

***Landscape Assessment Suter Art Gallery Redevelopment Proposal
Nelson City***

A Report Prepared for:

Nelson City Council
Strategy and Planning Division
PO Box 645
Nelson

Date:

03.04.12

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	2
1 Landscape Effect on Queen's Gardens.....	3
History of the Queen's Gardens	3
History of the Suter Gallery site.....	3
Landscape attributes	8
The existing character of the Queen's Gardens	8
The existing character of the Suter Gallery site.....	9
Spiritual, cultural and social associations.....	10
Landscape assessment.....	11
The Suter Gallery redevelopment proposal.....	11
Visibility of the redevelopment within Queen's Gardens.....	12
Landscape evaluation.....	15
Evaluation of the effect of the redevelopment on the use and enjoyment of Queen's Gardens.....	15
Relevant objectives and policies of the NRMP.....	20
Steps required to mitigate adverse effects.....	21
2 Landscape Effect on Bridge Street.....	24

Introduction

1. This report provides a landscape assessment of the Suter Art Gallery redevelopment proposal (new and old elements), including the effects of vegetation modification, on Queen's Gardens and on Bridge Street.

1 Landscape Effect on Queen's Gardens

History of the Queen's Gardens

2. The history of the Queen's Gardens has been described in detail in the Landscape Conservation Plan prepared by Louise Beaumont in December 2011. The following summary is taken from information in that report.
3. Following European settlement in 1841, the eel pond area was set aside as a marketplace, but a few years later it was being used for public recreation. In 1880 its status was changed to Public Recreation Ground. Early plantings included pines, eucalypts and willows.
4. In 1886 the Council decided to convert the Eel Pond Reserve into gardens that would be called after Her Majesty the Queen. Designs were prepared and planting began in 1887. The Gardens' first large-scale public use was in 1889, and the new park was officially opened in 1892. Following much planting during 1892, by 1893 it was described as "virtually botanical gardens".
5. In 1894 a row of plane trees was planted between the eel pond and Albion Square, running south from Campbell's School.
6. The next significant planting occurred in the 1940s, with 7,402 plants and 119 trees planted across the Gardens in 1941.
7. Native plants were established in the south-west corner and along the western side of the eel pond at various periods during the twentieth century.
8. Garden features have been added and changed throughout its life, the most recent being the Chinese garden, but the pattern of open spaces and vegetation structure has remained constant since the 1890s.

History of the Suter Gallery site

9. This summary is also derived from information in the Landscape Conservation Plan.
10. The land now occupied by the Suter Gallery was used as a site for a school from 1844. By 1886 Campbell's School was operating only as a Sunday school, and the Council considered buying the property to add to the Queen's

Gardens and connect them with the neighbouring grounds of the provincial chambers (Albion Square). This was not done, but instead the Nelson School Society allowed the Council the use of the school grounds as part of the Queen's Gardens. The ongoing stewardship of the site was confirmed by the Bishop Suter Art Gallery Trustees in 1898 when they agreed that the land surrounding Campbell's School stay under the control of the City Council.

11. The Mayor planted an oak tree on the school property in February 1892, as part of the Queen's Gardens Jubilee plantings. The Mayor's Oak was damaged by a horse in 1896, at which time it was over six feet high. No record was made of the location of this tree.
12. In 1896 the Nelson School Society offered its land and property as a gift to the Bishop Suter Art Gallery Board of Trustees. The building of a 'suitable' art gallery was seen as completing the beauty of and enhancing the Gardens. It was oriented to face the eel pond, "so that its most pleasing aspect may be visible from the Queen's Gardens". Its presence, as viewed from various locations within the Gardens, was seen as a marker of the city's cultural development.



Illustration of the new gallery and Campbell's School about 1899, showing one young tree in the location of the present-day northern oak and another tree by the south-east corner of the school. This second tree may have been one of the row of planes. The present-day southern oak had not been planted when this picture was taken.

Photograph reproduced from Beaumont L: Landscape Conservation Plan Queen's Gardens, Nelson (2012) p32



Photograph reproduced from Beaumont L: Landscape Conservation Plan Queen's Gardens, Nelson (2012) p43

13. In 1926-7 the Horticultural Society helped to refurbish the fernery that had been established in 1905 in the south-west corner of Queen's Gardens, and they extended the fern plantings with flaxes around the western side of the eel pond, with the path moved back from the pond edge. Study of the photo of this planting and a 1947 aerial (both reproduced here) suggest that a row of kowhai trees may also have been planted along the edge of the pond.



