

5.6 Sector 6: Wrights Hill/Zealandia



Wrights Hill (centre right) is a broad flat-topped hill above Karori, which drops down steeply to the Kaiwharawhara Stream valley (left) where Zealandia is located. Sector 7 of the Outer Green Belt continues south along the distant skyline above Zealandia to Hawkins Hill and beyond.

Key features/values:

- · Wrights Hill landmark and viewpoint
- Major ecological hub in Wellington, anchored in Zealandia
- Headwaters of Kaiwharawhara and Karori streams
- Destinations: Zealandia and Wrights Hill Fortress
- Significant water supply and gold mining heritage at Zealandia and World War II heritage on Wrights Hill
- Track network connecting Mākara Peak and Te Kopahou.

Local communities:

Karori, Highbury

Local community volunteer activities:

Pest animal control, Zealandia perimeter fence monitoring, hosting and guiding at Zealandia, heritage restoration and open days at Wrights Hill fortress.

5.6.1 Overview

Sector 6 (363.2 ha) extends from South Karori Road, across Wrights Hill and the valley of Zealandia, including the saddle at the top end of the Kaiwharawhara Stream valley between Zealandia and Long Gully. Note: The official name for the hill is 'Wright Hill' but 'Wrights Hill' has become the common usage and is therefore used in this plan.

5.6.1.1 Land administration

Parts of Wrights Hill Road and part of the historic World War II fortress area on the Wrights Hill summit is Crown-owned land, administered by DoC. DoC and the Council are working through the processes (as provided for under the Reserves Act) to appoint Wellington City Council to control and manage the land. The Council already carries out practical maintenance in these areas, such as road maintenance. Zealandia is managed by the Karori Sanctuary Trust.

Various land parcels on Wrights Hill are currently recreation reserve but would be more appropriately managed as either scenic or historic reserves to better reflect the natural and heritage values of the land and will be reclassified.

There are encroachments of private use from adjoining residential properties with addresses on Versailles Street and Messines Road onto the Council-owned reserve land. The encroachments vary in extent and are mainly gardens, lawns and outdoor uses (such as trampolines). The private use is contrary to the purpose of the reserve land, which is for public benefit, in this case a particular role as part of the Zealandia perimeter. The Council considers that the land should be revegetated to strengthen the natural buffer between housing and Zealandia. Encroachments into any reserves is prohibited (refer to Rules section).



5.6.1.2 Nature

Though much of the Zealandia valley was historically cleared and a large area planted in pines, there is good quality remnant and secondary forest on the steep west face, and significant areas of kānuka/mānuka on the southeast slopes, which are important seed sources. Particularly notable is the presence of swamp maire and some original kowhai (*Sophora microphylla*), each of which are found in only one or two other localities in Wellington. Swamp maire (*Syzygium maire*) seed cannot be stored viably for any length

of time, making it particularly vulnerable to myrtle rust. Also notable is the important opportunity to restore and research freshwater habitats in the two lakes (former water reservoirs), including for aquatic and bird life.

Zealandia plays a key part in the objective to restore an ecological corridor along the Outer Green Belt. It has been described as having a role as 'the mothership' for animal species reintroductions in Wellington, from where indigenous wildlife in particular will spread out into the surrounding reserves and wider city area. Collectively, all the vegetation in this sector forms a large expanse of indigenous vegetation that, while not as well advanced or impressive as that in Otari-Wilton's Bush, will form a major ecological hub in this part of the city as restoration efforts progress. This hub will connect west to Mākara Peak, north via Birdwood Reserve and the Kaiwharawhara Stream to Otari-Wilton's Bush, east to Polhill Reserve in the Wellington Town Belt and south along the main ridgeline to Te Kopahou and the south coast. Already, birds which were absent in Wellington 20 years ago, such as kākā, toutouwai (North Island robin), tieke (saddleback) and kākāriki are spreading from Zealandia into the adjacent reserves and, in some cases, well beyond.

Under its Living with Nature, *Tiaki Taio*, *Tiaki Tangata Strategy 2016-2035*, Zealandia is now also focusing on Sanctuary to Sea - Kia Mauriora te Kaiwharawhara, a multi-stakeholder project that aims to restore waterways and forest corridors in the Kaiwharawhara water catchment, and help support resilient ecosystems in an urban environment in the face of constant pressures from human development and climate change.

Tackling major threats such as weed and pest animal control is an essential component in managing this sector of the Outer Green Belt as a key nature restoration hub. A network of professional pest animal control is enhanced by the huge volunteer predator control effort in place, primarily through community volunteer groups but also through private land owners who are carrying out trapping in adjacent blocks and in residential backyards. Volunteers have also been involved in cleaning up and restoring the Birdwood Reserve, the first reserve area downstream of Zealandia. Information sharing, education and promotion of benefits and successes are key to the ongoing success of this community-led work.

