

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of this Management Plan

The Draft Kensington Park Management Plan 2012 contains specific provisions for the future management and development of Kensington Park as a recreation reserve.

The management plan has been prepared in accordance with Section 41 of the Reserves Act 1977. Section 41(3) of the Act sets out the purpose of a reserve management plan, which is to:

“provide for and ensure the use, enjoyment, maintenance, protection, and preservation..., and the development, as appropriate, of the reserve for the purposes for which it is classified.”

Relevant statutory obligations, bylaws and approvals of the Government, Northland Regional Council (NRC) and Whangarei District Council (WDC) will be complied with in the implementation of this plan. In addition, relevant WDC documents will be given due regard to in the implementation of this plan. They include the following provisions.

- Reserves Act 1977
- Local Government Act 2002 – WDC Long Term Plan
- Resource Management Act 1991 – Regional Policy Statement for Northland, Northland Regional Plans, Whangarei District Plan
- Whangarei District Growth Strategy – Sustainable Futures 30/50 (and the Parks and Recreation 30/50 Implementation Plan – Reserves Strategy)
- Whangarei District Public Places Bylaw
- Whangarei District Dog Management Policy and associated Dog Control Bylaw.

1.2 Plan History

The former Whangarei City Council, in March 1988, prepared and publicly notified for comment a Discussion Document as part of its desire to prepare a management plan for Kensington Park. Twenty-nine submissions were received, the document amended and a Management Strategy for Kensington Park was approved by the Council.

A Kensington Park Development Concept “Vision Statement” was approved by WDC on 23 March 1994. It described the existing features of Kensington Park and showed where further development or expansion into residential areas could occur to enhance the facilities of the park.

In 1999, WDC approved its first completed Kensington Park Management Plan. A review of the 1999 Management Plan commenced late 2003, with approval for the final plan being given in August 2004. At this time, Kensington Park comprised 53 land parcels, most of which were in separate titles. A consolidation of these parcels into one land parcel of 24.2800 hectares and the classification of Kensington Park as a Recreation Reserve under the Reserves Act 1977 was subsequently carried out by WDC. As the amalgamation and reserve classification came after the approval of the Kensington Park Management Plan 2004, it was necessary, in accordance with the Reserves Act 1977, to have the management plan re-approved by WDC. This was completed on 21 September 2007 and a letter sent to all stakeholders who made a submission on the 2004 management plan to advise them of the consolidation and classification.

Although the Kensington Park Management Plan 2004 is the last management plan to go through a comprehensive public consultation process under Section 41 of the Reserves Act 1977, the Kensington Park Management Plan 2007 is the document referred to as the current management plan for the park.

The Draft Kensington Park Management Plan 2012 is the first stage of a review of the Kensington Park Management Plan 2007. A number of matters have warranted a comprehensive review of the 2007 Management Plan, principally proposals for an additional artificial hockey turf and four outdoor netball courts on the park, requests for more cricket pitches and soccer fields on the park, and proposed changes to the intersection of Western Hills Drive and Kensington Avenue (New Zealand Transport Agency). The current construction of an approved athletics and gymnastics stadium with associated car parking and re-alignment of Park Avenue on the eastern perimeter of Kensington Park requires mention. In addition, minor changes are required to the management plan to note the construction of a second hangar on the Order of St John’ leased land, the removal of the smaller of the two Parks and Recreation’ maintenance depot buildings, a minor extension to the Leisure Centre and the extensions to the Marist Sports Club building.

1.3 Plan Implementation and Review

The management plan, once approved, has a proposed 10-year life. At the end of that period the effectiveness of the plan will be reviewed by WDC.

The vision and its associated objectives for Kensington Park, as set out in this plan, are long term and are intended to go beyond the 10-year timeframe of this plan. Community support and commitment in achieving the vision and in implementing the policies and actions in the plan will be encouraged.

2. The Park

2.1 Location and General Description

Kensington Park is situated approximately two kilometres north of Whangarei city centre. It is bounded by Western Hills Drive (State Highway 1) to the west, Kensington Avenue to the south, Park Avenue to the east, and St Francis Xavier Catholic School and residential properties to the north.

Kensington Park is approximately 25 hectares in area contained in five Certificates of Title. Details of the land parcels are shown in Appendix 1. The Park is owned and managed by WDC, who has responsibility for its use, maintenance and general administration as a recreation reserve under the provisions of the Reserves Act 1977, the Whangarei District Plan and WDC bylaws.

Kensington Park is one of the largest multi-purpose open space recreational areas in the Whangarei District, if not in Northland. The park provides both outdoor and indoor recreation opportunities. The Park is regarded as a regional facility for hockey, cricket and athletics, and a District facility for basketball, netball, football (soccer), junior rugby and gymnastics.

2.2 History of the Park

In February 1903, the Whangarei Agricultural and Pastoral Society purchased Kensington Park from Mr. Robert Thompson for £1,018. The park was paid for in part by a government subsidy granted on the condition that it should be available at all times, free of charge, for the use of the Defence Forces of New Zealand (New Zealand Historic Places Trust website). In the same year, Pohe won the wrestling match at the Caledonian Sports Day held at Kensington Park (Marina Fletcher, pers. comm., 31 August 2012). The Whangarei Racing Club leased the park in 1911 for 14 years, with a right of renewal for a further seven years. Cattle pens and a cattle pavilion were erected on the park in 1922 and a sheep and pig pavilion erected four years later. In September 1925, the former Whangarei Borough Council paid the final settlement on the park land. Between 1926 and 1936, Kensington Park was used for various military camps and training activities. The race track was relocated to Ruakaka in 1976 with the Racing Club buildings being purchased by the former Whangarei Borough Council. The Whangarei Agricultural and Pastoral Society moved to Barge Showgrounds, Maunu, in 1991.

Many of the earlier buildings (e.g. cattle pens and pavilion) have been demolished or removed off site. However, there remains on the park a significant heritage building worthy of mention, the Kensington Park (Round Roof) Grandstand. Built in 1903 by the A & P Society with the assistance of a special bank loan, the grandstand was originally located in the park off Western Hills Drive. In 1951, it was used for temporary accommodation during a Ranfurly Shield match. Two years later it was used for the Royal visit, in 1954 for accommodation during a visit by Rawene District High School and in 1955 for accommodation for a Bible study group. In 1996, the grandstand was relocated to its present site at the northern end of the park, adjacent to the artificial hockey turf and part of the hockey complex. (See also Section 6.4 for information on the protection of the grandstand).

The first artificial hockey turf at Kensington Park was laid by Northland Hockey Association in 1986 and its clubrooms built six years later. It soon became evident that a second hockey turf would be required and this was laid in 1997 together with the construction of two new car parking areas. The re-development of the stadium, now part of the larger ASB Leisure Centre, took place during the late 1990's and early 2000's. Whangarei District Council and the Whangarei Netball Centre in 2004 redeveloped the netball courts along the park frontage with Kensington Avenue. The most significant recent addition to the park was the completion of a new 400 metre, artificial surface, athletics track in 2010.

2.3 Existing Uses and Activities

2.3.1 Vehicular Access and Car Parking

Existing public vehicular entry/exit points to Kensington Park are located off Western Hills Drive, Kensington Avenue and Park Avenue. WDC vehicles access the Parks and Recreation' maintenance depot from a separate entrance on Park Avenue. There is an additional entry/exit point off Western Hills Drive specifically for emergency services associated with The Order of St John' leased area. Pedestrian access is available at several points along Western Hills Drive, Kensington Avenue and Park Avenue. Formalised car parking facilities are provided off Western Hills Drive and Park Avenue. Street parking along Kensington Avenue is limited. Parking is not permitted along

Western Hills Drive from in front of The Order of St John' area extending to the corner of Kensington Avenue.

2.3.2 Sports Fields

The sports fields of Kensington Park comprise natural turf, or grassed, sports fields, and artificial surfaces. Winter sports on the natural turf include football (soccer) and rugby. In summer the natural turf is used for cricket; both daytime and twilight cricket games are played. The grassed sports fields are also used for school sporting events, outdoor expositions and carnivals.

A high level of informal use of the park is also evident with fitness station use, jogging, walking, kite flying, model aircraft flying and impromptu team sports games.

2.3.3 Athletics Track

A 400 metre all-weather athletics track, managed by Athletics Whangarei, is located on Kensington Park adjacent to Park Avenue. It is used for regional events. Associated athletics activities are throwing circles for hammer, discus and shot put, and a long jump pit.

2.3.4 Hockey and Netball Grounds

Hockey is played on the two artificial hockey fields located at the northern end of the park and one grass hockey field on the natural turf. Twelve netball courts are situated at the southern end of the park adjacent to Kensington Avenue. Both junior and senior levels of hockey and netball are played. Tennis is also played on the netball courts.

2.3.5 Existing Buildings and Structures

Leisure Centre

The ASB Leisure Centre consists of a stadium complex providing a range of sports and commercial activities (e.g. basketball, table tennis, physiotherapy clinic, and childcare) and the offices of several organisations including Sport Northland, Table Tennis Northland, Whangarei Cricket Association and Hatea Harriers. It is owned and administered by Sport Northland. It is funded by the ASB Trust, and by WDC for long term maintenance. A lease exists between WDC and Sport Northland for a term of 21 years commencing on 21 July 2000 with a right of renewal.

Clubroom Facilities

Clubroom facilities on the park comprise the Cricket Pavilion, Netball Centre, Marist Sports Club' clubrooms, Northland Hockey Centre and associated Kensington Park Grandstand. These facilities are also used for private functions, seminars and other community group activities.

The Cricket Pavilion provides an administration office and clubrooms for junior cricket and is the club rooms for the Onerahi Central Cricket Club, Hatea Harriers and Old Boys Junior Rugby. Whangarei Junior Rugby and Whangarei Car Club have expressed an interest in utilising space within this building. The Cricket Pavilion is owned by WDC. A lease is currently being drawn up between WDC and the Onerahi Central Cricket Club for the building. The Cricket Pavilion plays an important role in not only the success of the Onerahi Central Cricket Club but also cricket in general at Kensington Park and in Whangarei. It is a necessary facility on the park.

The Marist Sports Club Inc. (Whangarei) has a lease with WDC for a term of 30 years commencing on 1 March 1995 for its premises off Park Avenue. In April 2012, WDC gave its approval for the extension of the Marist Sports Club building. Athletics Whangarei are currently using the Marist Club until the new athletics and gymnastics stadium has been completed late 2012.

Leases exist between WDC and Whangarei Netball Centre and Hockey Northland for their respective clubrooms.

The other buildings are owned and maintained by various sports clubs and associations.

WDC Parks and Recreation Depot

WDC Parks and Recreation' depot is situated on land adjacent to the park at the corner of Kensington Avenue and Park Avenue. In the 2007 Management Plan, the depot consisted of two buildings. Since then, the smaller of the two buildings has been removed as it was no longer required by Parks and Recreation. The depot is used for the necessary storage of park maintenance equipment (e.g. cricket mats, goal posts, soil) and machinery. It is essential for the existing building to remain on Kensington Park.

The Order of St John Area

The Order of St John leases land from WDC in the north-western corner of Kensington Park from which it operates land and air ambulance services and other associated activities. The lease was renewed 1 October 1998 for a period of 21 years and contains a right of renewal for a further period of 21 years. Two hangars have been constructed on the park for their operations. A helipad is located just outside the building envelope of the park. Two helicopters are permanently stationed on the site.

