

CONCEPT DESIGN

CABELEIGH PLAYGROUND

January 2020





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BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND SITE HISTORY

INTRODUCTION

Auckland Council has appointed Urban Solutions and 4Sight to develop a concept design for a potential playground development for Cabeleigh Drive Pond Reserve in Helensville.

The project brief is for the development of a neighbourhood play space with a focus on a mix of junior, intermediate and teen play. The existing reserve has a stormwater pond that needs to be considered in the design for the new play space. The site has poor drainage and no all-weather path providing access through the reserve.

PRE-EUROPEAN HISTORY

According to the Helensville Museum’s Pre-European History¹, tradition suggests that the Kaipara region has been occupied by the very earliest Maori settlers for over 90 centuries. A crucial area from a strategic point of view, it provided a route for travel to and from the north, while the hilly terrain made it easy to defend and offered a rich abundance of food and resources. The harbour was plentiful in seafood with numerous rivers, lush kauri forests and a 40km ocean beach. The temperate climate and warm free-draining soils were ideal for growing crops.

Ancient traditions of Ngati Whatua trace the tribe’s ancestry back to fairy people called patupaiarehe or Turehu. Maruiwi, Kupe and Toi te Huatahi, captains of waka, were significant for Kaipara. The most significant waka to have arrived is Mahuhu around 1300AD. Many of the crew settled at Taporapora. The descendants of the Mataatua waka, Ngati Awa made a profound impression on the people and the landscape of south Kaipara where they built prominent pa with distinctive terracing and earthworks which is still found today.

Most of Ngati Whatua’s settlements and cultivations were at that time west of the Kaipara River, by the sea at Te Muriwai, Oneonenui and along the lush valleys of Waimanu and Waipatukahu streams. Ngati Whatua attempted to engage in the new colonial economy in a variety of ways. During the 1840s they were involved in the shipping industry and helped provision newly arrived settlers and transport them over rugged terrain.

Ngati Whatua’s long involvement in the kauri timber industry of the southern Kaipara, Pitoitoi and Waitakere districts was, in the early 1860s supplemented by the nascent kauri gum trade. By 1862 Ngati Whatu had successfully encouraged John and Issac McLeod to move north and settle at Te Awaroa, where they established McLeod’s timber mill. John McLeod and his wife Helen built a single-storey Kauri home which was called “Helen’s Villa” a name which was quickly adopted by the town.

During this time kauri was considered as ‘king’ with countless kauri logs being milled and shipped from Helensville’s busy wharves. For many years it was the headquarters for a steamship service running to Dargaville and other ports around the shores of the Kaipara Harbour.

