



MANGAWHAI COMMUNITY PARK



Kaipara te Orangakui • Two Oceans Two Harbours

Draft Master Plan



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Introduction

Mangawhai Community Park (the Park) is a 34 hectare piece of public land in the heart of Mangawhai Heads between Thelma Road South, Molesworth Drive and the Mangawhai Golf Course. The land has no formal reserve classification meaning it can be put to any uses agreed by the community. To date this has included a local museum, historic village, the Daring restoration project, wastewater treatment plant, walking tracks, activity zone with multiple play opportunities, ambulance station, fire station, information centre and bowls club as well as a large area of native bush.

The flexibility in what uses the Park can be put to, and the need to protect its natural values heightens the need for this Master Plan. That is, this Master Plan is the document through which the Mangawhai community can set direction for the ongoing management and use of the Park.

The original Master Plan was developed by the community and adopted by Council on 24 November 2014. The Mangawhai Community Park Governance Committee initiated a review of the Master Plan at its 05 September 2022 meeting. The community provided initial feedback (over 100 responses) for consideration in a redrafted Master Plan. The Mangawhai Community Park Governance Committee considered this feedback and worked with stakeholders and user groups in the Park to develop this updated draft Master Plan which is now being made available for the community to review and submit feedback on. This feedback will be considered, and further amendments potentially made before the Master Plan is finalised.

The agreed vision for Mangawhai Community Park is:

Mangawhai Community Park will be a visible, predominantly natural, public space at the entrance to Mangawhai Heads, used (freely) by the public for recreation and enjoyment of the outdoor environment.

This Master Plan directs that the Park's natural landscapes (ecological and geological) will come to dominate, with additional native plantings providing shade, shelter and tying the different areas of the park together. The presence of all existing users is valued and acknowledged. Moving forward the Park will continue to primarily be a space for informal play, passive and active recreation. Maintenance, expansion, and enhancement of walking and cycling tracks through the Park will be supported, as will establishment of additional play equipment, picnic facilities etc. Formal competition-level sports such as those requiring full sized sports fields will better be accommodated elsewhere, as will any large-scale development of further utilities (wastewater, emergency services depots etc.) Purely commercial activities will not be permitted.

Mangawhai Community Park will continue to be a thriving green heart with play and recreation opportunities that invite residents and visitors to enter and enjoy the natural surroundings. The Park will continue to be a hub for a community of interest groups, volunteers, citizens, and visitors to connect, share and express their talents. The Park hosts community events (both outdoors and indoors), provides space for individuals, friends, and whanau to gather – a place to bump into friends and make new ones. You can learn a new skill, share kai or just watch the world go by.



Understanding the Park

This section provides background information and an overall understanding of the Park as it exists at present.

Location and connectivity

Mangawhai Community Park is conveniently located in the heart of Mangawhai Heads, within walking and cycling distance of this area, just across the Tara Creek estuary from the Mangawhai Central shopping precinct and only a short walk from the Wood Street shops. The Park also backs onto the Mangawhai Golf Course with walking and cycling linkages around the outside of the course.

The Mangawhai shared path runs through the Park, providing an active transport link between the Park and key residential areas of Mangawhai. A range of walking trails run throughout the Park, connecting to different activity areas and out to surrounding neighbourhoods.

As the number of attractions at the Park and Mangawhai's population has grown, car parking at the Park has become increasingly limited. While accessing the Park via active transport rather than private motor vehicles is encouraged, active transport is not a realistic option for everyone. Presently, all carparking is available off Molesworth Drive at; the museum/historic village, Mangawhai activity zone, and the bowls club.

The Park is also on the route of a bus service that operates in the summer months providing a further alternative to private vehicle use.

Legal Status of the Park

The land now known as Mangawhai Community Park was purchased from a private owner through a willing seller/willing buyer sale in the 1980s by Otamatea County Council (now incorporated into the Kaipara District Council). This land was further subdivided in the 1990s with the Mangawhai Golf Course and the site of the Bowls Club now having separate titles. The land for the Mangawhai Golf Course was later made a recreation reserve under the Reserves Act 1977 and is hence excluded from the scope of this Master Plan, though linkages between the Park and the reserve will be considered.

Mangawhai Community Park is 32.5 hectares situated in Lot 2 DP 450057 and the site of the Bowls Club is 1.66 hectares situated in Lot 1 DP 450057.