3. Vision and Objectives

3.1 Vision

Kensington Park supports multi-functional recreation and sporting activities and programmes that provide for the well-being and enjoyment of the community, while retaining its open space character.

3.2 Objectives

Recreation Access and Use (See Section 4 page 19 below)

To provide a range of compatible active sport and recreation activities, primarily of an outdoor nature, for the use and enjoyment of the public.

Landscape Enhancement (See Section 5 page 26 below)

To ensure that the open space character and amenity of the park is safeguarded and enhanced.

Cultural Heritage (See Section 6 page 31 below)

To ensure that areas and features of Maori and European cultural heritage value are identified and accorded an appropriate level of protection.

To provide a means of protecting both recorded and unrecorded sites having cultural heritage value.

Protection of Kensington Park's Future Interests (See Section 7 page 34 below)

To ensure all relevant statutory and bylaw requirements pertaining to Kensington Park are met.

To integrate the management and development of Kensington Park with existing and planned reserves within Whangarei City and the wider Whangarei District.

State Highway 1 Safety Improvements (See Section 8 page 36 below)

To ensure that the proposed State Highway 1 safety improvements meet the needs of Kensington Park users as well as safe and efficient traffic management.

The management of Kensington Park as an integral part of Whangarei District Council's parks and reserves network will help to achieve the above Vision and Objectives.

4. Recreation Access and Use

4.1 General

The New Zealand Recreation Association (NZRA) has developed a national set of parks categories and associated levels of service to be used by territorial local authorities for the planning and management of parks. One of their park categories is “Sports and Recreation” (Appendix 2). Sports and Recreation parks are designed and used for sport and recreation. They are often multi-use and provide for a range of community activities and facilities. They are likely to have formally maintained sports turf for a mixture of winter and/or summer sports. They may include artificial turf, hard court and built recreation facilities. Toilets, changing facilities and car parking are likely to be available and some parks may have resident sports club facilities. Some Sports and Recreation parks may have recreation facilities such as playgrounds. Others may be leased for sports or recreation activity (NZRA, 2011, p. 6).

Kensington Park fits the description for “Sports and Recreation” parks. It is a prominent local and regional recreation hub and has the most intense use and development of sports parks in the Whangarei area. More to the point, Kensington Park is full, i.e. it is at maximum use capacity. The sports fields are under huge pressure, particularly during wet winter months when school teams are active, day length is shorter, and the wet conditions affect playing surface quality. Existing sports codes desire to expand their use area on the park and new regular or organised sports users can not be accommodated on the park during winter. Parking is at a premium during Saturdays in winter and for large public events. Physically, Kensington Park can not easily expand, with busy roads and built up residential areas around much of its perimeter. Property purchase of adjacent land is expensive and poses social impacts on the neighbourhood community. What is proposed (WDC 2012-2022 Long Term Plan) is an alternative sports park in the city, of at least a similar size as Kensington Park (see Section 7.4). This need has been recognised in WDC’s Long Term Plan 2012-2022. Until an urban sports park is developed, tough management decisions will be necessary to ensure a continuing high satisfaction (at least 85%) of Kensington Park amongst the various sports codes and casual users.

The continued and future use of Kensington Park as a recreational resource will require both careful planning and tight control over potential conflicting uses. It is recognised that there is increasingly no longer clearly separated seasons between the winter and summer sports codes using the sports fields, with the potential for conflicting demands on the same park area by different codes and possible damage to the turf surface in wet weather conditions. To help minimise user conflict, it is the intention of WDC to enter into Sports Codes and Clubs Agreements with all sporting bodies using the park. These agreements would spell out, amongst other matters, the duration of the playing season for each sports code. All sports codes will also be asked to provide detailed information on sports fields’ usage to WDC at the end of their agreed playing season.

Security and safety is becoming more important as use of the park expands, sports codes use the park for twilight or night games, and as buildings and structures are developed or upgraded. WDC is finding that incidents of vandalism of vehicles in the car parks are increasing. Protection of assets and facilities (e.g. athletics track, clubrooms, sports fields and associated equipment, artificial turfs, car parks, public toilets and park furniture) is required. Clear security and safety measures for the park, such as security cameras (CCTV), lighting, and perhaps locked barrier arms at the main vehicle entry/exit points, should be put in place to help deter crime and inappropriate behaviour and improve public safety.

Consideration is being given by WDC to the construction of traffic calming devices in the car park near the Leisure Centre. Additional bollards to separate vehicle access and parking areas from high use recreational areas, and/or fencing in areas around the park, may also be required.

Multiple recreational use of the park will continue to be encouraged by WDC.

4.2 Access and Parking

Public vehicle entry/exit points to the park are provided along Western Hills Drive, Kensington Avenue and Park Avenue. A separate entrance is used only for Council vehicles accessing the Parks and Recreation’ maintenance depot; this is not a public entrance to the park.

Pedestrian access is available at several points along Western Hills Drive, along Kensington Avenue and from the two car parks along Park Avenue. Planning for public access around the margins of Kensington Park would provide additional links for local walking and cycling. Further, it would be consistent with Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles by increasing natural surveillance of the park through more hours of the day.

In March 2012 WDC adopted its "Walking and Cycling Strategy for Whangarei District". As part of a proposed urban Whangarei network, a Kamo/Tikipunga Walkway – Cyclepath Network will be constructed. Options for linking the city centre with Kamo/Tikipunga through the Kensington area include using the rail corridor or Kamo Road. A key outcome of the urban Whangarei network is to connect lower socio-economic communities, schools (e.g. St. Francis Xavier Catholic School) and important community facilities such as Kensington Park. Whilst discussions with Kiwi Rail and other interested parties has yet to commence, it is highly desirable to provide a link from this walkway/cyclepath to Kensington Park, possibly to the rear of the athletics and gymnastics stadium on Park Avenue. It is anticipated consultations for the Kensington area portion of the walkway/cyclepath will commence in 2013/14 following the completion of much of the Onerahi/Hatea River crossing and Raumanga/Tarewa Road walkway/cyclepath sections currently under construction (WDC, 2012).

Vehicle access onto the natural turf sports fields is restricted. Emergency services and WDC's maintenance staff (including their contractors) access the sports fields via entry points adjacent to the Leisure Centre, beside the Parks and Recreation' maintenance depot, through a gated-off access north of the Marist Sports Club' clubrooms and beside the Kensington Park Grandstand. There is an additional entry point specifically for emergency ambulance services directly from The Order of St John' area.

There are an existing four public car parking areas within Kensington Park, accessed off Western Hills Drive, Kensington Avenue and Park Avenue. Additional parking exists along nearby Lupton Avenue, recently upgraded to provide an increase in car parking available for Kensington Park users.

A car park comprising three parking areas for a total of 247 cars is currently being constructed on Park Avenue in association with the new athletics and gymnastics stadium. A traffic impact assessment report carried out in 2010 as part of the land use application for the stadium concluded that the peak use of the new facility required a maximum of 198 car parking spaces. The additional 49 spaces provided in excess of those required should help address parking demand for other users of Kensington Park. However, some of these 49 spaces replace what was lost by the development of the athletics track.

On-site car parking for users of Kensington Park is extensive. However, comments from park users and neighbours of the park show that parking is a huge problem, particularly on Saturday mornings during the winter season and during large tournaments or events when the park is at capacity use. It appears people may often be forced at these times to utilise neighbouring streets for car parking. Outside of these times large tracts of the car parks may remain under utilised.

Pressure on the existing on-site car parks has been exacerbated with the prohibition of parking along Western Hills Drive from in front of The Order of St John extending to the corner of Kensington Avenue. Further pressure is envisaged with an expected increase in the future use of the new athletics track and athletics and gymnastics stadium. Add to this, the construction of a grassed petanque court and the possibility of a third artificial hockey turf and four additional netball courts on the park, and the car parking problems may further increase.

There are a number of options available to help resolve issues of car parking. Noting that Kensington Park is at capacity, users of the park, including large sports codes, will need to manage their activities to minimise issues of car parking related to their park use (e.g. timing of and between games), or to use alternative venues when parking may be at capacity. The temporary car park on the corner of Kensington Avenue and Park Avenue could become a permanent car park. The provision of drop-off areas and bus bays in the vicinity of the park for park users is being considered by WDC. The purchase of properties for car parking along the western side of Park Avenue between the corner of Kensington Avenue and the athletics track is a longer term possibility dependent on market conditions.

Traffic volume data for roads surrounding Kensington Park was gathered in 2010 as part of the Land Use Application for the athletics and gymnastics stadium and as part of the proposed State Highway 1 safety improvements. On Park Avenue, 20 metres from the Kensington Avenue corner, traffic counts were 2,249 vehicles per day and 407 vehicles in the peak hour (2006), and, measured 670 metres from Kensington Avenue, were 1,822 vehicles per day and 306 vehicles in the peak hour (2009) (McAlley Consulting Group, 2010, p. 11). Average measured peak hour traffic volumes for Kensington Avenue were 3,800 vehicles per day with a projection of 6,080 vehicles per day for 2030. Comparative figures for State highway 1 were 21,180 and 33,800 vehicles per day (Clint Hanger, Northern Civil Consulting Engineers, pers. comm., 23 July 2012). It is unclear how many of these vehicles are associated with the use of Kensington Park.

With this in mind, WDC has contracted Opus International Consultants to undertake a comprehensive parking survey of Kensington Park and the surrounding streets (August/September 2012). Results of the survey will not be known till after the public release of this Draft Management Plan, but will be given full consideration by WDC prior to the approval of the final version of this Plan.

The development of another urban sports park in Whangarei would alleviate the demands for car parking at Kensington Park for sports codes who wish to use or relocate to this planned facility (see Section 7.4).

4.3 Sports Fields

The Kensington Park Management Plan 1999 gave priority to junior sports codes when the capacity of the sports fields was limited. This policy is still valid.

The sports fields comprise 15.4 hectares of the 25 hectare Kensington Park; 12.53 hectares natural turf area and 2.87 hectares artificial surfaces. There are 11 existing rugby fields, six existing soccer fields (one full-size and five junior fields) plus 23 mini fields marked out for the winter season. Junior rugby has traditionally used the park for as many of its junior grades as possible. The Marist Sports Club, a sports clubs covering the interests of several sports codes, has a licence to occupy the field in the centre of the athletics track for rugby. Both senior and junior soccer (football) are played at the park.

Football has had and is expected to maintain very strong growth in Whangarei. It is enjoyed by an increasing number of women players and young players. Junior football is booming with Kensington Park and other parks in the District having an impressive number of players on weekends and weekday evenings. WDC and the Northern Football Federation (NFF), a regional federation of Football New Zealand, have recognised that seven or eight full-sized football fields are urgently needed across the District as 'catch-up' before addressing future needs. The NFF have requested over the past three years the provision of additional junior/youth pitches at Kensington Park to help meet growing player numbers and run its "Midget" (under 8 years) programme. This will be very difficult to provide with the proposed additions to hockey and netball facilities.

