

## 9. *Western Park (encompassing Churchill Heights)*

### **Description**

Location:	Cutfield Road, New Plymouth Central
Legal description:	Section 2450 Town of New Plymouth
Size:	5.11 hectares
Reserve Status:	Subject to the Reserves Act 1977
Reserve Classification	Recreation reserve



Western Park is a sports park stretching between Cutfield Road and Morley Street north of Barrett Street. The park consists of five areas. It is dominated by a hill known as Churchill Heights which provides panoramic views and has historical significance to the city. The low section of the park which fronts Morley Street is developed as a sports field. The field is currently used for soccer and cricket. A bowling club is located to the south west of the park with two full size bowling greens and associated facilities. There are also two croquet greens to the north west corner of the park and an arboretum to the north east.

The majority of the park (sports field, arboretum and bowling greens) are Open Space A Environment Area in the District Plan. These areas are used primarily for organised sports and recreation. Such areas will normally have associated buildings such as clubrooms, changing sheds or toilet facilities.

The north west of the park (including Churchill Heights and the croquet greens) is Open Space B Environment Area which is characterised by those areas that are predominately focused towards informal recreation pursuits, usually of a more passive nature, such as walking and playing. They are more open, with less built features than the Open Space A Environment Area.

The park is surrounded by a mix of Residential A and B, and Sanders Park to the south west of the Park.

The aerial photograph below shows the five areas considered to be an element of Western Park:



#### **Tangata whenua interests**

This reserve is within the tribal rohe of Te Atiawa Iwi and Taranaki iwi. The area is of historic and cultural significance to Ngati Te Whiti and Ngā Mahanga-a-Tairi.

#### **Land status and acquisition history**

Section 2450 (formally Sections 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 443, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 468, 469, 488, 489, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 2392, 2393 and Part Fulford Street Closed) Town of New Plymouth, was purchased by New Plymouth city for recreation purposes in 1951. It was classified as a recreation reserve in 1980.

#### **History and cultural values**

The Western Park Management Plan was approved by the Council in 1980 pursuant to Section 41 of the Reserves Act 1977. The sports park was developed for summer and winter use, and in addition to the Sports fields, a bowling club is located at Western Park in the southwest corner with two full size bowling greens and associated facilities. There are also two croquet greens in the north west corner of the park.

The Management Plan looked at the management of the sports fields, buildings, access and parking, landscape and signposting, and public toilets.

The fields have previously been used for cricket, hockey, soccer, and summer softball.

There are a number of historical monuments located at Western Park and Churchill Heights:

#### *Western Park*

- Two stone pillars on the left and right side of the main gate and one pedestrian gate between pillars on Morley Street.

#### *Churchill Heights*

- Concrete fixture stating 'Institute of Surveyors' located near the carpark. A marble plaque is located on the fixture stating 'Winston Plaque. Directional Dial.'
- A historical monument is also located at the carpark. A brass plaque states 'The New Zealand Institute of Surveyors 1888-1988 commemorating the centenary of this institute and the contribution of surveyors to the development of Taranaki Trig Caverhill – est 1879'. Another marble plaque on the directional dial states 'This hill is named Churchill Heights to commemorate in perpetuity the gratitude of the people of this District for the faith courage and resolution inspired by the leadership of the right Hon. Winston S Churchill P.C, O.M, C.H, PRI.'
- A stone pillar is located at the entrance with a brass plaque stating 'Paul Memorial Entrance' and another brass plaque stating 'Western Park'.

#### **Existing improvements**

The existing improvements within Western Park (excluding Churchill Heights) include:

Fence, gates, wall, steps, two monuments, two rubbish bins, road, paths, sign, hall/pavilion, and two sheds built within the banks surrounding the field.

The existing improvements within Churchill Heights include:

Barriers, wall, path, three seats, rubbish bins, street lights, three signs, eight monuments, road and carpark.

#### **Uses and activities**

Western Park is a sports park with one field available which is currently used for cricket. The Council owned amenities (changing rooms and toilets) are available for hire. The Clubrooms on top of the amenities building are owned by the resident club.

The park is an open area which enables the public to participate in a range of organised and casual recreation pursuits.

The following clubs hold leases at Western Park:

- West End Croquet Club for greens and Council owned amenity building (lease term till 30 September 2012 with 21 year right of renewal)
- West End (NP) Bowling Club for greens and Club owned amenity building (final lease expiry 2036)
- New Plymouth High School Old Boys Cricket Club Inc, clubrooms (lease renewable every 21 years)

## **Management objectives and specific policies**

- 1) The Western Park Management Plan 1980 shall be revoked and replaced with this plan.
- 2) The developed areas of this park will be managed as a sports park suitable for formal and informal sport and recreation.
- 3) Future development of Western Park/Churchill Heights will be in accordance with the development concept including:
  - i. Rationalising trees within the Arboretum area to create a clear collection
  - ii. New signage at entrances and top car park
  - iii. Planting of the top terraces
  - iv. Removing or closing off the old storage shed in the bank.
  - v. Maintaining and improving a mown pathway along the middle terrace

## **Buildings and leases**

- 4) A lease will be maintained with New Plymouth Old Boys Cricket Club, West End Bowling Club and West End Croquet Club for the clubrooms they own and green facilities. Any extensions to the footprint of the existing building will be considered on a case by case basis in accordance with General Policies for Council administered reserves.
- 5) In August 2010 the Council resolved an intention to transfer Council owned buildings or part of buildings to the clubs that use or occupy them. This affects the West End Croquet Club, whose pavilion is owned by the Council and the lower storey of the building used by the Cricket Club. The Council is currently working with clubs to achieve this.
- 6) The West End Croquet Club are considering the future installation of a storage shed and toilet on their lower green. The Club is required to apply to the Council for approval to undertake this works, which may require a variation to the lease area depending on chosen location.
- 7) A licence to occupy will be established with the New Plymouth Old Boys Cricket Club for the cricket nets owned by the Club.

## **Vegetation management**

- 8) The West End Bowling Club have previously requested that the large pohutukawa tree outside their building at the entrance to Churchill Heights be removed, due to the interference the tree causes with their building. In 2007 the Council resolved to retain the tree and put in place measures for management of the problem as set out in the Council resolution.

*The final resolution of the Hearings Commission dated 22 January 2007 specifies the following:*

*“That having considered all matters raised in the report [of the Manager Landscape]:*

- a) *The application by the West End Bowling Club to have the tree removed from the club's Cutfield Rd frontage be declined in accordance with the District Tree Policy.*
  - b) *The Council continue to offer reimbursement assistance for clearance of sewer conflicts on a case by case approval basis.*
  - c) *All costs identified to improve both the stormwater and sewer outlets be met by the Council."*
- 9) The pohutukawa tree adjacent to the Bowling Club is currently monitored annually in accordance with the District Tree Policy. In 2010 the review concluded that the tree was in a healthy condition and should be retained.