

S E C T I O N T W O
C O N C E P T O V E R V I E W

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2.01 Concept framework

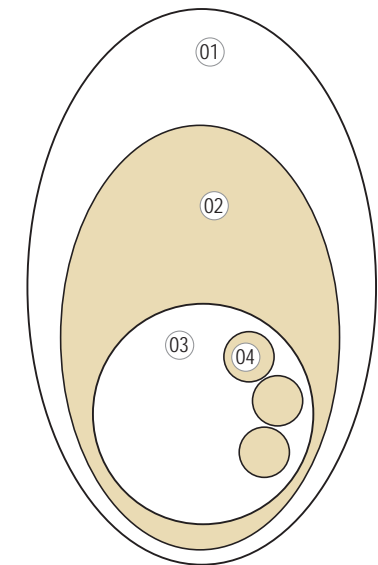
The Botanic Gardens benefit from a borrowed landscape, with a native bush corridor stitching the Gardens to Totara Park. The Botanic Gardens site is 64ha in size. Collectively, Totara Park and the Botanic Gardens create a 264 ha visitor destination of regional significance.

The core of the Botanic Gardens (i.e. the themed gardens and collections) currently only occupies approximately two-thirds of the site, with the remainder comprising native bush and the former Ellerslie Flower Show site.

Although the Botanic Gardens is quite unlike a park in that it is a cultural institution comparable to the Auckland zoo or museum, it sits within a park like context.

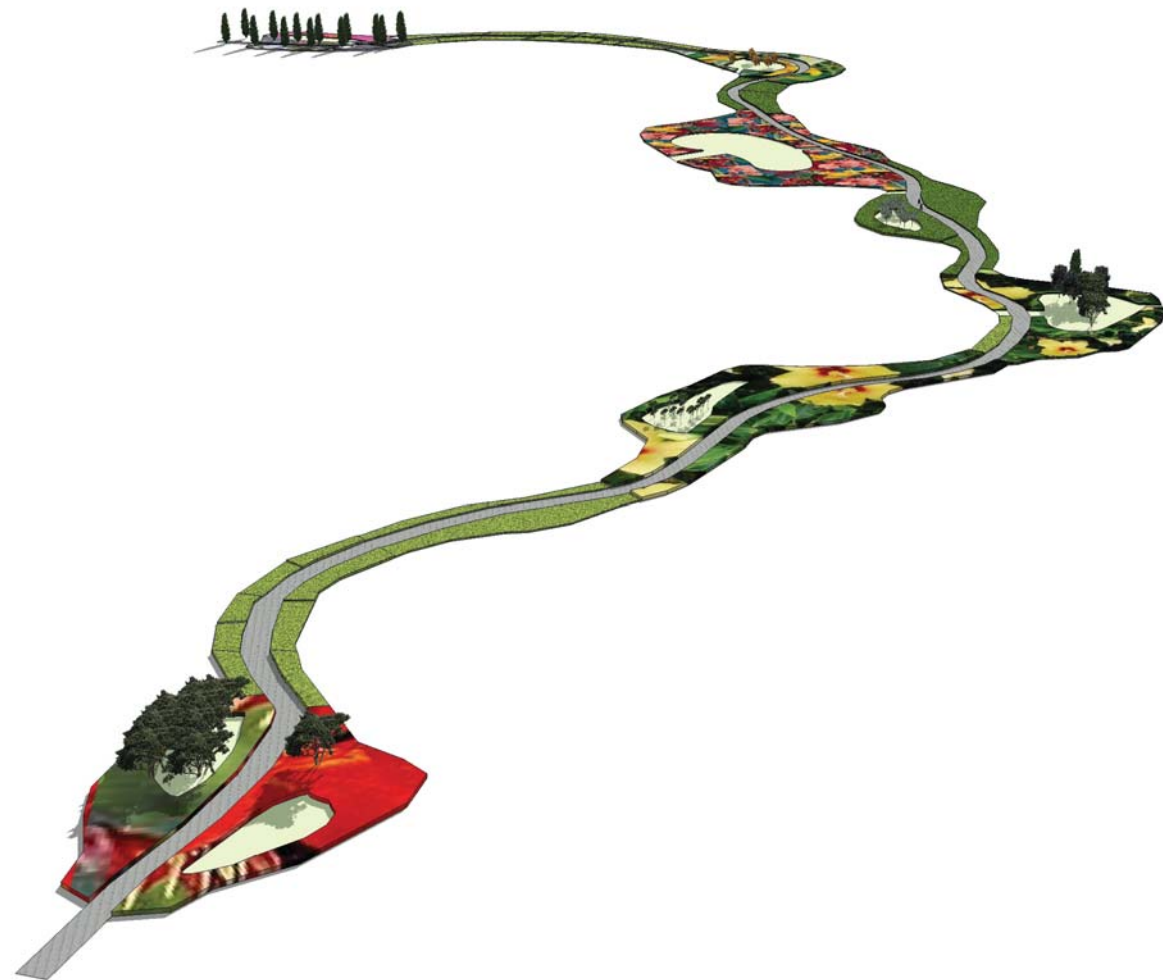
Conceptualising this idea allows us to consider the intensity of the Botanic Gardens and the future expansion of new gardens and collections. It also provides a simple understanding of how the park provides structuring elements for the Botanic Gardens.

