Hutt City Council

Assessment of Reserve Values

Wingate, Eastern Hutt Road

PREPARED FOR:

Hutt City Council

PREPARED BY:

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Management Consultancy

SEPTEMBER 2006

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Hutt City Council

Assessment of Reserve Values

Wingate, Eastern Hutt Road

Introduction

The Hutt City Council (the Council) has been approached regarding the possible purchase of land on the Eastern Hutt Road at Wingate, immediately south of the Motex site (refer Figure 1 aerial photograph).

The land is part of a 96.4ha. property with the legal description Lot 3 DP 83794 on Certificate of Title 50D/743. The land was previously pasture and is now reverting to gorse with some emerging native vegetation. Two streams run through it from two gullies above the site. The streams run into culverts at the road edge of the site and under the road.

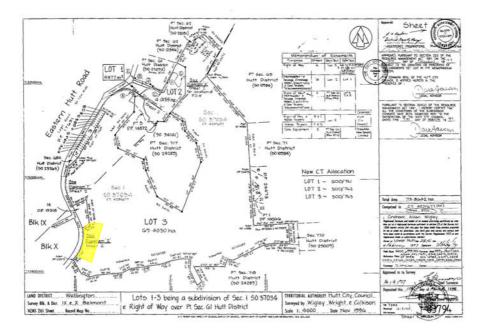


Figure 1 – Above: Extent of Lot 3 DP 83794 and location of site for possible disposal. Below: Aerial view showing location of portion of Lot 3 DP 83794 for possible disposal.



This report assesses the reserve values of the site to aid the Council in determining whether it would be appropriate to make the portion marked yellow in Figure 1 available for private development. The assessment follows Land/Acquisition and Disposal Policy as adopted by the Council 28 October 2003, according to process set out in the Reserves Act 1977 and Local Government Act 2002.

Property Information

The assessed land is sited within Lot 3 DP 83794 and is held as Recreation Reserve under the Reserves Act 1977 by the Council. The land is zoned as Passive Recreation in the District Plan.

The site is included in the Hutt Valley Landscape Identity Area under the Hutt City Council's Reserves Strategic Directions. Under the Hutt Valley Landscape Identity Area "regenerating bush in the Eastern Hills should be protected and revegetation work continued".

The land is also included in the Hutt City Bush Reserves Management Plan 2002 and is managed for reserve purposes.

Conclusions

- The site has low value as far as its contribution to the reserve network is concerned.
- Any commercial development of the site would mirror areas immediately to the north and south of the site on the same side of the Eastern Hutt Road, where bush-clad hills form a backdrop to commercial buildings (as seen in Figure 2).
- Development of this site in a manner similar to that immediately to the north and south would have minimal impact on native regenerating bush on the upper slopes of the hills. Provided buildings heights do not extend above the 35 metre contour, development of the site would not have a significant visual impact due to the low visibility of the site from other areas (refer Figure 2 Page 8).
- There is limited opportunity for the development of the land for recreation purposes due to the sloping and vegetated nature of the site, and its isolation from residential areas.
- If the land were retained, native lowland forest would eventually cover the site through natural regeneration processes, increasing the total area of native vegetation and habitat. As there is an abundance of similar open space in the Hutt Valley Landscape Identity Area and the site is relatively small, even after native forest regeneration, it would not contribute significantly to the total reserve network in this area.

Recommendations

- 1) Disposal of the area of land contained within the proposed subdivision of Part Lot 3
 DP 85794 as marked in Figure 1 of this document will not have a significant impact on the provision of parks and reserves in the Eastern Hills and the Hutt Valley Landscape Identity Area.
- 2) Rezoning the land under the District Plan from Passive Recreation to General Business in line with the surrounding industrial area.

¹ Hutt City Council Reserves Strategic Directions May 2001 p.16.

Methodology

A site assessment was carried out on foot. The site was assessed in the context of the immediate neighbourhood and the wider context of the Hutt Valley Landscape Identity area as identified in the Hutt City Council Reserves Strategic Directions. Two relevant Council documents aided assessment: Reserves Strategic Directions and the Bush Reserves Management Plan. The prime assessment tool was the criteria set out in the Hutt City Council Reserve Land Acquisition/Disposal Policy and Guidelines and is attached in the Appendices.

In using the criteria to assess the land, good judgment and common sense were applied. As reserve land has long term values that may improve in importance as an area develops, the impact of disposal was considered carefully.