The land comprising Mangawhai Community Park, including the separate title for the Bowls Club, was never formally protected as a reserve under the Reserves Act 1977, but rather has continued to be held in fee simple by the Council on behalf of the community.

This means that this large area of land in the heart of Mangawhai Heads has remained available to be put to any use the community requires, be that a museum, wastewater treatment plant, activity zone or fire station.

138 Restriction on disposal of parks (by sale or otherwise)

(1) A local authority proposing to sell or otherwise dispose of a park or part of a park must consult on the proposal before it sells or disposes of, or agrees to sell or dispose of, the park or part of the park.

(2) In this section,—

dispose of, in relation to a park, includes the granting of a lease for more than 6 months that has the effect of excluding or substantially interfering with the public's access to the park

park—

(a) means land acquired or used principally for community, recreational, environmental, cultural, or spiritual purposes; but

(b) does not include land that is held as a reserve, or part of a reserve, under the [Reserves Act 1977](#).

Section 138: substituted, on 28 June 2006, by [section 13](#) of the Local Government Act 2002 Amendment Act 2006 (2006 No 26).

Box 1: Section 138 of the Local Government Act 2002.

Given the wide scope of uses to which the land can be put, it is essential that a clear Master Plan be developed in consultation with the community to ensure that the ongoing use of the land meets the present and future needs of the community.

In addition, the Park is formally protected through section 138 of the Local Government Act 2002 (reprinted in box 1).

Furthermore, the Local Government Act 2002 requires Council to engage with its communities on any significant decisions, as per its Significance and Engagement Policy. That is, were the Council to seek to make a decision on the future use of the Park which was of significant interest to the community, it would be required to consult with the community on that decision. What constitutes “significant” is set out in Council’s Significance and Engagement Policy.

The Park is zoned “rural” with a harbour overlay in the Operative District Plan. All future development of the Park must comply with the District Plan rules.

Landforms, Ecology and Vegetation

The Park lies on a fixed sand dune comprised of sand blown in from the coast during the Holocene. This feature is still largely unconsolidated and free draining.

While the area along Molesworth Drive is mostly flat with only slight undulations, much of the remainder of the Park is steep and undulating with relatively dry ridges and damper hollows. Many of these lower lying hollows have developed into wetlands. The Park is also home to an impressive sandstone gully which is an important natural feature of the Park.

The Park contains several wetlands, the largest being an extensive kanuka (*Kunzea ericoides*) dominated area in the northwest corner along Thelma Road. An extensive rush bed is also present in the northeast below the Mangawhai Bowls Club car park. A further three wetlands along the southwestern edge of the Park are dominated by kanuka although the most northern one, and largest has a significant component of mānuka (*Leptospermum scoparium*). At their drier eastern ends, tree ferns and even cabbage trees are present. Ground cover is jointed rush (*oioi*) (*Apodasmia similis*). All the wetlands are ecologically valuable.

With the exception of those areas cleared for development or as the result of exotic forestry removal, most of the Park is covered by a closed canopy of tall kanuka forest. This is a distinctively Northland forest type (kanuka does not grow as tall further south) and may also be an example of a sand dune forest, a forest type recognised as being nationally rare. While some areas of this forest are degraded by introduced species, others are essentially pure and of high ecological significance. The more natural areas of kanuka forest are also home to abundant native fungi.

This kanuka forest is the single most important component of the vegetation cover of the Park. Its dense continuous canopy restricts the establishment of exotic species such as acacia, asparagus fern (*Asparagus densiflorus*) and pines. Canopy height varies from 4m on the drier ridges to 8 – 10m in moist

valleys. The reasonably dense canopy of this species limits light to the understory with some areas supporting few ground cover and sub-canopy species. Common ground cover species include carex grasses (*Carex lessoniana*), and exotic asparagus fern (an invasive weed), with kauri grass (*Astelia*) and sphagnum moss on damper sites, and a sub-canopy of hangehange (*Geniostoma rupestre*), karamu (*Coprosma robusta*), tree ferns (*Cyathea*), and scattered five finger (*Pseudopanax arboreus*) where the canopy is higher. There are however no populations of indigenous fauna which need to be protected within the Park. Fortunately, most of the high quality native bush and wetlands are located away from Molesworth Drive and so should not clash with development.

