

////// PUKEKURA PARK === POSSIBLE FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS ////

C. I. Mc DOWELL.

28th March, 1968.

To the Chairman and Members of the Pukekura Park Committee,

Dear Sirs and Madam,

In determining the future development of Pukekura Park and Brooklands, it is necessary to bear in mind the following aspects in order to place the area in perspective as regards the community of New Plymouth:-

- 1/ National trends through the people - these include aspects of our heritage, culture, history, religion and social structure.
- 2/ The region of Taranaki - this has great bearing on the choice of materials used in the Parks landscaping, determining factors include Geographic, Climatic, Geologic, Biotic, Topographic and Ecology. From these our resources are determined, and population and density, technology and tourism all follow in logical sequence.

We are indeed fortunate to have well dispersed Parks and Reserves throughout New Plymouth, mainly due to the foresight and policy of the Town Council. The topography of the area, and radiating rivers from Mount Egmont give relief from the monotony of the Urban Sprawl, Pukekura Park is situated in one of these valleys being remarkably close to the centre of the town. Together with Brooklands, they provide basically an informal setting for a variety of popular activities and for the satisfying of a host of human physical and emotional needs. The activities range from cricket, athletics, boating, to walking and bird watching. The human needs include relief of tensions, keeping physically fit, satisfying the impulses to explore, to learn, to be alone, to express ones self, aesthetic experience and the need of fruitful and pleasurable leisure.

To ascertain the various kinds of development in analysis of who uses the park, when they use it and why, should help to show those facilities that need accentuating and those that are lacking or are likely to become more popular in future. If present trends continue, the long weekend will eventually become longer as working hours decrease, already many people enjoy three weeks annual holiday and travel extensively, People are more prosperous and retire earlier in life, and increases in tourism is inevitable through several factors. Because of these facts it is undeniable that the recreational facilities offered are becoming increasingly important.

Through questioning staff working in the Park, Visitors and my own limited personal observations the following deductions have been made:



WHO USES THE PARK, WHEN AND WHY DO THEY USE IT?

(A) LOCAL RESIDENTS: New Plymouth is the hub and natural climax of this region, the population of 36,000 is estimated to reach 65,000 by 1989. The port, commercial and industrial centres realise work for the residents. At the same time the town is attracting an increasing number of retired people, especially farmers. The Park itself is surrounded by residential areas and these will in time, increase in density. Due to the relatively steep sides of the valley it is not regularly traversed by these people going to work or shopping, however people do use it as a short cut, especially boys travelling to the High School. (Unfortunately cycling paths through the Park are unpracticable.)

Whilst the Park is near the the heart of the town, I cannot foresee the shopping centre developing along Liardet Street, and the Park cannot be regarded as a refreshment for shoppers, only through the development of an area where the railway yards are at present will this be achieved.

Many mothers, together with their children do spend their afternoons in the Park, especially utilizing the playarea. Further picnic tables could be added here and in other suitable areas.

There are quite a few local residents who due to devious interests rarely visit the Park, often other reserves cater for them. However the times when large numbers of local residents do use that park are when special attractions occur or they have visitors and wish to show them around. Cricket matches, Rugby, Athletic meetings, Bands or Gymnastic Displays, Christmas decorations, floodlighting, the Bowl of Brooklands Festival of the Pines, evenings, a Race meeting, a special feature in the Ferneries or to take active participation in an event at the Park, attract local residents.

Local children particularly teenagers do visit the park frequently, especially enjoying boating, where their energy is dissipated.

From this perusal it can be seen that the following attractions \* would encourage further participation by local residents.

a. Further interesting attractions held on the Sportsground, also an extended use of the Bowl of Brooklands facilities. For instance, during the Festival of the Pines when floodlighting is available, each evening a 'Son et Lumiere' could take place. Changing lights, perhaps a set on stage of a castle, fireworks and music.

b. Exhibitions and Competitions held within the Park. With a new building at the end of the Hatchery lawn the area could be used during fine weather for an open air art or photographic show. Brooklands Park would be suitable for a permanent, changing sculpture exhibition.

The town lacks a sizable Exhibition Hall, a suitable site for consideration would be at the southern end of the Racecourse.

\*(These ideas are further described under headings later on.)