In 1949 it was proposed to alter the layout of the area belonging to the gallery, replacing exotic trees with native shrubs and ferns. This 1947 aerial photo shows the two oak trees

between the Suter Gallery buildings and the eel pond (1, 2), with to their left the row of plane trees (3, 4, 5). The present-day single red beech (6) and the group of black beech trees around one of the planes can also be seen (7). Between these and the edge of the pond is another row of trees (8 to 12) underplanted with ferns. Most of these appear to have a weeping character, possibly being kowhai.

Photograph reproduced from Beaumont L: Landscape Conservation Plan Queen's Gardens, Nelson (2012) p46

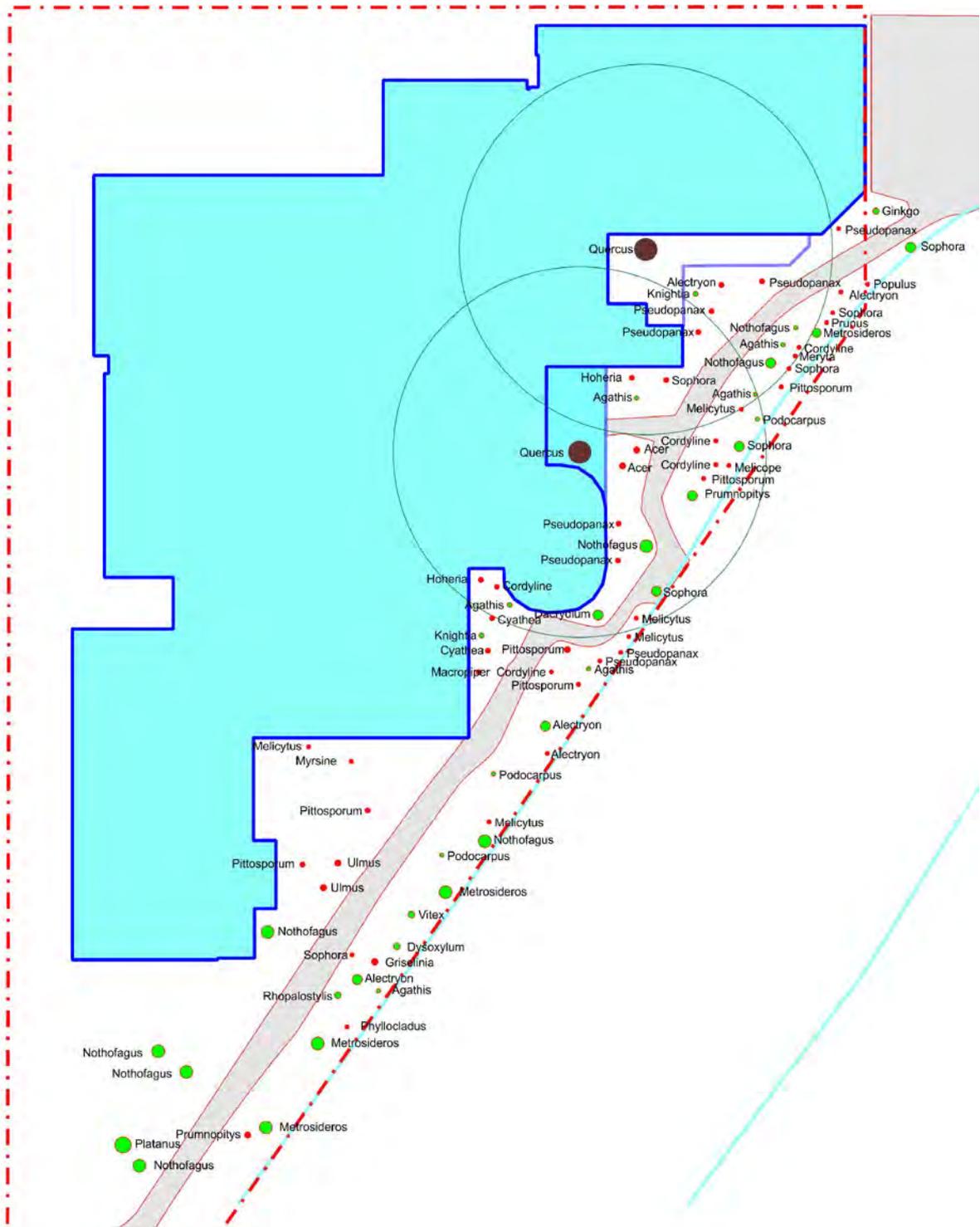
14. In 1979 a major redevelopment and extension of the Suter Gallery added new spaces and opportunities, including a café with an outdoor deck to the eastern elevation, overlooking the pond and the Gardens. Construction of a new theatre building in 1987 extended the bulk of the gallery eastwards along the Bridge Street frontage.



