8.3 Sector 3  Aro Valley/Polhill Gully

8.3.1 Character and use

This sector is located at the head of the Aro Valley. It is made up of two areas on each side of Aro Street (Sector 3: context map).

Only a small part of the original Town Belt still exists here. The green space in Aro Valley appears bigger because of the neighbouring reserves, including George Denton Park and Polhill Gully Recreation Reserve. Collectively they make up the Waimapihī Stream catchment and stretch up above Holloway Road to the Sanctuary fence line and the Outer Green Belt. These reserves contain stands of conifers, regenerating native vegetation and exotic scrub.

This part of the Town Belt is steep and densely vegetated. A large stand of hazardous trees above houses on Entrance and Norway streets was removed in 1998 and the area was replanted with natives (Sector 3: landscape and existing vegetation).

This area is used for informal recreation. There are some tracks that link to the Outer Green Belt and Brooklyn. There is a play area at George Denton Park.

At the southern end of this sector there is a reservoir and Second World War anti-aircraft battery installation.

8.3.2 Land addition and boundary rationalisation

Policies

8.3.2.1 Formally add the following areas to Town Belt:
   a. Polhill Gully Reserve
   b. George Denton Park
c. Waimapihi Reserve
d. Panorama Heights Reserve
e. Brosnahan Reserves
f. Semeloff Terrace Reserve
g. 20 Norway Street
h. Raroa Reserve.

8.3.2.2 The Council will initiate discussions with the Ministry of Education, Te Aro School and Port Nicholson Block Settlement Trust over the future ownership, status and use of the steep gully that is part of the Te Aro School land.

The original Town Belt in this sector was continuous from Tanera Park around to Kelburn Park. Considerable portions have been alienated for residential development, roads and educational purposes such as Te Aro School and Victoria University.

*Please refer to Table 3 at the end of this sector for a complete list of Town Belt land additions, removals and boundary rationalisations.*

**Polhill Gully Recreation Reserve, Waimapihi Catchment and George Denton Park:**
There is only a small area of original Town Belt south of Aro Street. This land is contiguous with other reserves that form part of the Waimapihi Stream catchment. These reserves have consistent recreation and landscape values to that of the neighbouring Town Belt, and are located behind and above the first line of hills (Durham Street ridge). They are visually outside the Town Belt’s horseshoe catchment but their continuity with the part of Polhill Gully Reserve that lies within the original Town Belt means they should be managed as one unit. It is proposed that these reserves will be added to the Town Belt and managed under the Wellington Town Belt Management Plan.

This addition will increase the size of the Town Belt in this area, strengthening its continuity and providing a green backdrop to Aro Valley. This addition also accommodates several tracks including ‘Transient’, Highbury Fling’ and ‘Serendipity’, which link the city with the Outer Green Belt and the Sanctuary fence line.

**Norway Street and Semeloff Terrace Reserve**
The small area of Pleasure Ground (1406sq m) in Semeloff Terrace and Recreation Reserve (4027sq m) in Norway Street border the sector.

**Part of the Te Aro School land – Abel Smith Street:** This land is owned by the Crown and managed by the Ministry of Education. It is included in the Deed of Settlement First Right of Refusal Land Schedule, and the Port Nicholson Block Settlement Trust has the first right of refusal if the land is declared surplus.

It is situated at the top of Abel Smith Street. Te Aro School uses about one-third of the land. The rest of the land is made up of a 6000sq m steep gully bounded on the east by the school and on the west by the rear of properties on Devon Street. This steep gully section is assessed below.

The vegetation is mixed exotic trees, including sycamore and large pines, with an understorey of natives and exotic shrubs.

The land was part of the original Town Belt Deed and taken out by the Crown in 1931 for education purposes. It is now separated from existing Town Belt lands but forms part of an important green network and backdrop to the Aro Valley. The original Town Belt lands that connected this land have now been extensively developed and used for other purposes, such as residential development and education.
The steep gully is small in scale, and its location, aspect and accessibility add little value in strengthening the Town Belt’s continuity and horseshoe shape. However it has important landscape values as a natural backdrop for Aro Street and as a green buffer between Devon Street and Victoria University. It has ecological connections to the nearby Karori Sanctuary. The mix of exotic and native trees including the large eucalyptus, provide a habitat for several native bird species including kereru (wood pigeon), kaka, tui, ruru (morepork), kotare (kingfisher), tauhou (silvereye), riroriro (grey warbler) and piwakawaka (fantail). The recreational values are currently low with no formed tracks within the area.

