
Newlands Park and Open Space Quality Assessment

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1 Introduction

This is a systematic assessment of the quality of the Council parks and reserves in Newlands with rating against the criteria in a Park and Open Space Quality rating table. The report includes a short commentary and recommendations for each space. This assessment does not cover detailed technical issues such as adequacy of servicing and lighting.

This report is ordered around types of space, with parks and playgrounds distinct from reserves. However, several spaces have a dual function, being both reserves and local parks. These have been placed in the group which best categorises their function. This classification does not impact on their assessment, as the same assessment criteria, informed by the known functions of each space, have been applied to all spaces.

The field study was carried out in July and August 2009 by Graeme McIndoe (McIndoeUrban) and Thomas Hickey (WCC Playgrounds Officer). Naomi Witham (WCC Parks and Gardens GIS Officer) also assisted.

2 Summary Observations

Parks and Playgrounds

2.1 Seven of the 13 local parks reviewed are well-located, and offer a high level of amenity and a range of activities. These high quality parks are:

- Grenada Village
- Salford Street
- Kenmore Street
- Helston Park Play Area
- Brandons Rock
- Lyndfield Lane
- Cheyne Walk

Nevertheless, some minor modifications relating variously to signage, access, seating, location of furniture and equipment, and kickabout areas could be implemented to further enhance these successful spaces.

2.2 Several spaces are of notably lesser quality, lacking in a significant number of ways, but still offering some amenity. Usually these contribute visual relief and openness, and sometimes a flat open space within a hilly neighbourhood. These can continue to contribute to the local area as long as some significant issues are addressed, and it is accepted that for various reasons their contribution is restricted. Public engagement is needed to better understand their use and value, and to inform their future function and management. These spaces include:

- Ring Lane
- Ceres Street
- Jay Street
- Lynda Avenue
- Spenmoor Street

Jay Street is the only one of these spaces with play equipment, and none of these are sufficiently centrally placed for play equipment to be justified.

2.3 One space rates as poor or extremely poor against the majority of assessment criteria, and its future should be reconsidered. This is:

- Chapman Street

2.4 One space, William Hardgrave, although designated as a local park and reserve rates relatively poorly as a reserve. It is small, and undeveloped, but appears optimally located at the centre of the neighbourhood and opposite the entrance to a primary school to become a highly successful local park and play area. This has good potential and should be investigated further.

Reserves

2.5 The very large reserves which extend over significant parts of the periphery of Newlands, and along the harbour-edge escarpment, successfully contribute to a green belt effect. These have significant visual and ecological benefits and also offer recreational potential. This group includes:

- Kentwood Drive
- Waihinahina
- Seton Nossiter Park
- Gilberd Bush
- Brandons Rock Walkway

Several of these have well developed walking trails, and there are opportunities with the newest reserves to extend those trails.

2.6 Successful links to reserves invite both viewing over and provide generous connection between the reserve and public space. Gilberd Bush Reserve and Kentwood Drive are example of reserves which have good connections with their local neighbourhoods.

2.7 Trees and planting are often distributed across the small green areas within reserves, and can prevent these being used for a kick-about area. An example is the top area within the otherwise excellent Kentwood Drive Reserve. While these spaces are not playing fields, and some visual intricacy and interest is desirable, elements might be placed for spatial enclosure, or visual effect while still allowing a reasonable small kickabout area.

2.8 Other reserves offer a distinctly lesser degree of amenity, but still contribute in various ways. This group includes:

- 79 Kentwood Drive
- Glanmire Road
- White Pine Avenue
- Henly Estate
- William Hardgrave

2.9 Four small reserves provided in new subdivisions offer little or nil amenity and are of extremely poor quality:

- Tamworth Crescent
- Dungarvan Road (2 reserves)
- Sheridan Terrace

These areas are the only open spaces in the subdivisions, often occupy residual space that would not be suitable for any other activity, and are inaccessible. They fail to meet the objectives of Council's Subdivision Design Guide. This calls into question the process which approved their designation.

Sports Fields

2.10 The highest-rated sports field, Newlands Park is attractive, in a good state of repair and offers good surfaces, but critically, it is both suitable for and welcomes a range of uses.

2.11 Mark Avenue and Pinkerton Park (categorised in this study as a sports field given its primary use) are also of generally high quality, even though there are issues to address with each which could lead to improve these.

2.12 Helston Park is the least successful sports field. It is characterised by mono-functionality, a location that does not invite a range of users, a poor entrance experience, and relatively drab, ill-maintained facilities.

3 Commentary and Recommendations

Grenada Village Play Area

Primary role and functions

Local park and play area

Summary assessment

- An exemplary local park, very well located at the centre of Grenada Village.

Recommendations

- Work with Grenada Village Community Association to maximise use of the tennis courts.

Relation to context

- Located at an intersection on the main route through the neighbourhood, this park is both visible and readily accessible.
- Located at a bus stop and with good parking adjacent.

Image and ambience

- Swathe of grass and trees at the street edge create a pleasing first impression.
- Benefits from mature trees, landscaping, furniture, equipment and clubrooms all being attractive and in a good state of repair.

Function, activity and occupation

- Well-overlooked by houses on all sides, this is likely to both feel safe and be safe.
- Provides high quality play equipment, with several places to sit, including under trees next to the play area.
- Sloping site precludes use for a kick-about area, however active recreation is provided for with the tennis courts. However these are not open to the general public. They appear to be for use of members only, so recreational benefits of this surface remains restricted.

Environmental conditions

- Good sun, but exposed to northerly winds.



All parts of the park and play area are prominent in view from adjacent houses.



High quality play equipment provides multiple opportunities for challenging play



Mature trees provide shelter, shade and spatial definition between the tennis courts and play area



Clubrooms in very good condition next to tennis courts with moss and weeds beginning to grow through

Salford Street Play Area

Primary role and functions

Local park and play area

Summary assessment

- A very successful, highly visible park which offers a good range of recreational opportunities.