Small mammal monitoring has been carried out in this sector for some years and expanded to neighbouring private land with land owner agreement. This monitoring is producing good long-term data, which will be helpful in determining whether or not there is a correlation between barberry fruiting and rat population levels.



5.6.1.3 Landscape and land use

Wrights Hill is a landmark flat-topped hill on the southern edge of the Karori basin, which sits between the Karori Stream valley to the west and the upper Kaiwharawhara Stream valley (containing Zealandia) to the east. Housing extends up its north flanks to some high spurs but, nevertheless, large vegetated areas provide an important open space backdrop to Karori. The comparatively broad summit area has a more utilitarian character than much of the Outer Green Belt hilltops, with a public road and two carparks, various structures and modified land forms associated with World War II fortifications, water reservoirs and a cluster of radio transmitter masts. The hilltop is an important part of the Outer Green Belt skyline seen from the central city and harbour. The lookout has a spectacular view, with an almost birds eye view straight down into Zealandia and across to the city, harbour and mountains beyond. It is one of the few places in the Outer Green Belt with drive-on hilltop access and also has an extensive track network that provides local loop routes and longer distance connections, most particularly the proposed Skyline Track route that will link this sector with Mākara Peak one way and Te Kopahou the other way. Forest is regenerating well on Wrights Hill, though Darwin's barberry is established, especially on the wind-swept upper slopes and summit. The summit was one of the first areas where a community group did restoration planting. Important patches of remnant forest include kāmahi (locally uncommon), tawa, toro and ramarama, which are good seed sources for forest restoration. A recent Masters research project found that kākāriki (red-crowned parakeet) are spreading out onto Wrights Hill from Zealandia.

Zealandia Te Māra a Tāne (formerly Karori Wildlife Sanctuary), occupies the 225-hectare valley in the headwaters of Kaiwharawhara Stream, which was one of the city's original water catchment areas. It is managed by the Karori Sanctuary Trust in partnership

with the Council, to work towards the vision of creating a self-sustaining ecosystem representative of pre-human New Zealand. The goals include reestablishing indigenous fauna and flora, restoring natural habitats, contributing to other national recovery programmes and educating visitors about New Zealand's unique biodiversity and nature conservation. The concept has been a ground-breaker in many ways, not least, the research and development behind the 8.6km pest-proof fence that encircles the sanctuary. After the fence was built, all introduced mammalian pests were removed, enabling vulnerable rare and endangered species to be gradually reintroduced, including plants, birds, lizards, tuatara, invertebrates, frogs, fish and, most recently, in 2018, kahi - fresh water mussels.



5.6.1.4 Culture and heritage

Heritage features in this sector are well recognised and have clear management regimes. The summit of Wrights Hill is a significant heritage site⁶⁹, containing extensive World War II fortifications built to service a 9.2 inch battery gun. *The Wright Hill Conservation Plan* contains a full history of the fortress. The Wrights Hill Fortress Restoration Society carries out restoration works and regularly runs popular open days, when the public can explore the fortifications including an extensive underground network.

A number of features of historic interest are also found in Zealandia. These include two dams, historic buildings and other structures from the former water collection days, in some cases meticulously restored by the sanctuary trust. Several gold mining adits (a mine with a horizontal entrance) and diverse conifer plantings are associated with the early settlement period.



5.6.1.5 Recreation and access

The track network is comparatively well developed in this sector, comprising the Zealandia perimeter track and walking and mountain biking tracks on Wrights Hill. There are a number of local tracks to nearby housing and a mountain biking loop from Fitzgerald Place, uphill via the shared Salvation Track and downhill via the bike-prioritised grade five Deliverance Track. The long-distance Skyline Track route will be marked through this sector. The track network in

⁶⁹ List No. 7543, New Zealand Heritage List/Rārangi Kōrero. New Zealand Archaeological Association sites R27/173.

Zealandia is accessible only by way of an entry fee. The drive-on access to the summit of Wrights Hill provides opportunities for less physically able people to enjoy wide views. Zealandia provides a key destination for viewing natural heritage, especially indigenous fauna, but there is potential to enhance Wrights Hill summit as a destination and one of a series of main entry points to the Outer Green Belt.



5.6.1.6 Community and identity

The Council will seek to establish a sound working relationship with the Wrights Hill Fortress Restoration

Society, including consultation over proposed entrance facility development in the hilltop area and how that could support the society's activities, including open days.