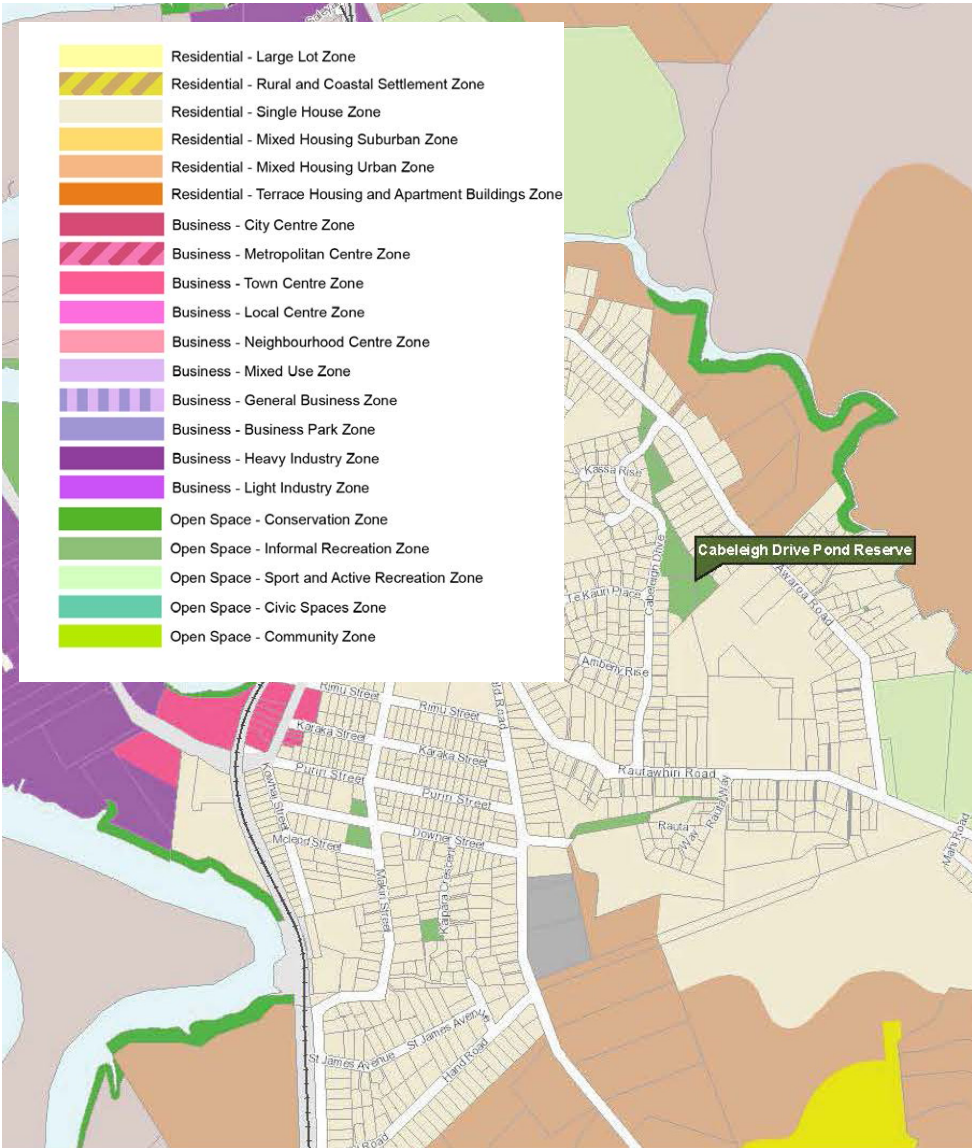
The site sits within the Kaipara Ecological District². Before human settlement of New Zealand most of Kaipara Ecological District (Northland) would have supported dense rain forest.

By the time of European settlement (1850s onward), the District was essentially deforested, the predominant vegetation being kanuka/manuka shrubland and wetland. The Kaihu valley on the northeastern boundary supported kauri-podocarp-broadleaved forest associations typical of Northland on a variety of sedimentary and volcanic substrates; elsewhere, almost the only old-growth forest surviving was kahikatea forest on valley floors.

Old-growth forest is now extremely scarce in the Ecological District with Tapu Bush, Pretty Bush, Upper Okaro Bush, and Lake Humuhumu Island providing a tantalising glimpse of the pre-human forests. Kauri/broadleaved forest similar to that in much of Northland would have been widespread except on the youngest, unconsolidated sands, the oldest, poorest consolidated sands, and the organic soils of the wetlands. Kauri would have been concentrated on upper slopes and ridges. Canopies elsewhere would have been dominated by taraire and kohekohe, with puriri, titoki, and mangeao common. Totara and narrow-leaved maire would also have been common, as emergent and canopy tree respectively, on drier sites. On sites sheltered from the prevailing drying westerlies, rimu would have been present as an emergent and towai in the canopy. Sheltered coastal valley sides would have supported coastal forest dominated by pohutukawa (absent today from most of the west coast) and karaka, along with a variety of other species now rare (e.g., whau, wharangi) or apparently absent (e.g., tawapou). Subcanopies everywhere would have been dominated by mahoe.

