

**Date:** Wednesday 28 February 2018  
**Time:** 4:00pm  
**Meeting Room:** Albert Eden Local Board Office  
**Venue:** 135 Dominion Road  
Mt Eden

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## **Albert-Eden Local Board**

# **OPEN MINUTE ITEM ATTACHMENTS**

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## Auckland Horticultural Council Inc.

Association and involvement with the preservation and restoration of the historic former Chamberlin Park Golf club rooms.

**The Auckland Horticultural Council (AHC)** and its predecessor Auckland Horticultural Society, has had a long and proud association with the Auckland province and beyond since 1843. Our first Patron was Sir George Grey.

The AHC is the coordinating or overarching body representing numerous amateur and specialist horticultural/ garden clubs and societies collectively representing many thousands of people.

Over the years it has worked closely with Auckland Local Bodies in the development of parks and gardens and in the overall encouragement of gardening and beautification of the Auckland region.

**The Chamberlin Park** public golf course was severely impacted by the construction of the North-Western Motorway, resulting in an area of land fronting Gt North Road from the intersection of the old Western Springs Road (now St Lukes Rd) through to a point opposite Motions Road or the old transit camp. In the succeeding years this largely abandoned land which included the then dilapidated overgrown and run down old golf club rooms became an increasing liability for the Auckland City Council (ACC) and a centre of various criminal and anti-social activities.

Early in 1984 our then Chairman Assid Corban made an approach to the ACC to acquire rights to use the old club rooms. Nothing seems to have happened and in August 1986 the AHC wrote to the ACC proposing a joint venture to develop and manage the wider area. As a result, the AHC were invited to submit proposals to restore and upgrade the historic building and for a joint venture to provide a community gardening facility for the benefit of the people of Auckland.

On 24 November 1988 ACC wrote approving renovations of the club rooms on condition that there would be no cost to ACC and that the ACC would send an assurance letter of intent to guarantee an appropriate lease of the club rooms. The letter also said this assurance would not extend to the “whole site at this Stage” because there needed to be further agreement of the funding “as previously agreed”.

1 February 1989 Barry Bonner the then ACC Executive Manager, presented a formal JV proposal including plans for the entire site, to the parks and recreation committee. The proposal was more grandiose in vision than eventually accepted. Some of the key elements that were not scaled back included, the exhibition hall, restaurant, parking and particularly relevant the community gardens. The ongoing management of which was to be jointly with AHC and open to the public during daylight hours. AHC to contribute \$280,000 (actual in excess of \$300,000) inclusive of \$80,000 already expended on the clubrooms. In today's terms this represents \$1,625,000 source Reserve bank of New Zealand property inflation calculator.

From the records available to us it appears that the final build cost was around \$1 million, Funding for which came from the AHC contribution of \$300,000 and the balance (on the strength of the good offices of the AHC) from a millennium fund contribution of \$700,000. The rate payers of Auckland contributed very little.

JV problems started within a short time, even though it was supposed to be a jointly managed, because ACC leased the restaurant to an operator who claimed priority over using the exhibition halls for weddings preventing the AHC using the halls for horticultural activities as intended.

The community gardens were developed in accordance with a design agreed upon by the AHC and ACC. The ACC in terms of its commitment agreed to pay for a gardener (\$12,000 per year) and provide the water. The gardens were a very popular drawcard for visitors and widely used for wedding photos.

Around 2007 the ACC reneged on this agreement and advised AHC they would no longer provide a gardener or water. The Bulb and Perennial Society one of the groups under the AHC umbrella volunteered to maintain the gardens. Incredibly the ACC said they would

only agree to this if the B&P Society paid them for the privilege of doing this and also paid for all of the water they used.

When advised that this was not acceptable and gravely unfair (let alone not being in keeping with, and a further breach of the JV): -

The ACC bulldozed the gardens.

Report prepared by Graham Milne from AHC records and historical notes of Lorraine Ramsay.

January 2018