Circa 1980 photograph showing the new gallery and the café looking out through the existing trees to the eel pond

Photograph reproduced from the Bishop Suter Art Gallery Archives

15. The next redevelopment phase took place in 1992, when a conservatory-like structure and a kitchen were added to the Suter café.
16. Views of the building's new form from within the Gardens became increasingly screened by tree growth and by the planting of over 105 native tree and shrub species, which was carried out along the western side of the pond, in 1995-6, by Fern Society volunteers.



Sketch plan showing the main trees growing along the east and south sides of the Gallery as at March 2012. The two oaks are marked in grey, and the approximate spread of their canopies is shown. The most well established of the other trees are marked in green, with younger, smaller or spindlier trees marked in red. Their branches grow together to form an almost continuous woodland canopy, currently around ten metres tall, between the building and the eel pond, apart from a small open area alongside the McKee Gallery.

Note this is NOT a measured plan and all plant locations are approximate only. It will be necessary to survey the individual stems to determine their exact locations in relation to the building footprint

Landscape attributes

The existing character of the Queen's Gardens

17. Most of the trees and shrubs in the Queen's Gardens are now mature, presenting a typical tree canopy around 20 metres high, punctuated by occasional taller trees to over 30 metres tall. Within this canopy there are four open spaces, comprising the U-shaped eel pond, the lawn between the two sets of Bridge Street gates, the Boer Memorial lawn, the rose garden, and the Hardy Street lawn.
18. Park users enjoy the gardens from the lawns and from the paths, which meander through the trees, across the lawns, around parts of the pond and through the rose garden. They are encouraged to sit on park benches placed alongside the paths and at picnic tables alongside the eel pond. Very few visitors stray from the lawns and paths into the eel pond or into the shrubberies and planting beds.
19. Views from the lawns and paths are generally short, and terminated by vegetation. There are no formal vistas in a conventional sense. All of the focal points are structures: entrance gates, footbridge, Boer War memorial, Priapus fountain, boat sculpture, gazebo and waterwheel.
20. The whole park is strongly enclosed by tall, dense boundary trees and internal vegetation, making it into an apparent oasis, with minimal visual connection to the surrounding hills, streets and buildings.
21. The density of the planting reflects the success and the consistency of management over the past 130 years to create and maintain a complex and stimulating garden, rather than parkland or woodland.
22. The diversity of plant forms, colours and textures reflects that it is primarily a botanical collection. The small scale of the open spaces (eel pond and lawns) in comparison to the height of the enclosing vegetation makes walking through the park into a very intimate experience, heightened by the variations in air temperature experienced when passing between sunny and shady spaces.
23. It provides an attractive venue for occasional public events including theatrical performances held in the gardens from time to time.

24. A high proportion of the taller trees and larger shrubs in the Gardens are evergreen, retaining their leafy appearance and casting shade throughout the year. A significant but lesser proportion of the canopy trees and the smaller feature trees are deciduous, providing colour variation through the year, and opening up views and letting in sunshine over the winter months.
25. The planting between the western side of the eel pond and the western boundary of the park (south from the Gallery land) has a predominant character of native woodland/riparian understorey, growing under a high canopy dominated by exotic plane and native beech trees. A woodland path threads through the trees alongside the eel pond, squeezing through the narrow space between the café and the pond edge. This path is part of a very popular walking and jogging circuit around the Gardens, enjoyed because the native bush character adds diversity to the botanical experience of the Gardens.

The existing character of the Suter Gallery site

26. The Suter Gallery site is mostly covered by the buildings of the gallery. On the west (Albion Square) side of the gallery there is just a narrow access roadway. The north side presents to Bridge Street with a paved entrance courtyard, a small feature tree and neat mass planting.
27. The eastern boundary of the property is the edge of the eel pond. The area between the eel pond and the gallery building has the character of young native riparian woodland, much of it being over 10 metres tall, growing under a high canopy dominated by two large spreading oak trees and a tall native beech tree.
28. The southern corner of the property has an unsealed carpark under a high canopy of three native black beech trees and one plane tree. Just north of these, on the east side of the McKee Gallery building, are a large red beech tree and two spindly but tall Chinese elm trees.
29. All of this vegetation melds seamlessly with the landscape of the western boundary of the Queen's Gardens south from the Gallery's land.
30. The shade cast by the taller trees, together with texture of the tiled roofs, the use of reflective glass windows and conservatory and the recessive wall

colours, together make the building inconspicuous in the filtered views through the woodland.

31. The oaks, the plane and the elms are deciduous, letting in the sun and increasing the extent of views to the sky during the winter months, while almost all of the other vegetation is evergreen.



