

3.7 PRIDEAUX PARK

3.7.1 DESCRIPTION

Prideaux Park is located immediately to the west of the town centre and is largely bounded by roadways. Tamarangi Drive, Islington Street and Plunket Street provide boundaries to the north and east. The western boundary is provided by Massey Street and two residential lots. Much of the southern boundary is along Glasgow Street.

Adjoining Prideaux Park on its southern boundary is the Ruruanga Reserve, which is managed as part of the Park. The Reserve is downstream of Stoneham Walk across Bell Street, meaning it is effectively an extension of the Walk.

There are five vehicle entrances into Prideaux Park. One is from Glasgow Street, three from Plunket Street and one from Tamarangi Drive. The Tamarangi Drive access is gated and locked, and used mainly for maintenance vehicle access. Vehicle access is sometimes made off Tamarangi Drive to an unformed track which follows the flood control embankment along Ruruanga Stream to the Sports Field pavilion. Use of this track is not encouraged.

Pedestrian access is also available from Tamarangi Drive, Islington Street, Glasgow Street, Bell Street and Massey Street. Two footbridges cross Ruruanga Stream in Prideaux Park. One footbridge leads to Hansen Walk, a footway which leads from the town centre to Massey Street via either a set of stairs or a steeply ramped path. Further downstream a footbridge crosses the stream from the sports field.

The Reserve is largely flat with an area to the west rising up a natural embankment between Ruruanga Stream and Massey Street. Ruruanga Stream flows in a northerly direction through the western side of the Reserve. A flood control embankment on the eastern bank, adjacent to the grassed athletic track, provides a good spectator viewing area.

Soil in the area is of recent origin, associated mainly with eruptions from the Okataina caldera. The rhyolitic pumice subsoil is freely draining and of moderate to low fertility. The Tarawera eruption of 1886 covered the area in alkaline basaltic scoria. Potentially highly fertile, the scoria has yet to break down to form soil.

The dark colour of scoria combined with high sunlight levels in the region gives rise to natural dryness, causing difficulties in establishing tree species and maintaining quality turf cover on playing surfaces. There has been some contouring and importation of soil to alleviate this problem.

During its development, Prideaux Park was extensively planted in exotic trees. Ruruanga Stream is lined with a mix of deciduous trees, the embankment rising to Massey Street is a semi-wilderness area of trees and shrubs, and mixed evergreen and deciduous trees line Plunket Street and Tamarangi Drive. The north-eastern corner of the Park, bordered by Islington Street and Tamarangi Drive, contains annual flower beds and New Zealand and Australian native trees and shrubs.

A feature of the Park's vegetation is a fine stand of native trees located behind the Swimming Pool complex, between Ruruanga Stream and the embankment. These were planted by Kawerau North School pupils to celebrate Arbor Day in 1957. In more recent years native species have been planted throughout the Park.

Prideaux Park's vegetation provides a green parkland backdrop to the town centre. Every autumn the green gives way to a blaze of yellows, oranges and reds as leaves drip from deciduous trees. Its parkland character, sporting facilities, and vicinity to town, make Prideaux Park one of Kawerau's most important recreation Reserves.

Points of Interest:-

Maurie Kjar Memorial Swimming Pool Complex

The Swimming pool complex occupies the south-eastern portion of the Reserve. The pools are heated by geothermal steam piped from a bore located across the Glasgow Street, near the recreation centre. In the past, excess steam was vented to the atmosphere via an artificial volcano within the pool grounds. This practice was discontinued and the volcano structure removed due to safety considerations.

Facilities in the complex include a main pool (25x14m) bulkhead pool (5mx14m) spa pool, learners' pool, toddlers' pool, changing rooms with toilets and shower, covered barbeque area, seating, clubhouse, office, floodlighting, ancillary buildings, and a large grassed area. The entire area is fenced. A sealed carpark is located in front of the swimming pool complex with access off Glasgow and Plunket Streets.

The complex has time scheduled for general admission, lane swimming, schools, private hire and maintenance. Clubs, schools and private group pay for exclusive use where allocated. Current users include: Kawerau Amateur Swimming Club, Tarawera masters Swimmers, Arthritis Foundation, schools, and general public.

Bowling Greens Immediately north of the Swimming Pool complex is Kawerau Bowling Club. The club has two bowling greens, clubroom/pavilion and ancillary buildings. The club maintains the entire fenced area of this site. A lease agreement with Kawerau Bowling Club provides for exclusive occupancy of the area until 29 June 2013 (a 19 year 364 day lease from 1 July 1993).

