

INVESTIGATION OF CEMETERY LAND OPTIONS

This report is to investigate the feasibility of use of two parcels of land for cemetery purposes. The two parcels are as follows:

1. Waipa Village Site

Legal description	Lot 1 DPS 64610
Area	11.5372 hectares
CT	SA53B/603 (separate CT – no subdivision required)
RV	\$134,000 (based on a proportion of \$1.1 million for 94 hectares).
Ownership	Red Stag Wood Products Ltd. The land was originally Crown land but was sold off under the SOE Act. It is subject to Section 27B of the SOE Act 1986 which provides for the Crown to resume the land on the recommendation of the Waitangi Tribunal if it is required to settle treaty claims.
Situation	SH5, immediately south of Waipa Road. The site is within 4.5 km of the centre of the CBD.
Access	The lot has legal and physical access via Lot 3 DPS 64610 (Waipa Road). The proposed right of way over Lot 3 has never been registered on the title and therefore continued access can't be guaranteed. Although Lot 1 has extensive frontage to SH5, it may be difficult to build a new access due to the presence of a stream and the need to get Transit consent to a new crossing.
Topography	The site is quite low-lying and flat other than where it rises up into pine forest to the east, and falls away to the stream to the west.
Drainage	The site appears to be poorly drained with a lot of surface water and vegetation that would suggest a high water table or poor surface drainage. The extent of the drainage problem will need to be further investigated.
Previous development	This site was once used for a forestry village. The houses were removed in the early 1980's, but there is some infrastructure remaining i.e. tarsealed roads, concrete slabs, drains and possibly septic tanks. The full extent of the works remaining on-site is not known at this stage and needs to be the subject of further investigation. However, preliminary discussions with ex-Crown employees who were around at the time would indicate that only the buildings were removed from the site, and that all in-ground installations remain.
Zoning	Rural A. A cemetery would be a discretionary activity in this zone.
Contamination	Council records indicate contamination of the adjacent Waipa Mill site with PCP's. No contamination is recorded for the village site. However, evidence with contamination from sawmills in other areas such as Whakatane would indicate that neighbouring residential properties may also be contaminated from residents using treated sawdust in gardens, and from ash from burning treated wood in fireplaces.
Projected Capacity	Based on projected average new plots required being around 125 per annum (currently around 75 excluding Ngati Whakaue, re-opens, children and RSA), and 1750 plots per hectare (4m ² per plot and 70% effective land usage ratio), and usable area being 10ha, the site has a projected capacity of 17500 burial plots or 140 years. This capacity will be reduced by increased demand or lower effective land use ratio.

2. Centennial Park

Legal description	The land is in 3 separate parcels: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Part Lot 2 DP 23567, recreation reserve classified in 1987. Currently leased to the Mokoia Pony Club. Vested in RDC. 2. Part Lot 2 DP 23567, recreation reserve classified in 1987. Part leased to the Mokoia Pony Club, and the remaining land used as part of the Tree Trust. Controlled and managed by RDC – held by the Crown. 3. Section 102, recreation reserve, previously stopped road. Vested in RDC.
Area	Part lot DP 23567 (RDC) – 5.5651ha Part lot DP 23567 (Crown) – 3.1535 ha. Around half of this is on the other side of Mokoia Drive, so only around 1.6 ha would be available. Section 102 - .2979 ha. The total area available is around 7.5 hectares.
CT	Part CT 621/156
RV	
Ownership	The majority of this land is vested in Council as recreation reserve with the Crown holding the remainder. The Crown has a reversionary interest in the land by virtue of it having derived from the Crown initially. The land is also subject to Treaty claim as a “gifted reserve” and is listed in the addendum to Wai 94 as one of the gifted reserves. If this land is deemed by the Crown to be surplus to requirement or not required for its original purpose, it is to be returned to Ngati Whakaue in accordance with the Ngait Whakaue Gifted Lands Policy produced the Crown in 2001.
Situation	The land is situated to the east of Mokoia Drive below Tihiotonga and above the Hemo Gorge. It is located on the very edge of the urban area about 3.5km from the centre of the CBD.
Access	The land has legal and physical road access from Mokoia Drive. There are two vehicle entrances to the land, one of which is used by the Pony club and the other gives access to the RDC reservoir. Access is virtually unrestricted.
Topography	The site slopes considerably from a low flat at the northern end up to a higher plateau at the southern end. However, the slope is quite gradual, with the only steep area being below the reservoir where cut and fill has created a terrace. The slope would mean that the cemetery would be very visible from many parts of Rotorua.
Drainage	The site is very free draining due to its elevation and contour. The water table is likely to be well below the surface and there is no evidence of pans or perched water tables.
Previous development	The land has been used for grazing and pony club activities and is virtually undeveloped. It is in grass, and has a few small buildings, fences, jumps and areas for dressage. The land has been leased to the Mokoia Pony Club for many years. The Pony club were offered a new lease which they have signed, but which Council has not yet countersigned. The Pony Club will need to be consulted with regard to any use of the land for cemetery purposes.
Zoning	The land is zoned Reserve A in the District plan. This zoning provides for community facilities as a discretionary activity, but not cemeteries or crematoria. To establish a cemetery on reserve land under the current District plan would require resource consent as a non-complying activity, or designation of the reserve for cemetery purposes. A designation however only lasts for ten years.
Contamination	There is no evidence of contamination on this land.
Projected Capacity	Based on projected average new plots required being around 125 per annum (currently around 75 excluding Ngati Whakaue, re-opens, children and RSA),