There are also two very large Pohutukawa trees located in the Park. These Pohutukawa, which are likely to be several hundred years old, are a remnant of the prehistoric forest cover and are arguably the Park's most valuable minor vegetation component. These are also interesting in that they have been partly buried by the once shifting sands of the dune and so have taken on a unique structure.

Current Uses

Many assets and activities in Mangawhai Community Park have been created by small charitable trusts with Licences to Occupy specific areas of the Park, and consistent work by many community volunteers.

Walking

The Park contains a network of walking tracks. These tracks have been designed to highlight and make accessible the various scenic features of the Park. These include large Pohutukawa trees, a sandstone gully, wetlands and kanuka forest. Condition of the tracks vary and they are frequently monitored. Maintenance of the immediate margins of The Last of the Summer Wine Track and Paul's Track is carried out by volunteers within the Mangawhai Tracks Charitable Trust, and many people use these daily, often walking dogs and taking children. The Council maintains other tracks to keep them open.

Cycling

There are a limited number of mountain biking tracks around the Mangawhai Activity Zone. Proposed new signage will clearly identify the walking and cycling tracks.

Mangawhai Activity Zone (MAZ)

After communications with Kaipara District Council in 2008, the Mangawhai Activity Zone Charitable Trust was created by a group of parents and interested members of the community to establish a state-of-the-art activity zone. Today MAZ features a large skatepark, picnic and barbeque areas, playground, senior and junior pump tracks, 3-a-side basketball court and multi-sports court, and one of the country's largest skate bowls. The skatepark was designed by Premium Skatepark Designs and features a manny pad, death box, love seat, stair sets and several pool-style bowls, including one that is 3.3m deep. Incorporated into the Activity Zone are natural landscaping elements giving the space a sense of place. The second stage of the skatepark designed by Rich Landscapes is under construction and includes a street scape area and two flow bowls.

The MAZ Café sells refreshments to visitors which provides a small amount of funding towards the maintenance of MAZ.

The combination of a café, public toilets and play equipment make MAZ a great place to meet and engage. For example, families and community members, in collaboration with Sustainable Kaipara, meet at MAZ at 8.25am on the first Sunday of each month for Mangawhai Community Clean Up of selected streets and beach.

Mangawhai Museum

The Mangawhai Museum is a new and modern museum that stands proudly at the entrance to the southern entrance of the Park on the corner of Molesworth Drive and Thelma Road South. The Museum celebrates life around our harbour from building ships to building sandcastles. Family and women's stories of early life in Mangawhai are shown and displays and educational materials also focus on natural history around Mangawhai and our harbour including the programme to save the critically endangered Fairy Tern.

The Museum has a changing exhibition space to engage locals and visitors as well as school holiday and other programmes. Second hand book sales at long holiday weekends are legendary.

Mangawhai Museum is a prime tourist destination and includes a café and gift shop.

The Daring

The Daring, a two-mast schooner built in 1863 in Mangawhai, is in the process of being preserved and put on display as an extension of the Mangawhai Museum.

After being beached purposefully by Captain Phipps and his crew in 1865 this ship was rediscovered after a weather event moved the sands to expose her near Muriwai in Auckland. After an extensive rescue mission, with diggers on the beach, the Daring came home to Mangawhai in May 2019, where it now resides beside the museum.

The Daring Trust volunteers are working to preserve this historic ship to the condition it was in when it was discovered on the beach and look forward to bringing it to the public in coming years.

The Museum and Daring trustees are working together on a project to erect a purpose-built facility which will connect the current Museum building and the new permanent Daring building. This facility will be built within the Museum's current License to Occupy area.

Mangawhai Historic Village

The Mangawhai Historic Village is a collection of historic buildings that have been relocated to an area of the Park adjacent to the Museum. These buildings, coming from different areas across the district, have been restored, are on display to the public and can be made available for some meetings and smaller events.

The buildings include a 129-year-old church building, the former Tara Road School (which closed in 1968), the old Mangawhai Post Office and telephone exchange, the old Te Arai Library and a 1920s farm cottage. The Mangawhai Pioneer Village Trust was formed in 2016 to manage the site, raise money and coordinate volunteers for ongoing maintenance of the buildings.

Mangawhai Artists Inc.

