
Appendix 8: Assessment of Recreational Effects by PAOS Ltd



Kelson Sportsground

6-15 Kelso Grove
Kelson

Assessment of Potential Effects of Proposed Plan Change

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January 2011



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1. Executive Summary

1.1. INTRODUCTION

PAOS has been engaged by Hutt City Council (the Council) to assess the potential effects of existing recreational land being used for residential purposes as a result of revoking reserve status of part of the land at 6-15 Kelso Grove and rezoning it General Residential Activity Area. The balance of the land would remain General Recreation Activity Area and retained as Recreation Reserve under the Reserves Act 1977.

This assessment identifies:

- The importance of the site in relation to the recreational facilities within the local area
- Existing and potential opportunities for informal and formal recreation
- The effects which would result from the use of a portion of the site for residential development.

See Figure 1 below for the location of the site, and Figure 2 showing the part of the site to be zoned General Residential Activity Area and the part of the site to be retained as reserve.

The legal description of the site is Lot 527 DP 42342, held in (cancelled) CT WN470/210. The total site area is 4.2167 hectares and currently zoned General Recreation Activity Area under the District Plan of the City of Lower Hutt. The area of the application site subject to the proposed plan change is approximately 1.6467 hectares. The flat area of the site covers an area of approximately 1.6152 hectares. The Proposed Plan Change would rezone 6465m² of this area.

The site is designated as a neighbourhood reserve under the Council's Neighbourhood Reserves Management Plan, and is registered on the title as vested in Council on 28th May 1975, pursuant to the Municipal Corporations Act 1954 as Recreation Reserve subject to the Reserves and Domains Act 1953, and vested on DP 42342.



Figure 1 - Location of Kelson Sportsground



Figure 2 - Plan showing Area A (reserve status to be revoked) and Area B (to be retained as reserve)

1.2. CONCLUSIONS

The overall conclusion of this assessment is that a zoning change to Area A (see Figure 2) to General Residential Activity Area is appropriate, subject to certain recommendations as outlined in Section 1.3 below.

Further conclusions of this assessment are:

- Recreational use of the site is currently limited due to poor ground condition and lack of natural surveillance. Informal recreation in general in Kelson is provided for in Kelson: at neighbouring Kelson School¹, Kelson playground, several other informal recreation areas including a playground on Major Drive, a play area at the community centre on Timaru Grove and an undeveloped open grassed area off Waiponamu Drive, and Belmont Regional Park
- Developing Area A (see Figure 2) provides opportunity to improve the area identified to be retained as reserve (Area B in Figure 2). Although smaller than the original reserve, this new reserve would have the advantages of improved drainage funded through proceeds from the sale of the balance of the site, and increased safety through natural surveillance created by new residential properties overlooking the reserve

- Area B has value for informal recreation, with the proposed Indicative Development Plan providing opportunity to improve the recreational value of the reserve land (see Figure 3). This would help meet demand for usable flat recreational open spaces for kick-a-ball type spaces and dog walking in an area with a high proportion of young people and families
- Retaining part of Area B as reserve for recreation and improving the ground surface so it is usable for informal recreation would enable local residents to recreate locally without the need for transport, and to provide opportunities for children and young people to recreate in their local area. This would fit with the intention of land managed under the policies of the Neighbourhood Reserves Management Plan
- There is demand for Area B to be retained as a designated dog exercise area. The site is the only off leash dog walking area in central Kelson, a suburb with a high proportion of dog ownership
- There is no identifiable demand for sportsgrounds in Kelson or the wider Western Hills. Currently active sportsgrounds are centrally located on the valley floor "...where there is greatest overall benefit for the city and its environment"², easily accessed and close to sporting clubs
- The site is generally not suitable for development for formal recreation. Much of the flat area of the site is covered with a 6+ metre depth of fill³ and would require extensive drainage at some cost to bring it up to sportsfield standard. The area to be retained as reserve could in the future be developed for junior sport. Because of drainage issues, this would most likely be limited to summer sport
- The proposed zoning of part of the site as General Residential Activity Area is consistent with the zoning of the adjoining residential areas (Kelso Grove, Mossburn Grove etc). This consistency, combined with the low visual prominence of the site means that development is unlikely to detract from the existing urban form of the area
- Loss of the bush clad slopes of the site are not considered significant as the vegetation is not identified as such in the District Plan, has a low level of visual prominence and lack of continuity with the original gully due to creation of the flat sportsground area. The sheltering pines on the southeast side of the area are to be retained as reserve and an area of bush on the northern side of the reserve will remain.