This joined-up series of photographs gives an idea of morning views across the eel pond to the Suter Art Gallery site. The gallery buildings can just be seen through the riparian trees. The high tree canopy behind the native beech on the right of centre is formed by the two spreading oaks, while the skyline trees to the left of centre are beeches and planes.

Spiritual, cultural and social associations

32. Since the 1880s Queen's Gardens has been Nelson's premier urban park. Like the city itself, it is small and compact. It acts as the de facto botanical garden for the town. Over the decades it has been used as a venue for many formal gatherings and as a place to plant commemorative trees. It has always been treasured by Nelson residents and by visitors to the city, drawing people in to stroll, walk, jog, feed the ducks, sit, and enjoy the weather and the greenery. It is also well used as a walkway connecting between Bridge Street and Hardy Street on the eastern side of the town centre.
33. For a similar period the Suter Gallery has been the city's premier art gallery, and a hub of Nelson's artistic culture. The close connection between the display of artworks and the enjoyment of an artistically laid out landscape was recognised from the start, with the location of the gallery alongside the Gardens, the orientation of its entrance facing the Gardens rather than Bridge Street, and the decision, confirmed at regular intervals, that the grounds of the gallery should be managed and used as a part of the Gardens.

34. The close association was reinforced by the 1979 gallery extensions, which included construction of a glass walled café and associated outdoor deck looking out over the eel pond, plus two new high gable windows artfully placed to frame views of existing trees.
35. The new deck unfortunately intruded onto the existing around-the-pond path. The intrusion on enjoyment of the grounds was further reduced by the 1992 café extensions. Their visual effect of the 1992 changes was reduced by the use of reflective glass for the conservatory, but the kitchen extension is incongruous to this day. Together, these two extensions changed the character of the eastern façade from a simple front face overlooking the Gardens to a complex collection of back spaces tucked in behind the gallery. The subsequent 1995-6 Fern Society plantings created a vegetation screen between the café and the pond, possibly intended to screen these additions, and this action further reinforced the change of character.

Landscape assessment

The Suter Gallery redevelopment proposal

36. Following a failed plan to undertake a substantial redevelopment of the gallery in 2002, the management was re-organised, with the Bishop Suter Trust constituted by the City Council as a Council Controlled Organisation.
37. The Council has engaged architects to prepare initial sketch designs for a scaled-down redevelopment proposal. This seeks to have greater respect for the heritage values of the 1899 building and the Queen's Gardens landscape.
38. In order to achieve this and also to provide sufficient floor space within the new building, the architects have determined that it will be necessary to fell the two oak trees to make way for the extended building. The footprint of the sketch proposal also extends closer to the trunks, and over the root zones, of a number of other trees along the eastern side of the property, and reduces the width of land available for a public path through the trees between the building and the pond.
39. Plans are still at an initial sketch stage. While the proposed changes have the

potential to restore an attractive face and visual linkage to the Gardens, they also propose to introduce a stepped series of blank walls along the southern part of the eastern face.

Visibility of the redevelopment within Queen's Gardens

40. The proposed redevelopment of the Suter Gallery will be seen from some of the paths, seats and lawns within the Queen's Gardens. Visitors to the Gardens do not generally stray from the paths and lawns into the pond or into the shrubberies.
41. Visibility through the existing vegetation is greater in winter months, when the deciduous trees lose their leaves.
42. Analysis of the viewshed from the Gardens shows that the main areas from which the redevelopment will be seen are:
 - ⤴ the set of two parallel paths that run along the eastern side of the west arm of the eel pond, looking across the pond, generally busy with hungry ducks, to the gallery site. These paths have flanking seats and lead past two paved areas with picnic tables affording views to the redevelopment site.
 - ⤴ the paths and lawns in the rose garden and on the north side of it, including, as a background feature, a view from the northern end of the footbridge. Seats set around the rose garden encourage visitors to linger, savouring the sunshine and the views across the rose beds and between the specimen trees.
43. Provided a sufficient amount of the appropriate type of existing vegetation is kept - in winter the redevelopment may be seen as a minor background feature, partly obscured behind foreground plantings, from the Hardy Street (dawn redwood) lawn. In summer it will be hardly noticeable.



Plan (not to scale) showing the Queen's Garden paths and lawns from which the gallery redevelopment will be seen. Those parts of the Gardens shaded out have minimal or no views to the site.



