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DESIGN PHILOSOPHY
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The background thinking behind the proposals for Flaxmere have already been laid out in the written report. It is worthwhile however to tie together the theory of the report, and the designs contained in the folio of plans by way of what can be termed the design philosophy of the project. This, in order to demonstrate, in words, how the policies of the report have been put into practice in terms of the plans.

1. EXISTING FLAXMERE AND ITS OPEN SPACE PATTERN

The survey of existing Flaxmere was carried out and the open space areas were pinpointed and analysed as to their effect on further development elsewhere in Flaxmere. A plan whereby these open spaces could be linked together to provide for two walkways between the Lochain Block and the Community Shopping Village was put forward, since it was considered that pedestrian activity should be encouraged. These walkways, with appropriate landscape treatment could become very pleasant areas and could become a feature of the NorthWest side of Flaxmere. Quite apart from their providing for attractive pedestrian areas, such walkways would aid in neighbourhood definition.

The need for the extension of the open space linkage through to the new Lochain subdivision was recognised and the way in which they could be achieved was shown in the plans. This element of linking open space areas to tie the new development to the existing, was seen as being most important in allowing the Lochain Block to become an integral part of Flaxmere and not merely an appendage.

The areas in existing Flaxmere of visual importance were noted and these, along with the open space areas, had an effect on how the new block developed.

Existing street patterns were taken into account and where possible continuity of direction was planned.
In fact, all four of the main streets could be continued through into the Lochain Block, indicating consideration of this in the planning of the neighbouring area of Flaxmere.

The survey and analysis of the soils of the area indicated the use of the best soils for parkland and the poorer soils for residential use. This situation has been covered adequately in the report and further comment is not necessary, except to say that there are grounds for the questioning of this policy.

The survey of housing indicated large scale segregation of privately-owned housing from state-owned housing. This, in the writer's opinion, is a mistake as it tends to lead to large visually depressed areas. Nor is the policy of sprinkling individual state-owned houses amongst privately-owned ones the way to success. The answer seems to lie somewhere between, in the form of smaller scale grouping of homogeneous neighbourhoods - this line of thinking is more clearly outlined in the written report.

2. THE LOCHAIN BLOCK SUBDIVISION

A survey and analysis of the soils of the site indicated that while some of the soils were suitable for residential development, others were only marginally suitable or unsuitable.

The areas of sharp topographic change provided an opportunity for aligning the street pattern on a Nature-inspired basis. Use of these swales for streets would reduce the visual nuisance of the main traffic flows.

Walkways were proposed to fit in with these streets, and the swales were to be further emphasised with appropriate large-scale tree planting. Such planting would again aid in neighbourhood definition.

A primary road connection the extensions of Portsmouth, Walton, Caernarvon, and Flaxmere Roads would allow for easy and efficient dispersal of traffic coming to and from the residential areas. Secondary roads leading to the individual homes were placed to allow for optimum utilisation of the site in terms of section yield, and to provide for as
little through traffic as possible.

Recreation areas were sited where the site provided possibilities of exploitation as in the Western corner of the block; or as continuities of open space areas from E Block. The recreation area opposite the gum plantation of Chatham Road would, because of its soil type, be unsuitable for grass play - (e.g. rugby) and should be used for tennis/netball hard surface activities.

The placement of the school is central to the subdivision, and is on a site which provides opportunities for landscape treatment. Access would be by way of the walkways suggested and the crossing of the primary roads is seen as unavoidable - although pedestrian crossing supervision would be required.

Suggestions for a variety of housing types are laid out in the report and no further discussion of this aspect is required here.

The poplars at the North corner of the subdivision which were described visually may in the future become a wind-throw danger, because of the effect of poplar rust (Melampsora spp.) on the Lombardy Poplar. It is thought that the early defoliation of susceptible poplars may lead to the death, or failure to grow, of the fine roots which do much to provide stability for these tall trees. These effects have yet to be proven, in terms of increased wind-throw of Lombardy Poplar, however it seems likely that the poplars on the Lochain Block would need to be replaced within the next ten years.

