the Taranaki mountain stream character. The bringing of this stream to the surface will be a valuable aid in linking the fountain lake with the main lake and enticing people to follow its course. Planting along this stream would be an ideal site for certain of the dwarf Japanese maples and other dwarf shrubs. The plantings would need to be light in texture and grouped rather than be heavy or continuous. This would enable people to have access to and allow effective floodlighting of the stream as an added summer attraction,

WATER CURTAIN: The proposal for a waterfall from the top of Canon Hill does not seem to me, sensible or practicable because it will contravene the laws of nature and the object of the present planting namely screening and shelter of the sportsground. As an alternative and what could be a more spectacular scheme I suggest consideration be given to a curtain type waterfall to be sited on Hughes Walk on the bank near the Weeping Elm and rubber tree. A fall of twenty five feet or more could be made to almost any length desired. A supply of water would require pumping from the main lake and could be either returned to the main lake or continued through the Hatchery Lawn outlet. This scheme would lend itself admirably to floodlighting even with an ordinary incandescent lamp. Provision could be made for, in its design, for people to go behind the water curtain and look outwards.

FOUNTAIN LAKE OUTLET STREAM: Like the Hatchery lawn proposal, this stream needs to be given the mountain stream atmosphere.

To open up this area a number of dense evergreen trees will require removal, leaving only the rimus, kahikateas and dawn redwood, together with a copse of trees sheltering the playarea. An informal pathway could be constructed from the fountain lake along the western side of the stream crossing over to the Palm Tree Lawn about 100 yards downstream. A waterfall could be made at the confluence of the sluice and outlet channels and the stream widened in a couple of places to give reflection pools. Boulders would again be used but great care would be required in siting them so that the water carrying capacity of the stream is fully adequate during heavy rains or sudden floods. Plantings along the stream and margins could be made using woodland plants, and ferns.

The water flume below the Childrens Playarea is an ugly and hard to camouflage structure. I would like to see a retaining crib wall built out from bank to bank to the level of the supporting framework. Native ferns would soon establish themselves on crib walling and give a natural appearance to the area. The Flume would require shortening and widening to double or triple its width. The out flow could then be divided and disseminated in a natural manner.

STANTON DELL: The two upper arms of this region should ultimately be the home of a very fine collection of woodland and moisture loving plants. Already the Primula Dell and the upper lily pond plantings provide excellent seasonal displays. As the golden Wheki tree ferns around the lower lily pond increase in size, the margins of this lake will become more suited to building up and planting extension of the range of woodland plants. The central island of hydrangeas in the uppermost section of the Dell should be removed and the area redesigned to accommodate woodland plants, unusual lilies and peat loving subjects from sub arctic latitudes. The small flow of water that feeds the upper lily pond could be brought to the surface and used to good effect.

The outflow from the lily ponds gurgles over some stonework along the eastern margin of the fernery lawn. This is not used to advantage at present so I suggest making half moon pool which could feature one or two pieces of water sculpture. Water could be supplied by a small electric pump or local water pressure. The present canna bed would have to be removed and a border planted around the margins of the pool which would be protected by pillars and chain. Designs for the sculpture would be the ideal subject for a competition.

The area on the right of the fernery entrance is badly in need of repair and overhaul. If this was reconstructed to double its size and renovated it would be an ideal site for a collection of Mt. Egmont alpine plants. Such a collection would be of considerable public interest.

GREENHOUSE DISPLAY: Any display is most effectively presented when its appearance is as natural as possible and not marred by difficult staging. In recent years certain groups of plants have been grown with great success on branch like frameworks in a number of parks in New Zealand and Great Britain. The pineapple group, the bromeliads, are aptly suited to this culture and so too are some of the orchids, hoyas and cissus. Plants grown in this manner would be most effectively used in the new Begonia House. A third dimension can be added to the display giving better and more natural use of the display space. This technique may be useful in dividing the sections of the house, one from another.

RHODODENDRON DELL :

The water that overflows from the Brooklands Lake runs out of sight along a drain beside the bush while through the centre of the flat below the dam face, runs the sluice outlet channel. Much of the basin the sluice channel runs through, is boggy wet soil unsuited to the successful growing of rhododendrons. If the central portion of the basin was excavated, damp areas on the margins could be built up and a reflecting pond made by diverting the outflow of water from Brooklands Lake into the south eastern corner and forming a small cascade into the pond. Suitable plantings could be made to the edge of the pond to create another highlight in this area. Provision to empty this pond would have to be made to allow any subsequent draining of the Brooklands Lake to be carried out.