Recommendations

- Investigate potential to develop the grassed amphitheatre for active play by slightly levelling the grassed surface at its base and providing a larger and more effective netting back stop.

Relation to context

- Centrally located and highly accessible.

Image and ambience

- Sweeping grassed contours and mature trees framing a view back out over the harbour assist in making this a very attractive park.

Function, activity and occupation

- Well-overlooked from the street and from surrounding houses, promoting a strong sense of safety.
- Has a number of spaces on different levels that provide a range of settings for different groups and types of play.

Environmental conditions

- While in a south facing valley, receives good sun, but likely to be exposed to southerly winds.
- Trees provide some wind shelter and shade.



Play area provides a good range of equipment and has good informal surveillance from both adjacent houses and the street



Park offers spectacular view to the south, and amphitheatre-like contours offer potential for active play



Footpath winds along edge of park

Kenmore Street Play Area

Primary role and functions

Local park and play area

Summary assessment

- An attractive small local park and play area for young children.

Recommendations

- Install signage to indicate the pedestrian link between Kenmore Street and Longcroft Terrace.
- Provide for wheelchair access at one of the two entry points.

Relation to context

- Centrally located around 100 metres from the Newlands town centre, this is also on main routes to the town centre, and also can be accessed from Longcroft Terrace.
- The park can be accessed by a range of modes, with parking provided and bus routes passing close by.

Image and ambience

- Park, vegetation and equipment are all in good condition, with the exception of the garden areas around the entrances where planting appears to have been replaced with bark chips. The high fence along the edge of the Plunket Room however creates an apparently unnecessary blank edge and precludes informal surveillance in both directions across the shared boundary.

Function, activity and occupation

- Small and providing a playground suitable for young children. This is appropriate, complementing the immediately adjacent Newlands Plunket rooms.
- Trails through the small area of trees at the boundary show that this area is also used for children's play, and it complements the formal playground.
- While there is very good access, neither of the two entry points allow for wheelchair access. This could be easily remedied.

Environmental conditions

- Trees along the northern (Horokiwi Road West) and western boundary and location at a valley floor mean that this is sheltered from prevailing winds. Despite this enclosure, it still receives good mid-winter sun.



Kenmore Street Play Area is well defined and sheltered by contours and mature planting, but remains open to the adjacent street



Connection to Longcroft Terrace up to the right, with Plunket Rooms also at right.



Carparking at entry

Helston Park Play Area

Primary role and functions

Local park and play area

Summary assessment

- A well situated, safe and attractive local park and playground with a very good range of equipment.

Recommendations

- Install a third entry at the north-western corner of the park. This would be from Helston Road, connecting to the existing footpath and should provide for wheelchair access.

Relation to context

- Prominent in view on a main thoroughfare, and located at the main entrance to Helston Park, this is central and highly visible.

Image and ambience

- High quality play equipment in a good state of repair and some mature trees contribute to a pleasant environment.

Function, activity and occupation

- Provides play opportunities for a range of ages, and includes half-court basketball for active play.

Environmental conditions

- Good sun exposure.



Prominently located at the edge of Helston Road, this provides play opportunities for a range of ages



Challenging play equipment



Edge to Helston Road is well-fenced, but lacks an entrance for users approaching from the north



Proximity to Helston Park allows for shared use of car parking (across road at rear)

Brandons Rock and Edgecombe Street Play Area

Primary role and functions

Local park and play area

Summary assessment

- Small local park, which is highly memorable due to its unique location at the top of the escarpment, spectacular views and unique landform at its southern edge.

Recommendations

- Consider how proposed replacement play equipment can be located to both provide for a small kick around area, and be sufficiently separated from the road for safety.
- Consider placement of a kerb crossing at southern end to assist entry into the park with buggies, prams and bicycles.

Relation to context

- Highly accessible from the street.

Image and ambience

- Highly memorable due to unique configuration and views.

Function, activity and occupation

- Small, but open to view towards the street and community for very good informal surveillance.
- Combination of sloping grass, flat area, tree for climbing and proposed replacement play equipment makes this a very attractive small local park offering lots of play opportunities.

Environmental conditions

- Sunny and in this potentially highly exposed ridge top location, reasonably sheltered as well as spatially defined by land form and trees.



Southern end of playground is sheltered and enclosed by topography and mature trees



Northern end opens to harbour views

Lyndfield Lane Play Area

Primary role and functions

Local park and play area

Summary assessment

- This is a very large, high quality park. Several small enhancements could lead to it being exemplary.

Recommendations

- Locate new play equipment scheduled to be installed in October 2011 off to one side to allow for an excellent kickaround area.
- Provide all weather access (a path) to the new play equipment.
- Enhance seating opportunity at the lower part of the park close to the playground and kick-around area, considering particularly informal seating opportunities.
- Provide signage at both Lyndfield Lane and Black Rock Road to indicate pedestrian access between these streets.
- Provide a second connection to the lawn area at the top of the park to encourage use of this underutilised area. This would be short (in the order of 20 metres), would go along the contours through the bush area and should connect to the existing through-site paved path to provide for a circuit walk.
- Address removal of wind-blown rubbish.

Relation to context

- The park is highly visible and open to Lyndfield Road with multiple entrances. However, while there is access from Black Rock Road, this is not obvious.
- Provides linkage between Black Rock Road and Lyndfield Lane, however this linkage is not developed or signposted.
- Offers potential to act as an important connector for pedestrians in an area where steep and complex contours and consequent lack of interconnection in the roading layout mean that connections are few. Link between Lyndfield Lane and Black Rock Road, crossing this very large block.

Image and ambience

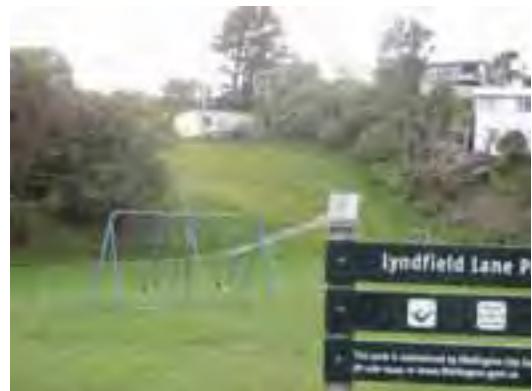
- Attractive area characterised by manageable changes in level, mature trees and bush.
- The space is compromised by apparently wind-blown rubbish that has collected along the path at the base of the bush by the lower lawn area.