This afternoon photograph shows people using the picnic tables that look directly across the eel pond to the Suter Gallery site, which is off to the left of the frame



This morning photograph shows the view across the rose garden to the Suter Gallery site. Two specimen deciduous trees between the eel pond and the rose garden filter the view. The picnic table in the top photograph can be seen between the trees. The canopy of the spreading northern oak on the gallery site can be seen behind the right-hand foreground tree.

Landscape evaluation

Evaluation of the effect of the redevelopment on the use and enjoyment of Queen's Gardens

44. All landscapes are dynamic and continually change. Landscape assessment is not about how to 'freeze' a landscape in a particular state. It is about managing the direction and consequences of change, and how to sustain landscape attributes and values over time.
45. The process of correctly assessing the likely effect of the proposals on the Queen's Gardens landscape is made difficult by the preliminary nature of the architectural drawings made available to us. We have made a preliminary assessment of those plans, but a final definitive assessment will be possible only through the construction of set of accurate photomontages. One with the existing vegetation retained, one with selected trees retained and one with much of the vegetation removed.
46. The photomontages will help to assess those key elements that will determine the effect of the redevelopment on the landscape and enjoyment of Queen's Gardens.
47. In the meantime our assessment is based on the preliminary artist's impression entitled Images Exterior View from Gardens and dated 8/03/2012.



*Suter Gallery Preiminary Design Issue, February 2012:
Images Exterior View from Gardens 8/03/2012*

48. The viewpoint would appear to be on the pond-side path close to the outside of the north-west quadrant of the rose garden.
49. This illustration is useful in that it shows the anticipated character of the proposed buildings. In using it to evaluate their effect, the representation of the grassed ground and also the standard architectural renderers' trees and people must be mentally removed, as they would not be part of the actual view after the building is erected. This is another reason to stress that our assessment is tentative, and cannot be confirmed until a set of accurate photomontages has been prepared.
50. It should also be noted that the viewpoint is further south along the pond-side path than would be the most representative view of people using and enjoying the Gardens. This has the effect of reducing the dominance of east-facing walls and revealing more of south-facing walls, compared to a more representative view looking across the pond from alongside the southern picnic table.
51. The most pertinent matters to be assessed are:
 - ⤴ The height and bulk of the buildings
 - ⤴ The styling of the eastern faces of the buildings
 - ⤴ The colours and reflectivity of the building finishes
 - ⤴ The retention or removal of the two existing canopy oak trees
 - ⤴ The retention, modification or removal of the other existing trees within 15 metres of the eel pond boundary
 - ⤴ The management and redevelopment of landscape features to reinvigorate the landscape setting of the buildings
52. A preliminary discussion of each of these follows.

The height and bulk of the buildings

53. The illustration show that in the main views from the Gardens, the most prominent feature of the redeveloped gallery buildings will be the unadorned rectangular grey walls of the east facing facades. The only east-facing windows are surrounding the café. We understand that this is due to the need

to prevent sunlight from shining onto the gallery's art collections and displays. The consequence is that it turns a blank face to the Gardens.

54. The designers have tried to mitigate this by proposing south-facing windows, but, as can be seen from these sketches, those windows are only visible when looking at the building from more of a southerly viewpoint. It is therefore understandable why the artist of the rendered perspective view has chosen a fairly southerly viewpoint and screened the blank walls with carefully placed groups of trees.
55. The sketch shows that the proposed redevelopment is of a height that will largely mask the 1899 building, and that the bulk of it, if unveiled, would dominate the landscape of the western side of the eel pond.

The styling of the eastern faces of the buildings

56. The styling of the proposal makes no reference to the Victorian/Edwardian heritage values of the Queen's Gardens. Instead, it appears to be deliberately designed to emphasise the surrounding heritage values by way of forceful contrast. Thus the proposed glazing pattern and cladding materials are plain, rectangular and unadorned, in contrast to the sloping roofs and textured red brick, tile and stucco of the 1899 building and the 1987 theatre building. This also contrasts starkly with the Victorian/ Edwardian aesthetic of the built features (fountain, war memorial, bridge, etc.) of Queen's Gardens.

The colours and reflectivity of the building finishes

57. The glazing around the café makes a visual reference to the reflecting waters of the eel pond. The proposed basalt stone facings to the blank walls will be very recessive. Without veiling vegetation they would give the impression of creating rectangular holes in the view. However the recessive colour means that they would largely disappear from view behind a veil of green leaves and branches.

