

Relationship of Whareroa Farm to Queen Elizabeth Park

Background and chronology

A few figures

The following figures may be helpful in considering the information provided:

- Current size of Queen Elizabeth Park = 639 ha (1595 acres)
- Current size of Whareroa Farm = 447 ha (1104 acres)
- 43 ha were set aside in the 1940s as reserves for roading and other purposes
- The total amount of land acquired by the Crown in the 1940s = 1129ha (2805 acres)

History of park development

In April 1941, the Hutt County Council had approached the Minister of Internal Affairs concerned that likely future housing subdivision in the Raumati-Paekakariki area would lessen public access to the coast. The Council proposed that a 200-metre coastal strip be retained in public ownership. Instead of limiting the response solely to acquiring this coastal strip, the Government began to consider other options. Central government took a broader view and opened up negotiations for the purchase of a reserve area of approximately 365 ha, extending from Paekakariki township north to the Whareroa stream.

Land acquisition during WWII

Soon after, in 1942, land was taken for temporary occupation under wartime regulations to accommodate U.S marines. Three camps were established. One at the MacKay's crossing entrance to the Park, named Camp Russell. Across the road, and outside of the Park's boundaries, Camp MacKay was set up on the area today occupied by Landcorp's Whareroa Farm. The third installation – Camp Paekakariki – was located around what is now the southern entrance to the Park. Land taken for Camp Russell included land from the MacKay family and Camp Paekakariki was located primarily on Maori land within the Wainui Block'.

Future use of the land

Soon after the departure of the Marines, the Government considered what it would do with the land it had temporarily acquired. In 1945, Cabinet directed that a committee be created to report on possible future utilisation of the land acquired for the Marines' camps. However the first committee did not come up with any specific recommendations. In June 1948, Cabinet directed that the development of the land be put on hold for several years. In the meantime, the land was to be farmed by the Department of Lands and Survey with a 450-acre (182 ha) dairy unit being established on a

sharemilking basis for city supply purposes whilst the remaining 1,200 acres (485 ha) would be run as a sheep and cattle farm².

The development of a park

No definite steps were taken towards the development of the Park until 1951 when Cabinet directed that a second committee of representative departments and local councils be formed to develop the 1,630 acres (659 ha) “for the purpose of recreation and for the health and welfare of the population ...”. The new committee reported in August 1952. Of the 1,627 acres (659 ha) in the Park, 700 acres was to be set aside for recreation, 125 acres for picnics and camping, 100 acres of roading, 412 acres as foreshore reserve and 290 acres remaining as farmland to continue the dairy operations³.

As plans for the park proceeded, steps were taken to formally acquire the necessary land. With the land that had been under temporary occupation for the Marine Camp, instead of compensation being paid for the occupation, negotiations to formally take the land and award full compensation occurred. In addition, other pieces of land, including the 20-acre Whareroa Maori reserve were taken under “better utilisation” clauses available in public works legislation. Other lands were negated for. At this time several blocks were held by members of the MacKay, Lynch, Smith, McKenzie and Budge families⁴.

The establishment of Queen Elizabeth Park Domain

In 1954 the Queen Elizabeth Park Domain was established and registered in the Gazette (No 54, p 1435) as follows

Pursuant to the Land Act 1948, the Minister of Lands sets aside the land described in the Schedule as a reserve ~~for~~ recreation and pursuant to the Reserves and Domains Act 1953 declares the reserve to be a public domain, to be ~~known~~ as the Queen Elizabeth Park Domain.

Schedule - Wellington Land District - Sections 2 and 3, Block II, Paekakariki Survey District: Total area 1,563 acres [625 ha], more or less (S.O. Plan 23214).

The lands included in the schedule include the land now referred to as Queen Elizabeth Park and do not include the lands now referred to as Whareroa farm.

In 1955 the Domain Board was established to manage the park. The Gazette notice establishing the Board includes a land schedule identical to that included in the gazette for the Domain ~~in~~ 1954.

² *Ibid*, Paekakariki–Raumati Recreation Area, Report of Special Planning Committee

³ *Ibid*

⁴ Draft Resource Statement – Queen Elizabeth Park 2004 unpubl.

Early funding for the Park

The Board and the Park were funded from levies on local authorities as well as profits from the Lands and Survey farms located within the Parks boundaries as well as neighbouring Whareroa farm. A 1992 draft management plan for the park states (p64) that:

The Department of Lands and Survey created Whareroa farm after World War II by amalgamating several properties which the crown had bought. The Whareroa sheep farm was established as an endowment for the Park in order to finance its development and management.

From 1953-1967 the Lands and Survey played a significant role in financing the park. A proportion of farm profits were injected into park management. In 1968 this was altered to a contribution from the Lands and Survey Reserve vote. Grants were fixed on a par with contributions from local authorities. With the formation of Landcorp, in 1987, Whareroa no longer contributes to Queen Elizabeth Park management. Landcorp contribution to the park comes from its lease of farmland in the park

1979 - Classification of Queen Elizabeth Park as a Recreation Reserve.