Site Description

The site is situated at the base of two gullies and is framed on one edge by the Eastern Hutt Road. An industrial site forms the northern boundary. The southern boundary is edged by pines with regenerating native vegetation. The eastern and more northern sides are also edged with regenerating native lowland forest.

The land was previously used for pasture, but is now in the early stages of native forest regeneration. Gorse has emerged through the overgrown pasture along with native vegetation, principally along the margins of the two streams which run down from the ridgeline in two gullies. Species include manuka, mahoe, rangiora, tree ferns and ground ferns. These streams are channeled into culverts at their base, and pass under the road.

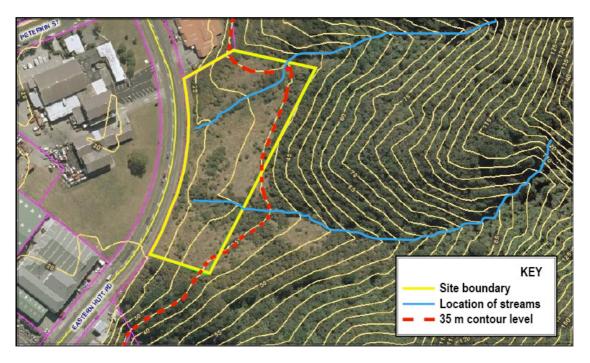


Figure 2 –Above: Plan showing the location of streams within the two gullies and the 35 metre contour. Below: View of the site showing boundary as seen from the Eastern Hutt Road.



Links with Council Plans and Policy

HUTT CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT PLAN

The Hutt City Council District Plan identifies the site as a Passive Recreation Activity Area. The objective of Passive Recreation areas is to "recognise and protect those parts of the city with high conservation and amenity values"².

The plan recommends that only low impact recreation and leisure activities such as informal recreation and scenic walks are permitted on such sites. One of the outcomes of this aspect of the plan is "to restrict the number of buildings and structures" on such land and to "control the size, scale, location and external appearance of such buildings and structures".³ Permitted structures for land zoned passive recreation are items such as landscape furniture or built structures forming tracks.

The surrounding area behind the site (to the east) is also zoned Passive Recreation Activity Area. The area to the north of the site is zoned General Business in line with the industrial buildings of this area.

Comment:

A Passive Recreation zoning is designed to protect areas with high amenity or conservation values. The bush around the site, though not the site itself, is listed as Significant Natural Resource 12, lowland forest on hill country. This area supports fire-induced regionally representative vegetation and includes areas of pre–European podocarps and hard beech. Nearly two- thirds of the forest in this area is 90-110 years old. There are also many bird species including New Zealand pigeon⁴. These features have significant conservation values and make the area above the site appropriate for its Passive Recreation zoning.

The slopes and ridges above the site contribute significantly to the reserves in the Eastern Hills and to the Hutt Valley Landscape Identity Area. They can be seen from the valley floor and from the Western Hills across the valley. Any buildings placed on the site should not visually intrude on the slopes.

The site in question does not share these significant site values. It has minimal amenity and conservation value as land newly retired from pasture and in the very early stages of native lowland forest regeneration (refer assessment findings on page 11 and Appendix 1 for details).

If the land were to be disposed of, a more suitable zoning would need to be put in place to reflect the nature of the site development. Suggested zoning would be General Business, in line with the surrounding industrial area.

RESERVES STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

This Council policy document identifies the land in this assessment as part of the Eastern Hills area within the Hutt Valley Landscape Identity Area. The Eastern Hills feature as a backdrop to the city providing an important interface between the city and bush. One of the Key Directions

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² City of Lower Hutt District Plan, Passive Recreation 7D 1.1.1

³ City of Lower Hutt District Plan, Passive Recreation 7D 1.2.1

⁴ City of Lower Hutt District Plan, Significant Natural, Cultural and Archaeological Resources p.14E/4

(Direction 4) of the Hutt Valley Landscape Identity Area is to "continue to protect and revegetate the Eastern Hills as an important backdrop to Hutt City".

Key Direction 1 of the Hutt City Council's Reserves Strategic Directions outlines the importance of the consolidation of the existing reserve network within Hutt City. The relevant recommended actions for this Key Direction include reviewing all of the Council's reserve lands to ensure that "Each area of land makes an appropriate contribution towards the reserve network in line with the purposes of the Reserves Act 1977".

Comment:

Key Direction 1 (as shown above), outlines the need to review lands to ensure they are contributing to the reserve network. Disposal of the land would fit in with the principles of Key Direction 1.