UNITARY PLAN

Cabeleigh Drive Pond Reserve is a site with stormwater pond and stream running through, designated as an Informal Recreation Zone within the Auckland Unitary plan. The planning category Informal Recreation allows for play spaces.



¹ Helensville & District Historical Society Inc (2019). *Pre-European History - Ngati Whatua*. Retrieved from <http://www.helensvillemuseum.org.nz/history/preeuropean.htm>

² New Zealand Department of Conservation (2009). *Natural areas of Kaipara Ecological District (Northland Conservancy)*. Retrieved from <https://www.doc.govt.nz/globalassets/documents/conservation/land-and-freshwater/land/kaipara-ecological-district/natural-areas-kaipara-eco-district-full.pdf>

SITE CONTEXT

ABOUT HELENSVILLE

A historic town, Helensville is situated beside the Kaipara River on Kaipara Harbour's southern edge. A 40 minute drive north from Auckland, Helensville has a relaxed lifestyle which boasts a variety of recreational amenities. These include harbour cruising, natural thermal pools, fishing, golf, horse riding, nearby vineyards and beaches.

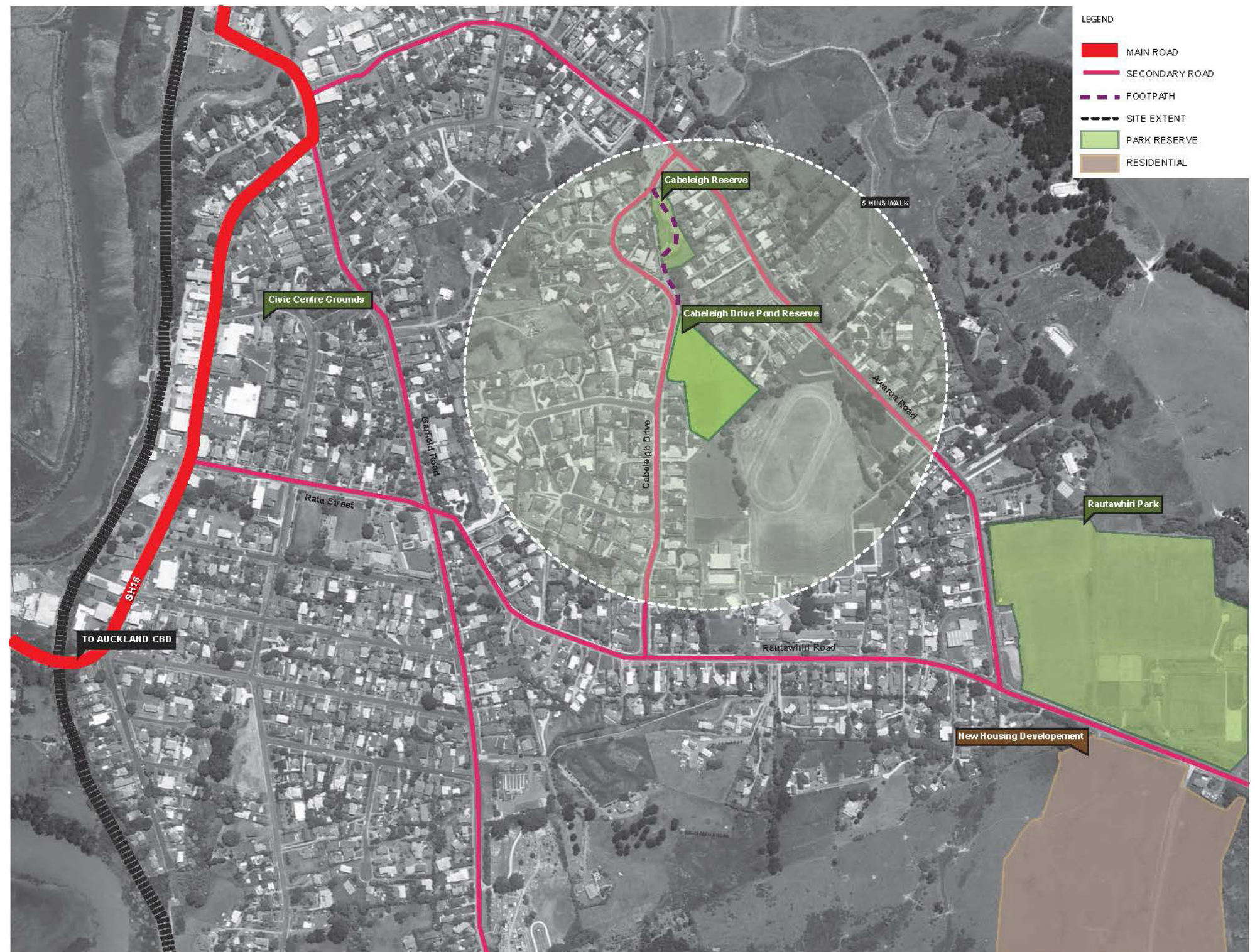
According to the 2013 census, Helensville's population was 2643, however this is expected to increase in coming years due to significant housing subdivisions currently under development³. Helensville has one local primary school and the secondary school Kaipara College is also located within the town.