Further active recreational pursuits for the younger people. Whilst many clubs such as the Y.M.C.A., Athletic, Surfriders, Riflerange, Football etc., and other areas in the town cater for these youngsters a pony trail beginning from the racecourse stables would make further use of that area of the Park for active recreation. This trail could possibly be linked from the Maranui Gully across under or over Coronation Avenue to then follow the TeHenui river in much the same way as a scenic drive proposed by the late Mr. Bellringer.

d. In order to encourage the local people to explore the hitherto unvisited areas of the Park throughout the year conducted tours by interested societies such as the Forest and Bird, Compost, etc., should be advertised more fully.

e. Also Nature Trails should be commenced as soon as possible, for with the aid of a pamphlet (inexpensive or even free to school parties) people would traverse every corner of the Park at the same time as learning by seeing and participation.

(B) PEOPLE FROM THE PROVINCE:

These are people who often come into town to shop, see relatives or at the weekend for a drive. They would be attracted by much the same features the residents enjoy, perhaps appreciating them even more. The whole family usually arrives and all age levels are catered for within a small area. e.g. Cricket, play area, feeding ducks, boating, horticultural displays.

Being further from home provision for shelter, during meals or adverse weather is appreciated especially if once again all the members of the family can be entertained.

Suggested ideas include:

a. Establish a Transport and Technology Museum at the southern end of the racecourse (Possible Curator Mr. I.G. Reid of Kapuni, C/O Lactose Co. N.Z. R.D. 29.)

b. Eventually a restaurant with evening entertainment including a tourist souvenir shop could be built and run and supplied by tender each year. A good site overlooks the Bowl of Brooklands or racecourse land, this could be linked by an elevated tree top walk or suspension bridge across the Maranui Gully to Brooklands. This then would cater for the refreshment of visitors at that end of the park.

c. More covered shelters within the park, vandal proof if possible, sites include eastern hillside lookout, Kiosk lawn, Brooklands Park where wistaria pergola is at present. Also an 'A' frame type building with ample porch would provide shelter at the head of the Hatchery Lawn.

(C) HOLIDAY MAKERS AND TOURISTS:

This group of people can be divided into two, those who have a limited amount of time and wish to see the main features, and those who are staying longer at hotel or motor camp, and when visiting the Park would welcome a day or more of interest and entertainment.

New Plymouth provides accommodation for those visiting the



tion and its attractions. With the increase of publicity etc., these numbers will undoubtedly rise. The problem is to provide outdoor recreation for these increasingly large influxes of visitors for short periods of the year. The Festival of the Pines is a major contribution to this problem.

At present many visitors to the Park have a limited amount of time, want to know what features are offered and how long it takes to see them. Another problem encountered during the holiday period is congestion of the main entrance, possible solutions to these problems would include:

- a. Maps displayed at all entrances, simply glued and then varnished over to boards, no glass cases needed. (I will redraw the present one for ease of reproduction and five colour printing).
- b. Features for the month listed alongside them, and at the main entrance they could be illustrated with slides (many already available) for sale.
- c. A relief model of the Park displayed either vertically or horizontally in the vicinity of the Tea Kiosk.
- d. Inexpensive brochures catering for the knowledge of amenities, short nature trails and other attractions. A range of such brochures could cater for the holiday maker with more specific desire in mind. E.G. Photography, horticulture, birds etc.
- e. Sign posts of uniform design and lettering with the attraction and the time taken to reach it, clearly displayed (times rather than distances).
- f. Full development and landscaping of the entrances at Rogan Street and the southern end of the racecourse, preferably linking the two behind the racecourse stands.

From Rogan street the easiest gradient into the valley of the Park is the Racecourse walk. I believe the Committee did discuss its formation as a oneway tar sealed road to the rear of the Tea Kiosk. Whilst this improved accessibility would lead to a decrease of the aesthetic environment these points should be considered:

1. Adequate parking to this entrance would be available on the Racecourse.
2. The area around the Tea Kiosk could be attractively paved (exposed aggregate slabs would be cheapest), accommodating tables, chairs and sun umbrellas or the wistaria festooned trellis extended.
3. Interruption of cricket matches by service vehicles would not occur, however with more families using the Rogan Street entrance the mixing of traffic and children is still not desirable.
4. People entering down the racecourse walk would immediately glimpse the Stainton Dell and would tend to explore that area before moving further into the Park.
5. From this entrance people would be introduced to the eastern terrace view point and picnic areas from the same level, it is here that a sheltered lookout could be built.