Private land south of Wrights Hill contains a number of important bush remnants, including the 65-ha Long Gully Bush Reserve, which is owned by the Wellington Natural Heritage Trust and protected in perpetuity by a QEII National Trust open space covenant. The Council has variously assisted these land owners in a number of ways, including with pest control, podocarp planting and covenant fencing.

5.6.2 Actions

N = New initiative; E = Existing; Ex = Expand existing

(Notes: (i) Some 'new' projects come within larger funded programmes but have not yet been started. (ii) Implementation depends on budget allocations).

5.6.2.1 Land administration

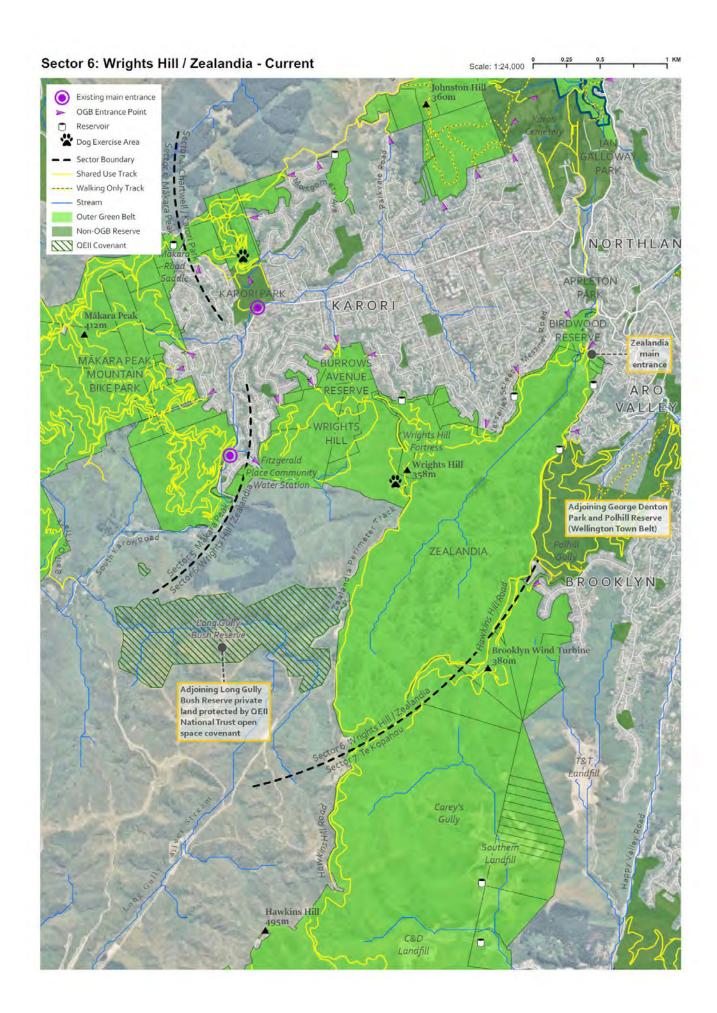
1.	Continue to work with DoC in considering the appointment of the Wellington City Council to control and manage the Crown-owned land on Wrights Hill.	Е	ongoing
Encre	pachments		
2.	Begin the process of removing the private encroachments around the perimeter of Zealandia, in order to revegetate it as a vegetation buffer between Zealandia and the adjoining residential properties, keeping just a service vehicle access way for maintaining the water reservoir.	N	Ongoing
3.	Work with the owners of 21-43 Versailles Street (odd numbers) to develop a community MOU that will enable this group of residents to care for the reserve space adjacent to their property, including plant and pest animal management and revegetation over time. This will remain in place while all the residents are working together to restore and help manage the site and will be re-considered when the OGBMP is reviewed or in 10 years (whichever is later) with a view to ensuring the site has genuine community purpose, as different to a private encroachment for personal use and enjoyment. This arrangement is proposed only because of the long and unique history of the land that borders these properties and the current community use of the space.	N	1-2 yrs