Rangi Delamere Courts At the north-eastern end of the Reserve are the Rangi Delamere Courts. The facilities include six netball or eight tennis courts, pavilion, floodlighting, fencing around the courts and a sealed vehicle access way. Allocation of the facilities has for many years been on the basis of a six month winter season for netball (April-September) and a six month summer season for tennis (October-March). Schools are allocated, free of charge, specific days each week for use of the courts in accordance with their respective sporting programmes.

The Netball Centre financed an extension to the pavilion, including a control tower and umpire's room. Access to the tower and umpire's room may be granted to other groups by the Netball Centre.

Sports Field Located between the Rangi Delamere Courts and the Bowling Club is the Sports Field. A full 400 metre oval athletic track surrounds a permanent artificial cricket wicket. Other facilities include; discus throwing area, two long jump pits, floodlighting field pavilion, irrigation pumps and an in-ground irrigation system. The Sports Field is sown in fine turf with recreational turf surrounding it.

The Kawerau Cricket Club and Kawerau Amateur Athletic Club both have time allocations for the area during the summer season. Year round users include Kawerau Harriers. The area is also used by the New Zealand Kennel Association for dog shows. The Christmas in the Park event is held on the sports field in December.

Ruruanga Reserve The Ruruanga Reserve spans the Ruruanga Stream east of Stoneham Walk between Bell Street and Plunket Street. Although separately named, the Reserve is managed as part of Prideaux Park.

One footbridge crosses Ruruanga Stream in the Reserve. It is close to Bell Street and provides pedestrian access to the northern stream bank from Fenton Mill Road

Ruruanga Stream has been set aside as a Junior Angling reserve throughout its length. The Eastern Region Fish and Game Council periodically restocks the stream with trout.

The people of Kawerau planted a Red Oak tree in the reserve on the death of Lady Baden Powell, co-founder of the guiding movement. There is no sign or plaque to mark the tree's dedication.

3.7.2 HISTORY

The park is named after Mr. Francis Prideaux, C.B.E., E.D., the first Town Commissioner of Kawerau. From 1954-1959 Prideaux undertook the unique task of turning a construction site into a town. Many of the recreational facilities in Kawerau today were established under the regime of Prideaux in those formative years.

In late 1954 and early 1955, the section of Ruruanga Stream between Tamarangi Drive and where the cricket pavilion now stands, was realigned. The work was supervised by Mr Tom Parr, Clerk for the Ministry of Works whose headquarters were in Rotorua although he lived in Kawerau.

During 1955-1957 many sporting clubs formed in the growing town and residents expressed a need for recreational facilities (e.g. sports fields, clubrooms, tennis courts). The area west of Plunket Street, then known as Plunket Street Reserve, became an early focus for development of recreational facilities.

Following the formation of Kawerau Bowling Club early in 1955, the Town Commissioner agreed to lease an area of Plunket Street Reserve to the club for the establishment of two bowling greens. The first green was ready for play in December 1955 and in 1956 the club signed their first lease agreement for the area. The second green was finished in 1958. Today Kawerau Bowling Club is an excellent facility with two all year synthetic astro-turf greens and spacious clubrooms.

In September 1955 a community delegation approached the Commissioner to urge construction of a swimming pool. With funding from government, contributions from the Community, and many hours of volunteer labour, the Municipal Pool was opened on 20 February 1957. The pool was located at the southern end of the Plunket Street Reserve on the corner of Plunket and Glasgow Streets.

In the years following, the pool facilities continued to be developed. The first changing shed was one of six temporary shops moved from the corner of Plunket and Onslow Streets when permanent shops were built. The building was divided into two parts: one for ladies and the other for men. The first custodian at the swimming pool was Mrs A Syme. An office building was added in 1960 and the pool was heated with geothermal steam in 1965. The Kawerau Swimming Club, formed in 1957, is still one of several clubs using the pool's facilities. The club has a two-storey clubroom building at the pool.

The pool complex was renamed the Maurie Kjar Memorial Swimming Pool Complex. Maurie Kjar was a Tasman Company representative on the Board of Commissioners from 1959-1962, and a foundation member of the Swimming Pool Construction Committee. He worked long hours on construction of the pool. Entry to the complex is free of charge.

Kawerau Tennis Club was formed in November 1955. By 1960 both tennis and basketball were being played on courts located at the north-eastern end of Plunket Street Reserve. During the late 1960's more courts were laid, and in 1972 the need was expressed for a new clubroom building. The pavilion was completed by Council in 1973. Today the facility is called the Mrs Rangi Delamere Courts, after District Councillor (1980-1990) and netball personality Mrs Rangi Delamere. Currently the courts cater for tennis in summer and netball in winter.