During the summer season the sports fields are used for cricket. Kensington Park is the central venue for senior and junior club cricket in Northland. All Northland Cricket Association (NCA) tournaments are played at Kensington Park as it is the only venue currently to have three artificial pitches, three grass blocks and a three-lane practice area, all are permanent facilities. It is the desire of the NCA to maintain the park's central cricket status in Northland. Further, in order to plan and cater for the increase in playing numbers and provide an eight team tournament venue, the NCA, through both WDC's 2012-2022 Long Term Plan and this management plan process, request an additional artificial pitch and an additional grass block at Kensington Park.

While the use of the park during summer by cricket may seem exclusive, it is in WDC's interests (and therefore the ratepayers' interests) to locate most of the wickets and ovals in one venue for keeping maintenance costs down. Cricket is a sport which requires a high standard of level surface and grass cover, and is therefore a more suitable use of the sports fields during summer.

The summer period is also a time when the park heals and repairs itself with the help of some intervention by the maintenance contractors. The soil dries and cracks providing important drainage channels through which water during the winter moves down through the soil profile. The grass plants also rejuvenate and strengthen, preparing themselves for another hard winter season. For these reasons, Council will restrict uses over the summer period, particularly when there are other parks within the city which do not have summer sports played on them.

The sports fields are also used for school sporting events, and outdoor expositions and carnivals. There is a high level of informal use of the sports fields including: walking, jogging, fitness station use, model aircraft flying, kite flying, land yacht training, picnicking and family activities. WDC is generally happy with the current level of informal use, though will continue to monitor the nature and extent of this use.

4.4 Athletics Track and Field

The majority of public focus during the preparation and approval of the Kensington Park Management Plan 2004 was on an all-weather athletics track on Kensington Park. The management plan gave approval for the construction of an all-weather athletics track outside the sports fields area and suggested athletics interests explore the possibility of a multi-purpose sports building in the vicinity of Kensington Park.

A fenced all-weather 400 metre athletics track, located between the sports fields and Park Avenue (Figure 4), was completed and operational in early 2010. Associated athletics facilities include horizontal jumps (long jump and triple jump), high jump, javelin run-ups, four throwing circles (shot-put and discus) and two pads for pole vault and steeplechase hurdles. A cage is to be erected for the throwing circles. The entire athletics facility meets IAAF standards and is managed by Athletics Whangarei.

The athletics track and field facilities are used by both junior and senior athletics/harriers sports codes. During the 2011/12 season, 4,000 individuals used these facilities. This included primary and intermediate-aged children from local and Northland schools. The Police use the facility for training purposes. Regional events are held, notably the annual Northland Athletics Championships and Northland Athletics Masters. Access to the 400 metre track is via a swipe card obtained from Athletics Whangarei.

A large fenced hammer throw cage and circle is currently situated on the sports fields near the netball courts. Athletes use this during winter as the area in the centre of the athletics track is used as a rugby field. The hammer throw cage and circle is in need of repair and could be a hazard to other park users. Its current location may also be incompatible with netball if the four proposed outdoor netball courts go ahead. An alternative site for the hammer throw cage and circle could be at the southern end of the athletics track, near 17 Park Avenue. However, this could pose a problem for users of an adjacent rugby/soccer field. Another suggestion is for the hammer throw cage and circle to be located on another park or reserve in Whangarei city. Discussions are continuing between Athletics Whangarei and WDC on the upgrade and final location of the hammer throw cage and circle.

4.5 Athletics and Gymnastics Stadium

The construction of a new building to house facilities for gymnastics and athletics is evidence of the principle of shared recreational use for the benefit of the local and Northland region community. These facilities are particularly complementary to the establishment of the all-weather athletics track and may be viewed as a logical extension to the recreational activities on Kensington Park.

The two-storey stadium will include a large gymnasium, offices, cafe and changing rooms on the ground floor, with a mezzanine viewing area, lounge and associated kitchen, and announcer's box on the first floor. A grandstand seating area on the first floor (exterior) will provide for approximately 470 people. Toilets and storage areas will be provided on both floors. A total of 247 car parking spaces will be provided, including parking for people with disabilities, ambulance parking and bicycle parking (Figure 4).

The re-alignment of Park Avenue has enabled the stadium to be located adjacent to the athletics track (Figure 4). To provide sufficient land for the stadium and associated car parking eleven properties along Park Avenue and Killen Street have been purchased and the residential dwellings removed by WDC. Corns Street reserve will be reduced in size - see Section 7.3.

The entire project, covering approximately 1.7 hectares, is due for completion in late 2012.

Northland Athletics and Gymnastics Stadium Trust (NAGST), a charitable trust, was formed in 2000 specifically to develop and operate an all-weather athletics track and supporting facilities in Whangarei. A proposed boundary adjustment to Kensington Park to include the stadium (and associated car park) and a new property lease for both the existing athletics track and stadium will help to enhance the park and its future management.

4.6 Hockey Grounds

There are currently two artificial hockey turfs and one grass hockey field marked out on Kensington Park. The former are located outside the natural sports fields of the park (Figure 4). Senior hockey and some junior hockey games are played on the artificial turfs, with the remainder of junior games on the grass field.

Hockey is increasingly becoming a summer sport. Hockey player demand is increasing in line with population growth, and the demand for artificial turf is very high. Current artificial turf capacity for hockey on Kensington Park is 95% and hockey use of the natural turf area is at capacity. It is envisaged that Kensington Park could remain as a key location for hockey in Northland.

Hockey Northland has requested the construction of a third artificial hockey turf by the end of summer 2012/13 to provide for the continued growth in hockey and in demand for turf time. Associated requested structures include an extension of the existing hockey building on its southern side to cater for larger changing rooms and administration area (sometime in the future), eight 20 metre high lighting poles, advertising signs around the safety barrier facing inwards to the turfs and the construction of two underground water storage tanks.

Provision for a fourth artificial turf is anticipated for the 2022 season but is not provided for in this plan. Both the third and fourth artificial turfs would need to be located adjacent to the existing facilities according to Hockey Northland. Similar to the existing artificial hockey turfs, any new artificial turf is proposed to be fenced and available for hockey only.

Opinions from submitters to the review of the Kensington Park Management Plan 2007 differ on the impacts of additional artificial hockey turfs on other sports codes using the sports fields. Hockey Northland suggests it has been proven that by re-organising the current layout of the sports fields no sports code will be disadvantaged. The Northern Football Federation, whilst it does not oppose the construction of new hockey turfs in principle, it does have major concerns regarding the impact on football's use and other users of Kensington Park due to the proposed location of the additional artificial hockey turfs on the natural turf sports fields. WDC considers that the construction of a third artificial hockey turf can be accommodated with respect to the use of the park by other sports codes if the current number of fields allocated to these other codes is retained (excluding cricket for whom it may be possible to fit in one more cricket wicket). This implies it is not possible for Kensington Park to cater for the expected future growth in sports such as rugby and football.

An additional artificial hockey turf on the park will also reduce the extent of open space character of the existing natural sports fields, notably the high fencing around the artificial turfs. A fenced facility may also increase the public perception of exclusive use by clubs and other organisations whilst diminishing open space use by the general public (including casual or passive users) of a key public recreational park.

Hockey Northland suggest that the construction of a third artificial hockey turf on the park will not increase the traffic and parking issue in the first year of operation as hockey numbers will remain about the same. Any possible congestion would be mitigated by staggering the start times of the games. Details on the use of the third artificial turf beyond its first year of operation and the associated demand for car parking on or near Kensington Park are not clear and require further discussion between WDC and Hockey Northland.

The artificial hockey turfs that are used are water turfs and require a considerable amount of water to be available to be used safely. At present hockey stores around 100,000 litres which is captured from the turfs and recycled. Hockey Northland believes they may require an additional 50,000 litre storage. This would be done by the installation of two underground tanks adjacent to the proposed third artificial turf. The impacts of this increase in water usage on the local water supply network and nearby outlets such as residential users, St Francis Xavier Catholic School, the athletics and gymnastics stadium and Marist Sports Club' clubrooms will need to be taken into account by WDC.

Two key policy statements in this management plan (Section 4.13 – Sports Fields) are critical to the consideration of the artificial hockey turf proposal. These statements recognise the importance of protecting the sports fields for a range of sport and recreation activities across a number of sporting codes. They are:

- *The area of natural turf sports fields in the park will be maintained and where possible enhanced.*
- *Buildings, artificial or hard surfaces, and structures will be restricted to areas outside of the natural turf sports fields...Any proposed encroachment onto the natural turf sports fields must first satisfy the council that an equivalent area of natural turf in proximity will be provided. (Having regard to the limitations placed on the expansion of Kensington Park, "proximity" is taken to mean, ideally, within the suburb of Kensington, but if this is not possible, within the urban area of Whangarei.)*

"Equivalent area" is considered to be approximately 7,200 m² being the area of one hockey turf with suitable off-pitch surrounds. This land area is currently unavailable within Kensington Park or in the adjacent Park Avenue area.

Whilst Kensington Park will play an important role for hockey in the Whangarei District (and wider Northland region), it may be prudent to develop artificial and grassed turf areas at schools around the District so that students can gain easy access to hockey surfaces without having to travel to the Kensington Park facility. These types of developments are becoming increasingly popular in schools as they provide an outdoor classroom area for physical education as well as for hockey, tennis and netball. The turfs could be used for games and practising, collegiate competitions and inter-school tournaments.

After consideration of the effects of the proposed artificial hockey turfs on the park and its users, WDC suggests that a third artificial hockey turf could be constructed on the natural sports fields near the existing artificial hockey turfs. Three options are indicated on Figure 4 of this plan for public consideration; Option 1 to the south of the area leased to the Order of St. John, Option 2 adjacent and to the south of the existing #2 artificial hockey turf and Option 3 overlapping and extending eastwards of Option 2. Accordingly, the building envelope line will be amended following the decision by WDC as to which option is the most suitable for the park and prior to the approval and public release of the final version of this plan. To comply with Policy statements on the provision of an equivalent area of natural turf where proposed artificial surfaces will encroach onto the existing sports fields, a new urban sports park, as committed to in the Long Term Plan 2012-2022, will be developed as a matter of urgency (see Section 7.4).

Whilst this management plan notes that a fourth artificial hockey turf has been suggested, it has not been provided for on the park at this stage as its location and timing will need to be reviewed in the future (i.e. after the completion of the 10-year timeframe of an approved final Kensington Park Management Plan 2012).

4.7 Netball Courts

Kensington Park currently provides for eight fenced courts for exclusive use by netball and four public netball courts used also for tennis. All netball grades and ages play on the park.

The Whangarei Netball Centre (WNC), as part of the process in preparing Council's 2012-2022 Draft Long Term Plan and this management plan, has requested Council assistance with the provision of four additional fenced and covered outdoor netball courts on Kensington Park adjacent to their existing facilities and on land identified in the Kensington Park Management Plan 2007 as a petanque area (Figure 4). The proposal would include pedestrian paths, a concrete strip for service access and covered areas for players outside the existing clubrooms. The establishment of additional courts would allow WNC to host regional and national competitions that cannot otherwise be accommodated in the District. The WNC has also requested an indoor venue for netball be considered. Although their submission to the Long Term Plan does not mention lighting of the new courts, given the existing courts are floodlit, the erection of one or two further artificial lighting towers is a possibility that should be taken into consideration.

The addition of four netball courts, as requested by the Whangarei Netball Centre, would necessitate encroachment onto the natural turf sports fields by approximately 3,055 m² in an easterly direction (towards Park Avenue). The situation here is similar to the requested additional artificial hockey turfs with respect to the provision of an equivalent area of natural turf where proposed artificial surfaces will encroach onto the existing sports fields.