The retention or removal of the two existing canopy oak trees

58. The two mature oak trees currently play a significant role in downplaying the visual effect of the existing gallery complex in views from the Gardens during summer months. This is largely because they cast deep shadow over the roofs and walls. They would have a valuable role in doing the same for the new building.
59. The oak trees also form the skyline to the north-west corner of the park, and as such they contribute to its strong sense of enclosure and its oasis-like character.
60. The Queen's Gardens Landscape Conservation Plan ranks all of the mature trees in the Gardens as *exceptionally significant*. While the oaks are not in the Gardens, it notes that "The Suter Art Gallery grounds are a significant part of the Gardens' setting. This is not only a visual and spatial relationship but includes historical, cultural and planted associations. The Suter grounds contain mature trees which are believed to be part of the Gardens' early grounds development planting".
61. The value of these trees to a significant number of members of the community is reflected in the number of submissions calling for retention of the trees that were received in response to the recent public consultation on the conservation plan.
62. Removal of either or both of these trees would have a significant adverse effect on the community's appreciation of the heritage landscape of the Gardens.
63. This needs to be weighed against the perceived benefits that might accrue from their removal, including the reduced maintenance requirement for the gallery buildings and the curatorial benefits of increasing the capacity of the gallery.
64. Retention of the trees would spread an umbrella over the north-eastern part of the proposed building, downplaying its visual prominence. However, this part of the building, characterised by the glazed walls of the cafe, is not the part most needing to be downplayed.

The retention, modification or removal of the other existing trees

65. The existing woodland between the gallery and the eel pond contains a number of large, well established native trees: three red beeches, a rimu, three black beeches, a ginkgo, four pohutukawas, three kowhais, two titokis and a matai. They are growing within a dense stand of smaller, thinner stemmed native trees and shrubs, which include young kauri and totara.
66. The screening effect of these evergreen trees, along with associated native trees and shrubs, is the main reason why the current Gallery buildings are hardly visible from those parts of the Gardens which overlook them.
67. The planting density, along with the shading effect of the overhanging oaks, has resulted in many being spindly. However, a number have grown to significant height and girth, and several others, notably the matai, rimu, kauri and totara trees, are well established and on their way to becoming the forest giants of the 22nd century. Given that the existing mature trees in the Gardens are some 130 years old, this is a reasonable timeframe to plan for.
68. Protection of the health of these “noble” trees as they grow to maturity over the next hundred or so years could possibly achieve a more sustainable long term outcome than retaining the oaks, which are already mature and may not survive in good health for another hundred years.
69. The group of three black beeches and one plane tree which are growing alongside the southern carpark, together with the red beech and two Chinese elms on the east side of the McKee Gallery, have a landscape significance in visually enclosing the Gardens which is possibly greater than that of the two oaks. Furthermore, the beeches, being evergreen, retain the enclosing function throughout the year.
70. It will be essential to keep and to bulk up this screen planting to ensure that the new gallery buildings are veiled from Queen's Gardens. Doing this will also reduce the visual significance of the two oak trees in views to the north-west corner of the Gardens.

The management and redevelopment of landscape features

71. At this stage no detailed thought has been given to a landscape plan for the proposed development.
72. The Bishop Suter Trust have submitted to the Council that the Queen's Gardens Preservation Society consider the "woodland" effect created by the vegetation on the Suter land along the edge of the eel pond to be important to the ambiance and character of the Gardens, and that views of the Gallery from the Gardens should be filtered out. This report's assessment of the visual effect of the proposed buildings confirms that that must be an essential component of the development proposal.
73. It has been suggested that the planting could be modified to restore the intimate relationship between the gallery and the Gardens. In 1899 it consisted of a simple open lawn running down from the front of the building to the margin of the pond, with three specimen deciduous trees carefully placed where they would grow to frame views of the building. The opportunity to achieve this spacious character was lost with the 1979 extensions, but the proposed redevelopment has some potential to renew the relationship between the café and the Gardens that lasted from 1979 to 1992, in a way that is deliberately designed to be more attuned to the current, intimate character of the Gardens.
74. Unfortunately this opportunity will be very limited, to just the area between the café and the edge of the eel pond, due to the need to veil about three quarters of the eastern frontage of the new buildings.

Relevant objectives and policies of the NRMP

75. Removal of any of the trees, protected or not, has the potential to cause an adverse effect on the environment, including the potential for an adverse effect on the neighbouring Queen's Gardens. Where resource consent is required the proposal must be assessed on its merits, and with regard to any mitigation measures proposed as part of the redevelopment to address those adverse effects.
76. In addition, specific Nelson Resource Management Plan (NRMP) provisions

cover the removal, damage and trimming of listed trees.