Function, activity and occupation

- The park provides for multiple functions – play areas, kick-around, tennis and hockey.
- An elevated lawn area behind the bush to the north of the tennis courts is defined by trees and bush, and offers spectacular views in several directions including to the harbour. It is however not visible, and accessible only by one path.
- The lower grassed area has excellent natural surveillance as it is overlooked from neighbouring houses.

Environmental conditions

- Sunny and sheltered.



Play equipment set within a large, sunny and sheltered, green open space. Neighbouring houses offer good informal surveillance



A large, sunny, but currently relatively inaccessible lawn area at the top of the park offers views south to the harbour and central city

Cheyne Walk Play Area

Primary role and functions

Local park and playground

Summary assessment

- This is a very well-located, highly accessible, sheltered and sunny local park. It is however compromised by a large mound of grassed earth at its centre which, while providing some opportunities for play, splits the large green area into two smaller areas, neither really suitable for kick-about, and which screens views into the park. This could readily be modified.

Recommendations

- Remove mound from centre of park to provide a large kick-about area, potentially creating elevation elsewhere at the edge of the park.

Relation to context

- Very well located on the top of a broad ridge with easy flat access along and from surrounding streets.
- This is highly accessible to the local neighbourhood, with multiple access points including from Cheyne Walk and via a grassed lane, from Somes Crescent close to its intersection with Bayfield Drive.

Image and ambience

- Boundary trees and a large, well maintained grassed area create a pleasant ambience.
- Furniture and play equipment is old, and while looking ‘tired’ is in good repair.

Function, activity and occupation

- Large, with a good degree of natural surveillance this park offers considerable recreational potential. However, its use and safety is compromised by the large earth mound at its centre which precludes what would otherwise be a large kick-about area, and screens the rear of the park from view from the road. At the same time this mound provides scope for some types of children’s play. Contouring might be retained but in a different location (and probably necessarily to a lesser extent) at the edge of the park.

Environmental conditions

- Sheltered and sunny.



The large, sunny sheltered and flat grassed area subdivided by a grassed mound



Second means of access into the park from Somes Crescent

Ring Lane Park

Primary role and functions

Local park

Summary assessment

- The primary benefit of this space is visual, providing a sense of green openness.

Recommendations

- Tidy up existing low level planting on the northern bank and potentially plant some taller trees here to partially screen the northern boundary fence, and enhance the primary benefit of this space which is visual amenity.
- Install subsoil drainage to allow use of the grass surface during winter.



Relation to context

- Location directly across the road from Newlands College places this reserve at the edge of the residential area. Proximity of high quality fields at the College is likely to limit the use of this space for kick-about.



Image and ambience

- This space is undeveloped and residual with the elevated northern edge being prominent in view, and dominated by the rear of a boundary fence.
- Very well overlooked and likely to be very safe.

Function, activity and occupation

- This park provides a narrow flat area however edges which drop away are likely to limit potential for kick-about.
- Turf, while appearing in good condition, is extremely wet and soft underfoot.
- The recreational potential of this park is currently limited, and its location at the edge of the residential area makes it difficult to justify locating play equipment here.



The park occupies an elevated corner site opposite Newlands College

Very good natural surveillance from adjacent houses

Ceres Street Park

Primary role and functions

Local park

Summary assessment

- Provides visual amenity for immediate neighbours and some recreational potential, which could be enhanced by formalising and signing an existing accessway.

Recommendations

- Strengthen and signpost existing connection to and from Cheltenham Terrace in order to provide for a recreational walking loop, and enlarge the neighbourhood catchment of the park.
- Provide signage describing links through the park at both entrances.

Relation to context

- Located at the south-west fringe of Newlands at the end of a cul-de-sac, this park nevertheless is connected with an undeveloped and unsigned access-way to the wider neighbourhood.

Image and ambience

- These edges are typically (but not always) well maintained, giving a pleasing sense of local custodianship and safety. Most neighbours have not erected fences, instead installing generally high quality garden edges.
- Existing and recent planting along the northern edge contributes to visual amenity.

Function, activity and occupation

- This is a reasonably steeply sloping grassed area with some planting along its northern edge. While not suitable for kick-about, it may provide for some types of active play. It does provide visual amenity for immediate neighbours.
- Potential to contribute to the neighbourhood network of walkways is not fully exploited. An existing accessway is unsigned and the path it provides is undeveloped.

Environmental conditions

- Sloping directly to the north-west this grassed area receives full afternoon sun but is also fully exposed to north-westerly winds.



Messy storage at the boundary of adjacent houses which nevertheless benefit greatly from views over the park



Potential for existing accessway which links with Cheltenham Terrace to be enhanced to provide a circuit through the park

Jay Street Park

Primary role and functions Local park

Summary assessment

- A currently overly-secluded flat green open space not well located at the margins of the residential area. This may continue to contribute limited recreational benefits following removal of play equipment and strategic thinning of edge planting.

Recommendations

- Consult on future needs and options for this park space.
- Consider selective removal or trimming of some boundary planting to open the park into view from adjoining houses (including from houses on Jay Street), while still maintaining strong planting for shelter and spatial definition.

Relation to context

- Located at the very edge of the residential area and therefore accessed only from one side, this also has very poor physical and visual connections to other places. The park is not visible from Jay Street.

Image and ambience

- Boundary planting and large flat area of grass creates an attractive sense of enclosure. However, the seclusion means that caregivers with young children are unlikely to find this attractive.

Function, activity and occupation

- Lack of connection with surroundings, and lack of informal surveillance makes this of limited value as a play area.
- While old, steel tube play equipment and a basketball hoop are provided, this is dispersed across the grass and apparently relatively unused.
- One primary function appears to be convenient means of access to the lower playing fields of Newlands College from the residential areas to the north-west. This access should be maintained.