The site is an appropriate candidate for review as it has a low contribution to the reserves network. There is limited opportunity for development of the land for recreation purposes due to the sloping and vegetated nature of the site, and its isolation from residential areas. The site has a low level of visual significance, being viewed only from the Eastern Hutt Road near Peterkin Street, and from surrounding industrial properties on the Eastern Hutt Road. The site also does not contribute to the scenic backdrop formed by the Eastern Hills, due to its low visual prominence.

BUSH RESERVES MANAGEMENT PLAN

As a Bush Reserve the site is defined as open space set aside predominantly for passive purposes. It varies in botanical content and quality but provides habitat as well as recreational opportunities and visual appeal in terms of green space landscape values⁷.

Comment:

The site has some value visually as green space between the industrial developments to the north and south, but limited opportunity for recreation. Current botanical content, quality and habitat have low value. If left alone, the bush would eventually regenerate, extending the green space and habitat of the surrounding area but due to the small size of the site it would have a limited contribution to the larger contiguous area.

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⁵ Hutt City Council Reserves Strategic Direction p.11

⁶ Hutt City Council Reserves Strategic Direction p.9

⁷ Hutt City Council Bush Reserves Management Plan, April 2002 1.2

RESERVES ACT 1977

The land is currently classified as a Recreation Reserve under the Reserves Act 1977. Under s. 17 (1) recreation reserves are managed primarily for:

recreation and sporting activities and the physical welfare and enjoyment of the public, and for the protection of the natural environment and beauty of the countryside, with emphasis on the retention of open spaces and on outdoor recreational activities including recreational tracks in the countryside.

Comment:

The site is not currently used for recreation due to its moderately steep and vegetated nature. The cost of implementing recreational development on the site would not be justifiable given that the area in question is separated from residential areas by roads, the railway line and industrial development, and that such areas already exist within close proximity to residential areas in the immediate neighbourhood.

SUMMARY OF ASSESSMENT FINDINGS USING ACQUISITION/DISPOSAL CRITERIA

Introduction

The site has been assessed in line with the criteria set out in the Hutt City Council's Reserve Land Acquisition/Disposal Policy as adopted by the Council 28 October 2003. For further details of this assessment see Appendix 1.

Visual Assessment

When assessed against the criteria the site has a low to medium level of visual significance. The site is typical of the surrounding Eastern Hills area with pasture reverting to gorse which is sheltering the early stages of emerging native vegetation. The site has a low level of visual prominence, being viewed from the Eastern Hutt Road only. The partially regenerating vegetation on the site forms some visual continuity with the revegetated slopes above, but is separated from adjacent revegetated areas fronting onto the Eastern Hutt Road, by commercial and industrial development (see Figure 3, p.11). However, the area provides some relief from the industrial area present on both sides of the Eastern Hutt Road.







Figure 3: Photographs taken from the site showing adjacent commercial and industrial development on the Eastern Hutt Road with a backdrop of

Open Space Values

The site has a low-medium level of open space values meeting only one Key Direction of the Reserves Strategic Directions. Direction 4 aims to:

Recognise and preserve the essential elements of the city's landscape that give structure and contribute to its natural and cultural identity.8

Open space needs are catered for in nearby areas, such as Naenae Park, Fraser Park and Taita College for organised sports. Informal recreation is catered for by the nearby Hutt River Trail and walking tracks which run from Taita Cemetery along the ridgeline behind the site to Stokes Valley. The isolation of this section of the Eastern Hutt Road from residential areas by industrial development and the railway line means that there are few recreational users within immediate walking distance of the site.

The bush on the site is in the early stages of revegetation, with gorse providing the main ground cover and some emerging native species such a mahoe, manuka and some tree ferns. The two streams on the site are modified by culverts at their bases to take them under the road. These streams would need some weed control to rehabilitate them to their natural state. Ecological health of the site is generally low, with some weed infestation. If left alone, native bush would eventually cover the site, especially with animal and plant pest control. However, this process would take some time, and as there is an abundance of similar open space in this area, this site

⁸ Hutt City Council. Reserves Strategic Directions. p.11

does not contribute significantly to the reserve network in the Hutt Valley Landscape Identity Area.



Figure 4: View of southernmost boundary of site showing typical regenerating vegetation including mahoe, manuka and gorse.

