

## 3.10 STONEHAM WALK

### 3.10.1 DESCRIPTION

Stoneham Walk is formed from a combination of Recreation and Esplanade Reserves. The walk is approximately 9.0 ha in size, and is bounded by residential housing, roads and private land.

Pedestrian access to the Walk is from Bell Street, Opunoke Drive, Valley Road, Blundell Avenue and Fenton Mill Road. Road access to the Walk is via Bell Street, Opunoke Drive and Blundell Avenue. In addition, there is access from the five rocks carpark on Fenton Mill Road.

Stoneham Walk is sited in a shallow gully through the centre of which flows the Ruruanga Stream. The gully runs roughly west to east. The stream effectively bisects the Walk into two halves.

Stoneham Walk now consists of two areas either side of the Ruruanga Stream. Each side is of almost even proportion. The northern side runs adjacent to a residential housing area. The southern side runs along Fenton Mill Road for a short length, and then is bordered by land owned by Council and residential houses.

The Walk development incorporates a scented garden, stone bridge, sealed walkways, pedestrian bridges across the Ruruanga Stream, raised perennial gardens and a pergola.

Soil in the area is of very recent origin and mainly associated with eruptions from the Okataina Caldera. The rhyolitic pumice sub-soil is very free draining but of only moderate to low fertility.

The Tarawera eruption in 1886 covered the area in an alkaline basaltic scoria shower, which, whilst potentially high in fertility has yet to break down.

The dark colour of the scoria combined with high sunlight levels in the region gives rise to natural dryness which causes difficulties in establishing tree species.

Vegetation at the time of European settlement appears to have been grasslands with stands of Kanuka (*Kunzea ericoids*), Manuka (*Leptospermum scoparium*), Cabbage trees *Cordyline australis* and Harakeke/Flax (*Phormium spp.*).

Extensive planting over the past 40 years has resulted in the area now containing a collection of young and mature trees. As the Walk lies in a shallow gully, it is relatively sheltered from prevailing winds. The gentle meandering nature of the Ruruanga Stream has naturally created semi-secluded locations within the Walk which provide tranquillity and privacy. The Walk is a popular retreat for residents who live nearby and for visitors.

#### Points of Interest:-

**Bell Street Entry** A pergola, constructed in early 1993, covers the main pedestrian entry into the Walk. On both sides of the pergola are raised perennial gardens.

**5 Rocks Carpark** A small off-road vehicle carpark constructed in 1991. A wheelchair entry point also exists here.

**The Scented Garden/Rose Garden** Planted with assistance from the Soroptimists Club in 1991, the round raised garden was originally filled with a mixture of culinary and scented herbs and perennial flowering plants. It is now a rose garden.

**Retaining Wall and Perennial Garden** Constructed in 1993 and planted in September of that year. Comprises a collection of perennial flowering plants.

**White Garden and Stoneham Memorial Glade Plaque** Stoneham Memorial Glade is contained within Stoneham Walk, and is the area encompassing the Scented Garden, Retaining Wall, Perennial Garden, White Garden and Stone Bridge. The Glade is dedicated to the memory of the late Roy Stoneham, O.B.E., Mayor of Kawerau from 1965 to 1983. A plaque commemorating this is mounted on a rock placed in the white garden. It is a popular place in the Walk for wedding ceremonies.

**Stone Bridge** Built in 1992 by members of the Kawerau Rotary Club. The bridge is in keeping with the English Woodland theme of Stoneham Walk.

**Ruruanga Stream** Eventually entering into the Tarawera River north of Kawerau, the Ruruanga Stream is a focal part of Stoneham Walk and adds greatly to the tranquil character of the Walk.

Ruruanga Stream is designated by the Fish and Game Council as a Junior Angler Stream. The Eastern Region Fish and Game Council periodically stocks the stream with trout fingerlings.

### 3.10.2 HISTORY

Construction of houses in McKenzie Street and opposite Hansen Walk on Massey Street to Short Street commenced in 1954. By 1960, Bell Street houses backing on to Stoneham Walk were built for Bowaters American personnel who came for the construction of Number 2 paper machine. The American families lived in these houses from 1960 to 1964. Houses on the other side of Bell Street housed Tasman management. They were built only as far as Massey Street. Construction of houses on Bell Street extension, Te Arika Place and Hinemoutu Avenue began in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

An area comprising some 2.617 ha was set aside as recreation reserve and was named the Ruruanga Gardens Reserve. The entry was in Bell Street where the pergola entrance is now. The Reserve ran along the south side of the stream across to Fenton Mill Road, and up to what is now the rose garden. It was mowed regularly by Council staff, trees were planted and a retaining wall was made from railway sleepers. Residents used the area as a walkway to the town centre, and a sealed path was laid alongside the retaining wall.