More publicity through advertising in the buses, T.V. and cinema shorts or interludes, photographs and slides at the P.R.6.

7. The Pukekura Park Kindergarten could possibly be extended to include a creche enabling some parents to further participation or relaxation in the Park. This creche could include pedal cars, tricycles and a miniature road layout.

2/ BEFORE EXPANDING UPON EARLIER SPECIFIC IDEAS FOR DEVELOPMENT, I  
FEEL A GENERAL REVIEW OF THE PRINCIPLES OF LANDSCAPING AS  
APPLIED TO THE PARK IS NECESSARY:

(A) UNITY

The quality of unity can arise from or be achieved by a number of factors:

a. Indigenous vegetation- without doubt it is the charming informal lush green of the native plants that attracts comment from visitors. The careful blending of a minority of exotic plants within this framework is the present policy and should be continued. There are however, many native plants still not shown to their best advantage and additional collections eg. Leptospermums, pittosporums, grouped in a manner similarly to the recently planted hebes on Victoria Road should be contemplated.

b. Sympathetic human usage- including buildings in keeping with their surroundings. The major portion of the park is designed primarily for walking, and should remain so. To facilitate this, some of the muddier sections of bush walks should be graded with clay and topped with chippings.

The whole collection of park furniture eg. signs, noticeboards, light posts, seats, litter bins, railings, entry gates should be reviewed, and together with distinct walling paving and buildings should notify the visitor that he is in Pukekura and Brooklands Park. Local materials should be used, walls faced with local split stone, seats and rails could be of the dark reddish timber the new band room is clad. (This blends in very well with its surroundings, seats recently seen in Wellington's Lady Norwood rose garden.) <sup>are of this material and are superlative in design</sup> Signs of this wood could be carved to form lettering or pictorial designs and these then painted in white.

Buildings lacking character and unity such as the coffeestall at the Bowl of Brooklands need to comply with standards to the satisfaction of an architect with the over all control of all new buildings.

Toilet facilities both in the Parks and at Brooklands need urgent reconstruction with these considerations in mind.

If the Park is to be an entity it must be finite, you should know when you are entering or leaving it. The arresting scarlet and white or silver colour scheme of the main gate, Gilbert Street and Hughes Walk entrances could be extended and other street entrances such as Victoria Road and Brooklands Rd. should be recessed to become more inviting.



There is still room for informal discussions on development key park staff and interested parties under the guidance of the Director. These discussions should be on the site, models, sketches, or descriptions could then be compared in situ.

It is only through Council policy, firm yet constructive guidance and a master plan that accommodation of, or proposed sites be made available for outside groups, clubs, societies and agencies, as well as the resources of governmental departments and business interests. These groups are the public organised and grander projects will eventuate through a combination of effort.

Often only through their help can projects such as the childrens zoo, bowl of Brooklands, exhibition centre, aquarium, museum, theatre or many more smaller yet equally important improvements can be made within the Park.

(c) A CONGRUENT OR NATURAL LAND FORM:

This basically has been carried out. The Main Valley having been dammed, now has three sheets of water and excellent use of reflections, water sport, fowls and fountain have been achieved. However there is still considerable potential in developing the unifying water courses. Once again local materials should be used and the effects achieved must retain the natural characteristics of this region. Use of water worn and lichen or moss covered stream boulders, such as are found in other streams of Mt. Egmont should be placed to accentuate the sound of rills and sight of sparkling water.

(d) Dominance and simplicity: The use of longer maturing trees to form the main canopy, and wind breaks has already been mentioned. Boldness in grouping trees, shrubs and plants should continue. Tree ferns, magnolias, azaleas and hydrangeas, and other plants that flourish in this climate must continue to hold visitors admiration, the brighter coloured subjects still being retained within the dominant green of native plants.

(B) SCALE OR PROPORTION:

Emphasis of the natural land form must continue with the careful choice of conifers to retain the skyline effect so admired from Liardet street and other areas in the city as well as within the park.

The intimacy of the sportsground area yet retaining room for crowds of people is excellent and on no account should it be destroyed to facilitate the parking of more cars. Racecourse land should be conserved as grass rather than carpark asphalt and curbing, as well as the obvious aesthetic advantages it can still be used for circuses, gymkhana, football and even grazing as well as the influx of cars over a short period at holiday seasons.

