

Report on Brooklands compiled jointly by Thomas Horton and Tom Boulton (Brooklands Head Gardener).

This report for the Park Board was done to highlight the volume of work required to successfully incorporate Brookland into Pukekura Park once it was officially handed over. It was issued on December 30, 1933

FENCES

The boundary fences all require overhauling. Some new posts and battens will be required, and where new wires are necessary, we can use spare wire from intermediate fences, that we recommend be removed. It is imperative that all boundary fences be put in good order promptly, so as to ensure safety from stock.

The boundary of the Brooklands area, (excluding the bush gully near Upjohn Street) is roughly 100 chains. To repair the boundary fences efficiently, it will require 78 posts, 4 strainers, 100 battens and 5 stays. The bush gully area at the far end of the estate, containing 5 acres 1 rood 11 perches has a boundary of approximately 39 chains, and of this, 24 chains require to be erected. For this purpose, we require 80 posts, 4 strainers, 200 battens, 5 stays, 5cwt wire and staples. Total material required, and cost, is as follows:-

158 Totara posts @ 2s 3d = £19 1s 10d

8 Strainers @ 10s = £4

300 Battens @ 15s = £2 5s

3 Cwt Barbed Wire @ 19s = £2 17s

2 Cwt Plain Wire @ 16s = £1 12s

25 lbs Staples @ 3d = 6s 3d

10 Stays, 12ft long, 4 x 3 = £1 16s

Total = £31 18s 1d

DIVIDING FENCES

There are over one hundred chains of dividing fences. Some of these are in good condition, and in others, repairs are necessary.

The dividing fence between the orchard and garden, we recommend should be removed, and this will give us all the material necessary for repairing the other dividing fences.

The fence in front of the homestead, we suggest be moved out at the North-east corner, so as to enclose the small group of trees at present exposed to stock.

Practically all the wires on boundary and dividing fences will require to be tightened up.

ORCHARD

The old orchard, we suggest, should be destroyed, trees grubbed out, and the area prepared for planting. We recommend this area be planted in assorted native trees.

At the Western side of the orchard, there is at present a row of pines, affording fair shelter from Westerly winds. This shelter belt should be strengthened and considerably fortified, by planting additional pines or other suitable shelter trees on the vacant land at the western side of the present row of pines. The row of Lawsoniana now growing between the orchard and front garden shrubbery, we suggest, should be dug up, and replanted approximately twenty-five feet from their present position. In close proximity to the Lawsoniana hedge, are some dilapidated old pines and a smothering growth of Eleagnus. We advise these be grubbed out later on.

PARKING SITE

We recommend that a suitable area near the gate leading into the orchard and to the right of the main entrance gate, be reserved and prepared for this purpose.

SHELTER BELT

All that area between Messrs Grundy, Bond and Shepherds boundary, on the western side of the bush, we suggest be planted with suitable shelter trees; and that this shelter be extended (at least half a chain wide) along the whole of the Southern side of the bush to Mr. List's gully.

BUSH PATHS OR TRACKS.

We suggest that all the old bush tracks be opened up and clearly defined, and new tracks formed where essential. That notices be erected where necessary, asking visitors to keep to the defined tracks and not to injure or mutilate trees, or remove ferns or plants. The opening of the bush paths as indicated will reveal a much greater extent of bush than most people think there is, and we are of the opinion that walks through this portion of the property will become very popular and enjoyable. A really good job of these tracks can be made without the necessity of cutting or damaging much of the growth. It will be necessary to cut through a dead log or two, and to remove a little of the debris, but we advise leaving everything as natural as possible. From these paths, visitors can obtain a glorious view of the whole bush area, and there should be no reason or excuse for anyone not keeping to the regulations.

The historic Puriri tree and one or two other trees of special value and interest, we advise, should have a low protecting fence erected around them.

Many of the trees in the native bush are threatened with ruin by the phenomenal smothering growth of a noxious climbing plant. To save the trees it will be advisable to remove this as much as is it is possible. Quite a lot has already been removed, but it is a slow and tedious job, much of the growth being difficult to get at.