The Mangawhai Artists are actively involved in the life of the Park, bringing creativity and flair to this space, though they do not as yet have their own facility within the Park. An incorporated charity since 2012, Mangawhai Artists Gallery currently operates on the site of Mangawhai Library and Hall in Moir St and met the costs of an art workshop addition to that building. A development site for Mangawhai Community Art Centre between the Museum and Historic Village was agreed in 2018-19, and in 2022 Mangawhai Artists Inc agreed to the shift of a potential site for a Licence to Occupy in favour of a proposed location for the Daring.

Merz Hut

George Merz is a favourite historic character in Mangawhai. He was a brilliant graphic engineer, designer and inventor. Of Swiss birth, he moved to Mangawhai at the time of the Second World War, after pressure from his peers in Auckland who were distrustful of the name Merz which seemed German to many. He lived at first in a cave by the beach and later took over the former kauri gum digger's cottage of Pipi Smith in the Upper Harbour within the Mangawhai Community Park.

He developed model boats and dug out the shapes of harbours to sail them in (e.g. Sydney Harbour).

The original huts have been removed for preservation; however, the historic site remains intact. This area is being protected, properly identified, and celebrated with signage planned to provide the history of the Merz Hut. A replica cottage is being erected within the Mangawhai Historic Village.

Mangawhai Bowling Club and Chartered Club

The Mangawhai Bowling Club is located adjacent to the Golf Club clubrooms in the far north-east of the park. The club provides outdoor lawn bowling for its members and the clubrooms are leased to The Charter Club for parallel use as a functions centre. Once a big sand dune, this complicated site in Mangawhai Community Park was levelled by volunteers and turned into bowling green 'A', with the

official club-rooms opening in December 1994. Bowling green 'B', was completed in 1996. In 2003, 'Hakaru Bowling Club' was renamed to 'Mangawhai Bowls Inc.' In 2018 both Men's and Women's Bowling Clubs amalgamated into Mangawhai Bowls. In 2023 the greens are in demand for many Centre fixtures and the Club House is used for private functions. The Main entrance shared with the Golf Club has been identified as an area needing improvement as traffic has increased a lot over recent years. In 2002 the Mangawhai Charter Club was formed. In 2023 it has over 2000 members with subsections including Darts, Pool, Petanque, Cards and more.

Mangawhai Information Centre

The Mangawhai Information Centre is volunteer-run and offers information on accommodation, eating out, local maps, activities and events. The Information Centre has recently relocated into the Urlich Cottage within the Mangawhai Historic Village.

St John's Ambulance

Hato Hone St John's Ambulance Station has established on the Park adjacent to MAZ. This recognises the value of this service to the community and the benefit of having the ambulances able to respond directly onto Molesworth Drive 24 hours a day, and 365 days a year. The patient transfer service workload includes both planned and urgent transfers for Te Whatu Ora/Health New Zealand as well as transport for residential care, palliative care, bariatric and air ambulance patients. The St John building includes a training room which is used by a range of community organisations for wellbeing and resilience courses, community meetings, first aid training and other sessions. St John provides First Aid Courses, products, medical alarms and secure key lockboxes and is supported, in part, by a retail store in Moir Street.

Mangawhai Fire Station – Fire and Emergency New Zealand

The Mangawhai Volunteer Fire Brigade recently relocated to a new fire station located next to the St John's Ambulance Station within the Park. The new station is larger and more ergonomic than the aging previous station. Importantly, it is also located on one of Mangawhai's key throughfares, allowing a quicker response to those in need. This is a volunteer station. That means all members of the Fire and Emergency Service dedicate their own time in order to serve this community and respond to a variety of emergencies in our local area including fires, medical emergencies, motor vehicle accidents, search and rescue, Civil Defence, natural disaster responses, and they also offer fire safety advice. Mangawhai Volunteer Fire Service worked tirelessly during the 2023 cyclone, clearing roads of trees, attending to homes that were flooded and helping with houses with damaged roofs.