Following the introduction of the Reserves Act 1977, which replaced the previous Reserves and Domains Act 1953, Queen Elizabeth Park was gazetted as a recreation reserve in 1977. The land referred to in the schedule includes only that land now known as Queen Elizabeth Park and none of the land in Whareroa farm:

638.4372 hectares, more or less, being Sections 99 and 100, and part Sections 2 and 3, Block II, Paekakariki Survey District. All CT987/6, S.O. Plans 23214, 24783 and 24175.

A new title was issued for Queen Elizabeth Park, being CT 98716.

Officers have checked the original survey plan 23214 and the corresponding land titles, and they show that only the land currently within Queen Elizabeth Park was surveyed and reserved as Domain.

1982 - Management Plan

The Department of Lands and Survey drafted this plan for the Queen Elizabeth Park Board in September 1982. This plan has several elements that indicate that it refers only to Queen Elizabeth Park and not Whareroa farm.

- The Map on p 5 highlights the land within Queen Elizabeth Park only and not that within Whareroa farm.
- The plan states (p.7) that Queen Elizabeth Park consists of 638.4 ha of coastal land bordered on the east by SH1 and the main trunk line
- The park is classified as a recreation reserve under the Reserves Act 1977
- All the objectives and policies in the plan, and the “management concept” refer to the land reserved as a recreation reserve (i.e. not Whareroa farm)

- Section 4 – Resource & Background Information. This section includes background about the acquisition of land and contains the statement referred to by Mr Porter at p 35:

...a total of 1129 ha has been set aside for the park; 448 ha is in the Whareroa Farm Settlement which is operated by the Lands and Survey, and the remaining 43 ha was set aside for residential subdivision and for motorway purposes.

This statement does give the impression that the Whareroa farm was originally set aside for the Park. However, we believe that this is an over-simplification of the situation relating to the land acquisition and later decisions about land use. What we understand, in fact, is that land was acquired for various purposes around a similar time and that decisions as to its end use took some time, and when the land was reserved for a Domain the only land to be reserved was that in Queen Elizabeth Park. It is important to note that the statement was included in Part 2 of the plan, in the background section, rather than in the management plan itself.

State Owned Enterprises Act 1986

The 1980s restructuring of government resulted in changes for both Queen Elizabeth Park and the Whareroa farm. Both properties were farmed jointly by the former Department of Lands and Survey until the replacement of that department by the Department of Conservation and Landcorp, when Queen Elizabeth Park became the responsibility of the Department of Conservation and Whareroa Farm became the property of Landcorp.

1993 Management Plan

In August 1990 the Regional Council was appointed by the Minister of Conservation to control and manage Queen Elizabeth Park pursuant to the Reserves Act 1977. The Regional Council took over responsibility for the management plan drafting. At this time the Queen Elizabeth Park board was still in place and had major involvement in the drafting of the 1992 management plan.

The 1992 draft plan

On 10 March 1992 the Queen Elizabeth Park Advisory Committee formally:

- Ratified the record of the working meetings and resolved that the initial draft of the Management Plan be amended accordingly. The only additional change recommended by the committee related to the formation of an ongoing advisory committee (92.154 refers).
- Recommended to the Operations Committee of the WRC that the amended plan be released for public comment.

The draft reiterates many of the features of the 1982 plan (as noted in bullets above), namely:

- It refers only to the area of land currently known as Queen Elizabeth Park
- Establishes 12 development areas, none of which refer to Whareroa farm
- This draft did not mention purchase of the Whareroa block

- Under the section “Establishment of Queen Elizabeth Park” (p 76) the draft resource statement contains the text referred to by Mr Porter in his paper, which essentially repeats the statement from the 1982 plan:

A total of 1129 hectares was set aside for the park, comprising the present park area (638 ha), the Whareroa Sheep Farm on the eastern side of State Highway 1 (448 ha) and 43 ha for residential subdivision and motorway purposes.

- The legal description remains the same:

Queen Elizabeth Park is entirely owned by the Crown. The land comprises 638.427 hectares, more or less, being Lot 1 D.P. 34143, Sections 99 and 100, and part Sections 2 and 3, Block II, Paekakariki Survey District. All CT987/6, S.O. Plans 23214, 24783 and 24175.

- The Resource Statement refers to Whareroa farm, somewhat confusingly, as follows (p. 64):

The Whareroa Farm takes its name from the Whareroa Pa of the Ngati Maru people. The Sheep and Beef Unit is located on the Eastern Side of State Highway 1, at Mackays Crossing. It covers an area of 1109 acres [i.e.448 ha equivalent to current Landcorp land]. The Dairy Unit is in the northwestern corner of Queen Elizabeth Park, and covers 300 acres. There is also cattle grazing around the Whareroa road area of Queen Elizabeth Park- Both are operated under the Land Corporation (Landcorp) of New Zealand. The dairy farm is leased by landcorp.