The Council considers this land to be a high priority for return to the Town Belt now it is no longer used for education purposes. It is recommended that the Council commence discussions with Port Nicholson Block Settlement Trust, Ministry of Education and Te Aro School regarding this land.

8.3.3 Landscape and ecological management

Policies

8.3.3.1 Restore all but the mown road edges of the Town Belt into podocarp and broadleaf forest.

8.3.3.2 Maintain the open mown grass areas adjacent to Aro Street.

8.3.3.3 Protect and maintain the natural unbuilt character of this sector.

8.3.3.4 Continue with animal pest control and the control of weeds.

The removal of the large stand of trees above Norway Street in 1998 was the first major pine-removal project following implementation of the 1995 Management Plan. The area was replanted with native plants and some limited weed management has taken place. Possum control is ongoing.

The long-term plan is to replace the conifers with native forest. However, the removal of these trees is a low priority so any replacement over the next 10 years will occur only if there are major tree failures.

Restoring the forest and controlling pests and weeds in this sector will improve ecological connections between Aro Valley and the Outer Green Belt and support the halo (ecological buffer zone) project being developed around Karori Sanctuary (Zealandia) to enhance and provide safe habitats for birds flying in and out.

8.3.4 Recreation

Policies

8.3.4.1 There should be no increase in the footprint of the existing leased facility used by the Central All Breeds Dog Training School.

8.3.4.2 In the event of the existing use of the leased facility ceasing, then the site will be redeveloped for outdoor recreation use.

8.3.4.3 The existing vacant building/pavilion/toilet will be assessed for heritage values and made secure.

8.3.4.4 The Council will investigate opportunities for formal access from Holloway Road to the leased facility.

8.3.4.5 Investigate the development of a track between Kelburn Parade and Aro Street with a possible link to the top of Semeloff Terrace.
The area is predominately natural with a series of tracks from Aro Street through the area linking with tracks to Brooklyn, the Sanctuary fenceline track and the Outer Green Belt (Sector 3: Current uses map). These tracks are dual use and were built by volunteers. In addition there is potential to improve track linkages between Kelburn and the Aro Valley through the Town Belt in this sector.

There is one lease in the sector:

- **The Central All Breeds Dog Training School** has a ground lease with the Council for 2000sq m of Town Belt land until 2017. There is informal vehicle access to the site from Holloway Road through land owned by Victoria University.

There are three community groups working in this sector:

- **Aro Valley project** is planting on Town Belt and adjacent reserve land at the north-western end of Aro Valley and Polhill.

- **Brooklyn Trail Builders** works closely with the Council to enhance recreational activities and assist in the habitat restoration work within Polhill reserves. This includes:
  - building multi-use tracks and mountain bike priority tracks
  - maintaining built tracks
  - assisting with enhancing the habitat within the area, including weed removal, rubbish removal and tree planting.

  The club has already completed the 3.8km Transient Track between Brooklyn and Aro Street and will shortly start work on two more tracks in the area.

- **Waimapihi Trust** is enhancing native forest cover in the Waimapihi Catchment, including Polhill, and controlling pest animals.

  There is a neighbourhood park and play area at George Denton Park.