SURROUNDING CONTEXT

State Highway 16 passes through the town connecting Helensville to Waimauku (towards the south) and Kaukapakapa (to the north). Passing through the town, the Kaipara River flows from the northern foothills of the Waitakere Ranges and terminates at the southern end of the Kaipara Harbour. Flat farmland surrounds the town to the west, with hilly terrain situated to the east.

EXISTING PLAYSPACES

Helensville's existing playgrounds include two junior play spaces located within the main urban area and an intermediate-senior play space at Rautawhiri Reserve which includes a skate park and netball and tennis courts. Rodney Local Board recently finished upgrading Rautawhiri Reserve to include a perimeter pathway and new multi-purpose courts. The junior play space in the Helensville Civic Centre grounds have recently been renewed, with nature play elements, playable edges and attractive colourful seating.



³ Statistics New Zealand (2013). *Quick Stats about Helensville*. Retrieved from http://archive.stats.govt.nz/Census/2013-census/profile-and-summary-reports/quickstats-about-a-place.aspx?request_value=13225&tabname=Work&sc_device=pdf

SITE ANALYSIS

EXISTING SITE CONDITIONS

Cabeleigh Drive Pond Reserve is open and sunny with a mixture of flat areas and hilly terrain. A small stream flows through the centre and a stormwater pond is situated at the southern end. There are a variety of mature, existing trees and there is no play equipment, existing paths or seating on the site.

The park has a central location within Helensville and plenty of opportunities for on-street parking. The long street frontage assists with excellent CPTED (crime prevention through environmental design) values due to the passive surveillance from the street.

The existing trees, stream and the undulating terrain on the site create opportunities for natural play spaces to be incorporated into the playground.