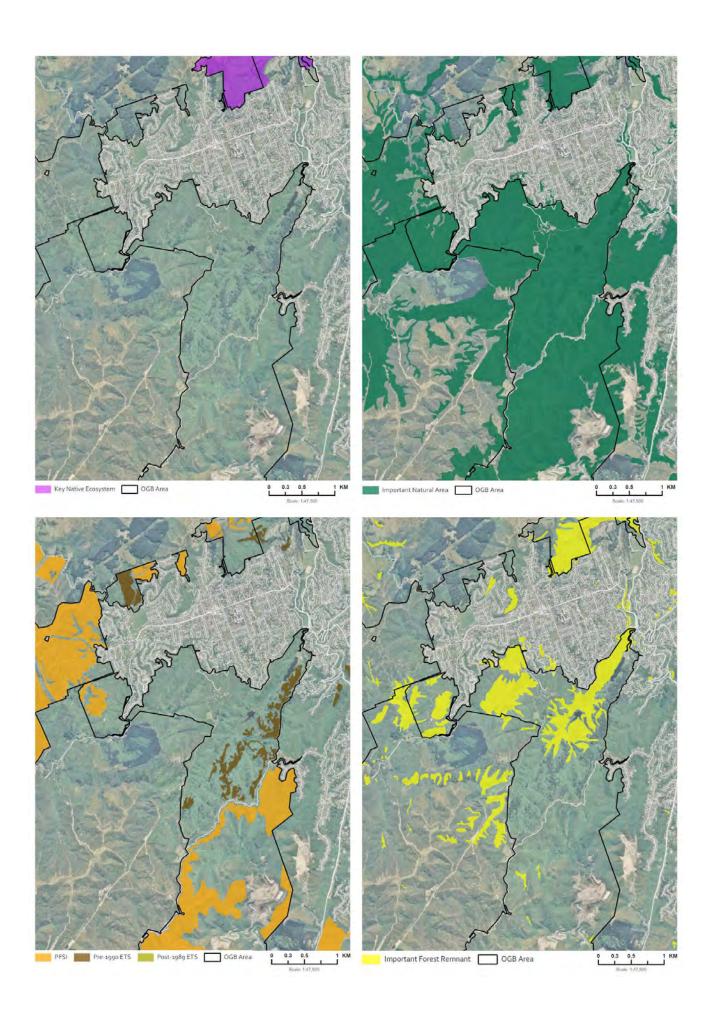
5.6.2.2 Nature

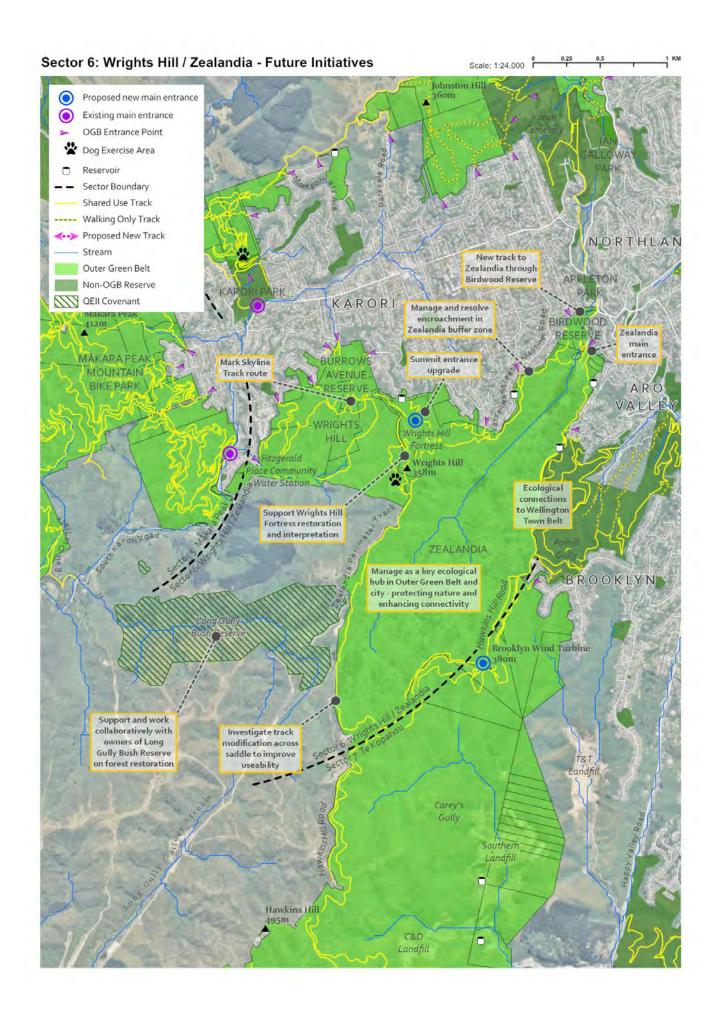
Caring	Caring for nature							
1.	Continue to partner with the Karori Sanctuary Trust in integrating biodiversity conservation within Zealandia (via its strategy) and the spread of biodiversity beyond Zealandia's boundaries.	E	ongoing					
Strean	ns							
2.	Support Zealandia to explore the eradication of pest fish within the lakes and streams of the valley.	E	ongoing					