Mangawhai Community Wastewater Treatment Plant

The Mangawhai community had traditionally been serviced by private septic tanks to meet its wastewater disposal needs. However, as a number of these began to age and affect the quality of water in the harbour and as the community continued to grow, it became clear that a more coordinated solution was needed. Subsequently, the Mangawhai Community Wastewater Scheme was constructed to move wastewater away from Mangawhai's celebrated harbour, treat it to a high standard and then dispose of it via irrigation to land in the Brown Road area. As part of the works, a little used area of the Park was made available as a site for the wastewater treatment plant with an access off Thelma Road. This required the area directly associated with the treatment plant to be fenced off and public access denied for health and safety reasons, with signage to this effect. However, the remainder of the Park remains unaffected. Work is currently progressing on a project to reuse recycled water from the Wastewater Treatment Plant in the irrigation system for the Mangawhai Golf Course. This is dependent on the upgrade of the wastewater treatment plant to produce a higher standard of recycled water. This project will keep the golf course green, even during the driest summers.

Adjacent Uses

Golf course

Adjoining Mangawhai Community Park and located less than 90 minutes north of Auckland, the Mangawhai Golf Club has consistently been regarded as one of the top courses in New Zealand. The course is a demanding mixture of wide and narrow fairways, undulating greens landscaped in a picturesque setting surrounded by native bush and wetlands that attract a wide range of bird life. Developed on a sandy base, weather until 2023 has not affected Mangawhai Golf Course due to its excellent drainage qualities. Remedial work has been required after unprecedented wet weather in 2023. The Golf Club has a fully equipped Golf Shop offering a wide range of hire and new equipment. A fleet of electric carts are also available. The Clubhouse overlooks the course and offers bar and café facilities. Mangawhai Golf Course has put significant effort into invasive weed control and predator control, although is not permitted by The Northland Regional Council to address overgrowth in some drainage.





The Future

This section sets direction for the future use and management of the Park. This includes a vision and direction for the Park overall, as well as looking at the more specific aspirations for the different precincts within the Park. Within this section, the aspirations and direction for each precinct are described, together with a list of actions to work towards realising this desired outcome. These actions can be removed as they are completed, and new actions added as they arise so as to keep this plan up to date.

Vision and guiding direction

The vision for Mangawhai Community Park is:

Mangawhai Community Park will be a visible, predominantly natural, public space at the entrance to Mangawhai Heads, used (freely) by the public for recreation and enjoyment of the outdoor environment.

This Master Plan directs that the Park's natural landscapes (ecological and geological) will be its dominant feature. Additional native planting shall be undertaken to provide shade, shelter and create connections between the different precincts of the Park. Future plantings should be exclusively native vegetation that is sympathetic to the dune lands environment. The dominant species throughout the Park should be kanuka and mānuka with occasional Pohutukawa. New plantings should give consideration to fire risk, with gaps/fire brakes incorporated in the layout.

The existing community groups already established in the Park will continue to be acknowledged for the contribution they make to the vibrancy and offerings of the Park. Their continued presence at the Park will be assured. That said, opportunities for expansion of existing groups and the establishment of additional groups will be limited in order to maintain the dominance of the natural elements of the Park. The addition of further built facilities will be in accordance with the direction given in this Master Plan.

The future use and development of the Park will be in keeping with its primary focus being as a space for informal play, recreation, and community participation. Therefore, expansion and enhancement of walking and cycling tracks through the Park will be supported, as will establishment of additional play equipment, picnic facilities etc.

Formal competition level sports such as those requiring full sized sports fields will be better accommodated elsewhere.

Historically commercial aspects of not-for-profit ventures have been permitted as they contribute to some of the groups being self-sustaining. Mobile food trucks and market stalls have also been permitted, subject to securing relevant permits, as it has been deemed they can add vibrancy to the park and be relocated as need-be.

Longer term commercial options that may provide necessary and meaningful contribution to the infrastructure or economic development of the community may be considered by Council.

The continued presence, operation and expansion of the Mangawhai Community Wastewater Treatment Plant is acknowledged and supported in recognition of its contribution to protecting Mangawhai's harbour environment. However, the large-scale development of further utilities (e.g. municipal water supply, emergency services depots etc.) will not be supported as these detract from the natural elements of the Park and its use for public recreation. A possible exception to this might be provision of a helicopter landing pad, recognising the importance of the rescue helicopter service to this community.

New facilities and the design or redesign of areas of the Park should maximise active transport as the primary means of accessing and moving around the Park. Similarly, strong linkages to public transport should be incorporated in the design of the Park. That said, Mangawhai is growing, with many choosing to live more rurally or in areas further afield from the Park and not serviced by public transport. The Park should therefore include ample parking, recognising its prominence as a destination Park for not just local residence but also those living on Mangawhai's outskirts as well as visitors to Mangawhai. The ability of the Park to host events also needs to be accommodated.