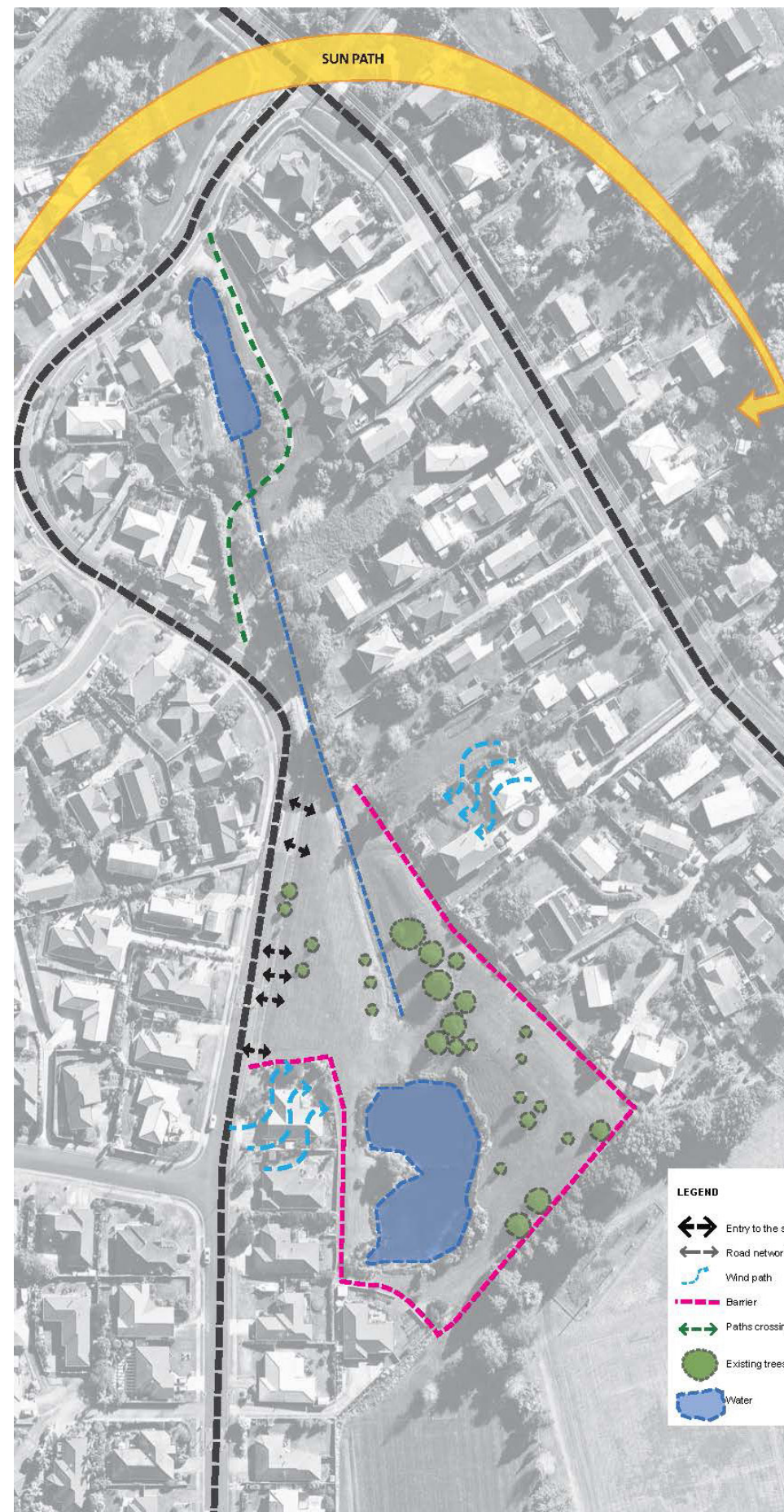
DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

The playground needs to be designed with consideration of the stormwater pond to ensure that children are not encouraged to venture near the pond.

The topography also needs to be analysed when designing the paths to ensure that the route is accessible.

Other aspects which could be considered include;

- There is currently no play equipment or seating on site;
- The opportunity to utilise the sloping topography to create challenging play opportunities for older children;
- The large flat lawn which could be utilised for a junior play area;
- There could be a focus on nature play elements and materials (timber, rock, rope, planting), local ecology and water movement;
- The excellent CPTeD values with passive surveillance from the street; and
- The potential to increase diversity of play opportunities in Helensville.



'THE ROCKY STREAM'

DESIGN STATEMENT

Located on Cabeleigh Drive in Helensville, Cabeleigh Reserve has a unique topography which has influenced the design of the playground. The stream flowing through the centre of the site provided inspiration for the nature-based concept. Inspiration was also garnered for the log components of the playspace from the strong historical connection that the area has to the old-growth forest and Kauri logging activities.

The concept creates two connected but distinct play areas, a junior playspace and an primary/teen playspace, both of which are influenced by nature. Formal play equipment is also included within the design. The junior area integrates a 'miniature' form of nature play through low lying logs. Rocks create a boundary to the space while incorporating informal play elements, while rocks intermixed with seating separate the junior and primary/teen areas.