### 8.3.5 Encroachments

There are no known major encroachments in this sector.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site name</th>
<th>Legal description and area</th>
<th>Description, location, current use</th>
<th>Previous policy</th>
<th>Discussion, criteria assessment</th>
<th>Recommend that;</th>
<th>Land covered by this TBMP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Part of Polhill Gully Reserve</td>
<td>Section 1153 Town of Wellington, CTV76/81, 11.741ha. Declared recreation reserve, subject to the Reserves Act 1977, NZ Gazette 1989. Part Subdivision 3 Block XVA Polhill Gully Native Reserve, CTV62/202, 0.4975ha. Declared recreation reserve, subject to the Reserves Act 1977, NZ Gazette 1995, page 4478</td>
<td>The reserve area is the small valley to the west of Durham Street. It borders the existing part of the Town Belt on the corner of Aro Street and Holloway Road. It accommodates the recreation track known as the Transient, which links through to the Karori Sanctuary fenceline track. The vegetation is a mix of native and exotics and mature conifers. Transmission lines traverse the land.</td>
<td>The TBMP 1995 identified this land as potential addition.</td>
<td>The land borders the Town Belt. Located on the corner of Aro Street and Holloway Road, it strengthens the continuity of the Town Belt and is already perceived to be Town Belt land. The site provides a green backdrop to Aro Valley. The access track provides a significant and only link between Town Belt and the Outer Green Belt. The vegetation is consistent with neighbouring Town Belt lands. Original Town Belt.</td>
<td>The land should be added to the Town Belt.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part of Polhill Gully Reserve</td>
<td>Section 30 Town of Wellington. Recreation reserve, part CTV76/81, 22.1995ha</td>
<td>This is the steep gully of the Waimapihi Stream catchment sloping down towards Holloway Road. It lies on the western side of the Durham Street ridge.</td>
<td>The TBMP 1995 identified this land as a potential addition.</td>
<td>It is appropriate to discuss these areas together as they all are next to and part of the Waimapihi Stream catchment. The land is predominately regenerating native forest. There is a network of recreation tracks linking the Outer Green Belt and Karori Sanctuary with Aro Valley. Even though this land was not part of the original Town Belt land, it makes sense to manage this whole catchment in one reserve management plan.</td>
<td>The land should be added to the Town Belt.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Denton Park</td>
<td>Pt Sec 1 Upper Kaiwharawhara District, defined on Application Plan 844 &amp; Pt Sec 1 Upper Kaiwharawhara District. All declared recreation reserve, subject to the Reserves Act 1977, NZ Gazette 1989/4483 Lot 8 DP 313319 Total area 15.0954ha</td>
<td>This land comprises the east-facing slopes of the Waimapihi Stream catchment, immediately below Karori Sanctuary down to Holloway Road.</td>
<td>The TBMP 1995 identified this land as a potential addition.</td>
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<td>Waimapihi Reserve</td>
<td>Described as: Pt Sec 10 Owhiro District Pt Sec 10 Owhiro District (taken under Public Works Act 1928 for pleasure ground in 1975) Lot 13-17 Application Plan 1524, Lot 20-22 Application Plan 1524</td>
<td>This is a small piece of reserve land at the end of Holloway Road, and surrounded by Polhill Gully Reserve Part B.</td>
<td>The TBMP 1995 identified this land as a potential addition.</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Semeloff Terrace Reserve</td>
<td>Described as Lots 1 &amp; 2 DP 2322, comprising 0.1406ha. Declared recreation reserve, subject to the Reserves Act 1977, NZ Gazette 1989 page 4483.</td>
<td>Two parcels of land border the Town Belt on Semeloff Terrace, located off Adams Terrace.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>These two lots are connected to the existing Town Belt, both visually and physically. The land would be perceived to be already part of the Town Belt given its consistent open space character. This land is not original Town Belt.</td>
<td>This land should be added to the Town Belt. Yes</td>
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<td>Raroa Reserve</td>
<td>The land (0.7331ha) is described as: Lot 1 DP 995, Lot 2-3 Block IX DP 995, Pt Lot 6 Block IX DP 995, Pt Sec 10 Owhiro District also known as Pt Lots 102-105 DP 114. All declared Scenic Reserve (s.191)(b), subject to the Reserves Act 1977, NZ Gazette 1995/4478 Pt Lot 4 Block IX DP 995. Taken under Public Works Act 1928 for pleasure ground in 1979 Pt Lot 5 Block IX DP 995, Lot 4-8 DP 22555.</td>
<td>This is Council-owned land made up of a number of individual parcels. It is bush-covered reserve land along and below the east side of Raroa Road.</td>
<td>The TBMP 1995 identified this land as potential addition.</td>
<td>This land does not connect to the existing Town Belt but is adjacent to the Norway Street Reserve. It has limited recreational values. This land was not part of the originally envisaged Town Belt but it makes sense to manage all the reserves around Aro Valley in one reserve management plan.</td>