¹ The 2007 PAOS report confirmed with the secretary of Kelson School in formal use of the sportsfield and playground areas

² Hutt City Council. *Reserves Strategic Directions*, October 2003, p10

³ Tonkin and Taylor. *Preliminary Geotechnical Stability Assessment*, Oakleigh Street, Maungaraki, February 2009, p3.



Figure 3 - Indicative Development Plan

1.3. RECOMMENDATIONS

The principle recommendation is to develop the area proposed to remain in the General Recreation Activity Area as Recreation Reserve by:

- Improving drainage and ground surface for informal recreation using proceeds from the sale of the area proposed to be zoned General Residential Activity Area in line with the Council Resolution of 12th August 2008
- Completing a development plan for the reserve area. Such a plan could include buffer planting and possibly mounding or transparent fencing to separate the proposed residential areas from the recreation area and provide a secure area for off leash dog exercise with a perimeter path and open areas for informal kick-a-ball type activities. Such development would not preclude future use of the reserve for Junior seasonal sport.

2. Introduction

2.1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The site is accessible from the end of Kelso Grove. The flat part of the site was formed by filling in part of a gully that runs to the valley floor. A gated driveway to the sportsground leads off the end of Kelso Grove down to the flat area. The ground surface is very uneven, wet after rain and in winter and rutted. The grassed open space is sheltered on its south east side by pine trees with native undergrowth and in the northern corner and to the west are bush clad escarpments (see Figure 4). Vegetation on these slopes includes native vegetation such as tree ferns and five finger and exotic vegetation, many of them weed species such as prunus and blackberry.

The vegetated hillside to the east of the site (which is not part of this assessment) forms part of a Significant Natural Resource Area identified in the District Plan, SNRA 23 Kelson Bush, a “regionally representative example of relatively unmodified lowland Mahoe forest.” The SNRA also supports a “large number of bird species including NZ pigeon.”⁴



Figure 4 - View of the site with a view of bush clad escarpments to the north and west (on the left side of the image), and showing uneven ground surface, (Fuji Finepix, 35mm 1 frame, 17.1.11)

⁴ Hutt City Council. City of Lower Hutt District Plan. Chapter 14E, p.10.



Figure 5 - Residential properties on Mossburn Grove with a view over the site (Fuji Finepix, 35mm 1 frame, 17.1.11)

The only houses that overlook the sportsground are one house at the very end of Kelso Grove and others some distance away on Mossburn Grove on the ridge above the sportsground (see Figure 5).

2.2. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF KELSON

Kelson is located in the western hills of Hutt City in the 'Western Hills Landscape Identity Area' as identified in the Hutt City Council's *Reserves Strategic Directions*. Key features of the Western Hills are steep bush clad gullies with streams, prominent hilltops and escarpments and Belmont and Boulder Hills⁵. State Highway 2, Belmont Domain and the Hutt River border Kelson on its Eastern side. A pedestrian underpass links Kelson to Belmont Domain and the Hutt River. Belmont Regional Park borders Kelson to the west.

Kelson has a population of 2616 people. It can generally be described as a family orientated area; couples with children make up 51.8% of all families living in Kelson, compared with 42.4% in the Wellington Region and 42% in the whole of New Zealand. Kelson also has a slightly higher percentage of young people, with 22.8% of the population aged under 15,

⁵ Hutt City Council, *Reserves Strategic Directions*, October 2003, p17

compared with 20.6% in the Wellington Region⁶. The figure for Kelson is also slightly higher than the national proportion of 21.5%.⁷

2.3. BACKGROUND TO ASSESSMENT

PAOS is familiar with the site and the wider landscape in which it is situated. From 2006 to 2008 we carried out a review of all lands held by the Council in Fee Simple and managed as reserve. As part of the review we assessed open space values of the site to identify the significance of its landscape and recreation values, and its contribution to the reserve network of Hutt City using criteria from the Council's open space policy document *Reserves Acquisition and Disposal Policy and Guidelines*. Significance findings were:

- Overall significance - low-medium
- Landscape visual - low-medium
- Natural site features - low-medium
- Ecological values - low-medium
- Open space - low
- Recreation - low.

Reasons for the assessment findings were:

- The site does not meet any Reserves Key Directions⁸
- The flat area of the site is undeveloped, has poor drainage and an uneven surface
- Views onto the site are limited
- Open space for informal recreation is provided at the neighbouring Recreation Reserve playground, at the school after school hours and at a number of other sites in Kelson
- The site is relatively isolated, is not viewed from neighbouring streets or immediate houses and perceived by some as unsafe⁹
- The site is not used extensively for informal recreation.