Environmental conditions

- Very well sheltered due to enclosing trees.
- Benefits from potentially good sun exposure, except that when sun is low, the surrounding trees and planting cast shadows over much of the park.



Park provides a pedestrian link from Jay Street through to the rear of Newlands College



A large flat green open space is provided, but this is not well overlooked



Dispersed play equipment is outdated and uninviting

Lynda Avenue Park

Primary role and functions

Local park

Summary assessment

- Provides a pleasing outlook and open space for local residents, but offers limited recreational amenity.

Recommendations

- Retain as a local open green area
- Consider placing a park bench in a sunny location at the edge of the park.

Relation to context

- Located close to the western edge of Newlands, this is visible from and readily accessible to a relatively small catchment.

Image and ambience

- Has good quality edge planting.
- Open to the street and overlooked by adjacent houses, this provides a sense of safety.

Function, activity and occupation

- Too small and unevenly contoured to allow useful kick-about space, and lacking play equipment or furniture, this space does not offer significant recreational benefit.

Environmental conditions

- Sunny and open to the north.



Planting around the edge provides a pleasant green enclave.



Water is ponding on a depression of this area which was once a tip site

Spenmoor Street Reserve

Primary role and functions

Local park and dog exercise area

Summary assessment

- While this appears to usefully serve the Newlands Scout Hall and potentially dog-owners, it is very poor when tested against the criteria applicable to local parks and relative to other local parks in Newlands. It is limited in functionality and benefit due to its relative inaccessibility, lack of informal surveillance and lack of flat area.

Recommendations

- Given limited use and utility this should not be regarded as a local park, rather as a reserve with important but limited functionality which complements the nearby Lyndfield Lane local park.
- Consider potential to formalise a well signed, and safe link through the park. This would reduce walking distance from the entry of the new residential subdivision to the Newlands Road bus stop from the 725 metres required if walking along the street to 240 metres.

Relation to context

- Located between Spenmoor Street and Newlands Road, and providing a not very well defined link between the two, this park could be developed with a formalised pedestrian path to give access from the new subdivision above to the bus stops on Newlands Road. A consideration in formalising a link would be whether there is sufficient natural surveillance to ensure it is acceptably safe.

Image and ambience

- Poor image due to scruffy bush and trees around the edges of the space, and signs of disorder. At the time of site visit, there was a dumped stolen car at the bottom of the slope.

Function, activity and occupation

- The steeply sloping lawn may provide for some types of active play by users of the Newlands Scout Hall at the Spenmoor Street entrance.
- Poor natural surveillance, with a few backs of lots edging the lower part of the park.
- The entrance from Newlands Road up through the bush is informal, and unlikely to be inviting. With lack of visibility of destination and lack of informal surveillance at edges, use is likely to be restricted to people who know the connection, and are confident. The path and bush area would however provide for active play for older children.
- While the park does connect Newlands Road and Spenmoor Street, the lack of a continuous pathway through will restrict its use as a pedestrian linkage, particularly when the sloping grass is wet.

Environmental conditions

- Sunny, but potentially exposed to north-westerly winds.



View from the footpath on Spenmoor Street over Spenmoor Street Park.



Entrance from Newlands Road



View up towards the scout hall and top of the park from the west

Chapman Street Park

Primary role and functions

Local park

Summary assessment

- A pair of small green fragments that offer no apparent neighbourhood benefit other than a sense of openness for a very few houses directly adjacent and across the road.

Recommendations

- Consult on deleting the larger area from parks holdings.
- Retain and maintain small area (with transformer).

Relation to context

- Located at the edge of an access-way linking down to Burgess Road and beyond towards Helston Park.
- Reasonably well-located at the centre of a residential area, but elevated above much of that area.

Image and ambience

- A simple swathe of green grass, notable only for the view it opens out to the north from Chapman Street and nearby houses.

Function, activity and occupation

- Largest grassed area is small and too sloping for useful kickabout.
- Small area accommodates a transformer, but also signals link down to Burgess Road

Environmental conditions

- Sunny but, at the top of a north-facing escarpment, both highly exposed to northerly winds and lacking shelter.



Park is split by an intervening house, and spaces are undeveloped, offering little visual amenity and no recreational potential



Transformer dominates the westernmost segment



Steps down to Burgess Road at edge of westernmost part of park

Kentwood Drive Reserve

Primary role and functions

Local park and reserve

Summary assessment

- Very high quality local park and reserve, located at the centre of the neighbourhood so is highly accessible and also offers significant potential to function as a well-located playground.

Recommendations

- Locate the playground scheduled to be installed in 2010 close to and accessed from the lower main entry.
- Drain lower grassed area to allow this to function as a kick-about area.
- Remove some of the shrubs/trees at the centre of the upper entry, replacing with planting at the edges to allow for informal kick-about.
- Consider developing a walkway linking the upper and lower grassed areas to allow this to function as part of a recreational walking circuit.
- Install signs for wayfinding, and interpretation (related to the stream regeneration).

Relation to context

- Located at the centre of a developing residential area where there are no recreational facilities, this offers potential for a local playground.
- Offers multiple, wide and open connections to the neighbourhood, and is accessible by a range of modes of transport.
- There is clear evidence of community ownership and involvement in the re-planting related to the stream.

Image and ambience

- Comprises attractive regenerating bush and planting including a stream, and generous open grassed areas, compromised to only a minor extent by the overhead high-voltage power lines.

Function, activity and occupation

- Wide open entrances are all associated with reasonably flat grassed areas of varying sizes. These provide for local recreational potential.
- Lower grassed area is wet and requires drainage.
- Kick-about potential of the upper entrance space is somewhat limited by placement of trees/shrubs through the centre of the space.
- Reserve lacks identifying signs.

Environmental conditions

- Opens to the north/north-west so is very sunny, however is also exposed to the wind.