(C) SPACE DIVISION:

The various features of the park can more or less be divided into components or modules e.g. the sportsground area, the main lake, Stainton Dell, childrens play area, and should be dealt with as such, not forgetting their juxtaposition one with another. Features should be spread invitingly throughout the parks and not be

concentrated in one area.

The relationship between light and shade, of open and closed, or active and passive must be remembered.

The open lakes need urgent bank fortification to prevent undermining of tree ferns and consequential loss of shady circumfrential walks and reflections.

At one time many open areas/<sup>and vistas</sup> in the Park became overgrown, this must not be allowed to happen again. One such place that would augur well to consider this fundamental pattern of spaciousness and containment would be the Maranui Gully. There are few places where the eye can see along the valley unchecked, Rhodos., along the watercourse could be removed and some replanted higher to the sides, but still the progression from closed bush to open space should be retained.

(D) INTEREST:

The ecological arrangement of plants should continue with bold groups of contrasting textures and foliage forms from trees to ground cover. Together with wood, split stone, gravel, water, the contrast or blending of tone, colour, light, shade, form and texture will be admired just as much as are seasonal foliage or flower features.

The mellow light of the moon should be supplemented if extra enchantment and extended visual use of the Park is required. Artificial lighting-whether from natural gas flares in the lakes, or electricity could be used to further advantage. Up to and through the glasshouses and in the Bowl of Brooklands area during the Festival of the Pines. (Besides the glasshouses the Tea Kiosk should remain open during that period of time)

Animated tableaux could be considered in certain areas such as the Ferneries Lawn.

The individual societies, if allowed further space or interest in the Parks development, would capture the participation of visitors through their respective fields eg. N.P. Band, Brass band music, Forest and Bird, conducted nature trails, field study and clubroom displays. Dancing groups-practise at the Bowl or Hatchery lawn, Aquarium Society and Cage Bird Society combined to provide displays of fish and birds in a new plant conservatory in the vicinity of the Gables and Childrens Zoo.

Other possibilities will come to mind regarding development including these groups.

3/ ELABORATION ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF SPECIFIC AREAS OR PROJECTS

ALREADY MENTIONED INCLUDE:

(A) NATURE TRAILS: A sub committee be established including Mr. L. Bublitz (Boys High School) Mr. G. Fuller (Compost Society Committee Member) Mr. D. Medway (President of the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society) Mr. A. Jellyman (Assistant Director Parks and Reserves) Mr. C.I. McDowell (Technical Assistant Parks and Reserves).



This Committee could then propose suitable routes, observation points, features at different seasons etc., and could compile and illustrate suitable brochures for these trails. Costs involved are negligible requiring only marker posts at observation points, and the publication of simple brochures.

Through coOperation with the Education Dept., the Park would become virtually an outdoor classroom for study and teachers from all the schools would find it relatively easy to conduct and teach a group of children along a trail.

(B) WATER COURSES: These have already been reviewed in earlier reports, their main essence is to unify and add interest to the Park. A reminder of points brought forward include:

1. Upper end of Main lake to Truby King Dell: Need to reform waterfalls, improve vistas and enhance entrances.
2. Brooklands Lake - 'Son et Lumiere' productions would naturally include the water curtain and floodlighting. Water lilies have already been planted and reflections improved with selected plant material. A hydraulic ram near the earth dam would attract people to this area out of curiosity.
3. The Stainton Dell to Tea Kiosk-as this would become increasingly important as an entrance, horticultural features of choice plants should be further developed in association with the water course, this should continue its length to the Tea Kiosk. Perhaps some of the larger Pukateas which encourage sooty mould could be removed to the benefit of colonies of ferns beneath.
4. The Kiosk Dell-if a low retaining wall along one side incorporated an open shelter with picnic tables, people could lookout onto a water wheel which I believe would make ideal use of the water in this area.
5. Fountain Lake- the synchronisation of the main water effects with music seems an admirable suggestion. Besides supplementary jets of water another consideration would be natural gas flares at water level, if not feasible here, then perhaps to light the hatchery lawn.
6. Below the Fountain Lake- incorporation of river boulders after clearance of present intruding vegetation would make a delightful watercourse to the waterfall. If the bridges here were designed to spring or leap over the water, Japanese fashion, they would further enhance the scene. The waterfall cascade itself is an asset its reshaping and floodlighting should not be neglected.