Further issues that require discussion between WDC and the WNC include providing access for general park users to the netball facilities, minimising impacts on the open space amenity values of the park (e.g. associated with the construction of a high fence and the covering of the proposed additional courts) and the expected demand for parking at the southern end of the park from an estimated additional 60 netball players plus supporters.

After consideration of the effects of the proposal on the park and its users, WDC suggests four additional lit outdoor netball courts can be developed on the natural sports fields adjacent to the existing netball courts (Figure 4). It is proposed to amend the building envelope line to provide for these facilities and a new urban sports park be developed as a matter of urgency. It is also suggested that WDC and the WNC confirm the best location for the cover, which may not be over the new courts.

WDC does not support the construction of a new indoor venue for netball on the park. Indoor facilities are available in the Leisure Centre, with one full court and three smaller courts provided in the Stadium. If WNC desire a separate indoor facility, WDC would urge them to consider alternative sites in the city.

4.8 Petanque Court

Petanque is a viable sport for the general public, particularly in the older age groups, though younger players also take up the sport. Several active petanque groups operate in Whangarei, including the Whangarei 60s-Up Petanque Group whose membership has quadrupled over the last 3-4 years.

Petanque interests use the existing facilities at the Town Basin and Kamo. Five petanque courts (terrains) are provided at the Town Basin. This facility has been at peak use on occasions and can not currently cater for regional tournaments of at least 12 teams of eight players. Whilst there are toilet facilities at the Town Basin, there is no kitchen, meeting or storage of gear facilities. The expansion of the adjacent children's playground places constraints on the expansion of the petanque area and the holding of large events at the Town Basin.

During the preparation of the Kensington Park Management Plan 2004, a request was received by WDC from the Whangarei 60s-Up Movement for a petanque court (terrain) to be constructed on the park. The management plan, as approved in both 2004 and 2007, provided for this facility adjacent to the netball court and outside the area of the natural sports fields. Construction of a petanque court did not proceed due to financial constraints of WDC.

The Whangarei 60s-Up Petanque Group, in its submission to the current (2012) review of the Kensington Park Management Plan 2007, outlined its request for a petanque court on Kensington Park. This included a petanque court of suitable size to accommodate at least 12 teams of eight players, covered for both shade and shelter, facilities such as toilets, kitchen and space for refreshments and entertaining other clubs, and a small secure area for the storage of gear. The Group felt it was desirable in the longer term to have flood

lighting to allow for evening games. The Whangarei Netball Centre meets some of these requirements. Access for petanque interests to the Parks and Recreation maintenance depot toilets and storage area could also be a possibility. The 60s-Up Movement have indicated they wish to use the grassed area marked out for petanque on Kensington Park from November 2012.

WDC, after considering this proposal, suggest that a grassed area marked for petanque could be provided on Kensington Park. However, due to the constraints of suitable park land available and the high demand for a range of uses on the park, a hard surface petanque court on Kensington Park can not be accommodated. WDC will work with petanque interests to find an alternative site in Whangarei to address future demand, which may include on the proposed urban sports park.

4.9 Leisure Centre

Recreational uses provided for in the ASB Leisure Centre include basketball, badminton, volleyball, netball, table tennis, martial arts and rock wall climbing. Indoor social netball has experienced rapid growth during weekdays at Kensington Stadium. The Kensington Stadium is also used for arts and crafts exhibitions, conferences and kapa haka. An average of 2-3 regional or national kapa haka events are held annually in the Stadium, with national events attracting several thousand participants. The national gatherings held in the Stadium are a back up for Matatini, the New Zealand kapa haka event. There is a possibility that future kapa haka may find an alternative venue as car parking requirements at Kensington Park for their large events is impacting on other park users. Junior users will continue to have appropriate access to facilities and an annual limit on non-sporting events will operate.

An outdoor basketball hoop has been erected on the south side of the Leisure Centre (Kensington Stadium end). This facility provides for informal basketball practice and is an alternative to the indoor basketball facilities. It is also free of charge.

4.10 Commercial Activities

Kensington Park caters for commercial activities which complement the recreational uses of the park. The emphasis is on activities and uses that are not for profit, excepting commercial activities in the Leisure Centre. They are limited in number and frequency.

Liquor licenses for activities on the sports fields may be granted on occasion. Several sports clubs have liquor licenses for their clubrooms.

The Leisure Centre comprises a number of commercial ventures. These include a physiotherapy clinic, licensed day-care centre, café, Kensington Fitness, a Northland Polytechnic Sport and Recreation campus, office space for Sport Northland and conference/meeting room facilities for public hire. The Stadium can accommodate international sporting events, major shows and exhibitions. Kensington Fitness is a commercially operated fitness centre with organised group fitness classes, weights/cardio equipment and squash courts. Commercial activities in the Leisure Centre are generally controlled through the lease agreement existing between WDC and Sport Northland.

4.11 Amenities

Amenities, such as toilets, shelter, sunshade structures, seating, picnic tables, artwork, signs, information boards, lighting, rubbish bins and drinking water outlets are provided so that the public can enjoy Kensington Park as an important recreation reserve in the city.

Public toilet facilities are located within the Western Hills Drive car park and between the hockey clubrooms and Marist clubrooms (Figure 4). WDC owns these two toilet blocks. Public toilet facilities are also available in the Leisure Centre, and will soon be available in the new gymnastics and athletics stadium.

The two public toilet blocks owned by WDC are dated structures that are oriented towards the sports fields giving them a "hidden" perspective from passing traffic and regular pedestrian activity. Anecdotal evidence received from the Whangarei Police indicates that the toilets in the Western Hills Drive car park are experiencing vandalism and undesirable behaviour. These same issues have also come to the attention of WDC. Ideally, the public toilets would be located in high traffic areas if possible (e.g. facing Western Hills Drive) and preferably co-located with other facilities (e.g. the Leisure Centre). This would ensure that the toilet facility is situated in the most accessible and convenient location to increase use. Consideration should be given to improvements to the design of the two public toilet blocks owned by WDC, or to their replacement. In addition, it may be prudent to close these toilet blocks to the general public after hours. At this stage, there is no identified budget for the replacement of these toilets, or for additional toilets, in WDC's Long Term Plan 2012-2022.

WDC is aware that there is a lack of seating and picnic tables around the perimeter of the sports fields. An area near the car park on Western Hills Drive and public toilet may be a suitable location for the erection of several more picnic tables as this area is popular with park users.

Existing signs in Kensington Park include advertising hoardings and sponsorship signs on buildings incorporating the naming of park buildings (e.g. Advocate Stadium, Rosvall Hockey Stadium, Mad Butcher Cricket Pavilion, and LJ Hooker Athletics Clubrooms). Sponsorship is invaluable for assisting in the provision of recreational facilities for the public community.

The artificial lighting on the hockey grounds, athletics track and netball courts has been designed to operate with minimal interference on adjacent properties. Direct light spill and glare has been minimised.

There are no plans to install lighting on the natural turf sports fields for sports practices. Generally lighting is only needed during winter, the period when the fields are at maximum utilisation and the days are shorter. The addition of practice lights would result in over-use of the fields. Most junior teams are able to practice after school and before natural light fades during winter.

An existing playground is located adjacent to Kensington Avenue and near the netball courts (Figure 4). A low screen has been installed on the Kensington Avenue side of the playground to improve public safety and a shade cover erected for sun protection of playground users. There is a need for playground equipment suitable for those with disabilities and special needs.

Objective – Recreation Access and Use

To provide a range of compatible active sport and recreation activities primarily of an outdoor nature for the use and enjoyment of the public.

4.13 Policies and Actions

Recreation Access and Use – General

WDC will consult with neighbouring and affected members of the community, including lessees and users of the park, and with mana whenua/tangata whenua on major development projects or activities that may impact on them.

WDC will encourage increased multiple recreational use of Kensington Park where practicable. Park users are encouraged to co-operate with one another and share grounds and facilities where possible.

WDC will enter into Sports Codes/Clubs Agreements with all sporting and recreational organisations using the park (sports fields and artificial surfaces) to help minimise user conflicts and maximise enjoyment of the park for its users. Sports and recreation organisations that use the park on a regular basis are requested to provide WDC with detailed information on usage at the end of their agreed playing season to assist park management.

WDC will endeavour to minimise conflict between different recreational uses and activities on the park.

WDC will be responsive to the changing recreational needs of the community.

Recreational facilities will be designed, where feasible, to meet the most up-to-date national standard and design criteria for access for people with disabilities.

WDC will provide safe sport and leisure equipment and surfaces so as to comply with relevant health and safety provisions including Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) and Injury Prevention through Environmental Design (IPTED) and a safe playing environment in accordance with the relevant NZ Standards of the time.

WDC will ensure that the negative impacts of any development within the park are avoided, mitigated or remedied.

WDC will take appropriate steps to minimise damage from unauthorised and inappropriate activities.

Additional lighting will be provided in the car park areas and near public toilet facilities to increase public and personal safety in the park environment and help deter crime and inappropriate behaviour. Security cameras will be installed to assist park security and safety. (See also 'Policies and Actions – Amenities' below.)

All uses and activities will comply with the noise requirements set out in the Whangarei District Plan.

WDC will provide limitations on the hours or use and access to certain activities that have the potential to cause excessive noise that may adversely affect the amenity of occupants of residential properties located adjacent or nearby to the park.

Kensington Park will be deemed and promoted as a smoke free area in consideration of the requirements of the Smoke Free Environments Act 1990. The public will be encouraged through signage and publicity to maintain a clean, healthy environment in areas that are primarily used by young people for sporting and recreation activity. Events held in Kensington Park will be consistently promoted as “smoke free” events.

Access to the park will generally be free of charge to the general public. Where permitted by the Reserves Act, WDC may charge for a particular use where a person or group gains special or exclusive benefits of a reserve, or facilities on that reserve, that is greater than that derived by the general public. User charges may be established for recreation events and other events. A bond may be required for all booked group uses of the park. A bond may be charged and/or public liability insurance required where there is potential for serious damage to the park, park users or park reserve neighbours.

WDC may close the park or part of the park in conjunction with a requested use for the protection and well-being of the park, or for the protection and control of the public using it.

Any network utility infrastructure (e.g. above and below ground electricity or electronic lines, gas or energy pipelines, manholes) constructed within the park will be designed to have minimal impact on recreational, cultural and conservation values. WDC will grant network utility operators conditional access to park land to inspect, maintain, operate, or upgrade existing works, subject to the provisions of the relevant empowering Acts, the Reserves Act and any conditions imposed by WDC.

With the exception of the Order of St John’ air ambulance activities and emergency uses, the taking off or landing of aircraft and helicopters on the park will require the prior written permission of WDC.

In accordance with the Dog Control Bylaw, dogs are prohibited from the park unless they are ‘guide dogs’, ‘hearing ear dogs’ or police dogs as defined in the Whangarei District Dog Management Policy 2003. Dogs are prohibited from entering all Council buildings and facilities, and the sports fields.

The following activities are prohibited on the park:

- Horse riding
- The playing or practicing of golf.

Firearms, slingshots or other projectile firing devices, and any other offensive weapons or instruments of a dangerous character are prohibited on the park.