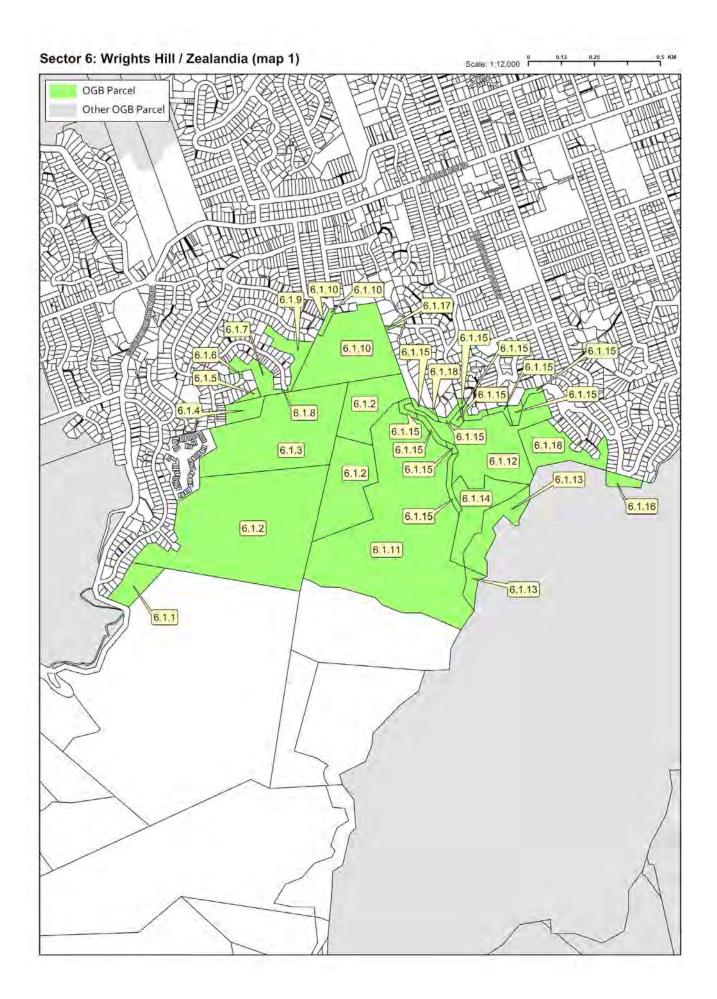
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3.	Continue to support Sanctuary to Sea - Kia Mauriora te Kaiwharawhara project as a key strategic partner.	E	ongoing
Research			
4.	Continue with the research being carried out at Otari-Wilton's Bush Botanic Garden into ways to successfully store swamp maire and myrtaceae seed as part of myrtle rust threat response and to reintroduce either uncommon or locally extinct plants into the catchment.	E	ongoing
5.	Support research into the factors limiting the dispersal of threatened or locally significant bird species from Zealandia such as tieke (saddleback), kākāriki (red-crowned parakeet) and toutouwai (North Island robin).	Ex	ongoing
5.6.2.3	Landscape and land use		
Views			
1.	Manage the vegetation to ensure that the wide views seen from the following places, in particular, are kept clear:	E	ongoing
	a) The carpark at the top end of Salvation Track, which is often used as a viewpoint		
	b) The lookout platform on the summit overlooking the Zealandia valley.		
5.6.2.4	Culture and heritage		
Wrights I	Hill fortress		
1.	Work with the Wrights Hill Fortress Restoration Society to support its activities in implementing the Wright Hill Conservation Plan.	E	ongoing
Interpret	ation		
2.	Develop interpretative material in a variety of media about cultural and heritage features and history in this sector, within the overall Outer Green Belt interpretation plan (see policy 4.6.2.5), focusing particularly on:	N	5-10 yrs
	Water supply and gold mining heritage		
	World War II military installation themes		
	 The big picture of the Outer Green Belt and Zealandia's place within it and the region, because the Wrights Hill lookout is such a great vantage point directly above Zealandia, with views to much of the Outer Green Belt. 		
5.6.2.5	Recreation and access		
Track net	work		
1.	Work out the best route for the Skyline Track to be sign posted and concurrently review the user status of the tracks in this sector to ensure safe and reasonable access for different users.	Ex	ongoing
2.	Investigate, in consultation with neighbouring land owners, the need for and feasibility of modifying the track across the saddle between Wrights Hill and Polhill, with a view to easing some of the very steep gradients. As this is the only track between sectors 6 and 7, it is desirable to make it as user friendly as possible, taking into account the constraints of the topography and the narrow strip of land available outside the Zealandia perimeter fence.	Е	ongoing