(C) HATCHERY LAWN: The main focal point here should be a new building to replace the old hatchery shed, an 'A' frame construction with tiled roof would fit into the surroundings perfectly. Its two main barge boards could be carved and surmounted with a figure to emulate a whale. A large entry porch would also provide added shelter for visitors, inside a hall could accommodate storage for displays, exhibitions etc., and even a small permanent display.



GLASSHOUSE RANGE: The sound of piped Maori music in the  
furnery may further induce people to enter the complex, if not here  
then its incorporation in the 'Son et Lumiere' at the Bowl.

(E) PONY TRAIL AND MARANUI GULLY: With stables idle for long  
periods of time at the racecourse surely the pony club could be  
encouraged to help in the formation of a pony trail through the  
Maranui Gully. A gravel path with retaining sides of wood or  
railway sleepers would be ideal. As previously mentioned this  
could, in time, be linked with the reserves along the TeHenui,  
helping allieviate the steepness of the descent down into Aotea  
Reserve. Mr. Bellringers suggestion of eventually reinstating the  
three Maori Pahs along this route would surely make this a major  
attraction to any holiday maker or tourist.

(F) RHODODENDRON DELL: At present this seems to be truncated  
where it joins the Brooklands Lake area. The Hillside below the  
developing turn around is at present hot and dry, however with the  
introduction of light shade trees such as kowhai and birch the  
selection of rhododendrons tolerant to such conditions would  
continue the dell planting. These would be admirably displayed to  
advantage on this hillside providing an ideal setting to the  
entrance to the Bowl.

ILLUSTRATIONS AND PLANS:..... Accompanying this report are sketches  
of the following future developments.

1. Rogan Street Entrance.
2. Hatchery Lawn Building.
3. Racecourse Restaurant and tree top Walk.
4. Suitable signs and display boards.
5. Water Wheel and shelter in Tea Kiosk Dell.

CONCLUSION: Pukekura Park and Brooklands are the greatest public  
assets in this city and it is with the general public in mind and  
through them that they should be further developed.

A master plan of future development should be drawn up and  
its formulation should take into account all the principles of  
landscaping mentioned eg. Unity, Scale or Proportion, Space Division  
and Interest. This will ensure the dealing with priorities as well  
as due regard to the overall development rather than piece meal  
gimmicks.

Assistance in design, especially those of architectural merit  
should be sought and even competitions held to obtain the best  
possible solution to a particular feature. The recently formed N.Z.  
Association of Landscape Designers \* may provide just such an  
acceptable solution if approach concerning the design of a new  
entrance for example.

It is inevitable that further staff and tools will be required  
for maintenance. Additional key staff will possibly include appoint-  
ment of an Entertainment/Supervisor (Exhibitions, Competitions,  
Displays, Dances, Bands, Circuses, Sports etc.,) Park Ranger (Guide  
on Nature or Pony Trail and Park Policing), Play Leader (alternating



with Pukekura Park and other play centres within the city.)