Submissions on the draft plan

43 submissions were received and a summary report was made on 2 October 1992. Submission 36 from Stephen Welch of Paekakariki asks the Council to look at expanding the park and **recommends the acquisition of Whareroa farm**, a back paddock of Wainui Farms Ltd, and NZ rail land at Paekakariki. He also notes that some urgency should be given to retaining public access, as subdivision was a possibility. He requests that “as a minimum, permanent access from Queen Elizabeth Park at Mackays crossing onto and over Whareroa Sheep Station should be legalised by way of registered walkways to the indigenous forest owned by **WRC**”.

The report on submissions notes that the opportunities pointed out in the submission warrant some provision in the plan. The report recommends that a new policy be included as follows:

Links to other area

Opportunities for connecting the park with Steam Incorporated and Wellington Regional Council’s indigenous forest areas will be investigated.

The Advisory Committee also heard oral submissions on 9 October at which Mr Welch reiterated his points.

Approval of management plan (and reference to purchase of Whareroa farm)

In 1993 the Queen Elizabeth Park Advisory Committee resolved that the draft management plan be amended according to its working groups recommendations, and recommended that the Operations Committee of WRC approve the amended plan as the operative plan for the park. The Operations Committee approved the plan in February 1993. Relevant changes to the plan included the following:

- Inclusion of an additional paragraph on the past administration of the park. This was made at the request of the Advisory Committee and related to the role of the Queen Elizabeth Park Board.
- Additions to Policy 1.6 Relationship with other regional parks and recreation areas:

Policy (2) - "The possibility of purchasing all or part of Whareroa farm, should the opportunity arise, will be investigated.

Explanation - "Purchase of all or part of Whareroa farm would place in public ownership a cross-section of the coastal landscape extending from the shoreline to the top of Mount Wainui, and would connect the recreational opportunities in the park with those in the Akatarawa block.

Interestingly, the final published version of the plan contains a greatly reduced section on the "Establishment of Queen Elizabeth Park". Much of the background contained in previous drafts was removed (including statements about Whareroa Farm being part of the park, and the statement requested by the Advisory Committee).

Investigations re Whareroa farm

Mr Welch followed up his submission with a formal proposal to the Council related to public use, and if necessary acquisition, of Whareroa farm (1 June 1993).

On 27 July Barry Chalmers replied to Mr Welch outlining progress on his proposal. In his letter, Mr Chalmers noted that the purchase of the farm was raised with Landcorp but they were not interested in selling. However the possibility of registering a walkway was agreeable to Landcorp. Council staff followed this up with a report to Council on 3 August recommending the registration of walkways be included for consideration in the 1994.95 Annual plan. The recommendation was approved.

That report notes that:

Whareroa farm was acquired by the Crown at the same time that the land now occupied by Queen Elizabeth Park was acquired. Both properties were farmed jointly by the former Department of Lands and Survey until the replacement of that department by the Department of Conservation and Landcorp, when Whareroa Farm became the property of Landcorp (93.338 refers).

A system of walkways was established on Whareroa Farm by the Department of Lands and Survey... the public have access along this walkway, courtesy of Landcorp

Landcorp agreed, in principle, to a walkway through the farm. However, the approximately \$40,000 required for the survey and registration of the walkway was not provided for in the Annual Plan. Consequently, the project lapsed and has never been completed.

Appendix 1 – Gazette Orders

1954 – Gazettal of Queen Elizabeth Park Domain

Gazette Order establishing the Queen Elizabeth Park Domain (No 54, p 1435),

Pursuant to the Land Act 1948, the Minister of Lands sets aside the land described in the Schedule as a reserve ~~for~~ recreation and pursuant to the Reserves and Domains Act 1953 declares the reserve to be a public domain, to be known as the Queen Elizabeth Park Domain.

Schedule - Wellington Land District - Sections 2 and 3, Block II, Paekakariki Survey District: Total area 1,563 acres [625 ha], more or less (S.O. Plan 23214).

Copy of Survey Map attached – the lands included in the schedule include the land now referred to as Queen Elizabeth Park and do not include the lands now referred to as Whareroa farm.

1955 – Appointment of Domain Board

Gazettal order establishing the Domain Board, refers to land schedule for Queen Elizabeth Park Domain as follows:

Wellington Land District – Queen Elizabeth Park Domain. Sections 2 and 3, Block II, Paekakariki Survey District: Total area 1,563 acres [625 ha], more or less (S.O. Plan 23214). 10th February 1955.

1979 – Classification of Queen Elizabeth Park as a Recreation Reserve.

638.4372 hectares, more or less, being Sections 99 and 100, and part Sections 2 and 3, Block 11, Paekakariki Survey District. All CT987/6, S.O. Plans 23214, 24783 and 24175.