77. Both of the oak trees are listed in the NRMP as Local trees, which allows for them to be felled without the need for a resource consent, provided the Council is informed one week beforehand.
78. It would appear that the oak growing alongside the wall of the theatre building may also be within the Queen's Gardens Woodland W28 as indicated on the planning maps, while the other oak, growing through the deck, appears to be outside the Woodland. The NRMP shows all of the trees between the building and the pond, as well as those by the carpark, as being part of Queen's Gardens Woodland W28, which is listed in Table 2.1 of NRMP Appendix 2 under the Heritage category.
79. The Manager of Resource Consents for Nelson City Council has advised that the Woodland category has no associated rules or objectives or policies in the NRMP. There is no regulatory outcome arising from a woodland classification. The existing rules list and specifically refer to individual trees, not woodlands. Accordingly, the only requirements imposed by the NRMP on the trees of the Suter Gallery site are the provisions for Local Trees for the two oak trees. None of the other vegetation on the Suter site, and between the existing building and eel pond, is identified in the NRMP and could be removed without even any form of notification to Council.
80. However, it has been advised that the entire gallery redevelopment would be a non-complying activity under the RMA, for zoning reasons. It will be necessary to demonstrate that the redevelopment has been very carefully designed and implemented so that adverse effects are minimised.

Steps required to mitigate adverse effects

- ⤴ All of the following measures must be planned for through the preparation and implementation of a landscape development plan, prepared by a landscape architect and an arborist working together, and then implemented and maintained to ensure that the attractive setting for the café and the veiling of the rest of the building from Queen's Gardens is satisfactorily achieved.
- ⤴ As discussed above, it should be possible to arrange the design so that it re-

establishes the intimate relationship between the café and the Gardens. This needs to be done in a way that can be recognised as being a positive effect of sufficient magnitude that it will outweigh any adverse effect of any selected tree removals.

- ⤴ For the main part, however, the existing screen planting must be identified and protected. It is currently only a narrow strip, some 5 to 8 metres wide, and therefore it must also be bulked up, by extending the width of the planting area, possibly to an average of between 8 and 15 metres.

Unfortunately, another feature of the proposed redevelopment plans causing an adverse effect is that the building footprint is proposed to be extended closer to the edge of the eel pond, hence reducing the area available for the existing screen planting to grow healthily. To achieve this footprint, a significant number of the current screen trees would have to either be removed to make way for the buildings, or the buildings would be so close to them that the trees will not be able to continue to grow healthily to maturity.

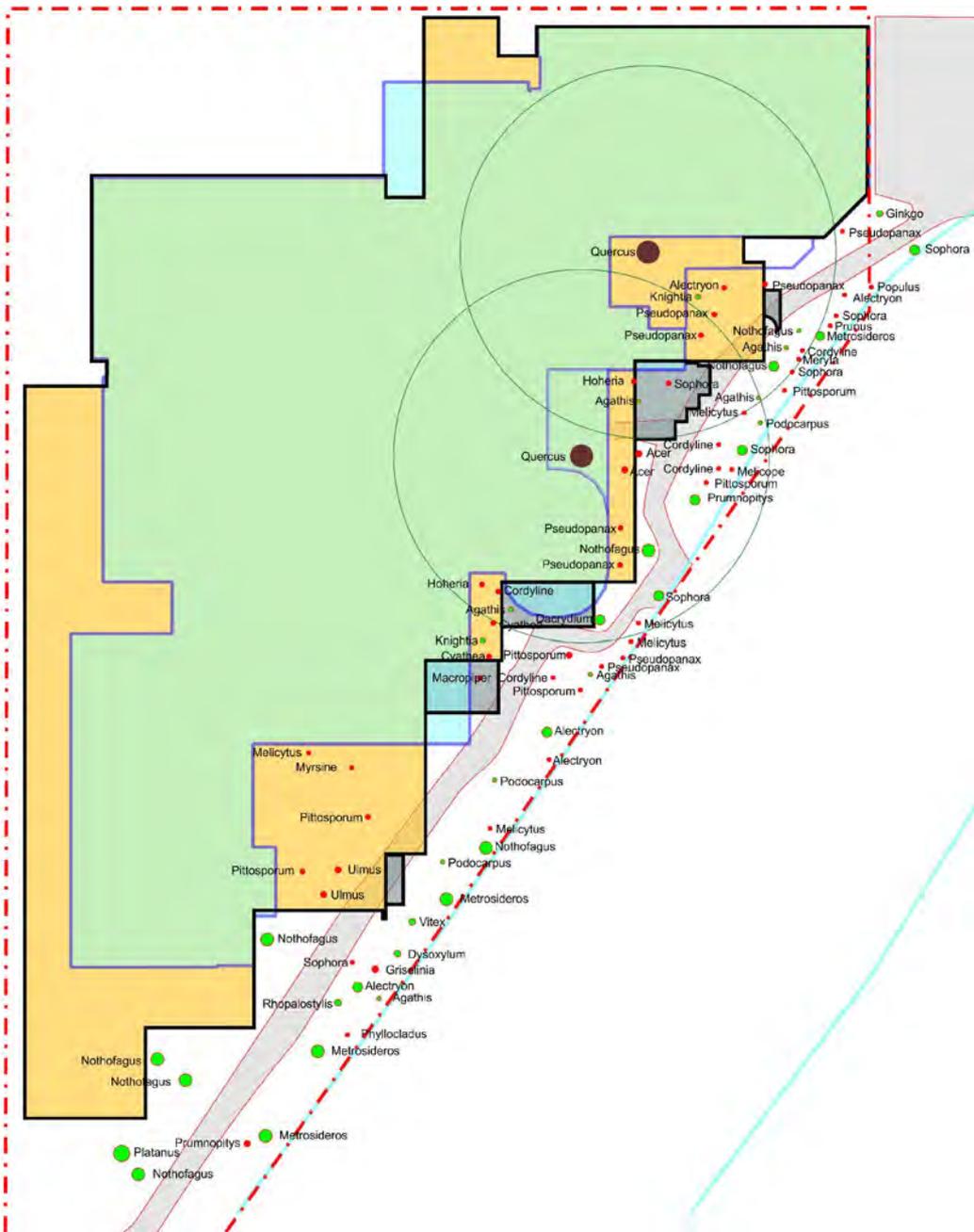
Thus the current plans propose both a building that would have an adverse effect on the landscape of the Queen's Gardens and the removal of the existing vegetation that will be needed to mitigate that adverse effect.