Yours faithfully,

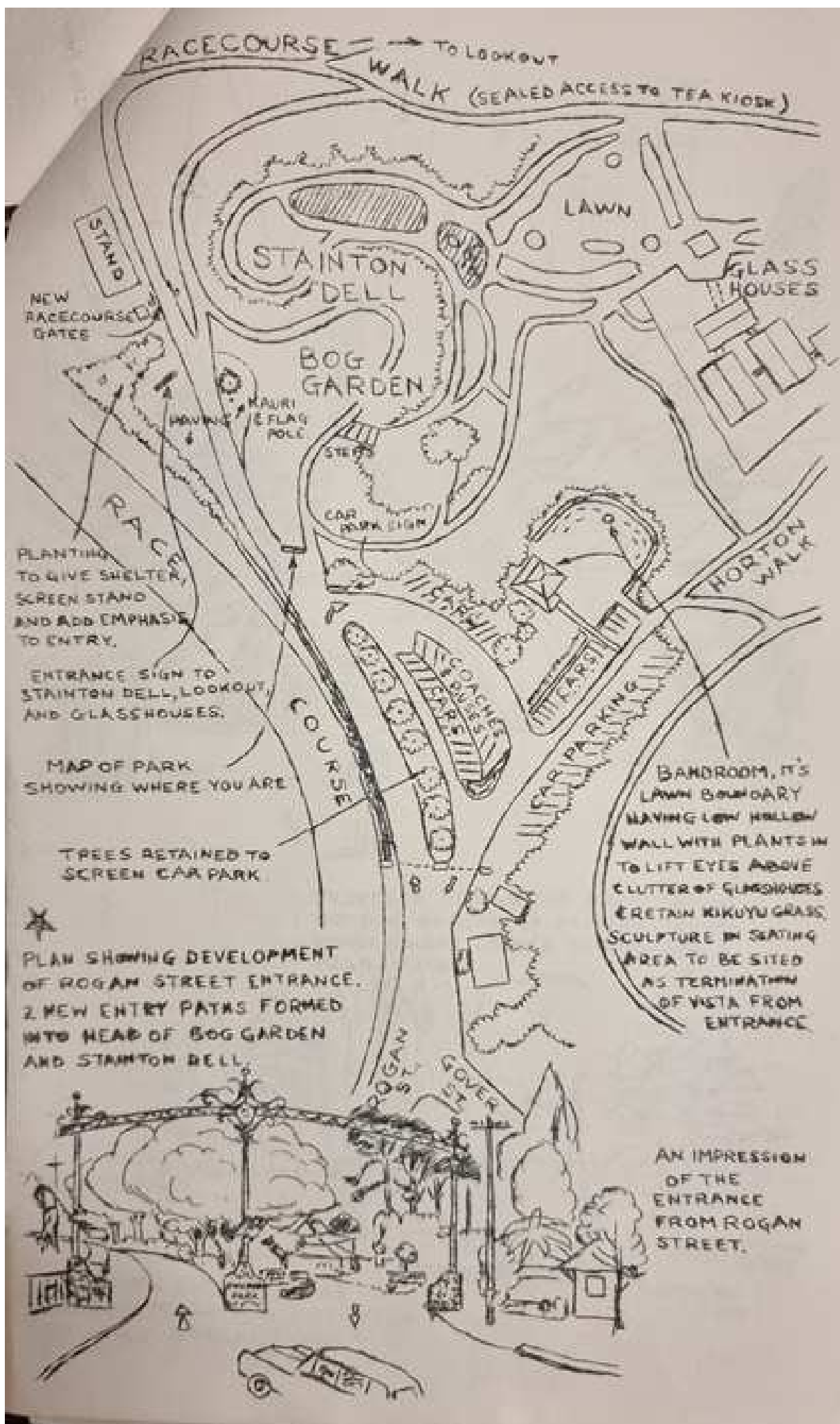
C.I. McDowell,  
Parks and Reserves Technical Assist.

NEW PLYMOUTH.

Address: C/- Duncan Cotterill and Co., A.M.P. Building,  
Cathedral Square, Christchurch.

CIMc./lmm.

