



Submission on the Christchurch City Council on draft Master Plan and Management Plans for Hagley Park and Christchurch Botanic Gardens

25 October 2006

From
Sustainable Otautahi Christchurch Inc.
P O Box 2657
Christchurch

Contacts		
Chrissie Williams Chair Phone: 388 0798 Mobile: 021 330 789 Email: chrissie.williams@xtra.co.nz	Roger Buck Vice Chair Phone: 366 6888 (wk) Email: bucl@clear.net.nz	Arthur Williamson Vice Chair Phone: 332 6815 Email: arthur.williamson@canterbury.ac.nz
Submission coordinator Kate Hewson Email: kate.hewson@canterbury.ac.nz		

We do wish to be heard.
Please email or phone advice of hearing to Kate Hewson

Submission on draft Master Plan and Management Plans for Hagley Park and Christchurch Botanic Gardens

1. Sustainable Otautahi Christchurch Inc. (SOC) is an incorporated society formed in April 2005. The aims of SOC as in its constitution are:
Recognising Te Tiriti O Waitangi / The Treaty of Waitangi, to actively contribute within Otautahi/Christchurch to opportunities and means for achievement of long-term sustainability. In doing so, to seek to ensure that all people have their basic needs satisfied, so that they can live in dignity, in healthy communities, while having the minimum adverse impact on natural systems, now and in the future.
2. This submission primarily relates to the draft Hagley Park/Botanic Gardens Master Plan. Our emphasis is more on general directions and values and less on details of specific projects. We thank the City Council for the opportunity to make this submission.
3. Like most people in Christchurch, the members of SOC greatly value the presence of Hagley Park and the Botanic Gardens as major, iconic green spaces in Christchurch.
4. While we are generally supportive of many of the concepts, comments, and project proposals in the master and management plans, we are particularly supportive of the following projects that we consider being broadly in the interests of enhancing indigenous biodiversity and urban ecological sustainability in Christchurch:
 - Environmental ‘best practice’ audit and implementation (project 2)
 - Heritage conservation plan (5)
 - Water conservation (10)
 - Wildlife and habitat conservation plan (11)
 - People friendly ‘park road’ exploration for Riccarton Ave (13)
 - South Hagley Park multipurpose stormwater treatment/water concept (35)
 - Waterway enhancement (36)
 - Children’s garden (40) - to help children develop a greater awareness of and sense of connection to plants, and the natural environment more generally
 - Education programme enhancement (43) – particularly education for biodiversity conservation and urban ecological sustainability
 - Gondwana Garden (44) – to help people better appreciate the evolution and uniqueness of indigenous biodiversity
 - New collections for the Botanic Gardens to profile important New Zealand plants, local native plants, NZ heritage collections, etc. (45)
 - Peace-Bell installation (47) - to promote Christchurch as a peace city
 - Redevelopment of the Cockayne and New Zealand sections of the Botanic Gardens (51) – to help people better appreciate the evolution and uniqueness of indigenous biodiversity
 - Advancing research programmes (55) – particularly those which would help meet Christchurch’s needs regarding biodiversity conservation and urban ecology.
5. We strongly support the comment on p. 2 of the master plan that there is now a greater public awareness and acceptance of the need to restore and enhance natural landscapes and indigenous environments. We question then, why (re p. 5, bullet point 6) should the Park be only *secondarily* managed to enhance wildlife values and provide habitat for biodiversity? Why not strive to optimally manage for both biodiversity and recreational values?
6. Regarding development of the future landscape character for different park areas (in project 6) and the replacement of many of the old perimeter trees (project 9): while SOC does not have any specific opinions on tree species and landscape characters for certain areas, we do

strongly recommend a holistic, integrated approach be taken to all future landscape and tree planning. This should include development in close conjunction with other relevant plans in preparation such as water, heritage, and wildlife and habitat conservation plans. We strongly support the Hagley Park and Botanic Gardens Plans actively contributing to meeting the vision of the Council's draft Biodiversity Strategy, and working to increase native bird and invertebrate numbers in the Park, particularly since they are still rare (re note p. 42 of the Hagley Park management plan).

7. We also definitely support development of Hagley Park towards better reflecting a wider range of Christchurch's unique values, and expanding the range of values and uses the Park is designed and managed for (re master plan p. 17, "directions for the future"; also Hagley Park management plan p.20, "time to grow a New Zealand landscape character",). As the plans' comments suggest, this should include consideration of and alignment with what makes Hagley Park and the Botanic Gardens unique to Christchurch and New Zealand; from valuing the past – both traditional indigenous values and English settler heritage; to present people and values; to providing habitat for Canterbury's unique biota; and to a future, sustainable Otautahi/Christchurch.
8. Looking to the future, while there are many promising comments and project proposals in the draft plans, SOC wonders:
what would Hagley Park and Botanic Gardens be like if, alongside their recreational aims, there was a clear aim to be a model and leader for Christchurch embracing indigenous biodiversity, ecological integrity, and long-term urban sustainability, to become a 'garden city of the future'?
Given its prominence and iconic nature within our city, we believe that Hagley Park and Botanic Garden can and should play such a leadership role.
9. If this was pursued, some possible project examples in addition to or expanding on the existing project list might include:
 - Demonstration gardens and associated education programmes on:
 - Attracting and supporting native birds throughout the city, including through choice of both native and appropriate exotic trees and other plants in home gardens;
 - How to grow vegetables and other food plants organically in a home garden;
 - How to create and manage attractive home gardens and lawns that also use negligible water, few or no synthetic chemicals, are bio-diverse, drought-tolerant, and can provide appropriate shelter, etc.
 - Set up a Biodiversity Education Centre at the Botanic Gardens
 - Major plantings in Hagley Park are appropriately designed and managed to provide wildlife refuges, particularly for increasing native birds;
 - Enhancing linkages with adjoining landscapes and other green spaces throughout Christchurch to create 'wildlife corridors';
 - Host a major forum on what long-term ecological sustainability can mean for Christchurch as a garden city; facilitate development of a city-wide vision and community implementation plan (the draft CCC Biodiversity Strategy would provide an excellent base for this).
10. To conclude, SOC recommends that the master and management plans for Hagley Park and Botanic Gardens be developed beyond their present state to more fully address taking on a leadership and model role to help Christchurch develop as an ecologically sustainable garden city. With the prominence and high visitor numbers to this combined iconic green space, there is a very real opportunity for Hagley Park and Botanic Gardens to become a truly educational and inspirational site for Christchurch residents as well as a unique showcase to people visiting our city.