

File: R/8/2/2

20 November 2001

Vivien Rickard
General Manager (Central Region)
New Zealand Historic Places Trust
PO Box 2629
WELLINGTON

Dear Ms Rickard

Thank you for your letter dated 25 October 2001, calling for submissions on the proposal to register the Rimutaka Incline Walkway as an Heritage Area under the Historic Places Act 1993.

As I explained in my previous letter, the Council has not had time to consider the proposal due to the submission period coinciding with the Local Government elections. However, Council officers have examined the proposal and prepared this submission which we will be reporting to the relevant Council Committees on 5 and 6 December for their endorsement (refer attached **draft** report). We realise that the Trust Board will be considering submissions on 6 December, so we are providing the comments in their draft form prior to receiving endorsement from the Committees.

Comments on the Rimutaka Incline Walkway Registration Proposal

We support the proposal to register the Rimutaka Incline Walkway as an Historic Area under Section 23(1) of the Historic Places Act 1993.

We consider that the proposal is consistent with the Regional Policy Statement. Chapter 11 "Landscape and Heritage", objective 3, policies 5 and 6 and methods 8, 10 and 11 are all relevant. Particularly:

Method 8:

Provide for the management and conservation of any cultural heritage values relating to any land it owns and for the recognition and protection of these values...

Method 10:

Co-operate, where appropriate, with the Historic Places Trust and other relevant agencies to conserve the heritage values of places, sites and structures which are considered to be of regional significance, including sharing information and using its powers as a Heritage Protection Authority, as appropriate.

Chapter 14 “The Built Environment and Transportation” is also relevant. Policy 8(3) states:

Maintain and enhance natural areas and protect those places, features or buildings with significant heritage, ecological, cultural or landscape values.

The WRC manages around 10 kilometres of the historic rail formation (including numerous bridges, tunnels, culverts, embankments, etc) as part of its Pakuratahi Forest. The Parks and Forests are managed with emphasis on three core values: recreation, environment and heritage. Registration of the area would be consistent with those values.

You may wish to make a small addition to the registration document. The document notes that the Department of Conservation has a Conservation Plan for its section of the rail formation, but does not make reference to the Regional Council’s Conservation Plan, prepared in 1999 and updated in 2001, (although the first version of the Plan is listed in the Bibliography section of the report).

The Council manages its section of the historic rail formation in a manner consistent with the Conservation Plan. In addition to an annual maintenance budget for the area, the Council is currently investing around \$370,000 over a three-year period restoring the heritage bridges along its section of the rail formation. Although sections of the rail formation have in the past been used as a logging route, this practice has now stopped and only temporary crossings are permitted (following consultation with HPT) with a requirement to restore the crossing points after use. As noted in page 5 of the assessment report, all commercial forestry plantings and activities are now kept back 40 metres from the formation and any cuttings or embankments, in order to protect the heritage values of the area.

We note that the registration proposal only covers the historic rail formation from Kaitoke Station, via Summit, to Cross Creek. The formation from Kaitoke Station to Maymorn tunnel also has heritage values and some interesting structures, albeit more modified than the Kaitoke to Cross Creek section. We would be prepared to work with the Trust with a view towards extending the registration to cover this area at some time in the future.

I hope these comments have been useful.

Yours sincerely

ROB FORLONG
Divisional Manager, Landcare

Encl: Draft Committee Report