Large open space at upper entry to Kentwood Drive Reserve



Reserve opens to the north, with bus stop, parking and access to a large green open space



Large green open space with reserve extending up valley to the south. Potential kick-about, but needs drainage

Waihinahina Reserve (in memory of Dennis Duggan)

Primary role and functions

Reserve and dog exercise area

Summary assessment

- A visually attractive reserve space, memorable in its spatial qualities and location as a plateau above the harbour, and satisfies an important recreational function.

Recommendations

- Identify and install features to enhance this as a destination dog exercise park.
- Repair the potholes that are appearing in the car park, and remove the graffiti from the entry sign.
- There are some areas of standing water on the turf. These may or may not be problematic (and were observed to be attractive to frolicking dogs), however if a permanent feature, may be best drained and filled, or developed as wetlands.

Relation to context

- Mainly comprising a large bush reserve, this contributes to the green belt effect that is being developed along the harbour-edge escarpment.
- Location at the periphery of Newlands, with the flat grassed area 800 metres from Woodridge Drive and requiring a climb of 10 metres then a drop of 35 metres, this will for most people be accessible only by car.

Image and ambience

- An extraordinarily spectacular site with views down the Petone beach and across the harbour. Combination of steep bush-clad hills give strong spatial definition which in combination with the very large flat green open space in an unexpected hillside location, gives a memorable sense of place.
- Good state of repair indicate that this area is well respected.
- A variety of spaces and paths allows for multiple types of use.

Function, activity and occupation

- Informal observation of use indicates this is well-used.
- This has been identified as a 'destination dog park' in the current Dog Policy Review
- While primarily a dog-exercise area, the spectacular setting and views obtained from this reserve also make it an attractive recreational destination.
- A large and well-landscaped carpark is provided to cater for the primary mode of access.



Entrance view and approach to Waihinahina Reserve



Large open area showing typical use and spectacular setting



Pleasant, sunny and sheltered secondary space to the west of the parking area

Seton Nossiter Park

Primary role and functions

Reserve and dog exercise area

Summary assessment

- A very large reserve area that contributes significantly to the green network of Newlands, and provides good recreational potential with a number of spaces and walkways.

Recommendations

- Consider quality of edge planting along Mark Avenue, encouraging replacement of gorse and weeds with native shrubs and trees, and for providing a view down into the valley.
- Upgrade faded sign at Bushland Road entrance.

Relation to context

- Makes a significant contribution to the developing network of reserves around the perimeter of Newlands.
- This makes positive use of the valley between Newlands and Grenada North and provides for recreational walking.
- Due to the open space of the nearby Newlands College playing fields and associated heavy planting, contributes to a very large green open area in this part of Newlands.
- This reserve provides an attractive outlook from neighbouring houses, in particular being open to Colchester Crescent. It also has physical connection from its southern end at two points (Fernwood Court and Colchester Crescent).

Image and ambience

- Planting is relatively mixed, with gorse dominant on north-facing valley walls, and typically regenerating bush elsewhere.
- Entrances are well-signed and generally attractive.
- The sunny valley with walls clad in a consistent carpet of regenerating bush that extends north from Colchester Crescent is very attractive.

Function, activity and occupation

- Provides a network of trails for walking and dog exercise as well as a series of flat green open spaces.

Environmental conditions

- Generally sunny, given orientation to the north of several valleys.
- Parts of the valley with an east-west orientation are likely to be reasonably sheltered from prevailing winds.



Entry signposting (with faded graphics) at Bushland Grove entrance



Bushland Grove entrance is wide, sunny and welcoming



Scout hall with kick-about area and car parking at northern entry from Mark Avenue



View from Mark Avenue showing the grassed areas and track along the valley floor



Mark Avenue edge is relatively poor



The southern end of Seton Nossiter Park is a very large, heavily planted valley



The two walkway entries at the southern end – near left (from Fernwood Court) and distant mid-upper left from Colchester Crescent

Gilberd Bush Reserve

Primary role and functions Reserve

Summary assessment

- This attractive swathe of regenerating bush extends the green belt, is large enough to offer ecological benefits, and provides for recreational use with its network of well-signed walking tracks.

Recommendations

- Examine possible encroachment at the southernmost entry off Fernhaven Grove.

Relation to context

- Well-connected to adjoin streets at three points.

Image and ambience

- Well-maintained, wide and open connections to adjoining streets allow the park to be enjoyed by street users as well as residents who look across into the reserve.

Function, activity and occupation

- The reserve is large enough to have an important ecological function, provides an attractive outlook for adjoining residential areas and recreational walkways.
- Wide and open connections and well-maintained pathways allow walkway users a view into the reserve before entry.
- Entry points are well signposted.

Environmental conditions

- Largely comprising a south-east facing valley this reserve, while opening to the harbour, is reasonably sheltered.



Overview of the Gilberd Bush Reserve, with houses along its west edge



Paths are visible and well sign-posted

Brandon's Rock Walkway

Primary role and functions

Public walkway

Summary assessment

- A successful recreational walkway with a valuable neighbourhood connection function.

Recommendations

- Consider either expanding the extent of planting at walkway entrances such as this to relate to the scale of the walkway, or deleting such planting.

Relation to context

- While providing for recreational walking, this also provides excellent neighbourhood connection.
- Brandon's Rock is an historic local landmark, now made more accessible to the neighbourhood.

Image and ambience

- This gains its character from its exposed ridge-top location and spectacular views afforded across the harbour.
- The small area of planting at the southern entry appears domestic in scale, and fragmentary.

Function, activity and occupation

- Excellent natural surveillance from neighbouring houses is possible over most of the walkway.

Environmental conditions

- Highly exposed to both prevailing winds, this is a recreational walkway where users can experience the extremes of Wellington weather. This, in combination with spectacular views, will make for a memorable experience.



Western entrance



Walkway follows the ridge, offering spectacular views over the harbour and is overlooked by adjoining houses

79 Kentwood Drive Reserve

Primary role and functions Reserve

Summary assessment

- While comprising residual and inaccessible land, it is very close to Kentwood Drive reserve, and therefore contributes to the continuity of reserves in Newlands as well as visual amenity for neighbouring residents.

