

# PONSONBY'S PARK

## TE RIMU TAHI

### 254 PONSONBY ROAD



The design of the proposed linear park weaves together different strands of Ponsonby's heritage and character to create a series of spaces to support a range of activities. We set out to create a space that fits comfortably within the community and character of Ponsonby, adding to the diversity of the ecology, reflecting its Maori, European and Polynesian heritage and celebrating the diverse mix of people and activities that populate the area. We aim to create a place that quickly feels like it has always been there, with a casual design that can easily evolve in collaboration with the community, and be staged in a manner that enables early implementation with ongoing community partnerships.

The design is based around creating 3 main spaces to enable a range of activities to take place, 'the bush- the backyard- the urban park/plaza' informed by and reflective of the surrounding Ponsonby area and communities both present and past. The park proposal aims to connect the contrasting natures of this site's location - from the hustle and bustle of both night and day activity along Ponsonby Road to the quieter and more refined vernacular of the residential activity along the western and northern parts of the site. A connecting path enable sightlines from the Ponsonby Road ridgeline, a route known by Maori as Rimutahi ('One Rimu' after a sacred rimu tree that once marked the start of the ridge line pathway to various sites of occupation) through to the Waitakere Ranges and back to the city. It provides the potential for visual connections to the surrounding landmarks visible from the ridgeline but also physically connects the residential neighborhood to the street. The materials and landscaping used also relates in scale to the location and to the adjoining heritage buildings, the neighboring character villas and Iwi cultural values.

Underlying this proposal is the expectation that community members and iwi representatives are involved at all stages of the process - from the further development of the design, to contributing to the landscaping and future maintenance and monitoring and managing the end use as appropriate and as capacity allows. Opportunities for the community to propagate plants from their own garden cuttings to contribute to the park, or to donate specimen trees is supported as means of advancing the project and providing a generational connection to place, from past, present to future. The proposed staging of the development seeks to enable early establishment of planted areas through this active collaboration with the community for the soft landscaping and tree planting. This also enables staging of public

funds for both the detailed design and development of the proposal, whilst maintaining and building upon community connections.

Our approach to the landscaping enables a transition from the quieter more organic greenery of the native bush area to a more suburban backyard feel of the central area to a structured 'urban park area' adjacent to the Ponsonby footpath which facilitates both economic activity and entertainment. Both day and night use and safety is allowed for by lighting, location of pathways and seating and appropriate planting to ensure clear sightlines across key spaces within the park. Informal 'incidental' play is supported through the landscaping design in addition to a small toddler play space.

Key features of each area are summarized below.

### 1. Bush Area

Located at the western part of the site adjacent to and opposite existing residential properties the 'Bush' area of the linear park reflects the past environment before settlement and provides a visual connection to the Waitakere Ranges as well as an ecological connection between Tole Reserve and Western Park. This area will aim to be a quieter space that can also be seen from other areas of the park but allows for play, exploration and observation of the activity away from the main road. It will also act as a buffer to the neighboring residential areas to the west and north of the site. A key feature of the planting will be a series of Rimu trees that will enclose the corner and stand as descendants in memory of Te Rimu Tahī which is also the Maori name for the Ponsonby Road, supported by an ecologically appropriate mix of other native trees and lower shrub planting. The picnic area and toddlers 'discovery play area' is partially screened from the rest of the park by a large Puriri to create a sense of enclosure whilst still enabling clear sight lines to the rest of the park. The picnic / play area acts as activity node, to encourage exploration and full use of the large area.

### 2. Backyard Area

The 'Backyard' reflects the importance the suburban backyard as an informal social and recreational area and for more productive use e.g. for fruit trees and vegetable gardens as a familiar part of our NZ culture and landscape. With apartment dwelling on the rise in the Ponsonby area it also recognizes the growing need to provide a 'communal' backyard space to support this aspect of the Ponsonby culture in the future. The space proposes a mix of lawn, herb gardens, orchard trees and trellises for vines and will allow for a mix of activity. The trellis supporting plantings but also acting as a potential windbreak. It enables opportunities for ongoing custodianship and use of the produce, depending on community

and local business interests, and includes the potential for heritage planting via cuttings from the neighborhood.

### 3. Urban Space

The linear park opens out to Ponsonby Road and invites people into the space from this corner part of the site. The layout to this more formal and public part of the park is designed to allow for a more vibrant activity appropriate to its prime location along the Ponsonby Road frontage that can also support community economy and activity both at night and day. It is a predominately paved area to support flexibility of use. Space is provided for public sculpture to mark the entry to the park at the street corner.

The urban space includes a stage and informal market area and it has the potential to be a regularly used as an 'out door community center' to support ongoing activity. A set of three permanent structures are proposed, to be designed to complement each other, including the covered stage/seating area, a row of small market stalls, and the public toilets to support the functionality of the park. Stepped seating and landscaping capitalizes on views both east and west and opportunities to see and be seen. Lighting is provided that allows for safety of the space and enables temporary decorative lighting to be installed for events, to also add to the night time atmosphere of this area

Colorful planting is selected along the southern part of the site to make the most the sunny aspect. This area of brightly colored planting represents both the 'colourful charcters' of Ponsonby and the decorative and formal 'Front yard' landscaping found along the residential streets. Seating is integrated into the landscaping.

#### **Produced by the Motu Design Ltd**

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The ownership of the preferred proposals will pass to the WLB on behalf of Auckland Council, with the understanding that the Submitter will be given credit as the originator of the Concept. The design proposal material will be made available to the public for comment by whatever means CLD Facilitation group decides. It is noted that the CLD Facilitation group is unable to provide any warranties or guarantees that the preferred scheme will be finally built.