VEGETABLE GARDEN AND SMALL-FRUIT AREA

We advise that this area be cleaned up, trees and plants eradicated, posts and wire removed and the whole of this part be levelled up and prepared, so as to extend the lawn over to the bush. There are two small hedges, (Escallonia and Fuchsia) that may have to be removed to enable this scheme to be carried out. When completed this will be a very decided Improvement. We think this work should put in hand as soon as possible.

A very fine specimen of Fagus Purpurea (Purple Beech) now growing outside the entrance gates, together with two or three other specimen trees, could be planted on this new grass extension, which we think would considerably enhance the beauty of the garden.

There are several large flowering shrubs, now overcrowded and getting ruined, which should be transplanted to more suitable positions, notably the Ghent Azaleas and one or two ordinary Azaleas. This should be done next Autumn.

The summer-house and garden seats want overhauling. This work is urgent. A few more garden seats should be provided, and at least half a dozen erected in the bush.

BUILDINGS.

The Gables: This has a tenant in and we have not inspected, but the hedges around the property have recently been trimmed, the paths cleaned up, and the place looks spick and span.

The Bungalow: The building is in fair condition, the papering of a room, a little paint, and small repairs to the spouting, will make it good. The electric range, copper and tubs, having been removed, these will require to be replaced. The garden and shelter hedges need trimming up and grass cut and fences repaired.

The Vinery: This is a well constructed house, in excellent order, and only requires painting periodically to keep it in first class condition.

Conservatory and begonia House: This is in fair order. Some repairs are necessary. It requires painting.

Propogating House: This also requires painting; otherwise this is in good condition.

Potting shed: We advise this be removed to a more suitable position, one of greater privacy. This building and the out-door frames are in fair order, but are in the wrong place for a public park, and are too small for requirements.

Motor garage Near Gate: We advise this building be removed to a position at the back of the trees, near the South-east end of the old barn, to be used as an implement, tool, potting shed, and general purposes for the permanent staff. This building to be efficiently screened from public view. The old potting shed could be attached to this building as an office and store-room for records, seeds, spraying materials, etc. A private room of this nature is essential.

Old Stables and Barn: The group of buildings comprising the above are in a dilapidated condition, and should be removed. Some of the iron and best of the doors and timber might be used to advantage in the construction of temporary conveniences for the public. The old building adjoining the dairy at back of the house, we think should also be removed. It is in bad condition and a source of danger from fire.

The Homestead: We are not reporting on, presuming you will be getting a more expert report than we would be able to furnish.

CONSERVATORY.

This is well stocked with suitable plants for requirements, and features of the place at this time of the year.

RHODODENDRONS.

If the Board finally decide to adopt the site that has been recommended for the Sanders Rhododendron Dell, then a great deal of preparatory work will be necessary, such as digging, draining, fencing, etc.

There is a swampy area between the old Park boundary and the Brooklands lake, eminently suitable for a sunken bog or iris garden. We suggest this work be put in hand as opportunity offers.

CONNECTING PATHS.

There are three paths in the park, that can quite easily be extended into Brooklands.

No 1. is the lower bush path starting at the steps by the Tea House. This goes right through the Park bush, and can be carried on through the bush in Brooklands, on the racecourse side of the lake, as far as the bridge.

No 2. is on the Western side of the arm of water beyond the boat house. This can be taken right on, following the bank at the Western side of the lake, and merging into another path on the hillside, right in front of the homestead.

No 3. is what we know as the "Totara" walk. This can be extended along the hillside, under the Park-like trees growing in No. 1 paddock, and thence on until it junctions with No. 2 in front of the house. From this path, a beautiful elevated view will be had of the bush, lake and proposed Rhododendron Dell.

We are making no report on that portion of the estate between the main drive and Brooklands Road, unless you desire us to do so.

We think cattle and other large stock should not be allowed in the paddocks where English trees are growing. breeding ewes and lambs should be used to graze in these parts.

We think we have given you a fairly full and detailed report of Brooklands as it is, and our suggestions for its improvement, and we think the suggested work will take two or three years to carry through. This, of course, depends on the amount of labour that will be available to assist the permanent staff.

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