⁶ Statistics New Zealand.

<http://www.stats.govt.nz/Census/2006CensusHomePage/QuickStats/AboutAPlace/SnapShot.aspx?id=3569302&type=au&ParentID=1000009f&expand=20000046&scrollleft=0&scrolltop=456&ts=y> accessed 18 August 2010.

⁷ Statistics New Zealand. <http://www.stats.govt.nz/Census/2006CensusHomePage/QuickStats/quickstats-about-a-subject/nz-population-and-dwellings/sex-and-age.aspx>, accessed 19 August 2010.

⁸ As outlined in the Hutt City Council document - *Strategic Directions*, October 2003.

⁹ PAOS Ltd. Assessment of Reserve Values, Kelson, October 2007.

3. Proposed Plan Change

The Plan Change proposes to zone part of the site General Residential Activity Area (Area A in Figure 2) and to retain Area B as a General Recreation Activity Area and Recreation Reserve. An Indicative Development Plan proposes a 24 Lot subdivision in Area A, and to develop the Recreation Reserve as a 'village green' (see Figure 3). Proceeds from the sale of Area A are to be used to improve drainage and increase usability of the Recreation Reserve.

The Recreation Reserve also includes a small area of pines with native understorey that shelter the south east side of the village green, and a small area of bush covered slope to the north and north east.

General Residential Activity Area

A key objective of the General Residential Activity Area under the District Plan is to "maintain and enhance the amenity values and residential character of the General Residential Activity Area of the City". A General Residential zoning allows for "residential dwelling houses and activities, open space, existing subdivision patterns and a general absence of large scale commercial and industrial activities [which] all contribute to the residential character and amenity values associated with the General Residential Activity Area"¹⁰.

The District Plan goes on to state that:

non-residential, commercial or industrial activities and inappropriate subdivision have the potential to alter the character of the residential environment, and affect adversely amenity values associated with a particular area. The adverse effects of these activities will be managed through the use of lists of activities and rules¹¹.

Also relevant is that clearance of vegetation is controlled to protect visual amenity values and the intrinsic values of ecosystems.

The type of development proposed in the Indicative Development Plan is typical of neighbouring streets and residential area zoned General Residential Activity Area (Kelso Grove, Mossburn Grove etc).

The Indicative Development Plan's proposal for residential activities along with development of the 'village green' would not significantly alter the character of the

¹⁰ Hutt City Council. *District Plan - City of Lower Hutt* p 4A 1-2.

¹¹ Hutt City Council. *District Plan - City of Lower Hutt* p 4A 1-2.

surrounding residential environment or affect adversely amenity values, vegetation or ecosystems.

General Recreation Activity Area

Key objectives of land zoned General Recreation in the City of Lower Hutt District Plan are:

- To ensure that recreation activities have adverse effects which are no more than minor on adjoining residential activity areas
- To ensure that recreation activities carried out are compatible with the physical characteristics of the land.¹²

Informal recreation on the village green would be appropriate in this setting and compatible with the modified landform.

4. Relevant Planning Documents

4.1. NEIGHBOURHOOD RESERVES MANAGEMENT PLAN

Despite being called the Kelson Sportsground, the site has never been used as a sportsground and is not designated as a sportsground.

Instead it is designated as a neighbourhood reserve under the Council's Neighbourhood Reserves Management Plan. Neighbourhood reserves are an open space set apart for public recreation and enjoyment and managed by the Council to cater for local residents. Their intention is to allow for local residents to recreate locally without the need for transport, and to provide opportunities for children and young people to recreate in their local area.

Council is bound by the requirements and procedures sets out in the Reserves Act for dealings with the site and in relation to the management plan.

4.2. RESERVES STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

The site is part of the 'Western Hills Landscape Identity Area' as identified in the Council's *Reserves Strategic Directions*. The Strategic Directions identifies key features of the Western Hills as steep bush clad gullies, prominent hilltops and escarpments, Belmont and Boulder Hills and Korokoro and Speedy Streams.¹³

¹² *Ibid* p7A 2.

¹³ Hutt City Council. *Reserves Strategic Directions*, October 2003, p17.

The site does not meet any Reserves Key Directions and does not form part of any of the key features of the Western Hills.