and 1500 plots per hectare (4m² per plot and 60% effective land usage ratio), and usable area being 6ha, the site has a projected capacity of 9000 burial plots or 72 years. This capacity will be affected by changes in demand, higher or lower effective land use ratio, or an increase in usable area.

SWOT Analysis

	Waipa Village	Centennial Park
Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close to Rotorua City yet outside the urban area with no immediate residential neighbours. • Easy to locate on State Highway. • Flat site. • Existing internal road network is still in relatively good condition and may be able to be utilised. • Projected capacity is well over 100 years depending on demand and design. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very close to Rotorua City. • Undeveloped farmland will have lower development costs. • Good drainage. • Council already holds most of the land in trust as reserve – no purchase costs. • Easy to locate and access direct from legal road and close to State Highway. • No buried services, septic tanks or concrete slabs. • No evidence of contamination. • Projected capacity is between 50 and 100 years depending on demand and design. • The sloping site will provide opportunities for landscaping and mitigation of visual effects.
Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access is via an unregistered ROW over neighbouring industrial land (lot 3 DPS 64610). This access can not be guaranteed. A separate direct access to the State Highway may be difficult and costly to achieve. • The site is full of buried septic tanks and concrete slabs. • The site is very wet and drainage may be an issue – needs further investigation. • Contamination may be an issue – needs further investigation. • Trees on the site would need to be removed, including removal of stumps and roots. • The land is in private ownership – the cost of purchase is potentially high given the alternative land uses i.e. industrial or accommodation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proximity to a high value residential area may lead to vigorous opposition from residents. • The sloping topography will require earthworks to establish levels for berms. • Council does not own all of the land – the area at the top is still vested in DOC. • The area is being utilised by the Mokoia Pony Club. However, any change in land use will be gradual and will not greatly affect the Pony club for some years.
Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The large area would allow greater flexibility in design and burial options. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The site is opposite the Rotorua Tree Trust, already in use for living memorials. • Use of this land for cemetery would allow more effective utilisation of

		<p>existing reserve land without compromising open space values.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The sloping ground and high profile of the site will require innovative design solutions.
<p>Threats</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 27 Memorial on title may result in land being resumed by the Crown to settle Treaty claims. • Council would need to apply for resource consent for a discretionary activity – this may be declined, although major public opposition is unlikely in this location. • Results of drainage and contamination investigations may prove this site to be completely unsuitable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reserve zoning does not provide for cemeteries. Council would need to apply for resource consent for non-complying activity, or designation of the land or a plan change. This may be declined. • Reclassification of land and vesting of part of land in Council will be required. This will require the consent of the Minister of Conservation which may ultimately be withheld particularly as the land is subject to the Ngati Whakaue Gifted Lands Policy. This policy provides for land to be returned to Ngati Whakaue if it is deemed to be surplus to requirement, or if a proposed change in use does not comply with the uses specified in the Fenton Agreement.

Conclusion

Based on the SWOT analysis, the Centennial Park site appears to be the better option of the two. A major impediment to use of this site will be the objections by residents of Tihiotonga to the change in classification of the reserve and to the land use consent. The Pukeroa Oruawhata Trust will also need to support the change in land use. However, as an area of cemetery reserve on Sala Street was reclassified to recreation reserve ten years ago, the Trust may see this proposed change in classification from recreation to cemetery as restoring the balance.

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