•	Develop a new track through Birdwood Reserve, if possible, to facilitate access for forest restoration work and provide an alternative walking access to Zealandia from the Birdwood Street parking area.	N	3-5 yrs
ntranc	es, facilities and way-finding		
ŀ.	Investigate and assess the options for improving the existing entrance features in the hilltop area of Wrights Hill and prepare a long-term site development plan, including:	N	3-5 yrs
	a) Reconfiguring the parking to provide an efficient layout for public open days while also deterring 'boy racer' behaviour, (which is currently discouraged by the placement of large concrete blocks)		
	b) Providing public toilets and drinking water		
	 Resurfacing/regrading the disabled access pathway between the main carpark and the summit area which is currently in poor repair 		
	d) Upgrading the summit lookout structure.		
i.	Seek funding to implement any approved improvements.	N	5-10 yr
Way-fin	ding		
5.	Continue to update the way-finding signage to help guide visitors on the track network, including clearly marking:	Е	ongoin
	a) The Skyline Track and the two alternative routes it will take in the Karori Stream Valley (see 5.4.2.5 action 10 and 5.5.2.5 action 2)		
	b) Non-shared use tracks, e.g. downhill bike-prioritised Deliverance Track		
	c) Short walk options in the summit area.		
Oog wal	king		
7.	Continue to use the Wrights Hill Parade Ground as a dog exercise area and ensure signage reinforces that dogs must be on a leash elsewhere to reduce the risk dogs might pose to vulnerable native birds spreading out from Zealandia.	E	ongoin
Events			
3.	Continue to support the Wrights Hill Restoration Society in running its public open days.	E	ongoin
5.6.2.6	Community and identity		
Nork wi	th volunteers		
l.	Continue to work with Zealandia and its volunteers to patrol the Zealandia perimeter fence for signs of damage or incursions and to keep the perimeter track clear to prevent pest animals from reinvading the sanctuary via overgrowth.	E	ongoin
2.	Continue to support concentrated volunteer pest control efforts in this sector to protect, in particular, vulnerable native birds migrating out from Zealandia.	Е	ongoin
3.	Continue to encourage and support neighbouring land owners to participate in local pest animal management/weed control/restoration planting on their land, especially where it will help protect streams or important native bush remnants and/or helps to protect or extend the 'ecological hub' in this sector.	Ex	ongoin
1.	Continue to work with and support the Wrights Hill Restoration Society and clarify respective roles if the Council takes over management of the land on behalf of DoC (see 5.6.2.1 (1)) via a Memorandum of Understanding.	N	1-2 yrs









Management Sector 6: Wrights Hill: Land schedule (Map 1)

Gazette Reserve Name (may differ from WCC name)"	Mapping Reference	WCC Site number	Legal Description	Record of Title / Parcel Id	Land Area	Reserve Description	NZ Gazette Notice Reference	District Plan Zoning	Notes	Actions needed
Wright Hill Reserve	6.1.1	1322	Lot 1 DP 51083	WN20C/394	1.7318 ha	Scenic Reserve (b)	Gaz 2013 p3955 (LINZ regis # 9561291.3)	Open Space B	The within land has no frontage to a legal road. Subject to easement rights for ROW, stormwater, water, power and gas reticulation, see easement certificate 206763.3.	
Wrights Hill	6.1.2	1320	Pt Sec 46 and 55, Karori District	Part of WN46B/837	Approx 31 ha	Scenic Reserve (b)	Gaz 2013 p1554	Open Space B	Gazetted as Mākara Peak / Park / Wrights Hill together with land in Management Sector 5 (map ref 5.1.14). Transmission lines cross over part of this land. Subject to an easement to convey Telecommunication signals over Part Section 45 Karori District. Compensation certificates, reference 170815.1 & 230179.1 against part of the land under Section 17 Public Works Amendment Act 1948.	
Wrights Hill	6.1.3	1320	Pt Sec 46 and 55, Karori District	WN46B/835	16.9318 ha	Scenic Reserve (b)	Gaz 2013 p1554	Open Space B	Appurtenant to Pt Section 46 is a right of way over Lot 98 DP77320 (CT43D/167) created by transfer B.372717.9. Compensation certificates, reference 170815.1 & 230179.1 against part of the land under Section 17 Public Works Amendment Act 1948.	
Wright Hill Reserve	6.1.4	2228	Lot 9 DP 82773	WN49C/99	1.0446 ha	Scenic Reserve (b)	Gaz 2013 p3955 (LINZ regis # 9561291.3)	Open Space B	This land is a reserve subject to the Reserves Act, consideration of its current zoning is required, an Open Space zoning would be more appropriate than Outer residential	
Wright Hill Reserve	6.1.5	2039	Lot 115 DP 71537	646513	0.2195 ha	Scenic Reserve (b)	Gaz 2013 p3955 (LINZ regis # 9561291.3)	Open Space B		
Wright Hill Reserve	6.1.6	2039	Lot 116 DP 71537	646513	0.0307 ha	Scenic Reserve (b)	Gaz 2013 p3955 (LINZ regis # (9561291.3)	Outer Residential		Rezone as Open Space B
Wright Hill Reserve	6.1.7	2039	Lot 2 DP 77321	WN43D/169	1.2433 ha	Scenic reserve (b)	Gaz 2013 p3955 (LINZ regis # 9561291.3)	Open Space B		
Wright Hill Reserve	6.1.8	2039	Lot 98 DP 77320	533280	0.02 ha	Recreation Reserve		Open Space B		Proposed reclassify as Scenic Reserve (b)
Wright Hill Reserve	6.1.9	2039	Lot 3 DP 77321	WN43D/170	1.3740 ha	Scenic Purposes	Gaz 2013 p3955 (LINZ regis # 9561291.3)	Open Space B		
Burrows Avenue Reserve	6.1.10	1036	Lots 1 & 2 DP 10126, and Lot 2 DP 67004	WN426/243	8.4367 ha	Scenic Reserve (b)	Gaz 2013 p3955 (LINZ regis # 9561291.3)	Open Space B		
Reserve name not in gazette notice	6.1.11	1404	Sec 16 Upper Kaiwharawhara District, SO Plan 34500	No CT	28.3590 ha	Recreation Reserve	Gaz 1987 p24	Open Space B	Part heritage area	Proposed reclassify as Scenic Reserve (b)