Key Direction 2 seeks to:

- *Ensure effective delivery of parks and recreation services to the community by continuing to work with other agencies, other divisions of the Council and the private sector”¹⁴*
- *work with schools and other open space providers to improve environmental enhancement and avoid duplication of facilities”¹⁵.*

The site does not meet this Key Direction as far as we could ascertain. There are no current opportunities to develop the site in conjunction with other providers, agencies or community groups such as sports clubs or neighbouring Kelson School. Sports clubs are primarily based on the valley floor where they are more widely accessible¹⁶, and Kelson School has its own flat open sportsfield area.

Key Direction 3 provides for:

- *High quality parks facilities and services focussing on areas where there is greatest overall benefit for the city and its environment”¹⁷*
- *Consolidate the provision of sportsfields to intensify capacity where appropriate and consider resting those areas as open space where there is high maintenance cost with minimal use”¹⁸*
- *Improvement to environmental quality and variety of recreational opportunity on existing sportsgrounds, especially in the Hutt Valley floor.”¹⁹*

The site does not meet this key direction. It has poor drainage, is in poor condition, is not used by any organised sporting groups and could be considered a site that has “high maintenance cost with minimal use”. Even if it were suitable for organised formal sport, priority is for sportsfields on the valley floor “where there is greatest overall benefit for the city and its environment”.

¹⁴Hutt City Council. *Reserves Strategic Directions*, October 2003, p9.

¹⁵ *Ibid* p.10.

¹⁶ Discussion with HCC sportsgrounds officer, 13.01.11.

¹⁷ Hutt City Council. *Reserves Strategic Directions*, October 2003, p10.

¹⁸ *Ibid*.

¹⁹ *Ibid*.

5. Summary of Submissions

Council received 28 submissions in response to a public notice outlining the intention to revoke the recreation reserve status of part of Kelson Sportsground.²⁰ Most submissions opposed the disposal. Principle reasons were:

- The area should be retained for dog walking and should not be disposed of because it is the only area in Kelson where dogs can be walked off the leash (12 submissions)
- The land should be retained as recreation reserve, it is essential green space, and should be reserved for families and the residents of Kelson (9 submissions)
- Should be retained due to its informal use by local residents, such as walking, kite-flying and blackberry picking(9 submissions)
- Kelson has little flat recreational ground (4 submissions)
- Access to other sportsgrounds requires crossing SH2 (2 submissions)
- Sewerage and stormwater needs in Kelson need to be addressed before further subdivision is undertaken (2 submissions).

Other reasons for opposing the sale of the land were that development of the area would encroach on bird habitat, cats from new properties would invade the neighbouring bush reserve and that population growth means that park provision in the area should increase.

Suggestions from submitters for improving the site included:

- Improved ground surface (12 submitters)
- Improved signage (11 submissions)
- The addition of lighting (8 submissions)
- Other suggested facilities or improvements were the addition of BBQs or picnic tables.

In response to these submissions, the Strategy and Policy Committee modified the proposal so that a considerable area of flat usable land is retained (Area B in Figure 2) and that some of the proceeds of the sale be used for drainage works and other improvements.

²⁰ Strategy and Policy Committee. *Kelson Sports Ground Report on Submissions on the Proposal to Revoke Reserve Status*. 17th July 2008 p.3.

6. Assessment of Potential Effects of Proposed Plan Change

The following assessment considers the effects of the proposed zone change on informal and formal recreation, natural features and vegetation, existing urban form and visual amenity.