Appendix 1

ASSESSMENT USING ACQUISITION/DISPOSAL CRITERIA

Appendix 1: Assessment using Acquisition/Disposal Criteria Lot 3 DP 83794 CT50D/743

CITABACTTORICTIO	NOTATIOSSIC			LEVEL OF	LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE
CHARACIERISTIC	DESCRIPTION	High	Medium	Low	COMMENTS
LANDSCAPE - Visual	/isual				
Landscape Identity Area	Reinforces the character of the area.	Integral part of the defined character.	Contains elements that make partial contribution.	Not related to the character.	Low-Medium: Contain some elements of the surrounding area, early regenerating bush.
Prominence	Degree to which the area is seen.	Viewed from main arterial routes.	Viewed from suburb.	Viewed within street only.	Low: Only viewed from surrounding industrial properties on the Eastern Hutt Road.
Continuity	Provides visual continuity with other similar features.	Part of scenic backdrop.	Similar character but separated from adjacent area.	Exists in isolation.	Low: Forms some continuity with revegetated slopes above, but is separated from adjacent revegetated areas next to the Eastern Hutt Road by commercial and residential development. It could be argued that the open space character of the site provides visual continuity with the open space character of the forested slopes above, but given the abundant area of open space behind, the significance is low.
Integration	Provides transition between hard and soft landscape.	Provides significant relief from the built environment in an area where amenity is low e.g. strong presence of low- quality building structures or heavily used high impact road.	Provides moderate relief from the built environment in an area where amenity is low.	Insignificant effect.	Medium: Provides some relief from the built environment along the Eastern Hutt Road.

Pleasantness	Contributes to harmony and balance between the built and natural	Has a special character that is unique within the reserve's network	Contributes variety to the reserves in the area.	Featureless site in an area with an abundance of open space	Low: A sloping area of former pasture with regenerating vegetation, provides a break from the industrial properties edging the Eastern Hutt Road.
	environment.				
Coherence	Is an integral part of an adjacent area.	Integral part of the adjacent area.	Contains elements of the adjacent	Not related to the adjacent	Medium: Contains some elements of the adjacent area (i.e. retired pasture with gorse and regenerating bush).
			area.	area.	
Uniqueness	Has an unique or	Elements are rare	No unique	Typical and	Low: Area has a supply of sportsgrounds and areas for passive recreation. The sloping nature of the site limits recreation
	landscape elements	to make special	character	riginiy representative	development.
		character.	contributes to	of other	
			strengthening	reserves in area	
			landscape	for which there	
			elements in the	is an over-	
			area.	supply.	

When assessed against the criteria the site has a low to medium level of visual significance in an area with an abundance of open space. Its visual significance in this context is limited development edging the Eastern Hutt Road, but the relief is minimal. Development on the site would form a similar pattern to the existing industrial premises on this side of the to the immediate area only, as it can only be seen from surrounding industrial properties on the Eastern Hutt Road. The space could be seen as a visual relief from the industrial Eastern Hutt Road where buildings are placed into a cut with a retaining wall behind, and the slope above is left intact, with the bush continuing to regenerate.

	recharacone			LEVEL OF	LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE
CHAKACIEKISIIC	DESCRIPTION	High	Medium	Low	COMMENTS
LANDSCAPE – Open Space	Open Space				
Role	The purpose for which the land is intended.	Meets more than one of the Key Directions of the Reserves Strategic Directions.	Meets one of the Key Directions of the Reserves Strategic Directions.	Does not meet any of the Key Directions of the Reserves Strategic Directions	Medium: KD4 – regenerating bush as part of the Eastern Hills.
Multi-functional	The range of uses for which it can be utilised.	Multi-purpose.	Mixed use but purpose has potential to change.	Single purpose.	Low: Single purpose
Threat to existing character	The way the land might address a threat to the character of the existing open space in the area e.g. subdivision, proposed roading development etc.	Infill housing occurring or other open space land uses changing.	Potential for loss of open space.	Open space provided by other land uses.	Low: Open space in this area is provided by other land.

The site has a low-medium level of open space values with open spaces needs in the area being provided by other land. The isolation of this area from residential areas by indistrial development means that there is low need for recreational open space in this particular area.

OTT OTHER PROPERTY.	MOTATIOSTIC			LEVEL OF	LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE
CHARACIERISTIC	DESCRIPTION	High	Medium	Low	COMMENTS
LANDSCAPE – Natural Site Features	Natural Site Fea	tures			
Bush	Present on the site (refer also ecological).	Covers whole area.	Covers part of area.	Small scrappy remnant.	Low: Early stages of revegetation occurring.
Stream	Tributary feeding larger body of water.	Protects natural character.	Enables natural character to be reinstated.	Heavily modified and limited	Low-Medium: The two streams on the site have been channelled into culverts at their base to travel under the road.
				opportunity to rehabilitate.	