Recommendations

- Consider addressing informal encroachment.

Relation to context

- Contributes in a minor but positive way to the developing network of reserves that mark the periphery of Newlands.

Image and ambience

- Characterised by broken topography with some regenerating bush, but is largely gorse covered. Nevertheless, this provides some visual amenity for residents but is compromised to an extent by the overhead high-voltage power lines.

Function, activity and occupation

- Except for the lawn area which joins to Kentwood Drive, this is physically inaccessible to the public.
- There are signs of encroachment by householders at the edges. This demonstrates custodianship of an otherwise inaccessible part of the reserve, but establishes a precedent for use of public land for private benefit.



Sloping grassed space at the top of the reserve, with some amenity planting

Glanmire Road Reserve

Primary role and functions Reserve

Summary assessment

- Undeveloped area of land, well-located in the centre of a residential area and with excellent orientation to the north. Offers potential for intensification of reserve planting, and/or development as a well-located, high quality local park.
- This appears as 'fallow' land with currently no apparent function.

Recommendations

- Consult on the future potential of this space as part of the reserves network.

Relation to context

- Central location, very good access, with potential for footpath along the edge of Glanmire Road.

Image and ambience

- Undeveloped, and characterised by scrubby re-growth which includes some mature native shrubs.

Function, activity and occupation

- Undeveloped visual amenity value.
- Presents opportunity for intensive reserve planting, with new planting supporting some semi-mature planting already in place.
- Has size, qualities, contours and accessibility which would also allow it to be developed as a high quality local park, however it is very close to the Edgecombe Street play area.
- The steep escarpment at the south end of the park spatially defines the area and would provide a good green backdrop to a park here.

Environmental conditions

- Sheltered from the south, orientated to the north so this space is very sunny, but exposed to north-westerly winds.



The reserve is a small, residual piece of land, but is readily accessible and well-located at the centre of the neighbourhood.



Bus stop located at north-west corner of reserve



Back of reserve adjoins a residential cul-de-sac

White Pine Avenue Reserve

Primary role and functions

Local park and reserve

Summary assessment

- A large open area of gorse dominated newly regenerating bush that enlarges the major swathe of reserves in this part of Newlands. Its major benefits currently are openness and visual amenity for neighbouring residents.

Recommendations

- Remove weeds and scrub from upper grassed area, considering potential to install fewer better trees and other planting in a way that will contribute to this becoming an attractive local park and kick-about area.
- Consider potential for connection up to White Pine Avenue of the walkway system that runs through Seton Nossitor Park.

Relation to context

- Contributes positively to the developing network of reserves that mark the periphery of Newlands by connecting to and extending the already large area of Seton Nossitor Park.

Image and ambience

- The park space off White Pine Avenue appears residual and relatively uninviting, being characterised by scruffy planting.
- Planting along the valley walls is largely scrub and gorse with some regeneration of native trees.

Function, activity and occupation

- The large flat open space on White Pine Avenue offers potential for kick-about, but this potential is restricted by placement of weed-dominated planting.
- Function of the majority of the reserve is limited to visual amenity, however there is potential to explore connection to the existing network of paths through Seton Nossitor Park.



Flat open space on White Pine Avenue



Southern and western edges of space adjoining White Pine Avenue



Bush covered gully, connecting to Woodridge Reserve to the west

Henly Estate Reserve

Primary role and functions Reserve

Summary assessment

- This reserve performs a useful visual and potentially ecological function.

Recommendations

- Consider control of invasive weeds that are dominant along the lower edge of the park.

Relation to context

Image and ambience

- Has a high landscape value at the top end of the Ngauranga Gorge and along the main entrance route into Newlands.
- Presents a generally attractive swathe of green vegetation, with native species having apparently emerged through underlying gorse.
- Closer inspection shows the trees along the lower (Newlands Road) edge of the reserve are being smothered by a climbing weed.

Function, activity and occupation

- Has ecological value, as a large area of regenerating bush, with many fine specimens of native shrubs and trees.
- Being a very steep, south facing slope, this offers little apparent benefit for occupation.

Environmental conditions

- South facing and shady.



View from Spenmoor Street Park of part of the Henly Estate Reserve

William Hardgrave Reserve

Primary role and functions

Local park and reserve

Summary assessment

- A small and somewhat overgrown reserve area which, located at the centre of the existing residential area and across the street from a primary school entrance, offers potential for a small local play area.

Recommendations

- Consider potential for a play area on the small but sunny flat area accessed off Tree Top Lane.
- Trim and thin trees and undergrowth to allow a view in from Padnell Crescent and along Tree Top Lane.
- Clear and reinstate the walkway extending through the reserve and crossing the small residual stream at its base.

Relation to context

- Located on Padnell Crescent directly opposite a primary School, and at the centre of a large residential neighbourhood, this offers potential to establish a useful play area.
- Review of maps shows that this is located at the centre of the residential area, some distance from existing play areas.

Image and ambience

- Appears as an overgrown road verge at the edge of Padnell Crescent.
- Generally characterised in part by overgrown vegetation, in other parts by openness and amenity.

Function, activity and occupation

- Current benefit is limited to the visual amenity from a sheltered sunny grassed area at the edge of Tree Top Lane.
- A short walking track, now substantially overgrown links Padnell Crescent to the area by Tree Top Lane. This might be developed in conjunction with possible stream restoration, vegetation thinning and construction of a play area.

Environmental conditions

- The flat area off Tree Top Lane is sunny and sheltered.



There is no sign of local park space in the view from the road



Intriguing view into Tree Top Lane



Lane opens out to reveal a sunny sheltered flat area



Northern edge of the reserve, by the flat grass area is edged with houses

Tamworth Crescent Reserve

Primary role and functions Reserve

Summary assessment

- While the northern part of this small reserve is a bush clad knoll, and makes a positive contribution to the landscape effect, the southern part comprises inaccessibly steep, weed covered fill deposited at the end of Tamworth Crescent. This area, comprising close to half the reserve area, offers no amenity.