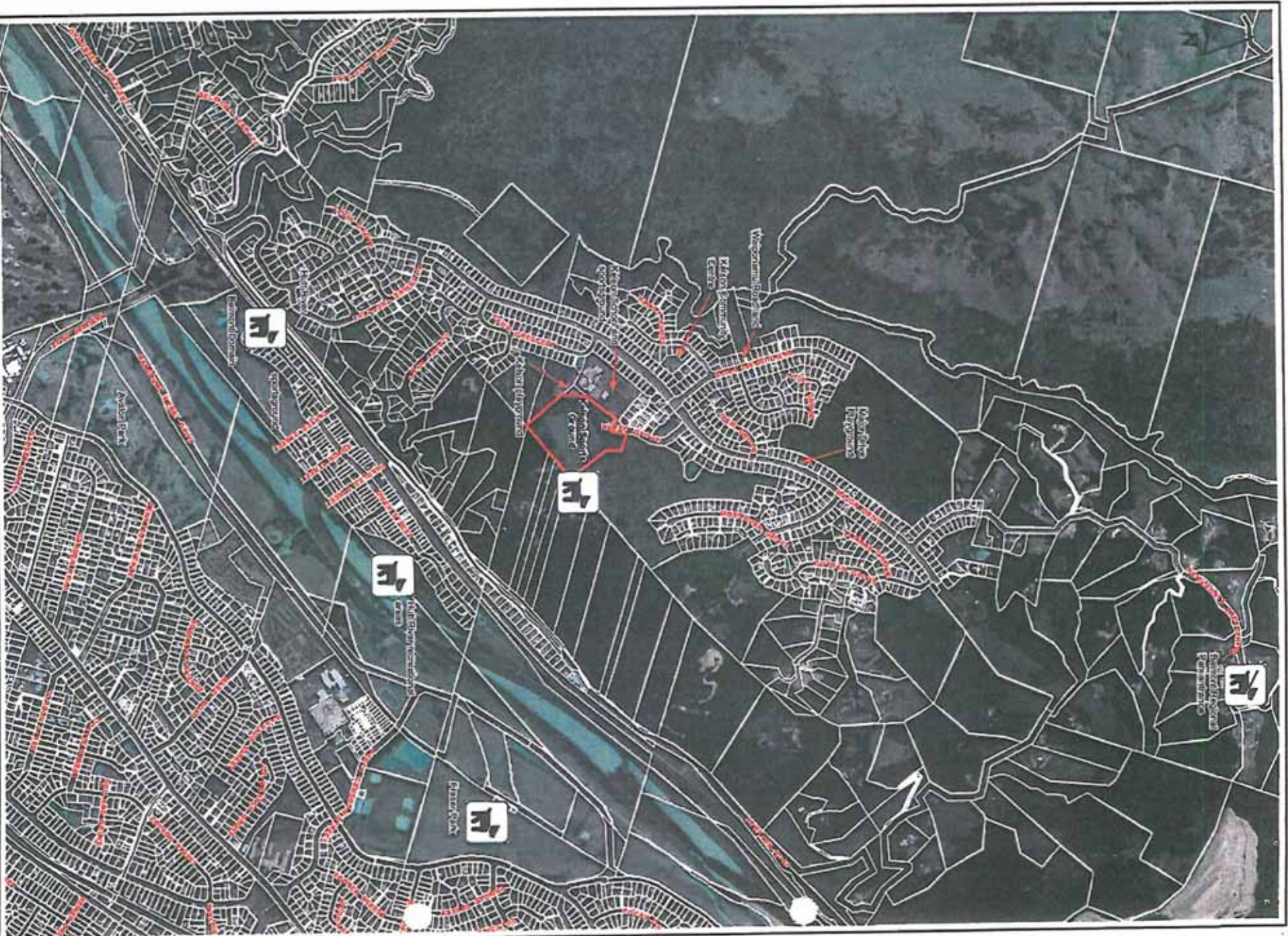
6.1. IMPORTANCE OF KELSON SPORTSGROUND

The flat area of the site is valued for informal recreation, in particular off leash dog walking. The site is a designated dog exercise area. Other activities are walking, kicking a ball around, blackberry picking, riding bikes, running around, kite flying and flying model planes.²¹

Although flat open spaces for informal recreation and dog walking are undersupplied in Kelson due to its topography, a number of areas provide a range of informal and formal recreation opportunities in and around Kelson (see Figure 6 for the location of these sites):

- Kelson School, to the west of the site, has an open grassed playing field area suitable for kick a ball space and accessible after school hours (see Figure 7) and a children's playground
- Kelson Playground behind Kelson School has a bmx track, swings, slides, roundabout, see saw and various climbing equipment
- A playground on Major Drive has swings, slides and a flying fox
- Land off Waiponamu Road is an open grassed area for neighbourhood informal recreation
- A small playground next to Kelson Community centre has a slide and climbing equipment including a climbing frame
- Belmont Recreation Reserve, on the Kelson side of the Hutt River is accessible from Kelson via a pedestrian tunnel and has sportsground areas
- Belmont Regional Park has open space for active recreation including walking, running, mountain biking and horse riding. The Kaitangata Crescent entrance to the park is 1km from Major Drive at the end of Kaitangata Crescent. Dogs are permitted on a leash

²¹ Summary of use of the site collated from submissions made during formal consultation, 2008.