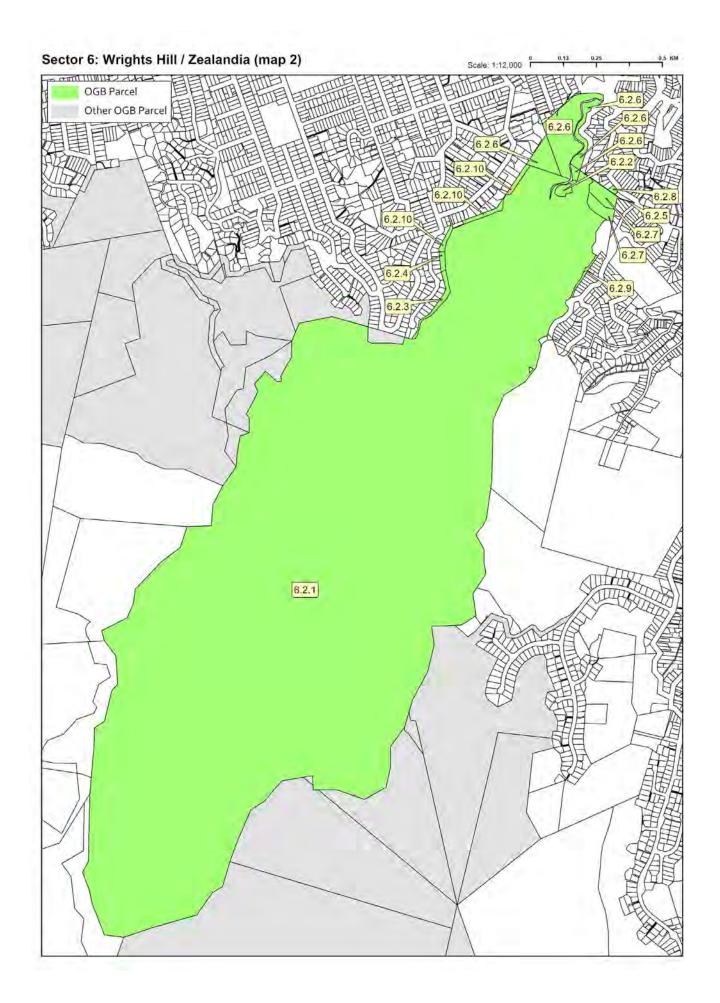
^{*} Land schedule information is as at November 2019

[&]quot; The reserve name that appeared in the NZ Gazette notice was the name used for the particular land parcel at the time of gazetting. It may or may not match the name WCC uses for a group of adjoining reserves, in on-site signs or in other WCC information systems.