The park setting, and in particular the local character of the waterways, native bush and rolling topography, makes a Botanic Gardens here unique from any other location in the world.

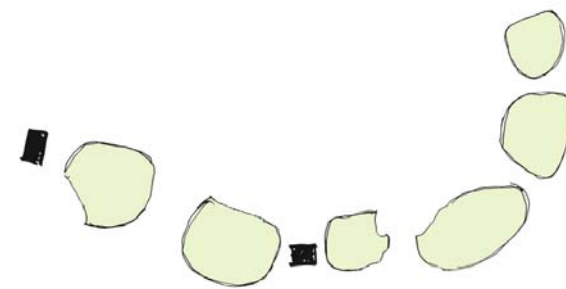


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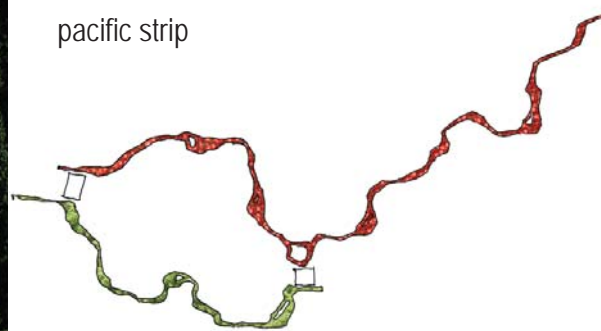
- 01 Borrowed landscape (Totara Park)
- 02 Parkland setting (Botanic Gardens)
- 03 Core of the Botanic Gardens
- 04 Themed gardens and collections within the core



pacific lawns



pacific strip



2.02 Concept structuring elements

The fundamentals for the master plan are:

- Identifying areas for future development
- Identifying areas of dedicated open space
- Protecting key vistas within the Botanic Gardens
- Resolving way finding and orientation issues
- Optimising visitor interaction with the gardens

There are two key considerations for ordering and organising the gardens and collections:

1. **Spatial enclosure and definition:** defining spaces and the views between them
2. **Circulation and sequencing:** navigating through a logical sequence of spaces.

The concept addresses these spatial considerations by identifying structuring elements that are an expression of the vision for a spectacular South Pacific Botanic Garden. These structuring elements reinforce the identity of the Botanic Gardens as unique to New Zealand and to the world:

Native corridors

The Puhinui Stream border between the Botanic Gardens and Totara Park provides a good example of remnant totara-broadleaf forest found along stream gullies and watercourses on the fringes of low undulating foothills ecosystems in the Manukau area. Totara, Kauri, Tawa, Tairare, Kahikatea and Puriri are the prominent species, with an understorey of Ponga tree ferns and Nikau. This indigenous forest strongly positions the identity of the Botanic Gardens within a South Pacific and local context.

Pacific lawns

The Pacific lawns are a spatial concept, derived from cultural origins. Pacific villages typically have a common lawn as a gathering space where special activities take place, and around which buildings and plantings are organised, e.g.: Maori: Marae atea, Polynesian: Malae aiga, European: Village green or formal lawn.

Pacific strip

The Pacific strip is a continuous pathway that acts as a connecting element; a vibrant seam with a distinctive South Pacific character. It utilises repeated materials and elements that act as visual cues for navigating through the site.

Garden clusters

Themes for garden clusters reinforce the concept of growing plants that are suited to Auckland conditions. This response to climate and site specificity also positions the Botanic Gardens in its South Pacific context.

2.03 Master plan Concept

The structuring elements are manifested in the master plan as described below for each layer:

1 Native corridors

The native corridors are continuous areas of bush following existing waterways through the site. These corridors provide an important ecological and visual link to the backdrop of significant podocarp forest extending along the northern boundary and into Totara Park. As a structuring device, the corridors provide a strong indigenous framework, lending a unique character to the Botanic Gardens that reinforces its South Pacific identity.

2 Pacific lawns

The pacific lawns are a sequence of open spaces providing for events and activities that support the Botanic Gardens as a visitor destination. The lawns also provide important views and vistas - ensuring a glimpse of what lies beyond each space and enticing visitors through the Botanic Gardens. The lawns are an important structuring device because they complement the intensity of the gardens and collections, and visually connect one end of the Gardens to the other. Buildings overlook the lawns and reinforce the connection with activity anchors, i.e. the Visitors Centre and the proposed Epiphytum.

3 Pacific strip

The pacific strip is the primary walking route that engages with the gardens to create a seamless and memorable journey for visitors. The pacific strip also connects the gardens to their park setting, providing legible access from the northern entrance. Nodes are incorporated into the pacific strip, identified by a thickening of the path around a central area of planting with a repeated theme. Each of the individual gardens are accessed directly from a node, and garden loop paths return to the same node to assist with way-finding. Secondary loop paths connect with nodes, providing access to the arboretum.

4 Garden clusters

Gardens are clustered around nodes, with between 2 and 4 gardens having access from one node. Garden clusters are themed where possible, providing a logical sequence from one cluster to the next. Themes may include taxonomic, geographic, gardenesque and ecological groupings. New garden development areas are identified to intensify the visitor experience by 'filling the gaps'.