HOVU CITY
Land Information Services

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**Lands managed as
reserve
Land Parcel Boundary**

**Figure 6 - Kelson Sports Ground
and view of other lands used for
recreation**

This map is intended to provide information only. It is not a legal document. The user should refer to the original documents for the legal description of the land. The user should also refer to the original documents for the legal description of the land. The user should also refer to the original documents for the legal description of the land.

Scale: 1:50,000
Sheet No.: 123

- The western side of the Hutt River from Benmore Crescent south to Belmont Domain provides off leash dog exercise areas and open space for informal recreation such as walking and jogging
- Fraser Park and Avalon Park, both a short distance away on the eastern side of the Hutt River, have off leash dog exercise areas. Fraser Park also has a sportsground area.

To summarise, the local community is able to use Kelson School sportsfield for informal recreation out of school hours and nearby Kelson Playground caters for the recreational needs of smaller children. In addition, Kelson School sportsfield and Kelson Playground are two neighbourhood open spaces that are arguably safer as, unlike Kelson Sportsground, they are overlooked by the school buildings and from neighbouring properties.²² The site is popular as a dog exercise area, although its isolation at the bottom of a driveway out of view of nearby roads and houses and its wet surface in winter may even limit this use.



Figure 7 - View of sportsground space at neighbouring Kelson School (Fuji Finepix, 35mm 1 frame, 17.1.11)

²² PAOS Ltd. *Assessment of Reserve Values, Kelson*. October 2007. p14.

6.2. EFFECTS ON FORMAL RECREATION

The Plan Change would have no impact on formal recreation in Kelson. The site has never been used as a sports ground and has not been developed for formal outdoor sports due to the poor ground surface and lack of demand for formal recreation in this area. There is currently no demand in Kelson or the Western Hills for sports grounds because clubs are based on the valley floor.²³ A formal sportsfield in the area is Belmont Domain, located immediately opposite the entrance to Major Drive and accessible via a pedestrian tunnel.

6.3. EFFECTS ON INFORMAL RECREATION

The site is valued as a designated dog exercise area and it is the only designated dog exercise area in central Kelson. The other is at the foot of Kelson on the valley floor in Belmont Domain, accessed by crossing SH2 or via a pedestrian underpass. The only other off street dog walking area in the suburb is Belmont Regional Park off Kaitanaga Crescent, 1km from Major Drive, where dogs must be on a leash.

Retaining the site as an off leash dog exercise area was mentioned by 12 submitters. There are 945 occupied dwellings in the Kelson area²⁴ and 308 registered dogs in Kelson²⁵, so approximately one in three households in Kelson are dog owners. The need for an off leash dog exercise area in central Kelson is highlighted by a comment made by the principal of Kelson Primary School, who is concerned that "the disposal of the Sports Ground could result in increased numbers of dogs being exercised on the school fields". This submitter also pointed out that the school is already dealing with dog litter and does not wish to see the problem exacerbated.²⁶

There is significant value in retaining part of the flat area as a 'village green' for informal recreation and dog exercise. Current recreation opportunities on the ground are limited due to the poor drainage, ground condition and poor natural surveillance of the area, which means the site is considered to be unsafe by some²⁷.

The development of housing on part of the area provides an opportunity to develop the 'village green' as a safe neighbourhood space by creating natural surveillance. This is achieved when houses overlook an open space. Houses above the flat area would overlook the 'village green'. Low or transparent fencing and planting would allow views out from housing onto the recreational space while providing some separation between public and

²³ Discussion with HCC Sportsgrounds officer, 13.01.11.

²⁴ Source Statistics New Zealand 2006 Census Data, Quick Stats about Kelson, www.stats.govt.nz.

²⁵ Information supplied by HCC animal control officer, 13th January 2011.

²⁶ Strategy and Policy Committee, *Kelson Sports Ground Report on Submissions on the Proposal to Revoke Reserve Status*, 17th July 2008 p.5-6.

²⁷ PAOS Ltd, *Assessment of Reserve Values*, Kelson, October 2007, p.7.

private areas. This type of development would fit within the requirements of General Residential Activity Areas.

Natural surveillance is generally a more effective alternative to the suggestion by submitters for lighting as a way to improve the safety and usage of the open space. Lighting is not always an effective tool to increase the safety and usage of outdoor spaces. In this case, the site is a recreation area at the end of a dead end street, visible from only a few houses at a distance and isolated with no safe alternative access routes. In this situation lighting is unlikely to increase the safety or usability of the space and may in fact contribute to a false sense of security. Lighting sends a strong message about safety and people may mistakenly assume that because the area is well lit it is well used or policed at night.²⁸

Resources could be better spent on drainage to improve the surface and encourage use of the space, rather than installing lighting in an area which has the potential to be unsafe, with a surface that is currently unusable for sporting activities and most informal recreation.