When Kawerau Intermediate School opened in February 1971, school children who lived in the Plateau area started using the western end of the Ruruanga Gardens Reserve as a shortcut. They would walk down from the Plateau through Opunoke Drive, across the stream and up the hill onto Fenton Mill Road, from where it is a short walk to the school.

From 1975 onwards, the Valley Road subdivision including Blundell Avenue, Marshall Street, Boss Road and Ion Road was developed. Sections were quickly sold and built on, and a recreation Reserve of 2.154 hectares was developed along the south side of the Ruruanga Stream, alongside

the newly-built houses. As for school children from the Plateau area, people from the new subdivision started to use the Reserve as a quick accessway between the Town Centre and Intermediate School.

Early development of the Reserve was never to any formalised design or concept. Paths and tracks were defined by the users, and bridges were built in relation to these tracks. Four bridges span the stream in the Walk. These were built by local service clubs including Rotary, Lions and Kiwanis. Until the Council nursery began producing its own plants, trees were obtained from the then Ministry of Works nursery at Newstead near Hamilton. Labour from government funded P.E.P Schemes was utilised to develop the Walk.

In November 1981, Council entered into a Licence to Occupy 9.5 hectares with the Minister of Crown Lands. This was an area of land bordered by Fenton Mill Road, the Ruruanga Stream, and residential housing in Kirk Crescent, Valley Road, Fenton Mill Road and Blundell Avenue. Approximately 2 hectares of this land was included in Stoneham Walk.

The various areas of Reserve land were formally named 'Stoneham Walk' following a Council resolution on 11 May 1983, immediately after the death of Mayor Roy Stoneham, O.B.E. who was Kawerau's longest serving mayor.

In recognition of this service Council resolved to "Plant a commemorative grove of trees on the flat ground on the banks of the Ruruanga Stream opposite the Valley Road stormwater outfall", and to "Designate the walkway from the Bell Street culvert to the grove of trees 'Roy Stoneham Walk'".

Between 1983 and 1986 the road link between Valley Road and Tamarangi Drive was constructed and a culvert built for the Ruruanga Stream to flow through. Work began at the Bell Street culvert entrance and progressed from there. On the northern side of the Ruruanga Stream, behind the houses in Bell Street, a planting of pine trees was removed. While the stream still runs on its original course, the land form has been slightly altered as rises and hollows in the land were levelled to allow grassy flats to be established.

In 1991, Council adopted and implemented a landscape concept plan for development of Stoneham Walk. This included a stone bridge, pergola, scented garden, perennial gardens, improved walkways and entrances, and a small car-park off Fenton Mill Road. In 2000 a scented garden was redeveloped into what is now the rose garden.

The Walk today is a peaceful and restful park. During the year it is a popular spot for wedding ceremonies, picnics, swimming, walking, and dog exercising.



### 3.10.3 STATUS

Stoneham Walk is administered by Council. The Walk comprises several small recreation and esplanade reserves as defined by the Reserves Act 1977. The legal descriptions of these are:

Lot 580 DPS 7302 Recreation Reserve  
Pt Lot 85 DPS 9663 Esplanade Reserve  
Lot 86 DPS 9663 Esplanade Reserve  
Pt Lot 1546 DPS Recreation Reserve  
Pt Lot 39 DPS Recreation Reserve

The Walk is approximately 9.0ha in size.

In November 1981 the former Kawerau Borough Council entered into a Licence to Occupy with the former Department of Lands & Survey Pt 39, Matata Parish, being 9.5 hectares in size. Approximately 2ha of Stoneham Walk now occupies some of this land being leased under licence. The licence is renewed every two years. Stoneham Walk is zoned Recreation/Landscape Amenity under the Council's District Plan.

## POLICIES

### Landscape Character

1. The relaxed and informal nature of the Walk shall be maintained.
2. Grounds maintenance shall be a standard appropriate to the particular character areas within the Walk.

### Vegetation

1. Sound horticultural techniques and application shall be applied in the management of the Walk's vegetation.
2. Planting shall be carried out in a manner that is sensitive to the landscape integrity of the Walk.
3. Prior to the removal of any vegetation its historic, ecological or aesthetic merit must be assessed.
4. Noxious and aggressive exotic plants shall continue to be controlled and where possible, eliminated.

### Access/Parking

1. Stoneham Walk is a designated dog exercise area.
2. Existing pedestrian access ways into the Walk shall be maintained.
3. Short-term visitor parking shall continue to be provided off Fenton Mill Road.