Camping will only be allowed if it is associated with an approved recreation activity on the park.

Access and Parking

Public vehicle access will continue to be from Western Hills Drive, Kensington Avenue, and Park Avenue.

Access to WDC Parks and Recreation maintenance depot is limited to WDC and contractors’ vehicles and staff only.

Car parks on Kensington Park are for motorised vehicles associated with legitimate use of the park. Car parking areas are not constructed to accommodate heavy vehicles and therefore should not be used as a ‘truck stop’.

Parking other than in areas set aside for car parking is prohibited without prior written approval by WDC.

Regular day, overnight or long-term car parking is prohibited without prior written approval by WDC.

Exclusive use of car parks may be allowed for special sporting and recreation events upon application to WDC and the payment of a charge for this exclusive use.

Use of the car parking areas or fields to park and display vehicles for sale is prohibited.

Driving or parking of motorised vehicles off the formed car parks on the park, including onto the natural sports fields area, is prohibited except:

- in accordance with a bylaw
- those vehicles that may be used by WDC or its contractors for management purposes, and
- those vehicles that may be used for emergency services.

WDC will upgrade the status of the temporary car park on the corner of Park Avenue and Kensington Avenue to a permanent car park.

Users of the park, including large sports codes are urged to manage their activities to minimise issues of car parking related to their park use, or to use alternative venues when parking may be at capacity.

WDC will not be proposing further car parks on Kensington Park.

WDC will assess the need for additional traffic calming devices and bollards to enhance public safety and separate vehicle access and parking areas from high use recreational areas of the park, and take action as necessary.

WDC will assess the results of the current car parking survey on the park and modify management policy and practices as required.

WDC will encourage the use of public transport, and discuss with relevant authorities and users of such services, such as the Northland Regional Council, the provision of suitable drop-off areas, bus bays and bus shelters for park users getting to and from the park.

WDC will, as part of its proposed Kamo/Tikipunga Walkway – Cyclepath Network, construct a link from this network to Kensington Park to enhance walking and cycling access to/from the park in an environment which is safe for its users.

WDC will extend the walking/cycling path in front of the Leisure Centre to the car park on the corner of Western Hills Drive and Kensington Avenue. Consideration will be given to the construction of walking/cycling access paths around the margins of the park and the provision of secure and clearly signposted cycle parking/storage facilities on the park. Until these paths and associated facilities have been provided on the park, bicycles are encouraged not to use the park excepting the area being developed for a new athletics and gymnastics stadium and car park.

Buildings and Structures - General

With the exception of approved existing network utility services, buildings and structures on Kensington Park will be limited to those approved through reviews of this management plan.

WDC will plan and manage Kensington Park to minimise the number of buildings and structures on the park. The duplication of facilities will be avoided by encouraging existing lessees to maximise the use of club facilities without compromising the sustainable management of these facilities and to co-operate with other park users or community groups by the sharing of facilities.

The removal of buildings no longer required will only be carried out following public consultation with affected parties on the proposed removal.

Sports Fields

Priority for use of the sports fields will continue to be given to junior sports codes.

The area of natural turf sports fields in the park will be maintained and where possible enhanced.

Buildings, artificial or hard surfaces, and structures will be restricted to areas outside of the natural turf sports fields and marked by a dashed line on the map, Kensington Park Existing & Proposed Development (Figure 4).

The building envelope line is proposed to be altered to allow for the proposed developments seeking approval in this management plan which contravene the former Policy (i.e. a third artificial hockey turf, either Option 1 or Option 2, and four additional outdoor netball courts), and to exclude from the sports fields the car park on the corner of Kensington Avenue and Park Avenue (to allow for continued parking) and the Parks maintenance depot (existing building to be retained) (Figure 4). **Note:** See Section 7.4 for Policy on a new urban sports park as a mitigation measure for the effects of the hockey and netball development proposals on Kensington Park.

As a mitigation measure for the constraints placed upon the expansion of football/soccer on Kensington Park, WDC will provide for future football needs through the establishment of a new urban sports park in Whangarei.

WDC will develop an additional cricket wicket on the natural turf sports field.

WDC will replace the fitness station during the lifetime of this management plan.

WDC will continue to monitor the informal use of the sports fields. People who wish to use the park for impromptu team sports games are urged to notify Parks and Recreation staff of WDC prior to their planned activity.

In recognition of the park being at capacity, no new sports and recreation uses will be permitted on the sports fields where a conflict in use may occur.

No winter code shall use the natural turf sports fields to play senior games (i.e. players older than school students), without each game being approved by a Parks staff member of WDC.

Use of the natural turf sports fields may be restricted in certain periods to allow for repair and rejuvenation. Use of the sports fields by sports codes or for an event shall not compromise or damage the fields for subsequent users.

WDC is responsible for the erection, taking down, storage and maintenance of all goal posts and other structures used on the natural turf sports fields.

Athletics Track

WDC recognises and supports the continued use of the athletics track and associated facilities on the park.

WDC will continue to liaise with Athletics Whangarei on the location and upgrading or replacement of the hammer throw cage and circle.

Athletics and Gymnastics Stadium

WDC recognises and supports the use of the new gymnastics and athletics stadium.

WDC will carry out a boundary adjustment to Kensington Park to include the new gymnastics and athletics stadium and associated car parking in the park.

WDC will enter into a new lease with the Northland Athletics and Gymnastics Stadium Trust incorporating the gymnastics and athletics stadium and the athletics track to enhance the park and its future management.

Hockey Grounds

WDC recognises and supports the continued use of the two existing artificial turfs in the park for hockey.

WDC approves the development of a third artificial hockey turf on the natural sports fields of the park near the existing artificial hockey turfs with associated lighting, signage and underground water storage facilities by Hockey Northland. Three location options are presented in this Draft Kensington Park Management Plan 2012 for public consideration, described in the text and shown on Figure 4. WDC will continue to liaise with Hockey Northland on matters such as future demand for car parking and water storage and use. **Note:** This plan does not preclude approvals required under the Resource Management Act 1991 for lighting, signage and any existing building extensions desired by Hockey Northland.

WDC does not support the provision for a fourth artificial hockey turf on the park during the 10-year lifetime of this management plan as the effects of the proposal on other sports codes and on the amenity and open space values of the park can not be mitigated.

WDC, in consultation with Hockey Northland and other key stakeholders, will continue to investigate long-term alternative sites in the Whangarei District for the location of additional artificial hockey turfs. These sites may include, but are not limited to:

- The use of school sports fields in the vicinity of Kensington Park or in the wider Whangarei area/District
- Marsden Point-Ruakaka and Parua Bay areas, and other sports fields within the District.

Netball Courts

WDC recognises and supports the continued use of Kensington Park for netball.

WDC approves the development of four additional outdoor netball courts on the natural sports fields of the park adjacent to the existing netball courts by the Whangarei Netball Centre (WNC). WDC will continue liaising with the WNC on its proposals for the covering and fencing of the additional four netball courts, access to the courts for the general public and the expected increase in demand for car parking. **Note:** This plan does not preclude approvals required under the Resource Management Act 1991 for lighting, signage, etc.

WDC does not support the construction of a new indoor venue for netball on the park.

Petanque Court

WDC will liaise with petanque interests and other affected users of the park to mark out a grassed petanque court area on the park close to supporting existing indoor facilities (e.g. toilets, kitchen, meeting and storage areas).

WDC will liaise with petanque interests to find an alternative site in Whangarei for a hard surface petanque court to address future demand. This may include being located on the new urban sports park.

Leisure Centre

Recreation uses and activities in the Leisure Centre will comply with the lease between WDC and Sport Northland in addition to the provisions of this management plan.

Commercial Activities

Commercial activities will be permitted on the park provided they:

- add to the public enjoyment of the park and are consistent with the recreation reserve status of the park,
- satisfy the requirements of the Reserves Act and other relevant statutes including the Resource Management Act,
- are in accordance with this management plan, WDC bylaws, or WDC policy,
- can avoid, remedy or mitigate any adverse effects on the park and park values, park users, or park neighbours, and
- have reasons related to WDC's strategic goals to be located on publicly owned land.

Commercial activities on the natural turf sports fields must have a strong recreation component, have a low impact on the grounds and not interfere with normal sporting fixtures.

A formal agreement such as a lease, licence or permit is required for all commercial use of the park.

A charge may be levied for any commercial use of the park.

Commercial mobile shops or stalls selling food, drinks or any other goods are not permitted in the park unless they have the prior permission of WDC.

WDC may grant liquor licenses for premises located on the park or special licences for one-off types of events where:

- the effects on the park, park values, park users and park neighbours can be avoided, remedied or mitigated
- the conditions of the current Sale of Liquor Policy of WDC are met
- the sale and/or consumption of liquor does not breach WDC bylaws
- the sale and/or consumption of liquor are ancillary to a primary recreational use
- this is appropriate to the operation of the user groups, and
- they will not impact on junior sports codes use of the park.

Kensington Park is considered unsuitable for animal related events (e.g. dog shows), or circus type events, as alternative purpose-made venues exist for such events in Whangarei city.

Amenities

Amenities will be permitted on the park provided they:

- add to the public enjoyment of the park and are consistent with the recreation reserve status of the park
- satisfy the requirements of the Reserves Act and other relevant statutes including the Resource Management Act, and
- are in accordance with this management plan, WDC bylaws, or WDC policy.

Permanent toilet facilities should only be provided where the recreation uses and activities of the park are regular and the facilities will generate sufficient patronage. The provision of public conveniences for one off events will be the responsibility of the event organiser.

WDC will give consideration to the replacement of the two existing public toilet blocks on Kensington Park during the lifetime of this management plan.

Signs will be provided for visitor information, interpretation, direction, advertising via the naming of the property (Kensington Park) or building(s), and to help promote the safe and enjoyable use of the park by the public.

Sponsorship signs on buildings will be limited to the naming of the building(s).

WDC will maintain visual cohesiveness and amenity values of the park by limiting the size, scale, location, number and nature of all signs and advertising hoardings so that they do not detract from the primary features and recreation purpose of the park.

The size of signs naming the various buildings on the park must be in scale with the building itself, and required to be of a design and colour scheme which compliments the park, as determined and approved by the Parks Manager of WDC.

Temporary signs installed on the Kensington Avenue and Park Avenue roadsides for whatever purpose will be prohibited.

Temporary advertising signs from sponsors of sporting and leisure events will be permitted on park land providing they are appropriately placed during the event and removed immediately after the event.

All signs must be robust and as vandal proof as possible.

Seating, picnic tables, rubbish bins, play equipment and all other park furniture shall be placed with regard to the need, orientation to sun, shelter from wind, views, proximity to access points, in areas of amenity and/or recreational value and in consideration of CPTED/IPTED principles. In this regard, it is preferred that park furniture will be provided around the perimeter of the park where considered necessary.

The provision of lighting on the park will only be considered by WDC where there is a clear public benefit. (See also 'Policies and Actions – Recreation Access and Use – General' above.)

Lighting of the natural turf sports fields will not be permitted in order to maintain flexibility of field layout and limit the hours for practice use of the fields.

Lighting of artificial surfaces will require the prior written approval of WDC, in addition to any consents required under the Resource Management Act 1991.