Management Sector 6: Wrights Hill: Land schedule (Map 1 cont'd)

Gazette Reserve Name (may differ from WCC name)***	Mapping Reference	WCC Site number	Legal Description	Record of Title / Parcel Id	Land Area	Reserve Description	NZ Gazette Notice Reference	District Plan Zoning	Notes	Actions needed
Reserve name not in gazette notice	6.1.12	1404	Sec 17 Upper Kaiwharawhara District, SO Plan 34500	No CT	8.2866 ha	Recreation Reserve	Gaz 1987 p24	Open Space B	Part heritage area	Proposed reclassify as Scenic Reserve (b)
Part Wrights Hill Recreation Reserve	6.1.13	1402	Secs 13 & 14 Upper Kaiwharawhara District	41A/292	3.3705 ha	Recreation Reserve	Gaz 1991 p2870	Conservation	This land is Council-owned. Part of it is identified as a heritage area in the district plan.	Proposed reclassifying Historic Reserve
Wrights Hill Recreation Reserve	6.1.14		Sec 15 Upper Kaiwharawhara District, SO Plan 31460		3.6815 ha	Recreation Reserve	Gaz 1999 p2148	Open Space B Part Heritage area	It is Crown owned land. Department of Conservation are appointing control and management of the reserve to Wellington City Council. The land's legal documentation is held in gazette notices 929260.1 and 929260.2.	Proposed reclassifying Scenic Reserve (b) when under WCC control
Wrights Hill Road Conservation Area	6.1.15		Pt Sec 9 Kaiwharawhara District, Part Lots 2, 5 and 6 DP 1440, Pt Sec 55 Karori District, Pt Lots 8, 9 and 10 Block H DP 1543		Approximately 3 ha	Recreation Reserve	Gaz 1987 p24 (LINZ regis # 929260.1)	Open Space B Part Heritage area	It is Crown owned land, being the road access to Wrights Hill summit. Department of Conservation are appointing control and management of the reserve to Wellington City Council. The land's legal documentation is held in gazette notices 929260.1 and 929260.2.	
Croydon Park	6.1.16	2482	Part Section 2 Kaiwharawhara District	646526	0.5846 ha	Recreation Reserve	Gaz 2014-ln7418	Open Space B	Site of Scout Hall – access off junction of Campbell and Croydon Streets	
Burrows Avenue Reserve	6.1.17	2482	Lot 97 DP 303660	6531417	0.07 ha	Vesting on Deposit for Recreation Reserve		Outer Residential		Proposed Classifying Scenic Reserve (b) and re Zone as OpenSpace B
Wright Hill Reserve	6.1.18		Pt Sec 2 Upper Kaiwharawhara District	WN5B/488	3.4314 ha	Scenic Reserve (b)	Gaz 2013 p3957	Open Space B		

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Management Sector 6: Wrights Hill: Land schedule (Map 2)

Gazette Reserve Name (may differ from WCC name)*	Mapping Reference	WCC Site number	Legal Description	Record of Title / Parcel Id	Land Area	Reserve Description	NZ Gazette Notice Reference	District Plan Zoning	Notes	Actions needed
n/a	6.2.1	2149	Lot 1 DP 313319	6590100	246.5 ha	Not Classified		Conservation and Heritage Area	To be managed but not classified as reserve.	
n/a	6.2.2		Lot 2 DP 313319	6590101	0.2309 ha	Not classified		Conservation	Greater Wellington Regional Council owned land acquired for water supply purposes	
Zealandia Buffer	6.2.3	2149	Lot 3 DP 313319	6590102	0.3889 ha	Not Classified		Conservation		Propose Classifying as Scenic Reserve (b). Resolve issues in consultation with adjoining residents and the Sanctuary Trust, taking account of the wider community's interest in this land.
n/a	6.2.4	1218	Part Sec 2 Upper Kaiwharawhara District	3977232	0.15 ha	Water Supply Purposes				
n/a	6.2.5	2149	Pt Sec 32 Karori District	3748721	0.3 ha	Drainage Reserve		Conservation		
Birdwood Reserve	6.2.6	1379	Part Sec 34 Karori District, Parts Sec 32 Karori District, Secs 1 & 2 SO 30039 and Part Lots 65 & 66 DP 1871	WN22D/469	5.2375 ha	Scenic Reserve (b)	Gaz 2013 p3955 (LINZ regis # 9561291.3)	Conservation		
n/a	6.2.7	2149	Lot 5 DP 313319	6590104	0.51 ha	Not Classified		Conservation	Includes building (part of Zealandia)	
Reserve name not found	6.2.8	1057	Lot 1 DP 10884	4010337	0.0686	Scenic Purposes (b)	LINZ regis # 9561291.3	Conservation		
n/a	6.2.9	2149	Lot 6 DP 313319	6590105	0.1381 ha	Not Classified		Conservation	Access road adjoin fence line with Zealandia	
Zealandia Buffer	6.2.10	2149	Lot 4 DP 313319	6590103	0.6748 ha	Not Classified		Conservation		Propose Classifying as Scenic Reserve (b). Resolve issues in consultation with adjoining residents and the Sanctuary Trust, taking account of the wider community's interest in this land.

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