Protecting the Valuable Natural Features of the Park

There are a number of valuable natural features within the Park which need to be protected i.e. development of further community facilities, walking tracks, play equipment etc. needs to not compromise these features. These features are detailed in Table 1 and their spatial extent is shown in Figure 1.

Feature	Description and location	Notes for management
Mature kanuka forest	The Park is dominated by old growth kanuka forest. This is a uniquely Northland forest type and is characteristic of sand dune environments. The more natural areas of kanuka forest are also home to abundant native fungi.	While kanuka is fast growing and areas damaged or cleared can be replanted and re-established, the larger stature of some of the trees in the Park needs to be protected. Weed control is also important to protect the quality of this forest ecosystem. Kanuka is a particularly flammable species. To protect the forest, new plantings should give consideration to fire breaks to reduce the risk of fires spreading from the fringes into the interior.
Mature Pohutukawa	There are two very large Pohutukawa trees located in the Park. These Pohutukawa, which are likely to be several hundred years old, are a remnant of the prehistoric forest cover.	These Pohutukawa trees are to be protected.
Merz Huts site	George Merz's hut has been removed for preservation, however the site that he and his hut occupied remains intact.	To be protected and registered with Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga.
Wetlands	These wetlands are a feature of the sand dune landscape, having formed in hollows in the sand dunes.	These areas are a priority for weed control and restoration especially removing invasive acacia and pampas.
Sandstone gully	The Park is home to an impressive sandstone gully system which is an impressive natural feature of the Park.	The sandstone gully should be showcased, however public access needs to be encouraged away from trampling fragile parts of this formation.

Table 1: Features of Mangawhai Community Park that need to be protected.



Figure 1: The location and spatial extent of features which need to be protected in Mangawhai Community Park.

Connectivity within the park

The Park consists of a number of precincts which are separated from one another by geological features. Connectivity between areas is achieved by the Mangawhai Shared Path (a dedicated walking and cycling link that passes through the southern edge of the Park) and a series of lesser tracks and trails that explore their way through the interior of the Park. These trails are mapped in Figure 2.



Figure 2: The layout of active transport links through the Park.

Future connectivity projects will include:

- a) Install walking and cycling links between the Merz Hut area, the Mangawhai Museum and MAZ. These should be designed such that they are easily traversable with a pram or mobility scooter.
- b) Improve wayfinding signage for all tracks.
- c) Continue to maintain all tracks.

Heritage precinct

The heritage precinct includes the Mangawhai Museum, Daring Trust, Information Center and Historic Village. Appropriate activities in this area are any that help to connect people to the history of Mangawhai and to its culture both past and present. This could include expansion and enhancement of the historic village with more buildings added and clubs establishing, as well as the existing historic and museum buildings being used for community arts classes, flax weaving classes, yoga classes etc. This should be a vibrant area with doors open to the public, spaces to explore and opportunities to participate.

Future projects for this area will include:

- a) Expansion of the historic village with spaces available for arts and culture.
- b) Optimise existing car parking and vehicle manoeuvring areas.
- c) Existing vehicle entrances designed to celebrate entrance points to the Park. Design elements and materials to be repeated at both new vehicle and pedestrian entrances and heighten the presence of the Park along Molesworth Drive.
- d) Vehicle tracking to be undertaken to ensure sufficient space for bus manoeuvres.
- e) All entrances, access roads and car parks designed as slow zones which prioritise pedestrians.
- f) Additional native plantings to provide shelter and shade, as well as to create a cohesive feel throughout the Park.
- g) Outdoor display of restored or preserved vintage machinery.
- h) Outdoor display of sculptures.

A future concept for this precinct is detailed in Figure 3 below.



Figure 3: Future concept for the heritage precinct.

Merz Hut area

The Merz Hut area is the area between the Mangawhai Community Wastewater Treatment Plant and Thelma Road. This area was the site occupied by George Merz who was born in Switzerland, educated in England and emigrated to New Zealand when World War 2 was imminent.

After living in Auckland for a time he moved to Mangawhai and became a squatter initially on a site below Heather Street. He later moved to a cabin on what is today Mangawhai Community Park.