A recommendation is to complete a development plan for the flat reserve area to transform it into a usable public open space. Such a plan could include low planted mounds and possibly transparent fencing to separate houses from the recreation area and prevent dogs accessing residential properties. The plan should consider options for developing the reserve area further for dog exercise with, for example, a perimeter track, while retaining some open areas for informal kick-a-ball type activities (see Appendix 2 for an example of how the 'village green' could be developed). As long as the flat area is adequately drained, there is space on the village green for two junior sportsfields in the future, one 50x30 metres and a second larger field of 60x40 metres (see Appendix 2).

6.4. POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENT OF THE SITE FOR RECREATION

Retention of Area B as a General Recreation Activity Area would allow for the improvement of the current surface through the plan change and potential sale of Area A, the proceeds of which are to be used for the improvement of the site's drainage.²⁹ The Urban Development and Planning Assessments Report by Tonkin and Taylor outlined a 27 lot development and a 29 lot development, and two possible options for improving drainage on the site. These options have since been revised to the 24 lot option shown in the Indicative Development

²⁸ Auckland City Council. Introduction to crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) <http://www.aucklandcity.govt.nz/auckland/introduction/safer/cpted/7.asp>

²⁹ As per Council resolution, 12th August 2008.

Plan. The report estimates that drainage costs for the reserve area are likely to be in the range of \$60,000 to \$120,000.

- 1) The lower cost option involves recontouring the surfaces to form a central crown with surface swales around the edge. Subsoil drains beneath the swales would discharge into the existing stormwater system. The report states that “the resulting surface would be usable throughout most of the year but would remain wet underfoot for a few days after rain. It would not withstand heavy use from sporting activities during winter.”³⁰
- 2) The higher cost option involves more extensive earthworks to obtain better cross falls, the provision of turf drains and a higher (sportsfield) standard of topsoil grading, decomposition and fertilizing. The report states that “the surfaces would not be “all-weather” surfaces but usability would improve over time as the topsoil regained its structure and the reserves would become usable all year round under most weather conditions.”³¹

An alternative to the proposal is to retain the whole of the site as General Recreation Activity Area and develop for use as a sportsground. However, this is not recommended for the following reasons:

- Current sportsfield demand is centered on the valley floor, where sporting clubs are based. No sporting clubs have their home ground in Kelson.³² The current situation with all sportsgrounds on the valley floor meets the aim of the *Reserves Key Directions* to “Provide high quality parks facilities and services focusing on areas where there is greatest overall benefit for the city and its environment”³³
- The preliminary Geotechnical report by Tonkin and Taylor reveals that several areas of the site are covered with a 6+ metre depth of fill³⁴, which would require extensive drainage at some cost to bring it to sportsfield standard
- The site location in Kelson, an area without sporting clubs or current demand for sportsgrounds and located in the Western Hills which is isolated from existing sporting clubs on the valley floor

³⁰ Tonkin and Taylor Ltd. *Urban Development and Planning Assessments: Kelso Grove, Kelson*, March 2009. p.7.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² Discussion with HCC sportsgrounds officer, 13.01.11.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ Tonkin and Taylor. *Preliminary Geotechnical Stability Assessment, Oakleigh Street, Maungaraki*, February 2009, p3.

- **Sport and Recreation Trends** show that use of the site for informal recreation rather than organised sport fits with the findings of SPARC's 2007/08 Active New Zealand Survey for the Wellington Region.³⁵ which found that the two most popular recreation activities among adults aged 16 and over were the informal recreation activities walking and gardening. Organised team sports did not feature in the top ten popular activities for sport and recreation overall³⁶, but cricket was 8th place for men, while tennis 10th place for women.

Due to these factors the site is generally unsuitable for development in its entirety for formal recreation. However, residential development is occurring in Kelson, and a rise in population may mean the demand for a sportsfield in Kelson will increase. Should demand in the future be sufficient, the proposed 'village green' provides space to develop seasonal³⁷ junior sport, with one 50x30m sportsfield and one 60x40m sportsfield field (see Appendix 2).

As shown in the Indicative Development Plan, retaining Area B for informal recreation meets the needs of Kelson residents to have an area for informal recreation, including dog walking, particularly if the ground surface is improved. This would implement an action of the Key Directions "To encourage land of suitable topography to be developed and used for formal and active forms of recreation".³⁸ Retaining Area B as General Recreation Activity Area would also provide for future demand for usable flat recreational open spaces in an area with a high proportion of young people and families.