Formed in 1955, the Kawerau Cricket Club Inc. used the central area of Plunket Street Reserve by 1956. The Kawerau Amateur Athletic and Harrier Club was formed in 1957 and the area was developed into a grassed athletic oval and cricket pitch. The first pavilion used by the two clubs was one of the six temporary wooden shops moved from the central business district. This original building was replaced by the current building in 1976.

Deciduous and evergreen trees were planted along Ruruanga Stream to give the reserve a 'village green' appearance. A notable planting of native trees was made in August 1957 to celebrate the first Arbor Day. The planting was organised by Sister Nancy Thompson, Matron at Kawerau Maternity Home, and carried out by pupils from Kawerau North School. An existing stand of Kanuka between Ruruanga Stream and Massey Street was interplanted with Totara, Kauri, Kahikatea and Rimu. Since then Coprosma and Pittosporum species have been added. The fine stand of native trees is a credit to those people who celebrated Arbor Day in 1957.

In 1960 the area previously known as Plunket Street Reserve was renamed Prideaux Park, recognising Francis Prideaux's extensive contribution to the development of Kawerau and its recreational facilities. In June 1960, Prideaux Park, Firmin Field and Boyce Park, were the first reserves to be vested in the then Kawerau Borough Council for recreation purposes under the Reserves and Domains Act 1953.

The first Prideaux Park Management Plan was written in 1983 and the reserve has continued to develop as Kawerau's multi-purpose sports venue. It currently caters for swimming, bowling, cricket, athletics, dog shows, tennis, netball, passive recreation, inter-school events and community events such as 'Christmas in the Park'.

'Jack' the lumberjack statue was unveiled on 13 September 1997 opposite the Tourist Information Centre. Mr Derek Kerwood sculpted 'Jack' the 2.5 metre logger (top portion). The centre portion of the statue depicts the lifestyle opportunities in Kawerau and was carved by Megan Godfrey. Local resident Bob Rowlands carved the lower portion to depict the Maori history of the town.

Freedom camping in fully self-contained motor homes has been allowed behind the field pavilion since the early 2000's.

3.7.3 STATUS

Prideaux Park is vested in, and administered by, Council. The park is a Recreation Reserve as defined by the Reserves Act 1977. The legal description is Lot 4 DPS 5882 Recreation Reserve. The Reserve is approximately 7.8180 hectares in size. Prideaux Park is zoned Reserve under Council's District Plan.

For management purposes this plan also includes Ruruanga Reserve. Ruruanga Reserve is 7983m² and located to the south of Prideaux Park. The legal description is Lot 581 DPS 7302 Recreation Reserve.

3.7.4 POLICIES

Landscape Character

1. The parkland character of the Park shall be maintained and developed.
2. The semi-wilderness character of the embankment shall be maintained.
3. Ground maintenance shall be to a high standard and appropriate to the various recreational uses of the Park.

Vegetation

1. Sound horticultural techniques shall be applied in the management of the Park's vegetation.
2. Planting and vegetation management shall be carried out in a manner which enhances the parkland character of the Park.
3. Planting along Ruruanga Stream shall be with appropriate native species.
4. Prior to removal of any vegetation its historic, ecological and aesthetic merit must be assessed against the goal of removal.
5. Future plantings and vegetation management shall take into consideration the concerns of users with regard to shading of facilities and falling leaves.
6. Pest plants shall be controlled and where possible eliminated from the Park.
7. Seasonal use of the sports field shall be limited to activities which will not damage the turf.

Access/Parking

1. Prideaux Park, other than marked playing areas, is a designated dog exercise area.
2. Existing pedestrian access ways into the Park shall be maintained.
3. The sealed parking area serving the Swimming Pool and Bowling Club shall be maintained.
4. The sealed access ways to the Sports Field and the Mrs Rangi Delamere Pavilion shall be maintained to an acceptable standard.
5. Designated parking areas shall be identified, and where necessary developed, adjacent to the Sports Field pavilion, alongside the access to Mrs Rangi Delamere Courts, and along the northern boundary of the Bowling Club.
6. Parking shall not be permitted on the Sports Field unless authorised by Council.
7. Signs shall be used to identify designated parking areas.

Freedom Camping

1. Self-contained motor vehicles are permitted to park behind the field pavilion and along the northern boundary of the Bowling Club. In addition, freedom camping is allowed between 4pm and 9am at Maurie Kjar Aquatic Centre carpark. Upon application, Council may consider prior consent for self-contained vehicles, for organised groups in which capacity of other areas may not be sufficient for demand. The maximum length of stay is set out in the Kawerau District Council Freedom Camping Bylaw.