During the war, and because of his accent and name, he was reported to the police for spying for Germany and sending light signals to German ships and possibly submarines. The signals were in fact being sent along the coast by the Home Guard. He was arrested and interned but was eventually cleared at Government level.

He was an inventor, photographer, model maker and engineer. He made many motorised model boats and built mini harbours to test them out. His engineering background enabled him to work with batteries, a treadle and an old diesel motor, to power a radio and to make lighting available for his cabin. Word is he was the first to have a form of electricity in Mangawhai.

Merz's importance is due to his squatter background – of which he was one of many in Mangawhai at that time – an aspect that forms part of the fabric of Mangawhai society and its history. George was also something of a Mangawhai character in his own right.

Today, the Merz Hut area is almost wholly undeveloped. The vision for this area is to create a new public access and car park with adjoining picnic area and linkages to the Mangawhai Museum and MAZ areas via walking and cycling paths. In particular, this area will serve as the primary car park for the walking and cycling tracks in the Park. Linkages to other areas will also enable it to serve as overflow car parking for events in the Park. The vibrancy of this area could also benefit from the establishment of a building to house a community group in this area, however the area should not be allowed to become dominated by buildings. Picnic facilities such as mown areas, picnic tables and gas BBQs should also be provided.

Future projects for this area will include:

Preservation and showcasing of the Merz Hut site as a prominent feature of this area.

- a) Story boards telling the history of the Merz Hut site
- b) Reconstruct the existing access off Thelma Road
- c) Construct a new public car park in the Merz hut area.
- d) Construct a new public car park off Thelma Road between the Merz hut area and the Museum to provide access to walking and cycling tracks and overflow parking for events.
- e) Install picnic tables and other amenities around the new car parks.
- f) Additional native plantings to provide shelter and shade. Existing trees in this area should also be protected where possible. When completed, the area should be sheltered and shaded with the ambiance of a forest meadow.
- g) Create an area of open water where model boats can be sailed.
- h) Support the creation of a dog exercise area.
- i) Install walking and cycling links to the Mangawhai Museum and MAZ. These should be designed such that they are easily traversable with a pram or mobility scooter.

A future concept for this area is detailed in Figure 4.



Figure 4: Future concept for the Merz Hut precinct.

Mangawhai Activity Zone

The Mangawhai Activity Zone (MAZ) is a space where people of all ages can enjoy active play and recreation. This is a space for all to enjoy getting active in the outdoors with a focus on informal play rather than competition level sport. That said, the MAZ skatepark presently features facilities of a standard suitable for training for the Olympics.

Going forward, this area can continue to respond to community needs and interests with new play equipment and opportunities being added or replaced to continue to keep future generations engaged. The area should also continue to provide shady spaces for picnics, barbecues and passive recreation. The area should be a space where people can meet and connect, relax and socialise. The presence of a café raising funds for the Park should be maintained and the facility enhanced. The presence of this café facility provides both refreshments and passive surveillance.

The fire and ambulance stations which have been established adjacent to MAZ are acknowledged and will continue to be a celebrated part of this site, given the work they do to protect our community. However, no further emergency service stations will be permitted to establish in the Park, unless establishing within the existing sites e.g. if Land Search and Rescue wanted to store equipment and hold trainings in the Ambulance Station. Establishment of a helicopter landing pad could also be permitted to improve ease of access for the rescue helicopter.

Future projects for this area will include:

- a) Additional native plantings to provide shelter and shade, soften the built environment, as well as to create a cohesive feel throughout the Park. Predominant species should be kanuka, mānuka and Pohutukawa to provide a consistent atmosphere throughout the Park.
- b) Support the upgrading continued presence and enhancement of the MAZ café.
- c) Formalise existing car park to maximise parking spaces.
- d) Existing planted mound between carpark and Molesworth Drive to be retained to provide protection from road noise and traffic.
- e) Existing vehicle entrances designed to celebrate entrance points to the Park. Design elements and materials to be repeated at both vehicle and pedestrian entrances and heighten the presence of the Park along Molesworth Drive. All entrances, access roads and car parks designed as slow zones which prioritise pedestrians.
- f) Install a new drop off zone along Molesworth Drive for vehicles dropping off or picking up

passengers and not parking, including space for bus drop off.