Precedent images to illustrate the look and feel for the playspace:



The intermediate area incorporates a more challenging nature play inspired playspace with a net platform which allows children to climb up the sides of the structure and walk across or hang out on the net. A slide and a tire swing are also included here.

The proposed design seeks to:

- Highlight the natural play spaces by introducing a variety of timber logs and rocks into the site. The ability to walk across logs and rocks encourage children to use the natural elements as a way of being transported around the site.
- Encourage sustainability through the choice of materials and play equipment while retaining the qualities of the existing landscape.
- Introduce stream planting to attract local fauna and flora and to assist in filtering of stormwater run-off to the stream.



CONCEPT PLAN

Scale: 1:200 (A3)

● Existing Trees

+ New Trees

1 | Concrete Path

2 | Seating

3 | Spinning Bucket

4 | Horse Springer

5 | Ladybird Springer

6 | Slide

7 | One Seat Swing

8 | Tyre Swing

9 | Climbing Net

10 | Logs

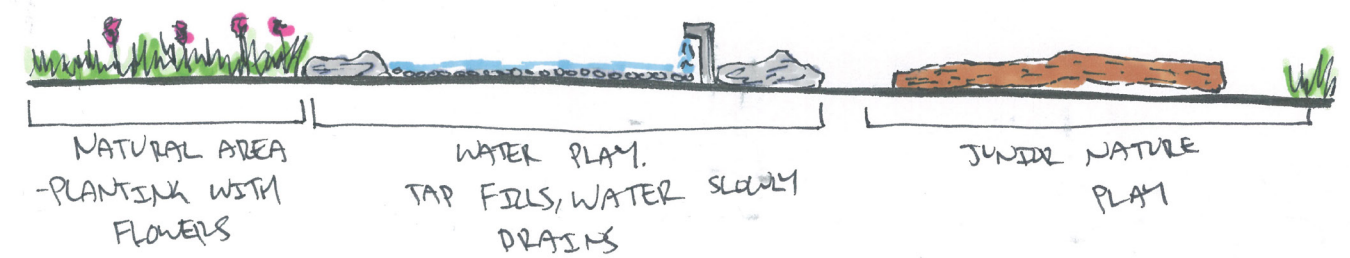
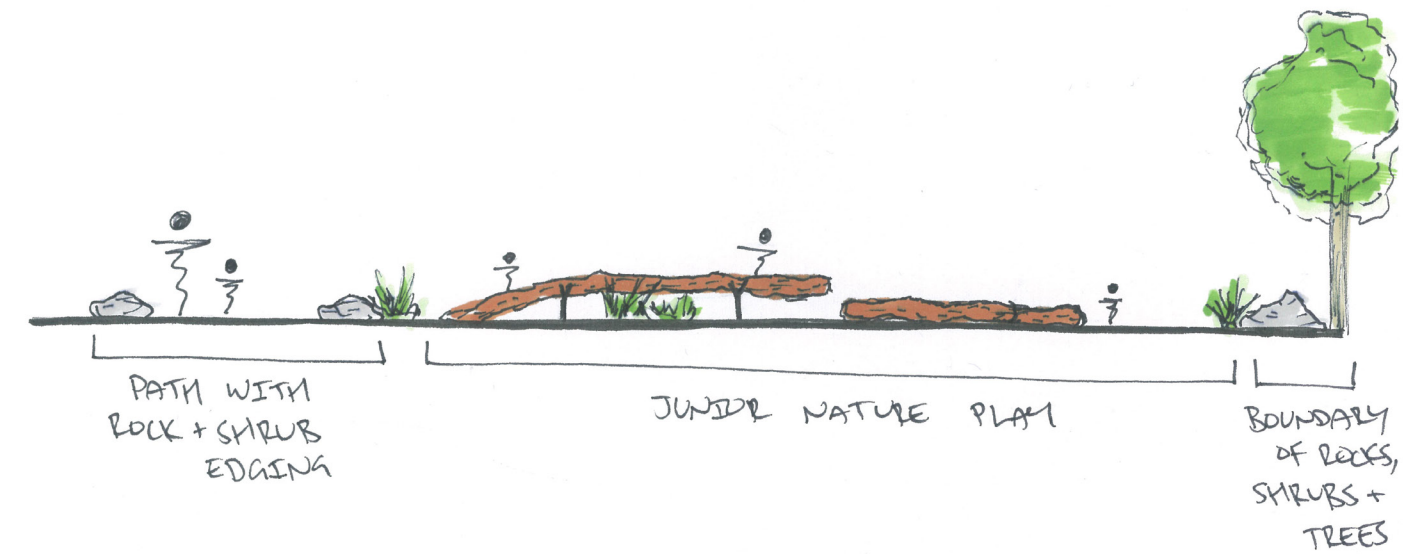
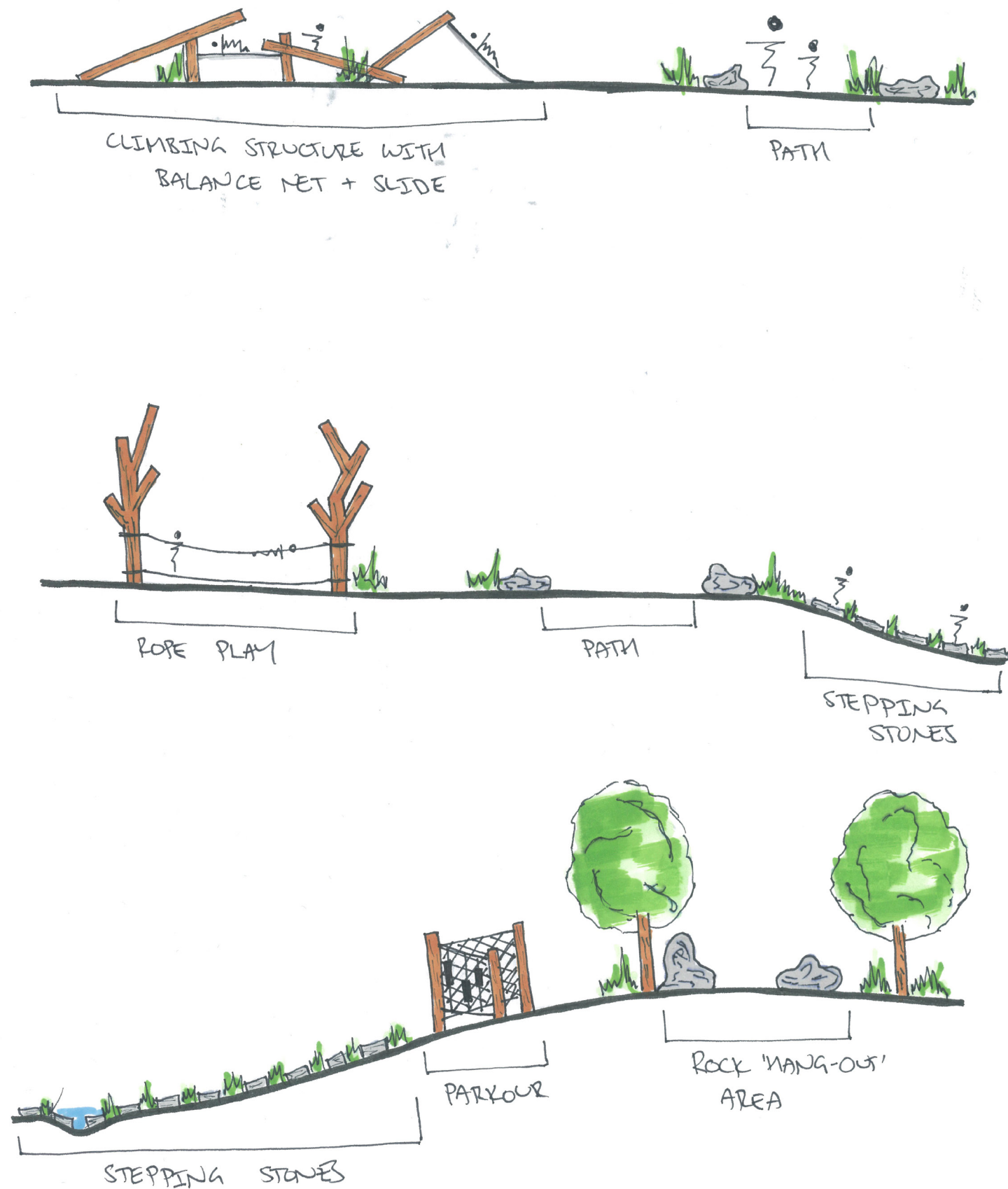
11 | Riparian Planting