The bush on the site is in the early stages of revegetation, with gorse providing the main ground cover and some emerging native species such a mahoe, manuka and some tree ferns, especially along the stream banks. In its context, the site has a low to medium value as a natural site feature.

	DECORIBITION			LEVEL OF	LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE
CHARACIENISTIC	DESCRIPTION	High	Medium	Low	COMMENTS
ECOLOGICAL					
Health	Relates to overall state of health of the native flora and fauna and ability of the Council to manage the area.	Health good and only requiring regular monitoring and maintenance.	Health generally deteriorated.	Health poor and requiring a major effort to rehabilitate.	Low: Health is currently poor but native forest would most likely regenerate over time, especially if plant and animal pests were controlled.
Sustainability	Of sufficient size to sustain ecological integrity.	Potential to improve ecological sustainability as part of larger contiguous area.	Over 2 hectares.	Under 2 hectares.	Low: under 2 hectares.
Infestation	Degree to which area is affected by invasive weed species.	No infestation of weeds threatening the ecological health of the bush.	Some infestation of weeds with minimal threat to ecological health but able to be controlled at moderate cost.	Heavy infestation of weed threatening health of the bush, unable to be controlled without considerable cost.	Medium to Low: Native forest would most likely overtop gorse in time. Other weeds such as Himalayan honeysuckle (<i>Leyestria formusa</i>) may compete with native species.
CITAGAGE					

Ecological health is currently poor. Eventually native forest would most likely dominate but this would take time as there are some competing weed species. To speed up the regeneration process, the site would require some attention.

OTTOTAL	NOTATION			LEVEL OF	LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE
CHARACIEMSIIC	DESCRIPTION	High	Medium	Low	COMMENTS
RECREATION – Informal	- Informal				
Neighbourhood Park	Provides space for kick-a-ball space, playground and trees.	Meets immediate needs of local community within context of other uses.	Area serves as a sector playground attracting wider use.	Immediate needs of small local community met elsewhere in the neighbourhood.	Low: Open Space for "kick a ball" and other recreation such as children's playgrounds are within a short distance of the site.
Access to natural areas	Provides access to rivers, harbour, bush and hilltops.	Gives access to recreational areas in high demand.	Complements existing recreational access and improves management access.	Caters for a minority and provided for elsewhere in the city.	Low: The open space contribution to the neighbourhood is minimal.
SUMMARY					

Informal recreation such a kick a ball is extremely limited on the site at present due to its slope and vegetation cover. The area could be levelled by fill but this would be costly and difficult to justify given that flat open spaces already exist within a short distance of the site (e.g. Taita College). The isolation of the site from residential areas would also make this non cost-effective.

Appendix 2

PROPERTY INFORMATION

Reference:

Prior CT:

42D/677

Document No.: B655040.5



CERTIFICATE OF TITLE UNDER LAND TRANSFER ACT 1952

This Certificate dated the 11th day of March One Thousand Nine Hundred and Ninety Eight under the seal of the District Land Registrar of the Land Registration District of WELLINGTON

WITNESSETH that THE INSTITUTE OF GEOLOGICAL AND NUCLEAR SCIENCES LIMITED

is seised of an estate in **fee simple** (subject to such reservations, restrictions, encumbrances and interests as are notified by memorial endorsed hereon) in the land hereinafter described, delineated on the plan hereon, be the several admeasurements a little more or less, that is to say: All that parcel of land containing 69.4030 hectares, more or less being **LOT 3 DEPOSITED**

PLAN 83794

Subject to;

- Part IVA Conservation Act 1987
- 2. Section 11 Crown Minerals Act 1991

B655040.6 Easement certificate affecting Lots on DP 83794

NATURE SERVIENT DOMINANT

LAND LAND

Right of way 3 - A 1 (CT 50D/741)

The above easement will be subject to Section 243(a) Resource Management Act 1991 when created

Subject to a right of way over part herein marked A on DP 83794 appurtenant to Part Lot 3 DP 14872 marked B on SO 34141 (Gazette Notice B352932.1) and Part Section 717 Hutt District marked A on SO 34141 (Gazette Notice B130158.2) created by Transfer B655040.8 (Subject to Section 243(a) Resource Management Act 1991)

Appurtenant hereto are right of way, right to convey water, right to drain water, right to drain sewage, right to convey electricity, right to convey gas and right to convey telecommunications easements over part Section 61 Hutt District marked D on DP 83794 (CT 52D/450) created by Transfer B655040.9 - All 11.3.1998 at 12.25



B663178.1 Transfer to The Hutt City

Council

29.4.1998 at 11.46.

for DLR