- g) Clear, well defined, generous paths around the courts and cafe area. Improve surface material to provide continuity and increase path network legibility and accessibility.
- h) Work with Northland Emergency Services Trust on if incorporation of a helicopter landing pad could add value by allowing the rescue helicopter to land and evacuate patients without requiring the Volunteer Fire Brigade to set up a temporary landing site.

A future concept for this zone is detailed in Figures 5 and 6.



Figure 5: Future vision for the MAZ precinct.

The forest interior

The interior of the Park is dominated by a closed canopy of tall kanuka forest. This area of the Park needs to be protected and celebrated. Appropriate activities include maintenance and enhancement of the existing walking track network, installation of information signage, resting stations and reconstructing the presently closed lookout tower.

Fortunately, most of the high quality native bush and wetlands are located away from Molesworth Drive and so should not clash with development.

Also present within the forest is a sandstone gully which needs to be protected and celebrated as a scenic feature.

Concealed within this forested area is the Mangawhai Community Wastewater Treatment Plant. The continued operation and expansion of this essential service is supported; however the Park should not be used as a location for further utilities e.g. if in future a municipal water treatment plant is required, it should be located elsewhere.

Future projects for this area will include:

- a) Control of exotic weeds.
- b) Predator control and eradication in league with other like-minded community groups.
- c) Maintain and enhance the existing walking track network.
- c) Improve the walking track around the sandstone gully to both showcase this feature and to protect it from being trampled.

- d) Construct a new observation tower to replace the present tower that has reached the end of its design life.
- e) Restore wetlands.
- f) Maintain a thickly forested visual buffer around the Mangawhai Community Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Area below the Club

The area below the Mangawhai Club is envisaged as a potential location for a future library, community hub or similar civic building. Any new facility should be supported by adequate parking while still maintaining a focus on active transport. This area has recently been cleared of exotic forestry and will require weed management and replanting with natives. The area also includes a natural wetland that should be restored and may also be enhanced to better manage stormwater flows in this area.

When completed, this area could feature a library, community hub or similar civic facility integrated into the natural environment of the Park with trees and plantings softening the outline of the new buildings. Seating and restful spaces should be provided along the shared path and around the wetland with native trees providing shelter and shade. Sufficient parking should be provided but should not dominate the site. Active transport should be encouraged with new buildings fronting onto the shared path rather than Molesworth Drive.

Future projects for this area could include:

- a) Establishment of a new library, community hub or similar civic facilities.
- b) Restoration of the wetland.
- c) Effectively manage stormwater.
- d) Weed control and revegetation of cleared areas.
- e) Install effective drainage to manage stormwater issues.

A future vision for this area is detailed in figure 6.



Figure 6: Future vision for the area below the Club.

Club zone

The area of the Mangawhai Bowls Club and Mangawhai Club is envisaged to continue to provide for lawn bowls and The Club's present suite of offerings, but could also accommodate other clubs and community activities such as event and function spaces.

Key projects for this area include:

- a) Reconfigure existing bowling club car park to permit additional parking and incorporate canopy lifted shade trees and native plantings to help tie it into the park. This could include realignment of the existing car park entrance.
- b) Reconfigure and widen the existing car park at the start of the track to the lookout.
- c) Stabilise slope instability.

Collaboration

So much of the facilities and offerings of Mangawhai Community Park have been provided by community groups with the support of the Council, rather than by the Council directly. Going forward, Council will seek to continue this collaborative approach, supporting community groups and volunteers to realise their aspirations.

While there are now limited opportunities to establish additional buildings in the Park, applications from community groups looking to establish on the Park will be considered against the direction in this plan. Groups will be encouraged to collocate or share facilities where possible, including establishing joint facilities e.g. the Daring will be housed within a new wing of the Mangawhai Museum rather than in its own standalone museum with a separate entrance.

Review considerations

Council shall keep this Master Plan under continuous review, so that it is adapted to changing circumstances or in accordance with increased knowledge.

This plan may be subject to minor alterations from time to time, with actions removed and added to reflect progress.

Council's Significance and Engagement Policy will be used to direct what consultation is needed on a case by case basis in response to the scale of the changes proposed.

Changes to the vision or extensive changes to the overall direction would trigger a comprehensive review. Any such comprehensive review would need to involve full community consultation, including the opportunity for submissions to be made and hearings held.



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