Figure 2: Junior Finals Day, 25 August 2012, Netball Courts at Kensington Park



SOURCE: Whangarei Netball Centre

5. Landscape Enhancement

The park's landscape is characterised by a variety of vegetation species planted for shade, shelter, heritage and other values. In the southwest corner of the park, a theme of native species has been followed. This includes the kauri grove. Behind the houses along Park Avenue and near the car park on Park Avenue are planted conifers, a couple of which have died and have had to be removed.

A Landscape Report was prepared in October 2010 as part of the land use application for the athletics and gymnastics stadium (Littoralis Landscape Architects 2010). The proposed site landscaping has been designed to incorporate the stadium proposal into the existing Kensington Park facilities and to provide sufficient landscaping to assimilate the new buildings into the surrounding existing built development. A low speed, pedestrian dominated environment for the re-aligned Park Avenue, incorporating facilities for cyclists, is to be created. Most of the trees on the Corns Street reserve have had to be removed to enable the provision of adequate parking. However, several large existing trees have been retained and extensive new structural tree planting will take place to reinforce a pedestrian scale and optimise amenity. Low impact design initiatives for stormwater management, such as permeable paving, wetland zones and rain gardens, will be integrated into the car parking and roadway areas; a little like the car parking associated with the Aquatic Centre.

The trees along the boundary between the park and State Highway 1 are highly visible driving north through Whangarei. Maintaining and enhancing the vegetation along this boundary is important to protect the amenity values of the park and provide a noise buffer from the busy highway. Maintenance of cohesive tree plantings on all road frontages would increase the presence of the park in the surrounding area.

Aside from the above Landscape Report for the stadium, there has been no recent landscape assessment or landscape development plan prepared for Kensington Park as a whole. There is no recognised, consistent landscape theme across the park. WDC staff acknowledges improvements can be made to the character and amenity of the park. In particular, there is a need for increased shade and shelter and mitigation of the dominant visual effects of the buildings and structures on the park.

To help address these matters, WDC has organised a landscape assessment of the park to be conducted over the next couple of months (September/October 2012). This report will provide a brief description of the existing character of the park, an assessment of the potential effects of proposed developments (e.g. an additional artificial hockey turf, additional netball courts) on the park, park users and neighbours, and potential mitigation measures (e.g. planting).

5.1 Objective – Landscape Enhancement

To ensure that the open space character and amenity of the park is safeguarded and enhanced.

5.2 Policies and Actions

Results and recommendations of the landscape assessment of Kensington Park will be incorporated into the Kensington Park Management Plan as appropriate prior to the finalisation of the plan.

6. Cultural Heritage

WDC gratefully acknowledge the contributions made by Marina Fletcher and others of Parawhau Ki Toetoe Otaika (Hauauru Trust) to the writing of Sections 6.1 and 6.2 below. Supporting contributions from other written sources are also acknowledged.

6.1 Early Maori Settlement

The original people of Whangarei, Ngai Tahu, arrived in approximately 1350 on the Tunui Nui a Rangi waka. Over the years conquest and marriage took place, the last battle being fought in 1832. Today their descendants are amongst Te Parawhau and Ngati Kahu o Torongare.

Te Tirarau Kukupa was the son of Kukupa, a great fighting chief, and Whitiao. He was born probably in the late 1790s. Although sometimes referred to as a Ngapuhi leader, Tirarau (as he was familiarly known) was closely related by marriage to Te Uri-o-Hau, Ngai Tahu and Te Uriroroi (Oliver, 2012, "Te Tirarau Kukupa", website). Te Tirarau held the mana across the land from Mangawhai to Kaipara and north to the Bay of Islands tribes. His mana was acknowledged by John Grant Johnson, Interpreter, who wrote in 1853:

The Parawhau, or original tribe of Whangarei, occupying and claiming the southern [western] bank, and the Ngapuhi the northern bank of the Whangarei, but both Parties being connected with, and in a great measure, controlled by Tirarau, the chief of the Wairoa River... (Land Purchase Department, 1853).

Tirarau was to be a continuing important figure in the development of Whangarei (Pickmere, 1986, p. 35).

By 1840 though some villages had palisades, they no longer had a need to be fortified. Kauika, near where Kauika Road is today, was the village of the chief Kahunui. Further to the west was Paritai where Iwitahi lived. Going south where much of the present commercial area of Whangarei is today was Ratu, the village of Karakare who was a *tohunga* (Pickmere, 1986, pp. 17-18). From the Town Basin area, inland to Kamo, Ketenikau and Parihaka, and eastwards to Parua Bay, was the territory of the Ngati Kahu o Torongare people. Tipene Hari had his palisaded village, Pihoi, on the hill near where St. Andrew's Church stands today. Continuing along the north side of the harbour, the next village was Waimahunga, on the banks of the Awaroa River, where the chiefs, Te Puia and his son, Hirawani, lived. At Tamaterau lived William Pohe and his people. Te Tirarau lived at Wharekohe.

The wide plateau stretching from the Regent to Kensington, to Whau Valley and to Mairtown was one of the most intensively cultivated places in the Whangarei area. Swamps and streams once flowed across the plateau and down to the Hatea River and Waiarohia Stream. Rich volcanic soils and plentiful sunlight would have produced large crop harvests to feed the people on the flats. Pickmere writes that the Maori traded with the Europeans in potatoes, wheat and maize (Pickmere, 1986, p. 48).

The Whangarei suburbs of Regent, Mairtown and Kensington were part of the land block known to Maori as Tawatawhiti, sometimes recorded as Awatawhiti or Wai Tawa. Tawatawhiti takes its name from the head of the Hatea River.

6.2 The Original Land Grants of Whangarei

William Carruth was the first permanent Pakeha settler in Whangarei. He left Scotland and initially settled in New South Wales, Australia, but a drought drove him to seek out better prospects in New Zealand. He arrived in the Bay of Islands in 1839. Wiremu Pohe, who travelled with William Carruth as a guide and interpreter, bought Carruth up Whangarei Harbour/Whangarei Terenga Paraoa on a trading boat that was part owned by Wiremu Pohe (Pickmere, 1986, pp. 19, 20).

In those days, the land where Whangarei stands was covered with bracken-fern, tea-tree scrub and the poisonous 'tutu' (tupakihī). Pigs and wild dogs roamed the scrub, but, as yet no sheep or cattle had come to this part (Pickmere, 1986, p. 20).

Tipene was said to have told his people of the benefits that Carruth and his settlers would bring, including horses, cattle, carts, ploughs and "tupara" (double-barrelled guns): "When my Pakeha's brother and the rest of the tribe come, they will have all these things here, so that Whangarei will become like Waimate" (apparently *sans* missionaries).

In 1839, the two original land grants for Whangarei, the Carruth Grant of 968 acres (391.7 hectares) and the Mair Grant of 1,800 acres (728.4 hectares), were purchased from Maori (Pickmere, 1986, p. 60) (Figure 3). The Carruth Grant included what is today most of the commercial and shopping area of Whangarei, and the area later known as Kensington (Pickmere, 1986, p. 21). The land owned by Gilbert Mair, situated to the east of the Carruth property, was known as Mairtown.

The Deed of the Carruth Grant was signed by: Tipene, Topa, Matiu, Tara, Tekite, Pirika, Tane, Tute, Tiro, Wara, Matangi, Iwitahi, Toururangi and Wiremu Pohe. The land described in the Deed was named “Aua Tawiti and Tiongongo”.

6.3 Early Expansion of European Settlement

By 1842, the Carruth brothers (William and John) had a cultivated area of about 30 acres in wheat, maize and potatoes (Pickmere, 1986, p. 23). These cultivations are recorded as being on the flat land close to where the whare of Tipene Hari was located. Whangarei became known as “the garden of Auckland” during the 1850’s (Pickmere, 1986, p.48).

By the mid 1850’s a considerable amount of land had been sold by Gilbert Mair and the Carruth brothers to a small number of settlers. These settlers, for the most part, gave English names to their homesteads; ‘Springhead’ (Gibbes), ‘Brookfield’ (Wrack), ‘Wycombe’ (Hunt), ‘Fernhill’ (Bedlington) and ‘Seafield’ (Fraser) to name a few (Pickmere, 1986, p. 60). Some of the streets and reserves of Whangarei also carry the names of early settlers or of their family members, such as Bedlington Street, Percy Street, Stanley Street, Wrack Street, Dent Street, Mair Park and Cafler Park.

One of the prominent early settlers was Thomas Bruton Kenderdine (1828-1894). After studying medicine in England, he sailed for New Zealand on the “Josephine Willis” arriving in Auckland in 1855 (Early New Zealand Families, n.d., “Eliza Jane Kenderdine nee Preece”, website). He continued north to Whangarei the same year. On arriving in Whangarei, Thomas Kenderdine bought 25 acres of land from Charles Davies. (The Davies’ block was known as ‘Waitangi’ which was part of a larger block previously owned by John Carruth). Thomas Kenderdine was Whangarei’s first doctor (Pickmere, 1986, p.87).

Dr Kenderdine had his home shipped from England in pieces and erected as a two storied house on his new property. He called his new home “Kensington” (Figure 3). It was a “stylish residence complete with a circular stairway” (Pickmere, 1986, p.100). It stood on the corner of Kensington Avenue and Kamo Road until the 1960s when it was pulled down to make way for a Woolworth’s supermarket. The large pohutukawa (*Metrosideros excels*) in the Woolworths’ car park, protected as a Heritage Tree in the Whangarei District Plan, is the only visible reminder of Kenderdine’s old garden (Pickmere, 1986, p.100). His farm extended over what is now Kensington Park. Dr. Kenderdine’s brother Isaac later owned the Kensington property (Early New Zealand Families, n.d., “Eliza Jane Kenderdine nee Preece”, website), and the name Kensington, is also maintained in the local area & Kensington Avenue (Pickmere, 1986, p.100).

In 1859, Dr. Thomas Kenderdine married Eliza Jane Preece at St. Paul’s Church, Auckland (Early New Zealand Families, n.d., “Eliza Jane Kenderdine nee Preece”, website). Soon afterwards he moved to Auckland, having been “much loved by the community” of Whangarei (Pickmere, 1986, p.100). Thomas and Eliza Kenderdine had nine sons and two daughters (Early New Zealand Families, n.d., “Eliza Jane Kenderdine nee Preece”, website).

6.4 Significant Cultural Features on the Park

The Kensington Park Grandstand, built on the park by the Whangarei A & P Society in 1903, is recognised for its cultural significance by the New Zealand Historic Places Trust and WDC. It was registered on 28 June 1990 under the Historic Places Act 1980 as a “Historic Place – Category I”, Registration Number 3829, by the Historic Places Trust. The historical significance of the grandstand, according to the Historic Places Trust, is based on it serving the Whangarei community for nearly 110 years. Its presence in Kensington Park reminds people of the important part played by the A & P Society in the city and of the crucial role of sport in the lives of many New Zealanders. In terms of its physical significance, the Trust notes:

The roof structure of the Kensington Park grandstand is a most unusual one for grandstands in this country. With the exception of the Derby Stand built for the Auckland Racing Club in 1882, which also had a barrel-vaulted roof, most grandstands erected in New Zealand have gabled or hipped roofs” (New Zealand Historic Places Trust website, undated).