For these reasons, the effects of the plan change on the provision of open space are assessed to be low. After development of the area proposed to be retained as reserve (area B), the effects on informal recreation are likely to be positive.

6.5. EFFECTS ON NATURAL FEATURES AND VEGETATION

An ecological assessment of the site is being carried out at the time of writing this assessment and will provide detailed information on the effects of the Plan Change on the ecology of the site.

Assessment of ecological impacts using the Reserves Acquisition/Disposal Criteria concludes that the regenerating vegetation on area A reads as part of the surrounding forest area, but lacks physical continuity with the original gully area. This is because the gully side has been

³⁵ The Active Recreation Survey provides an overview of physical activity behaviours among adults (aged 16 years and over) living in the Wellington region, in particular, their level of involvement with sport and recreation as participants and volunteers and their overall level of physical activity.

³⁶ The remaining top ten activities overall, in order were, swimming, equipment based exercise, cycling, jogging/running, golf, dance, fishing and trampolining.

³⁷ Summer season, when the improved ground quality would be suitable.

³⁸ *Ibid* p7A.2.

filled to create the flat sportsfield. A small area of existing vegetation on the northern side of the reserve area would remain, as would sheltering pines and native undergrowth on the site's eastern and south-eastern sides.

The overall impact of the loss of vegetation is assessed to be low. As the natural form of the gully has already been disrupted, the overall impact on natural features is also assessed to be low.

6.6. EFFECTS ON EXISTING URBAN FORM

Zoning Area A General Residential Activity Area allows for "residential dwelling houses and activities, open space, existing subdivision patterns".³⁹ The type of development allowable under a General Residential zoning is appropriate in the context of the existing residential character and urban form of Kelson.

The Indicative Development Plan proposes lot sizes allowed under subdivision provisions in the District Plan in the General Residential Activity Area, with a minimum Controlled Activity lot size of 400m². Site coverage of a maximum of 35% is allowed. This zoning is consistent with the surrounding subdivision areas of Mossburn Grove and Kelso Grove. This, along with the fact that the site has a low level of visual prominence, means the development suggested by the Indicative Development Plan is not likely to detract from the existing urban form of the area.

6.7. EFFECTS ON VISUAL AMENITY

The proposed residential development in the Indicative Development Plan would most likely only be seen from a small number of properties on the ridge of Mossburn Grove and from the end of Kelso Grove. Some properties would be seen from Kelson School.

The existing bush clad slopes of the site provide moderate relief from the built environment. The area proposed to be zoned Residential is not prominent and does not contribute greatly to the character of the Western Hills Landscape Identity area, where steep bush clad gullies, prominent hilltops and escarpments, Belmont and Boulder Hills and Korokoro and Speedy Streams⁴⁰ make up the primary character of the area. The regenerating bush clad slopes on the northern and western sides of the site contain some elements as they form part of the side of a bush clad gully. They therefore make a partial contribution to the character of the area. However, loss of this area would not be significant due to the low level of visual prominence and lack of continuity with the original

³⁹ Hutt City Council, *District Plan - City of Lower Hutt* p4A 1-2.

⁴⁰ Hutt City Council, *Reserves Strategic Directions*, October 2003, p17.

gully, which has been interrupted by the filling in of the gully side to create the flat sportsground area.

Overall, the impact of the proposed plan change on visual amenity values of the area is assessed to be low to medium.

Appendix 1 - Proposed Plan Change and Indicative Development Plan

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LEGEND

 Area to be rezoned

 Area to remain as reserve

Area of land to be rezoned is 18363m²

A3 SCALE 1:1000

0 5 10 20 30 40 50 (m)

DESIGNED BY	DATE	REVISION
DRAWN BY	DATE	
CHECKED BY	DATE	
DATE	14/02/2008-10.dwg	
NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION		
This drawing is not to be used for construction		
without the written consent of the Designer		

1. All dimensions are in metres unless noted otherwise.

 **Toshio & Taylor**
Environmental & Engineering Consultants

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Drawn by DC

DRAWING STATUS: PRELIMINARY DRAFT

HUTT CITY COUNCIL
KELSO GROVE SUBDIVISION

INDICATIVE DEVELOPMENT PLAN - ALTERNATIVE
Site Plan

Scale: 1:1000

Proj. No: 84009.004-10

Rev: 0