Recommendations

- Examine Reserves Contribution standards, particularly regarding the quality of space provided in order to avoid what has been treated as waste land being designated as reserve.
- If extending a walkway system through the reserve to the west, connect it through or close to this reserve to the end of Tamworth Crescent.

Relation to context

- By retaining vegetation rather than building on a prominent local landform, the bush clad knoll, contributes to the wider landscape.

Image and ambience

- Varies between good (to the north) and extremely poor (at the south end).

Function, activity and occupation

- Primarily visual function, but is partially successful in this.
- A parking area at the end of Tamworth Crescent provides for good vehicle access, however there is no entrance to the reserve beyond that.



Looking towards Tamworth Crescent at the top of the reserve, showing the gorse covered steep bank dropping off to the right



Gorse covered south-facing fill comprises close to half of the reserve area

Dungarvan Road Reserves

Primary role and functions Reserve

Summary assessment

- These two residual land areas contribute to a minor extent to the maintenance of regenerating bush on the escarpment above the Hutt Road. The easternmost triangular-shaped area appears physically inaccessible, and individually or together, these do not offer any appreciable recreational benefit.
- The treatment and location of these particular reserves is inconsistent with the intent and direction of the Subdivision Design Guide (refer Plan Change 46):

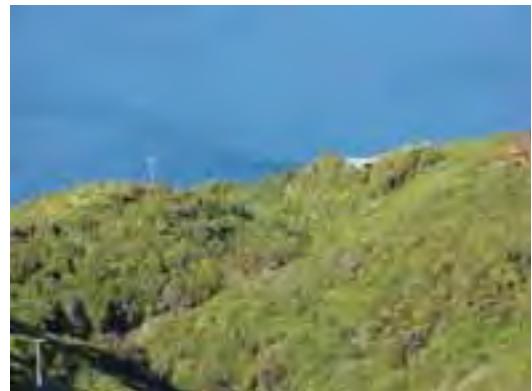
Provide parks and other public open spaces close to and well connected with concentrations of activity such as neighbourhood centres, in locations that serve a substantial population within close walking distance, and in keeping with any applicable structure plans.

Parks should receive reasonable year-round sunshine and will be in full view and directly accessible from the main streets in the neighbourhood.

Except for areas of bush, streams and wetlands preserved for ecological reasons, public parks should not comprise residual land which is inaccessible, predominantly steep or southfacing, or otherwise unsuitable for recreation.



Reserve on slope in middle background



Reserve behind and beyond telegraph pole, inaccessible from the public street which is behind the ridge to at the top right of this image

Recommendations

- Avoid creating or adopting reserves of this size, type and quality.

Relation to context

- While in steep topography it is acceptable and often desirable to maintain inaccessible land areas as reserves, and these have important landscape (visual and ecological) functions, recreational spaces should be close to the centre and accessible from the street to allow for recreational use.

Image and ambience

- These have some local visual value but do not contribute significantly to the wider landscape, being small fragments on a large green escarpment.

Function, activity and occupation

- Neither connected to other reserves nor large enough and sufficiently accessible, these offer no social or functional benefit. They will however contribute to a minor degree to maintaining the regenerating bush cover and ecosystems on this part of the harbour escarpment.
- Due to their solid planting they are of no benefit for recreational purposes.

Sheridan Terrace Reserve

Primary role and functions **Reserve**

Summary assessment

- This space is residual, offers no amenity to surrounding areas and serves only a minor ecological role.

Recommendations

- Review subdivision and reserves acquisition processes to ensure that areas of this residual type and extremely poor quality are not accepted as reserves.

Relation to context

- An isolated fragment of reserve in an area that is so steep and inaccessible that it is likely to remain largely in regenerating bush.
- Inaccessible and not visible from Sheridan Terrace.

Image and ambience

- Provides a patch of green in views from the top of the Ngauranga Gorge and would, if joined to the nearby Henly Estate Reserve, contribute to the planted escarpment. However, the slopes here and all around are so steep that access is precluded, and this area is almost certain to remain in re-growth/bush even if in private ownership

Function, activity and occupation

- Offers no potential for any kind of use or occupation.

Environmental conditions

- Steeply south facing so poorly orientated to the sun, and exposed to southerly winds.



Undefined entrance to reserve



Reserve comprises mainly steeply sloping south facing fill overlooking the Ngauranga Gorge, and included apparently abandoned earthmoving equipment

Newlands Park

Primary role and functions

Community park and sports field

Summary assessment

- An attractive multi-purpose sports field, well-located close to the centre of Newlands, but with potential for enhancement.

Recommendations

- Explore possibilities of achieving a more welcoming and open connection between the lower north-west corner of the park and Newlands Road, including more carparking.
- Extend the path from Newlands Road to the skatepark further up towards the field.
- Investigate means of obtaining formal or informal access from Robert Street to the south-western corner of the park.
- Investigate potential to install a new community park or playground.
- Remove rubbish from behind the sports pavilion, and consider restricting access to this area.
- Repair the cricket nets, in particular addressing drainage.

Relation to context

- Very well-located at the centre of Newlands, however not formally accessible from the south and west

Image and ambience

- Attractive entrance from Newlands Road.
- Sweeping grass lawns and trees complement the fields. In places trees and slopes provide shelter and space for spectators.
- The park is well maintained with the exception of around the cricket nets and at the back of the pavilion.

Function, activity and occupation

- Multi-purpose sports fields for summer and winter sports.
- Car parking provision seems low, given that immediately adjacent parts of Newlands Road do not allow for street-side parking.

Environmental conditions

- Good sun, as well as exposure to the northerly. However, planting along the northern and western edge of the fields provides some shelter.



Attractive and well-maintained entry from Newlands Road



View of Newlands town centre and the skate park to the playing fields above



Eastern edge is attractive and well maintained



Path to the skatepark from Newlands Road should also extend further up towards the field



Tree lined edge northern edge provides seating, shade and shelter

Mark Avenue Park

Primary role and functions

Sports field

Summary assessment

- A pair of attractive sports fields with some minor potential for improvement.