The Kensington Park Grandstand has also been identified as a Group I Heritage Building/Site in the Whangarei District Plan 2007 (Heritage Building/Site #3 on the Planning Maps). The Group I category for Heritage Buildings is the most significant in terms of Heritage values identified in the District Plan. The grandstand is one of only five buildings in the District given this status. Chapter 58 of the District Plan contains the Rules relating to Heritage Buildings, Sites and Objects. In most cases resource consent would be required.

The small kauri grove on the park perimeter along Kensington Avenue commemorates the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. The Whangarei District Plan provides for its protection under “Appendix 2 – Heritage Trees” as follows:

Any tree greater than 6 metres in height or with a girth greater than 600 mm ..., located within a road reserve or reserve administered by the council is classified as a Heritage Tree.

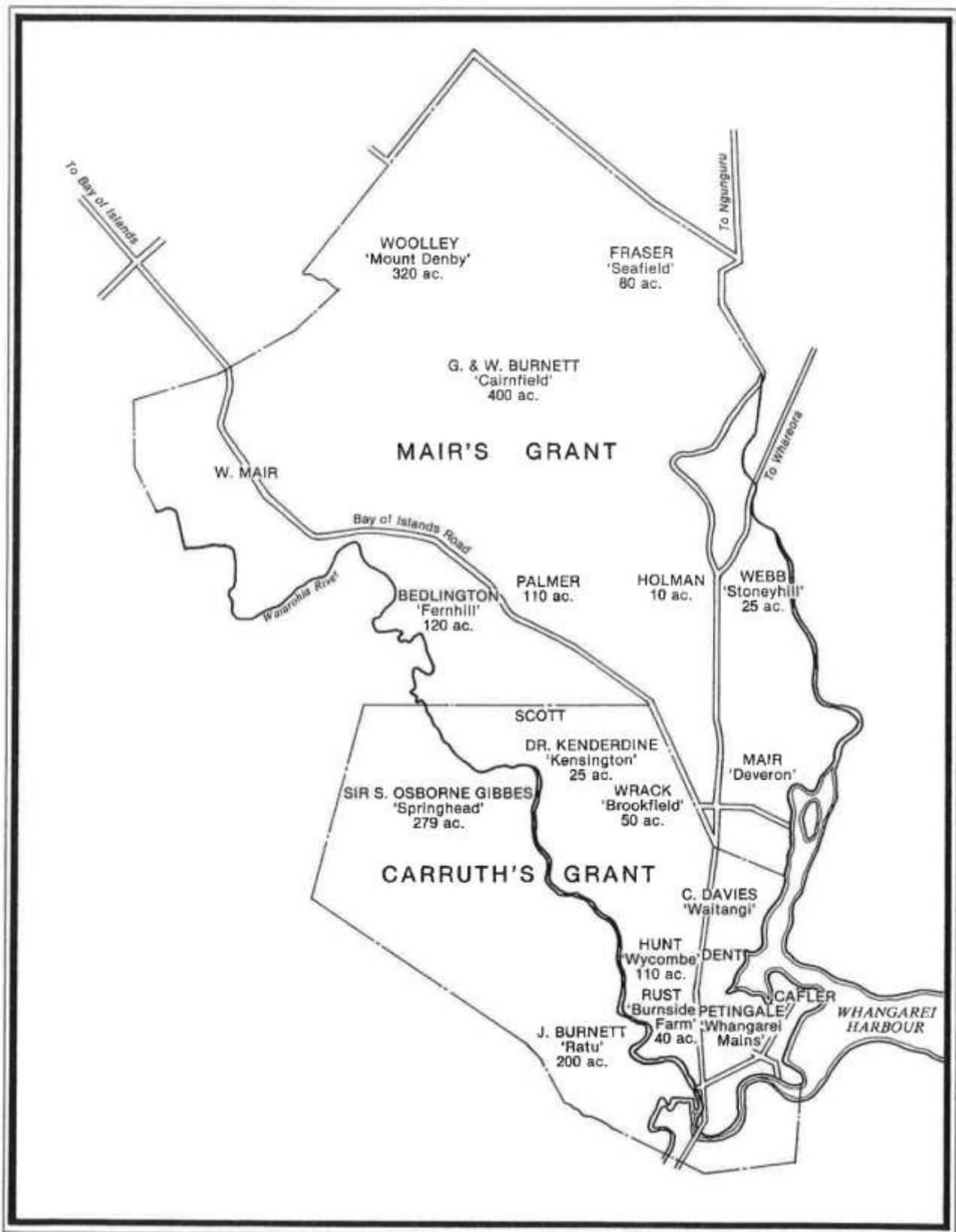
In addition to its cultural heritage values, the kauri grove is worthy of protection for its visual amenity, sense of place, and neighbourhood and urban amenity.

6.5 Archaeology

The Whangarei District Plan’s list of “Sites of Significance to Maori” makes no mention of the Kensington Park area. However, WDC is currently engaged with iwi to reach agreement on accessing information on areas of significance throughout Whangarei District. Should information become available to WDC from iwi on the Kensington area, staff will consult with iwi on what is appropriate to be included in this management plan.

Prior to the construction of the athletics and gymnasium stadium, an investigation of the building and car parking site was carried out. However, no Maori artefacts were found.

Figure 3: The Original Land Grants of Whangarei



SOURCE: Pickmere, N P 1986, *Whangarei: the founding years 1820-1880*, p. 60

6.6 Objectives – Cultural Heritage

To ensure that areas and features of Maori and European cultural heritage value are identified and accorded an appropriate level of protection.

To provide a means of protecting both recorded and unrecorded sites having cultural heritage value.

6.7 Policies and Actions

The Kensington Park Grandstand will be protected in its entirety in order to maintain the integrity of the building and its contribution to the character of the park and Whangarei District.

The kauri grove on the perimeter of the park adjacent to Kensington Avenue will continue to be protected for its heritage, visual, urban amenity and sense of place values.

Research into the cultural and historical values of the park will be conducted as necessary and as resources permit. WDC will encourage local hapu/iwi to take the lead in researching and managing Maori cultural heritage associated with Kensington Park and its environs.

WDC will consider requests for educational signage related to cultural heritage sites on a case-by-case basis and in consultation with the relevant community interests.

7. Protection of Kensington Park's Future Interests

7.1 Statutory Provisions

At 25 hectares, Kensington Park comprises five land parcels (Appendix 1) owned and managed by WDC. Lot 1 DP 365614 (24.28 hectares) is formally classified under Section 17 of the Reserves Act 1977 as a recreation reserve. The other four land parcels are shortly to be formally classified under Part III (Classification and Management of Reserves) of the Reserves Act 1977 as a recreation reserve. They represent the recent additions to the park - Corns Street reserve (residual area), land associated with the athletics and gymnastics stadium and car park, and part of 17 Park Avenue (Figure 4).

The majority of Kensington Park has an Open Space Environment zoning under the Whangarei District Plan, which provides for both community well-being and environmental health, in addition to the provision of a wide range of social and recreational opportunities, activities and facilities.

Several land parcels within the park have a Living 1 Environment zoning under the District Plan. These land parcels relate to the previous use of parts of the site for residential housing purposes. Living 1 provides for urban residential development. It is no longer considered suitable for land owned by WDC which is used for recreational purposes. Accordingly, it is intended to bring all land within Kensington Park under the Open Space Environment provisions of the Whangarei District Plan. Changing the Environment zoning will need to be undertaken by way of a Plan Change, possibly at the same time as the expected completion of a review of the Open Space Environment section of the District Plan by 2017.

7.2 Property Acquisition

Since WDC's Kensington Park Development Concept "Vision Statement" 1994, which outlined opportunities for the purchase of residential properties adjacent to the park, to date 43 properties have been purchased. Their purchase has enabled the construction of the second artificial hockey turf, areas for car parking, the Marist Sports Club' clubrooms, the athletics track and the athletics and gymnastics stadium.

A further three properties are currently Designated by WDC in the Whangarei District Plan as 'Proposed Recreation Reserve'. These properties are 87 and 89 – 91 Western Hills Drive (DW 100) and 17 Park Avenue (DW 123), and are referred to by WDC as "priority one" purchases (Figure 4).

In 2011, WDC acquired part of 17 Park Avenue for recreation reserve under the Public Works Act 1981. This land parcel, together with the land associated with the new athletics and gymnastics stadium, was recently declared as recreation reserve under the Reserves Act 1977 and once gazetted this land will be brought into Kensington Park to be managed as part of the park. The purchase of the remainder of 17 Park Avenue will be completed by mid September 2012, just prior to this draft management plan being released for public comment. Once purchased, it will also be managed as part of Kensington Park. It will be classified as recreation reserve under the Reserves Act 1977 and will be included in land covered by the Kensington Park Management Plan at the next comprehensive review. WDC is considering future use of these properties as an entry/exit point to the park for pedestrians and emergency vehicles only.

WDC has indicated that it may be interested in acquiring residential properties on Park Avenue adjacent to the park (marked as "Potential Future Park Extension" on Figure 4), but that these will be "priority two" after the above-noted three properties. The "priority two" purchases will depend on whether or not they come on the market for sale. Council policy is that they will not push people out of their houses or rush the process of purchase.

7.3 Amalgamation of Corns Street Reserve and Athletics and Gymnastics Stadium Land into Kensington Park

Corns Street reserve is located at the end of Corns Street off Park Avenue, to the east of Kensington Park (Figure 4). The Kensington Park Management Plan 2007 sought the integration of the management and development of Corns Street reserve with Kensington Park. This is still desirable, especially so with the construction of the athletics and gymnastics stadium and associated car parking and the realignment of Park Avenue. These developments will reduce Corns Street reserve from its former 6,543 m² to approximately 1,000 m² and will significantly reduce the opportunities on Corns Street reserve for passive and informal use by local residents. Proposed sensitive re-contouring and landscaping of the remaining area of the reserve, allowing for some planting, seating and informal play, is essential to maintain a passive 'neighbourhood reserve' function to this area.

In September 2012, following public consultation of its intention, WDC declared the remaining area of Corns Street reserve, together with the athletics and gymnastics building and associated car park, as recreation

reserve under the Reserves Act 1977. This draft management plan brings these areas into Kensington Park to be managed as part of the park.

7.4 Addressing the Future Growth of Whangarei through an Urban Sports Park

The Whangarei District experienced significant growth over the period 2001 to 2008. Between 2001 and 2006 the population of the District increased from around 68,000 to 74,000, an increase of 9.35% or almost 2% per annum. By 2009 the population had increased to approximately 79,000. Over the past 15 years around 40% of the population growth occurred in urban Whangarei or around the urban fringes whilst around 60% occurred in rural and coastal areas (WDC, n.d., p. 5). Future growth is projected to increase from 79,313 in 2011 to 89,519 in 2021 to 99,035 in 2031 and to 108,974 in 2041, averaging 1.4% annual growth rate through this period WDC 2010, "Updated Growth Model" - unpublished). Marsden Point/Ruakaka has been identified as an area with significant growth potential. It is anticipated this area will become a satellite town.

Compared to New Zealand as a whole, Whangarei District has an ageing population. Currently 15% of people in the District are aged 65 years and over. By 2041 this could increase to 28% and to 33% in 2061. Twenty-three percent of the present District population are aged less than 15 years of age. By 2041 this could reduce to 19%, and again in 2061 to 18% (WDC, n.d., p. 18). These trends will have a resultant impact on the types of reserve land use demanded by the population. For example, the demand for sports fields in some parts of the District may diminish over time. However, this impact may not be significant for another 10-15 years.