<td>This land should be added to the Town Belt. Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>20 Norway Street</td>
<td>Lots 12, 13, 14 and 15 DP 995, CT 425/168, comprising</td>
<td>This is Council-owned reserve land that is covered in regenerating</td>
<td>The TBMP 1995 identified this land as potential addition.</td>
<td>This land does immediately adjoin existing Town Belt land and is perceived to already be part of the Town Belt.</td>
<td>This land should be added to the Town Belt. Yes</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Privately owned gully below Hadfield Grove</td>
<td>Privately owned gully</td>
<td>This land is made up of the privately owned undeveloped gully being the residential properties in Hadfield Terrace.</td>
<td>The TBMP 1995 identified this land as potential addition.</td>
<td>This land lies below the residential properties in Hadfield Terrace and Kelburn Parade. Although bordering existing Town Belt, they provide only local landscape value and have little significance in enhancing the continuity of the Town Belt's horseshoe. The recreational values are limited and they are not part of the originally envisaged Town Belt.</td>
<td>The Council will not pursue acquisition of these lands.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ministry of Education land, Abel Smith Street</td>
<td>It is described as Pt Town Belt, Town of Wellington, comprising 0.4176ha and sec 1226, Town of Wellington, comprising 0.4221ha. The land was included in the Town Belt Deed conveyed to the Council in terms of the 1873 Deed. However, in 1931, the Crown under Act of Parliament took the land for educational purposes. It is zoned part Outer Residential and part Open Space B.</td>
<td>This land is owned by the Crown and used by the Ministry of Education. It is included in the Port Nicholson Block Claims Settlement Act 2009 and the Trust has the first right of refusal if the land is declared surplus. It is situated at the top of Abel Smith Street. Te Aro School uses about one-third of the land. The rest of the land is made up of a 600sq m steep gully bounded on the east by Te Aro School and on the west by the rear of properties on Devon Street. There is a track linking the school, Boyd Wilson Field and Devon Street. The vegetation is mixed exotic trees, including sycamore and large pines, with an understorey of natives and exotic shrubs.</td>
<td>The TBRP 1998 policy options for this land include: Option 1. Seek the return to Town Belt status of the area not occupied by Te Aro School. Seek agreement for the return of the school land when the school activity ceases. Option 2: Seek all of the land for Town Belt purposes. Lease back to the school the area currently occupied by the school for peppercorn rental.</td>
<td>The land was part of the original Town Belt Deed and taken out by the Crown in 1931 for education purposes. It is now separated from existing Town Belt lands but forms part of an important green network and backdrop to the Aro Valley. The original Town Belt lands that connected this land have now been extensively developed and used for other purposes, such as residential development and education. The steep gully is small in scale, and its location, aspect and accessibility add little value in strengthening the Town Belt's continuity and horseshoe shape. However it has important landscape values as a natural backdrop for Aro Street and as a green buffer between Devon Street and Victoria University. The mix of exotic and native trees, including the large eucalyptus provide a habitat for several native bird species including kōkako (wood pigeon), kaka, tui, rūrū (morepork), kōtare (kingfisher), tautuku (silvereye), riroriro (grey warbler) and piwakawaka (fantail). The recreational values are currently low with no formed tracks within the area.</td>
<td>The Council considers this land to be a high priority for return to Town Belt now it is no longer used for education purposes. It is recommended that the Council commence discussions with Port Nicholson Block Settlement Trust, Ministry of Education and Te Aro School regarding this land.</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46 Devon Street (part Council and Ministry of Education)</td>
<td>This land is described as Pt Lot 3 DP5759 et 433/88, comprising 906 sq m. It is held as fee simple land and is owned by the Council and the Crown (Education) in half shares as tenants in common. This arrangement was authorised by the 1931 Wellington City Empowering Act, schedule 5.</td>
<td>This land is adjacent to Boyd Wilson Field and the Te Aro School land discussed above. It has a narrow street frontage off Devon Street. It includes the track that links Devon Street through to Boyd Wilson Field.</td>
<td>This land is similar to the undeveloped gully of the Te Aro School land, discussed above. It is isolated from existing Town Belt land but does provide an important green buffer between Devon Street and the university. This land was not included in the Trust Deed but was original Town Belt.</td>
<td>Recommend that this land remain in joint ownership.</td>
<td>No</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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