Recommendations

- Replace barred entry gates with bollards or other devices which allow better entry for pedestrians while still precluding vehicles.
- Re-contour path from Mark Avenue down to the field to reduce gradient and open views in and out.
- At northern end of the park:
 - Remove asphalt and kerbs, or alternatively retain and explore potential to extend and develop with a sealed path over the 'hump' for cyclists and skateboarders.
 - Consider potential to obtain additional sports fields space or training facility by reconfiguration of the northernmost area.
 - Return Kauri tree at north end of park to the vertical and fix with stays.
 - Remove some conifers, instead planting trees closer to the edge of the park in order to allow for better use of open space and avoid visibility and concealment related safety issues which are likely to arise as the trees mature.

Relation to context

- Readily accessible being at the edge of the main access up to Grenada North, however being below the road, it is not readily in view.

Image and ambience

- Both entrances are dominated by locked entry bar gates. This type of entry is not inviting. At Mark Avenue pedestrian entry has worn a track into the grass and is through a gap in the timber fence which is partly damaged.
- A hump in the path down to the fields from Mark Avenue is unnecessary, a minor inconvenience but more importantly screens views in and out.
- Carriageway and kerbing leading nowhere and related mound suggest a previous use of this area which has not been fully erased, nor usefully integrated into the park.
- There is extensive amenity planting particularly at the north end of the park, with many trees in good condition. However, the conifers here will tend to spread and both claim and screen open space, leading to potential safety problems in the future.

Function, activity and occupation

- An apparently successful formal sports field. However, not being highly visible, this is unlikely to attract extensive alternative use.
- The contours and open space at the northern end might be developed to allow for other recreational activities.
- Area of grass to the north of the northernmost field is large and may be suitable for use as a small junior sportsfield or training area, but is very wet in parts.



View down over upper and lower fields



Main entrance from Mark Avenue is barred, and pedestrians have worn a path into the adjacent grass, past the end of a damaged fence



Access down to the park is not clear from the point of entry, with a requirement to climb up and over an intervening hump.



Northern entry point is also barred, with carriageway and kerb ending at an earth mound – the buried remains of a building that was once here?

Environmental conditions

- Good sun exposure and mature trees in combination with new planting help to provide some wind shelter in an area otherwise exposed to the north-west.



Generous car parking at the northern end



Planting to banks provides a pleasing ambience

Pinkerton Park

Primary role and functions

Local park, sports field and reserve

Summary assessment

- Functions best as a well-located local park and junior sportsfield.

Recommendations

- Repair drainage and paths down from Horokiwi Road West.
- Open up view into park from street level at Pinkerton Grove entry.
- Install signs as required to signal all entries and indicate walking tracks.

Relation to context

- Well-located at the centre of a residential area.

Image and ambience

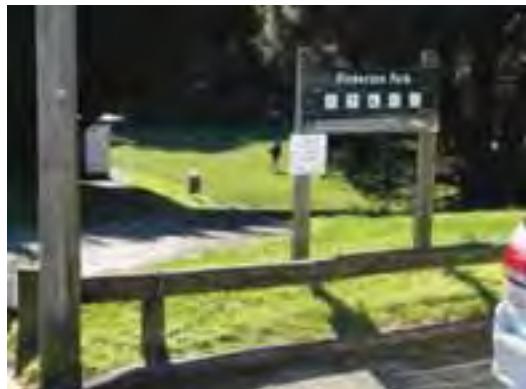
- Poor quality of wayfinding and poorly maintained entrances compromise what is otherwise an attractive local park.
- Lack of informal surveillance over the lower grassed playground area and damage to furniture suggest lack of safety.

Function, activity and occupation

- The sportsfield provides a reasonable sheltered and sunny space for junior sport. This is attractive and well overlooked from neighbouring houses.
- Both entry paths from Horokiwi Road West are in a poor state of repair.
- Wayfinding is difficult for visitors with lack of signage from Horokiwi Road West.
- The play area at the lower part of the park is not overlooked, and subject to vandalism. Because of signs of disorder and seclusion, it is unlikely to be attractive to parents/caregivers with young children. At the time for field study it appeared to be providing a sunny area for secondary school truants to relax out of sight of neighbours.

Environmental conditions

- Reasonably sunny and sheltered.



Main entry off Pinkerton Grove



Entries off Horokiwi Road West are saturated (upper photo) and overgrown (lower photo)



Park is well-defined and sheltered and includes changing rooms



Play area, complete with apparent truants relaxing unobserved from surrounding areas

Helston Park

Primary role and functions
Sports field

Summary assessment

- A mono-functional sports ground, this offers few benefits other than a sense of openness to the surrounding neighbourhood.

Recommendations

- Encourage upgrade of the rugby clubrooms and surrounds.
- Install signage to all entrances.

Relation to context

- Does not connect visually with surrounding areas, although there are three points of entry (two of which allow for vehicles).

Image and ambience

- This space gives an impression of closure and is not overtly welcoming other uses.
- Buildings and grounds are neither attractive nor especially well-maintained.

Function, activity and occupation

- This is overtly and primarily a rugby ground for the Johnsonville Rugby Club. While a large green open space, this is not visible from surrounding streets, has a relatively uninviting image and is unlikely to attract many other uses.
- While there are three entrances, the two from the south are not signed, and the second means of access by vehicle (at the south off Helston Road) provides only minimal carparking.

Environmental conditions

- Very good sun but also exposed to northerly winds. Appears reasonably sheltered from the south.



Overview of Helston Park from above, with play area in the background



Clubrooms and surroundings are utilitarian and show signs of deferred maintenance



Surfaces are neither attractive nor in especially good condition



Upper entrance from Stewart Drive is also unsigned, but provides convenient access to the south side of the field



Pleasant entrance off Helston Road, which is compromised by being unsigned and providing only a small amount of carparking