To manage the projected growth sustainably, WDC formulated a long term sub-regional growth strategy. The project, entitled *Sustainable Futures 30/50*, identified economic drivers of development, assessed future growth potential, determined existing and potential land use patterns, and assessed and planned for infrastructural requirements for the District over a 30-50 year time frame (WDC, n.d., p. 12). Research included the requirements for reserves and open space in the District. For Whangarei City the existing capacity of sports fields is 7.2 hectares, which is enough to meet present population needs. To meet anticipated future population demands and present service levels, a further 3.4 hectares of sports fields is required (WDC, n.d., p.133). For Kamo the corresponding figures are -0.35 hectares and 7 hectares, for Parua Bay -1.17 hectares and 7.5 hectares, and for Marsden Point/Ruakaka 1.6 hectares and 11 hectares. Substantial increased demand for sports fields, neighbourhood parks and other parks in Marsden Point/Ruakaka is expected with the predicted population growth (WDC, n.d, pp. 140, 188, 171). A major influencing factor on this growth provision is the decisions of the sports and where the fields are developed. Hockey, for example, develops mostly in one location therefore its provision of facilities is considered on a regional basis.

Demand for additional sports fields can be met through three key functions: better optimisation of land, the use of artificial and indoor facilities and improved management of sports and fields. To that end, WDC staff has developed a series of projects which meet current demand and provide for future facilities. These projects include the provision of football fields in Springs Flat and William Fraser Memorial Park/Pohe Island, the development of a new Whangarei urban sports park and the relocation of Whangarei Old Boys to the new urban sports park.

Kensington Park has been successful to date in providing for a range of recreational opportunities and facilities. However, it has now outgrown demand and a new open space area similar to Kensington Park is urgently needed. Projects nearing completion or proposed for the park in this management plan, notably the athletics and gymnastics stadium, third artificial hockey turf and additional outdoor netball courts, make the need for another urban sports park even more urgent.

Another urban sports park will:

- alleviate extra demand for Kensington Park
- cater for future growth of all sports
- accommodate new activities which have been requested for Kensington Park but are unable to be located on the park
- alleviate the problem of parking experienced with Kensington Park, and
- provide for current backlog demand by sports organisations, especially in wet winters.

WDC has clearly signalled its intention to provide, with some urgency, a new urban sports park in Whangarei through its Long Term Plan 2012/22. For the current financial year (i.e. 2012/13), the Long Term Plan provides an amount of \$3.8 million for "Land Purchase & Development" and a further \$2.0 million for

“Sportsfield Consolidation”. An additional \$1.1 million for “Land Purchase & Development” is budgeted for 2013/14.

A public expectation for another large urban sports park is increasing in the community. Most recently, of the nineteen public submissions received in August 2012 on the first phase of the review of the Kensington Park Management Plan 2007, four mentioned the need to establish an urban sports park.

7.5 Objectives – Protection of Kensington Park’s Future Interests

To ensure all relevant statutory and bylaw requirements pertaining to Kensington Park are met.

To integrate the management and development of Kensington Park with existing and planned reserves within Whangarei city and the wider Whangarei District.

7.6 Policies and Actions

The management, use and development of Kensington Park will comply with relevant legislation and WDC bylaws.

A Plan Change to the Whangarei District Plan will be promoted during the lifetime of this management plan to recognise the entirety of Kensington Park within an appropriate Open Space Environment zoning.

WDC will purchase 87 and 89-91 Western Hills Drive identified as “priority one” purchases. Once purchased, the corresponding Designations DW 100 and DW 123 in the Whangarei District Plan will be uplifted, the land brought into and managed as part of Kensington Park under the control of the Kensington Park Management Plan and classified as recreation reserve pursuant to the Reserves Act 1977.

WDC will uplift Designation DW 123 overlying 17 Park Avenue and bring that portion purchased in 2012 into Kensington Park to be managed as part of the park. WDC will classify this portion as recreation reserve under the Reserves Act 1977 and include it in land covered by the Kensington Park Management Plan at the next comprehensive review.

WDC will consider the acquisition of adjacent residential properties on Park Avenue, regarded as “priority two” purchases, as they come on the market. Once purchased, the land will be brought into and managed as part of Kensington Park under the control of the Kensington Park Management Plan and classified as recreation reserve pursuant to the Reserves Act 1977.

The justification for purchasing or acquiring land to add to Kensington Park will be based on one or more of the following general criteria:

- It would improve public access to the park in an area where this would be desirable.
- It would enhance the public use and enjoyment of the park.
- It would enhance or add to existing recreational opportunities.
- It would further protect the amenity value of the park.
- It would benefit future management of the park.

Such land will be brought into and managed as part of Kensington Park under the control of the Kensington Park Management Plan and classified as recreation reserve pursuant to the Reserves Act 1977.

WDC will bring the remaining area of Corns Street reserve, the athletics and gymnastics stadium and associated car park into Kensington Park to be managed as part of the park. The grassed reserve portion will be managed so as to retain its ‘neighbourhood reserve’ function with an emphasis on passive recreation. Active recreation facilities will not be permitted on this passive area.

In accordance with its stated commitment in the Long Term Plan 2012-22, WDC will purchase and develop a new urban sports park in Whangarei over the current and following financial years.

8. State Highway 1 Safety Improvements

Note: This management plan anticipates the construction of road safety improvements on the corner of Western Hills Drive and Kensington Avenue by the New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA) during the 10 year lifetime of this plan. The project is outside the scope of this management plan, the Reserves Act and WDC decision-making processes. The purpose of noting the road safety improvements in this plan, however, is to signal the possible effects of this project on visitor use and the landscape of Kensington Park and to consider how these effects may be minimised, without providing commentary as to the benefits, costs or appropriateness of such a development. It is also acknowledged that separate roading legislative processes will also be required to be complied with.

8.1 The Proposal

The Kensington Avenue to Manse Street project is part of a wider suite of roading improvement projects along the State Highway 1 North Whangarei Urban Corridor. It aims to:

Increase safety at the intersection of SH1 and Manse Street while providing increased capacity at Kensington Avenue intersection by providing additional lanes to reduce travel time and driver frustration for traffic within the wider network. In doing this, the project is expected to reduce crash numbers, allow safe passage for cyclists within the area and provide a no surprises environment for motorists on the highway. (NZTA Submission to the Review of the Kensington Park Management Plan 2007, 7 August 2012).

The proposed work will involve:

- Modification of the Manse Street intersection layout to left in and left out
- Installation of median barrier protection on SH1 from Manse Street to Kensington Avenue intersections
- Upgrade of the Kensington Avenue intersection
- Increased lighting on the route
- Removal of roadside sight distance restrictions

The Kensington to Manse project is presently in the Investigation phase. The Detailed Design phase (September 2012 – May 2013) and Construction phase (October 2014 – February 2015) are subject to funding availability. A designation and resource consents will be sought during the Detailed Design phase (NZTA Submission to the Review of the Kensington Park Management Plan 2007, 7 August 2012).

8.2 Visitor Use and Landscaping

Although the proposed safety improvements are not within the scope of WDC's decision-making, the proposals will impact on Kensington Park, in particular the proposed roundabout at the corner of Western Hills Drive and Kensington Avenue and alterations to the Kensington Avenue public vehicle entry/exit point. Issues that must be considered include:

- The loss of a natural grassed amenity area, including maturing trees, at the intersection of Western Hills Drive and Kensington Avenue, and the relocation and/or replacement of these trees
- The loss of Kensington Park land which will need to be replaced.
- The loss of approximately 50 existing car parks which will need to be replaced.
- The closure of the existing car park entrance on Kensington Avenue and a new car park entrance constructed further away from the corner.
- The need for additional landscaping.

There are several practical works proposals that will be required to be undertaken in order to enable the continued smooth operation of Kensington Park.

- 1 There should be minimal encroachment into the park past the current east side of the car park in order to prevent the loss of one rugby field.
- 2 The purchase of sufficient property on or near Kensington Park to replace the expected loss of car parks on the southern side of the ASB Leisure Centre.
- 3 Ensuring that the berm around the south-western corner of the park is of sufficient width to accommodate mature native trees, such as Puriri, Kauri, Pohutukawa and the like which is the current theme of plantings in this area of the park.
- 4 Relocation and undergrounding of existing electricity supply to the cricket pavilion and event supply box.

The NZTA, in its submission, stated that compensation or reinstatement of affected features and land will be provided in accordance with the Public Works Act. A formal approach will be made by NZTA to WDC for the purchase of the required land for the proposed work.

8.3 Objective – State Highway 1 Safety Improvements

To ensure that the proposed State Highway 1 safety improvements meet the needs of Kensington Park users as well as safe and efficient traffic management.

8.4 Policies and Actions

WDC will work closely with the New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA) to protect the current and anticipated recreational and amenity values of Kensington Park.

WDC requests input into the landscape development plans to be prepared by the NZTA for its State Highway 1 road safety improvements as they may affect the future management and use of Kensington Park.

Financial compensation to WDC from the NZTA for the purchase of land within Kensington Park will be used by WDC for future park development.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 Land Parcels Comprising Kensington Park

Name/Legal Description	Certificate of Title	Area (Ha)	Details	Status	Deed No
Lot 1 DP 365614	265956	24.2800	Land held in fee simple and subject to the Reserves Act 1977	Classified under Section 17 of the Reserves Act 1977 as a Recreation Reserve	
Sections 10-12, 14-21, 23, SO 438457, Lot 47A DP 45852 and Lot 69 DP 38056 (Stadium + part of Corns St reserve)	New Title to be issued	0.7090	Land held in fee simple and subject to the Reserves Act 1977	Classified under Part III of the Reserves Act 1977 as a Recreation Reserve	
Sec. 2 SO 410491 (this was part 17 Park Ave.)	558983	0.0596	Land held in fee simple and subject to the Reserves Act 1977	Classified under Part III of the Reserves Act 1977 as a Recreation Reserve	
Lot 47B DP 45852 (formerly part of Corns St reserve – end of Corns St)	NA8A/1033	0.0564	Land held in fee simple and subject to the Reserves Act 1977	Classified under Part III of the Reserves Act 1977 as a Recreation Reserve	
Parts of Lot 46 DP 38056	NA26A/655 – shown as Sections 13 and 22 on SO 438457	0.3766	Land held in fee simple and subject to the Reserves Act 1977	Classified under Part III of the Reserves Act 1977 as a Recreation Reserve	
Total Area		25.4816			

Appendix 2 New Zealand Recreation Association Parks Categories – Sport and Recreation

Primary Purpose	Typical Characteristics	Type of Use /Value	Likely Reserves Act 1977 Classification
Sport and recreation activity	Sport facilities, e.g. grass fields, hard courts, artificial surfaces Buildings, e.g. changing rooms, clubrooms, community centres, community activities Recreation facilities, e.g. playgrounds, skate parks, half courts, picnic areas, bike tracks, dog park Seating Landscaping Usually large size Leased sites could be small (e.g. the size of a single club)	Organised sport Social sports Active recreation Informal sport and recreation Walking Amenity and open space Events	Recreation, with parts possibly classified as Local Purpose.

SOURCE: New Zealand Recreation Association, 2011, *National New Zealand Park Categories & Levels of Service*, p. 6.

Figure 4: Existing & Proposed Development

