

PLANTING AND VEGETATION GUIDANCE - HISTORIC HERITAGE ENVIRONMENTS

Historic heritage environments are spaces which contain tangible and intangible cultural and natural heritage features. These features could be archaeological sites, burial grounds, historic buildings or heritage plantings. Heritage gardens require special care that devolves from a robust conservation planning process with comprehensive research at its heart.

Vegetation in these sites plays an important role in revealing the story of the site or the site's residents, the way it was occupied and used, as well as providing a backdrop or canvas on which heritage buildings or features are framed or complemented. Particular species are sometimes associated with specific uses. For instance, totara and yew trees are associated with cemeteries, and productive and floral gardens are associated with homesteads.

Key outcomes:

- use planting to frame particular features or views
- use planting to recall past uses, buildings or objects that once existed on the site
- incorporate flora and fauna which once existed or was unique to the particular area or site back into the park. Fauna could be incorporated physically (if appropriate) or through interpretation
- recreate historic associations and ecosystems, such as pond systems, estuaries or a stand of trees. Undertake research to understand how these systems have evolved and contributed to the site's landscape
- provide buffers between varied boundary conditions that surround the park to protect the integrity of views and experiences
- use heritage gardens in an aesthetic and educational role, to raise awareness about the site's heritage and the way it can be experienced
- where specific varieties and plants are not available, substitutions should be sensitive and well considered
- understand the significance of each element within the garden

Typical issues:

- loss of important views and vistas due to vegetation overgrowth
- inaccurate restoration, representation or recreation of plant species or inaccurate layout of these
- inadequate research and public engagement resulting in the accidental removal or damage to heritage planting or remnants (e.g. tree stumps)
- generic or contemporary designs, colours of planting schemes are incompatible and detract from the heritage place

Key considerations:

- **Site specific planting.** Planting should respond to the specific requirements of the site and its history. An approach based on preserving, restoring or reconstructing could be considered. This could be guided and informed by engagement with council's heritage team, community engagement and background research including historic photos.
- **Plant archaeological sites appropriately.** Archaeological sites require specific planting plans with sufficient planning and detail to avoid root intrusions into subsurface remains.

- **Celebrate character vegetation.** The local community may have a particular plant species or vegetation form that is a defining characteristic of the site or area. Successful engagement with the community is the best way to discover whether this exists, and how it would be best incorporated into the site.
- **Appropriate species selection.** New planting in heritage settings should use appropriate and relevant species. Research should guide the planting palette and species selection. Refer to historic photographs, legacy plans, and community members. Planting should reflect the heritage values and attributes of the particular site, and help to make it a special and enjoyable place to visit.
- **Retain vegetation form and structure.** When existing heritage plantings include invasive species which will require removal, replace these areas with non-invasive species that are similar in form and appearance.

Other considerations:

- **Plant source.** Propagate plants from existing remnant specimens, and consult nurseries which specialise in heritage species.



Nell Fisher Reserve, Birkenhead.

Two large cypress trees were retained and colourful annuals were installed either side of the path to celebrate the procession to a war memorial plinth. Nell Fisher

Reserve, Birkenhead.



An arch in Jellicoe Park made from volcanic rock is flanked with large specimen's trees which strengthen the connections through the park.



Judges Bay, Auckland. A midden was discovered during construction on this sloped coastal park. This led to the application of a planting technique using structural cells, which were fixed onto the surface of the slope, filled with earth and planted into, to prevent disturbance of the midden area.



Jellicoe Park, Onehunga. Clipped hedging with annual plants below provides a cottage garden theme, which works well with the surrounding heritage buildings in this park.



Rose Hellaby House, Waitakere. Restoration of the gardens included the use of gnomes to direct visitors around the property. The casting of an original gnome from the property was used and replicated, and these gnomes now provide wayfinding and character for the historic gardens.