

Onepoto Domain

Onepoto is a crater that has been filled to have a flat floor, first by natural silting from the estuary over thousands of years, and later by building a dam or dike that is the lower part of Tarahanga Street and then adding fill. This crater is a place of special significance as it is paired with the similarly formed Tuff Crater which is adjacent to the north.

As the park has been developed there has been an effort to ensure that some of its special nature has been retained. Weeks Reserve around some of the crater wall gives a natural backdrop. The floor has been left with a natural undulation but is essentially flat as would have occurred if the filling had been left to the estuary to complete.

The shapes in the park are informal and natural, the lines are curved, the borders are random. The buildings in the park, the toilets and the soccer clubrooms, have been painted to blend in with the surroundings. The road barriers, play equipment and bridges are made of weathered timber so that they are not obtrusive. The overall effect is, deliberately, that of a natural New Zealand view.

The only thing that is unnatural is that the floor is below high tide level which leads to flooding when a high tide coincides with heavy rainfall. The main purpose of the ponds, and the immediate surrounding area, is to cope with this storm water problem.



Onepoto Domain from the Lookout in Weeks Reserve

Korean Gardens, it appears, are more formally laid out, with structures, walls, pavilions, hills and waterfalls. The colours that are used are brighter than those that currently exist within the crater and the artist's renditions that have been presented show reds and yellows. This will disrupt the nature of the area which the Reserve Management Plan requires to be retained.



I am sure that Koreans may see this as familiar and an 'improvement', but to many New Zealand eyes the foreign shapes, formality, lines and colours will appear like a carnival funfair distracting from the natural view and the special nature of the site.

Religious Implications

Korean Gardens seem to have a religious significance to the Korean people:

“The garden has been a place of symbolism and representation of major philosophical questions. The first record of Korean gardens appeared in 391 CE at *Samkuksaki*. The palace building was heavily repaired, and a pond was dug for mounding to raise rare birds and exotic plants. Afterwards the ultimate goal of Korean traditional gardens was to transform the symbolic immortal world to an earthly paradise.”

If it is considered to have a status that is similar to the western idea of consecrated ground then I am unsure that it would be appropriate for the council to provide land for this purpose.

Sponsorship

If the Korean Garden is built with sponsorship from corporations then this is usually associated with naming rights or advertising. It would be unfortunate if it became 'Kookmin Bank Domain', or even 'Kookmin Bank Garden' within the publicly owned domain.

While there is no objection to there being a garden elsewhere in Auckland that carries a sponsors name, it would be inappropriate for the council to provide public land for commercial promotion.

Wild Life

There are many native species of birds plus others that are wild in New Zealand. Pukekos, shags, seagulls, pigeons and ducks (native grey and mallard) abound in the park and can be quite destructive to formality when they feed on plants or make nests. Such a large number as reside permanently at Onepoto can also naturally make quite a mess, which is acceptable to a natural area but may disrupt the orderliness and serenity of a more formal area.

It would not be acceptable, or even possible, to exclude the birds, especially as it is a common pastime for the residents to come to the park particularly to feed the ducks and other birds, and to photograph these, and the other less common species found in the domain, in natural New Zealand surroundings.

Equity

If one ethnic group is granted an area of public land for their exclusive control to promote a single foreign culture, then will other groups also be able to have the same privilege. Will a Dutch group be able to apply to build a windmill and tulip garden ? Would the council also provide land for a Japanese pebble garden ?