EDUCATION: This function of a park is perhaps the most neglected of all as far as New Zealand parks go. However a great increase in use of the park could be achieved if the 'Nature Trail' system was prepared here. Since ecology is becoming of increasing importance the 'Nature Trail' could be of immense benefit to schools. Basically a 'Nature Trail' is a series of points where observations of plants, animal, bird, insect or aquatic life can be made at various times of the year. Schools could use these points as the basis of practical field tuition. The co-operation of Education Dept. personnel would need to be sought to implement a project of this nature. This would make greater use of certain parts of the park and increase the appreciation of them.

BROOKLANDS PARK, BOWL, AND GABLES:

In recent years this region has seen substantial changes for the better and has gained a popularity which was quite unknown during my first years with this Department. The recent erection of new gates to the Bowl and the projected new gates to Brooklands Park will be a valuable improvement to the area in that the attractive entrances will invite people to enter the parks. With the development of the Childrens Zoo, Brooklands Park and Brooklands Bowl, manifold improvements have been made and a much greater patronage of the area achieved.

With this increase in usage the one important factor that should be given priority over most other projects, is the provision of new and modern toilet facilities to replace the decadent and disgraceful structures that exist at the present time.

Although opportunity is limited, a number of selected pieces of play equipment would make the zoo more attractive to children. I feel, however, that an additional number of attractions in this area could be well worthwhile considering. The area in front of the Gables would make an ideal site for a model village and ultimately the rest of the house could be used to house aquariums. A single admission fee could be charged to cover the three attractions and the popularity of the model village and aquarium would increase greatly the patronage of the museum section of the Gables.

The proposed road loop would sort out traffic problems and the central island would make an ideal site for a rock garden featuring a New Zealand Koromiko collection. On the slopes below the eastern side of the road loop a picnic terrace could be formed from which views across the lake, rhododendron dell and native bushes would be a feature. Tables and stools could be erected and the site would be sheltered and very sunny. The maintenance problem of the Brooklands Bowl can be overcome by grazing of stock between festival seasons. This would require some temporary fencing and the re-erection of the section of fence dismantled by the Trust along the Brooklands Park boundary last year. The lower section of the Brooklands Lake was successfully planted with named waterlily varieties last spring and it would be desirable to extend and feature the collection in this area. This would necessitate the removal of the large carpet of common waterlily at the outlet end of the lake.

GARDEN FOR THE BLIND:

The area just inside the gates of Brooklands Park could be effectively developed into a garden for blind people. Fundamentally this garden would be an elevated garden with scented flowers and foliage plants. Each group of plants would be named by Braille plates to enable easy identification. This site has certain advantages over other sites, firstly the position is a warm and sheltered one, secondly there is a minimal distance between parking area and the garden, and lastly blind persons would be able to walk on all level ground and if so desired, could stroll further into this

tranquil park. This suggestion apart, I would recommend that the remainder of the formal portion of Brooklands Park should remain in its present form. Brooklands Park however could be a very suitable venue for outdoor exhibitions of sculpture and arts and craft.

RACECOURSE USE: I would like to see a far wider use of the racecourse than is seen at present. With facilities that exist in stabling accommodation, encouragement should be given to stabling of horses and a pony trail traversing the Brooklands bush through Maranui to Welbourn Park and return could make good use of this area.

This could be integrated with more equestrian competitions on the paddocks used at present for jumping events. The possibility of establishing a permanent riding school based here warrants consideration and from this the general public could hire a horse and traverse the upper reaches of the park. Considerable spectator interest could be aroused if a sport such as polo was played at the racecourse. This would provide a further use linked with the stabling facilities. Clubs such as Model Aeroplane clubs could well make good use of areas in the centre of the present racecourse. The potential here to establish other attractions is considerable and the more variety it is possible to achieve, the greater the use will be.

A. D. Jellyman.
Deputy Director Parks and Reserves.
NEW PLYMOUTH.

ADJ/lmm.