Furthermore, the extended building footprint will prevent the setting aside of sufficient space for the continued provision of the attractive round-the-pond woodland walk without significantly eating into the screening vegetation.

According to the Bishop Suter Trust the formalising of this as a right-of-way was agreed on by the City Council and the Trust's predecessor on 28 August 1978.

- ⤴ This may require the footprint of the new buildings to be moved further back from the edge of the eel pond. In addition the footprint must step around those existing trees to be protected which are further back from the pond and provide enough room for the footpath without requiring further tree removals.
- ⤴ The details of the building construction must be modified as necessary to accommodate the long-term needs (for at least the next hundred years) of the roots of the existing trees that will be retained and of additional screen planting. In particular, a sufficient volume of good, well aerated topsoil is essential for healthy root development.

- ⤴ The “noble” trees must be identified individually and covenants must be added to the property title to ensure their long term protection, and so to guarantee that they will be left undisturbed to grow to maturity.



This plan shows coloured yellow those parts of the proposed building that will be outside the present footprint, and coloured grey the proposed decks. The existing building footprint is coloured blue and the overlay of both footprints is green.

The footprint of the new buildings may need to be moved back from the edge of the eel pond and to step around existing trees

Note this is NOT a measured plan and all plant locations are approximate only. It will be necessary to survey the individual stems to determine their exact locations in relation to the building footprint

2 Landscape Effect on Bridge Street

81. The brief was extended to include the effect of the redevelopment proposal on Bridge Street
82. The existing character of the Bridge Street frontage is dominated by the 1899 building, the 1979 entrance and the 1987 theatre building. There is an entrance courtyard with flanking concrete sitting walls between the 1899 building and the street, while the 1987 building rises directly from the street boundary. There is one small specimen tree in the north-west corner of the courtyard, along with foundation plantings around the buildings and between the courtyard and the street. The northern oak tree is a high background skyline feature in some views over the entrance and the theatre. The southern oak is not visible.
83. The redevelopment proposal is to remove the 1979 entrance and the courtyard and to replace them with a ramp and associated steps and a raised entry 'box' pushing out towards the street with a side canopy running parallel to the 1899 building.
84. It is also proposed to remove the oak trees.
85. The street frontages of Albion Square and Queen's Gardens are lined with large established evergreen trees which spread over the footpath. This character used to extend across the Suter Gallery frontage as well but in the last ten or so years it has been necessary to remove, for health and safety reasons, the mature pine and Norfolk Island pine that were growing in the front of the gallery site, increasing the prominence of the buildings.
86. The northern oak has only a minor visual significance to Bridge Street, the character of the gallery site being created by the three prominent forms of the gallery building. Removal of the oaks would not have a significant effect on the character of the street.
87. In comparison the proposed changes to the gallery entrance will transform the relationship of the gallery to the street, as well as the experience of going in and out of the gallery. At present one has the experience of walking down off the street, and after the changes one will walk up off the street into a raised entrance. The courtyard will be replaced by a ramp in front of the 1899 building, which will reduce the building's apparent height.