3. FLAXMERE PARK

The design proposed for Flaxmere Park is largely based on the suggestions which came forward from the questionnaire shown in the report. The proposals are thus expected to meet the "Consumer demand" in terms of park activities.

The siting of the swimming pool on the Park is an alternative only, and the writer has made it clear that he prefers the site to the North of the shopping village.
The planting design is largely based on using large scale planting to create within the park the appropriate use areas. This is particularly so in the areas surrounding the active recreation areas, and in defining the open spaces in the passive recreation area.

Tree species are mainly English and deciduous and are basically related to the soil conditions. Although there is quite a large number of tree species present, species are in general, clumped together to provide a particular area with an identity of its own. Where the park leads on to soils of different character, such as at the Flaxmere Avenue entrance, and at the Shopping Village corner, linkage species of gum and wattle have been proposed. The aim has been to provide for the different recreation requirements and yet retain the continuity of planting necessary for the design to succeed in an overall sense.

The factors leading to the proposals for the children's play area have been discussed in depth in the report. The play area has four sub-areas, namely - the play-hut, the "conventional" play-area, the adventure play area and the passive play area on the slopes of the mound. The combination of these four areas should allow for suitable activities for most children most of the time.

Planting has been based on species which will establish quickly, and thus become play-equipment themselves in a relatively short time - between 7 and 10 years. The poplar species used are resistant or at least tolerant of the Melampsora spp. which are now present in N.Z. The pepper trees are fast growing and make excellent climbing trees when established.

The masses of Berberis are designed to create play areas within the adventure play area and to provide a deterrent to children climbing over the poplars and pepper trees before they are old and strong enough to handle such treatment.

One further point regarding the adventure play area does require further elaboration - this is the point concerning playground supervision. It is an essential part of the
adventure playground concept that the activities need to be under constant supervision - both to encourage maximum usage and benefit to the children, and also to provide a safety factor for the activities taking place. In fact, the failure or success of the adventure playground can be said to depend almost completely on the quality of the supervisor running it. In Europe, where adventure playgrounds have been in existence since the 1940's the position of adventure playground supervisor is becoming more and more a specialised role and is of almost equal status to that of a school teacher.

The personality of the supervisor is most important. It is impossible to say what type of person would make the best supervisor as a truckdriver is as likely to be as successful as a teacher, as a retired orchardist. However, in general, it is possible to say the person, or persons, should have the following attributes -

(i) He/she must have a genuine desire to help children enjoy themselves.

(ii) He must be able to command the respect of the children.

(iii) He must have the ability to guide the children without telling them what to do. The children must be left with the impression that they thought of the activity.

(iv) He preferably should know the basics of First Aid.

(v) He should be practical-minded and have the ability at carpentry.

(vi) He should have a hefty dose of common-sense.

It might be thought unrealistic to expect a New Zealand local body to employ a full-time or even a part-time playground supervisor. However this is very much an accepted situation in many European countries. (see "Adventure Playgrounds" by Bengston.) It must be repeated that without at least a part-time supervisor the adventure play concept would fail.

We have accepted on behalf of our rapidly developing social conscience sociologists, psychologists and "better" ratios of police per head of population to deal with the results of the social problems in our cities. Yet the pro-
vision of attractive alternatives for the play of children may well go a long way towards preventing the development of such problems - particularly in children from "poorer" home backgrounds.

The employment of an adventure play supervisor would indeed be a forward step for recreation in N.Z. As far as I know no such person is employed anywhere in this country. The success of these playgrounds overseas makes one believe that it is a matter of time before they are adopted in this country. Will Hastings be the first?

CONCLUSION

The report, plans, specifications and summary of design philosophy for the Flaxmere project have hereby been completed! It is to be hoped that the products proposed can be utilised to ameliorate the problems involved. At least it is important that the approach of landscape architecture and its relevance in planning is appreciated since in a world where we are increasingly aware of the effect of the environment around us, the discipline of landscape architecture most definitely has a place.