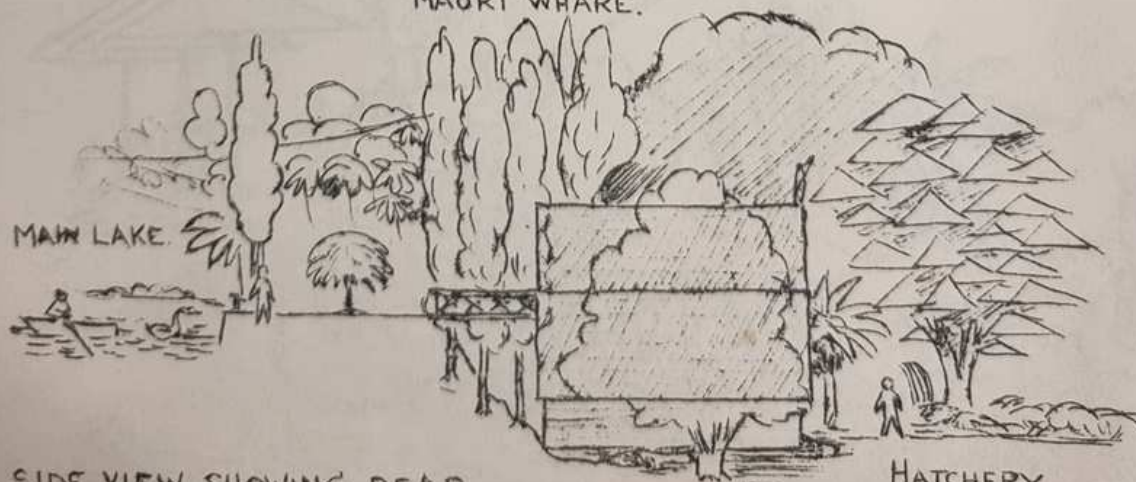








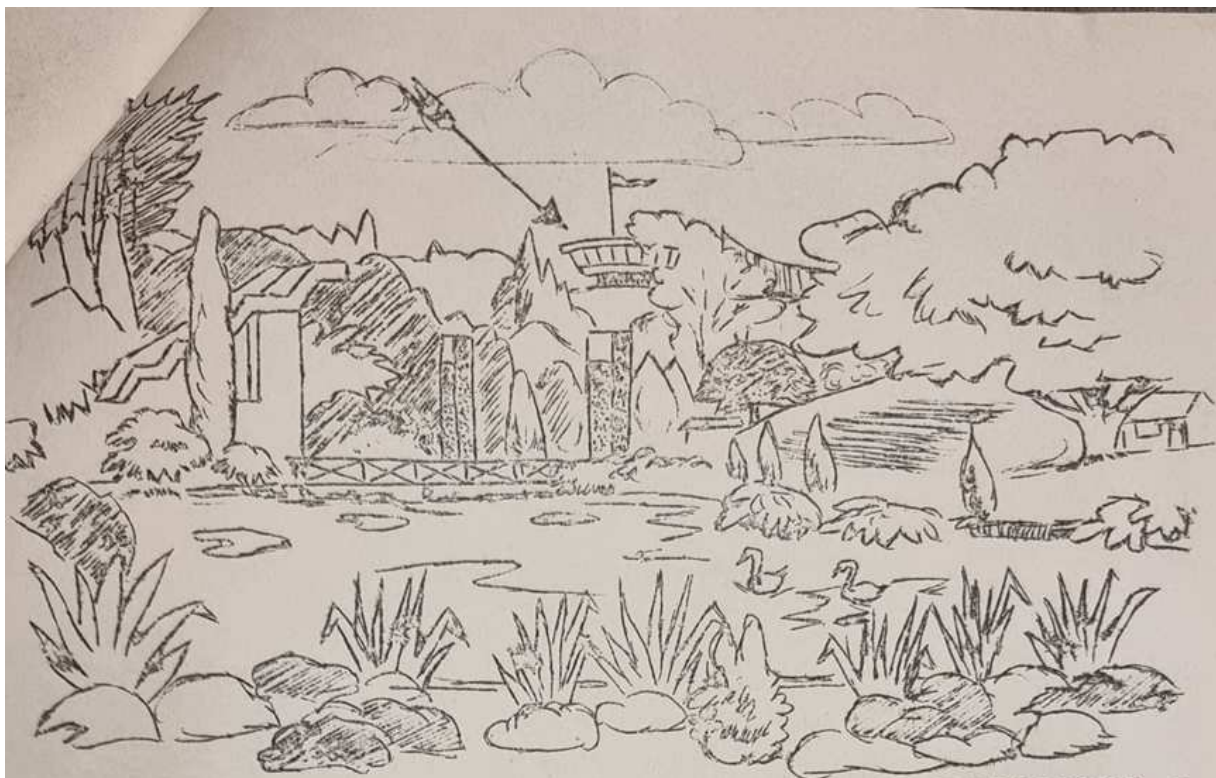
PROPOSED DESIGN FOR AN 'A' FRAME  
BUILDING AT HEAD OF HATCHERY LAWN.  
BARGEBOARDS CARVED TO EMULATE A  
MAORI WHARE.



SIDE VIEW SHOWING REAR  
ACCESS FROM LAKESIDE WALK  
TO UPPER STORAGE AREA.

HATCHERY  
LAWN.





VIEW FROM EARTH DAM SHOWING POSITION OF PROPOSED RESTAURANT AND GLIMPSE OF TREE TOP WALK.



TYPES OF PARK FURNITURE INCLUDING NOTICE BOARD, SIGN WITH LETTERING, CARVED & PAINTED, & SEATING.



PROPOSED SCHEME FOR KIOSK DELL. VIEW EAST.