12 | Rope Play

13 | Picnic Table



CONCEPT SKETCHES



FALL ZONES

1:200 (A3)



OVERVIEW OF THE PLAYGROUND (3D IMPRESSION)



JUNIOR/INTERMEDIATE PLAYSPACE (3D IMPRESSION)



SPATIAL ARRANGEMENTS



EQUIPMENT



SPINNING BUCKET



HORSE SPRINGER



LADYBIRD SPRINGER



SS EMBANKMENT SLIDE



ONE SEAT SWING



ONE-POINT PENDULUM TYRE SWING



CLIMBING NET

HARD SURFACE PALETTE



LOGS

Logs will be included into the play elements providing a natural amenity for children to informally play on. They will be arranged in a manner which allows for this.



ROCKS

Rocks will provide a boundary to the playground while creating an element of play for younger children. They form a visual link back to the stream.



CONCRETE PATH

The concrete path will connect to the existing path, providing continuity and ensuring that people can easily access the playground without passing directly through the playspace.



BARK

Bark is a natural looking softfall which will meet the playground design standard (SNZ HB 5828.1:2006) to protect children if they should fall.



TAKARANGI MOTIF CARVED/PAINTED ONTO A FLAT FACED ROCK

To provide continuity from Helensville's towncentre streetscape upgrade, the Takarangi Motif will be either carved or painted onto a flat faced rock. This will be placed at both entrances to the playground, adjacent to the path.

PLANTING PALETTE



PŪREI

Carex secta

A large, fast-growing green sedge, it is often found alongside streams and in wetland areas. The large root system is great for holding together drain and stream edges, preventing erosion. Evergreen, hardy and prefers wet soils.



KANUKA

Kunzea ericoides

A small tree with small, narrow, scented leaves and loose papery bark. Showy white flowers. Kanuka is an important revegetation species and is attractive to bees. Evergreen, moderately frost tolerant.



NEW ZEALAND TAWA

Beilschmiedia tawa

A broadleaf tree, the New Zealand Tawa has smooth dark bark with willowy green leaves which are paler underneath. It produces small greenish-yellow flowers in spring and early summer followed by 2 cm, dark purple fruit.



PURIE

Carex dissita

A tall densely tufted sedge with flat, smooth, dark green, deeply grooved, grass-like leaves. It forms bright green or reddish clumps. It can be abundant along streamsides. Black seeds appear on stems that are shorter than the leaves.



MIKOIKOI - IRIS

Libertia peregrinans

A grass-like plant with bright-orange leaves. Attractive white flowers in spring and summer. Tolerant of both full sun and shade. Evergreen. Hardy.



DWARF MOUNTAIN FLAX

Phormium 'Green Dwarf'

A dwarf New Zealand native flax, this plant has bright green foliage. Evergreen, it does best in full sun and well drained soils but will tolerate most conditions including coastal and frost. It is attractive to native birds.

