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new town

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Boffa Miskell NEWS
& PROJECT INFORMATION

autumn ²⁰⁰²



Editorial: talking is good for business

Talking is good for business. It doesn't matter what sort of business you are in, people who can effectively communicate ideas and facilitate discussion have the potential to add value to projects and business ventures.

At Boffa Miskell I am privileged to work alongside some excellent communicators who specialise in 'consultation'. These are people who have an impressive range of skills and techniques that they are able to draw upon to engage effectively with others, from individuals to organisations and whole communities.

People need to consult for different reasons but, increasingly, it is being shown that well conducted consultation solves problems, generates new ideas and saves time. Invariably, the outcomes exceed everyone's expectations.

Good communicators are more than people who know the right theory – they have real experience. They understand client

needs, budgets, time limits and statutory constraints. They have excellent people skills and they have an intuitive understanding of how people respond.

I consider that the combined experience and knowledge within Boffa Miskell means we have the confidence to create and adapt consultation plans, be flexible and be innovative. We also have the capability to prepare evocative graphics to help deliver the information.

Stories in this newsletter illustrate a range of projects where Boffa Miskell has successfully been engaged in consultation planning and implementation. These are not confined solely to statutory examples but also include consultation undertaken as part of design projects, visioning and structure plans... talking has bred ideas, which have bred success.

Nicola Rykers, Principal

Nicola, who has facilitated a number of large community consultation exercises in recent years, is undertaking the International Association of Public Participation Certificate Course this year to further develop her skills in designing and implementing consultation programmes.

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This newsletter is published twice a year by Boffa Miskell Ltd.

DESIGNED AND PRODUCED BY: DNA Designed Communications Ltd.

EDITED BY: WHAM Group Ltd.

COVER: 'Exposure', oil on board, 220 x 220mm by Pippa Sanderson (private collection). See Sponsorships, p.07

PHOTOGRAPHY: P.03 Pegasus Bay: Christchurch Press.

ILLUSTRATIONS: P.06 Browns Bay Centre Perspectives: Neil Colman.

PRINTED IN WELLINGTON BY: Astra Print.

dispatches



Moore Park development

A concept of 'sustainable sport parks' was the underlying theme used by Boffa Miskell in its recent development plan for Katikati's largest outdoor sporting facility, Moore Park.

Concerned about the impact of anticipated residential development, the Western Bay of Plenty District Council engaged Boffa Miskell to prepare a concept development plan that would ease the pressure on the park's recreational and open space facilities, and also allow for consolidation of the town's sporting facilities in the future.

A set of criteria for the proposed development was established after a comprehensive consultation process, which included meetings with key stakeholders, open days and public meetings.

Investigations are now underway for the preparation of detailed design plans.

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A new face for Western Park

Western Park, in the heart of Ponsonby, is one of Auckland's oldest parks. A long history of informal planting has provided a framework of mature trees with heritage value.

In 1999, Auckland City Council commissioned Boffa Miskell to produce a Maintenance and Development Plan that would protect the existing character of the park while developing it for contemporary use.

Implementation began in 2001 with the redevelopment of the Ponsonby Road frontage, where park furniture, tree planting and new pathways encourage people to enter and enjoy the park.

At the Hopetown entrance a new, sculptural viewing platform emphasises harbour views, and new paths and boardwalks lead into the park where a degraded stream has been refurbished with new planting.

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A new town in Pegasus Bay

A brand new township is to be built in Pegasus Bay, north of Christchurch, following a landmark Environment Court decision.

▲ View south of Pegasus Bay, where the new town will be built.

▼ Restoration of once-extensive wetlands will be an important part of the new town's open space framework.



Boffa Miskell has been part of large team of consultants which has worked on the project for five years. The team included architects, urban designers, engineers, archaeologists, lawyers, surveyors, energy experts, fisheries experts and Boffa Miskell's ecologists, planners and landscape architects.

District Plan provisions for the town were initially approved by the Waimakariri District Council in 1998 and 1999, but the project was temporarily put on hold when the Canterbury Regional Council appealed the decision, citing concerns the town would generate extra energy use and car emissions.

However, in January 2002, the Environment Court overruled the appeal, saying it wasn't adequately backed up by the Regional Policy Statement, and that effects on the environment would be negligible.

In fact, Boffa Miskell landscape architect, Don Miskell,

says the town was designed to minimise energy use, and also recognise ecological and cultural values.

"The landowner, Southern Capital Ltd, wanted the development to differ from conventional residential subdivisions, and to exemplify principles of 'new urbanism'," says Don.

"New urbanism recognises the economic, social and environmental benefits of traditional, pre-World War II towns.

"It promotes a sense of community through features like interconnected, walkable street layouts, mixed housing types, and a definite community centre. It's about building a sense of place through the celebration of natural and cultural features."

Site values

The 342-hectare site of marginal farmland comprises mainly old sand dunes and former wetlands. Vestiges

of the once extensive wetlands still remain, including habitats for rare Canterbury mudfish and plant species.

The area also has special significance to tangata whenua, Ngai Tahu, and includes a 500-year-old former greenstone working factory and wetland areas previously of importance for mahinga kai.

Recognising these ecological and cultural values, Boffa Miskell mapped out a framework for the township's open spaces, which comprise 50 per cent of the site. The plan sets aside large areas for wetland restoration, including a lake and three conservation areas, and allows for the protection of cultural sites.

Securing the concept

Once the concept was decided, Boffa Miskell was asked to ensure the development would happen as designed. Boffa Miskell planner, Sarah Dawson, says it was necessary to devise a comprehensive set of policies and rules tied to the staged development.

"A specified amount of wetland, for instance, must be rehabilitated before the next stage of development can proceed," she explains.

Rules were also worked out with Ngai Tahu, including protocols for wahi tapu sites and archaeological discovery, while new urban street layouts, streetscapes, building scale and layout were secured by rules tied to the development plan.

After five years of planning and hearings, consent to the new town has finally been achieved and development is about to get underway.

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▼ The Pegasus Bay town has linked street layouts and a definite community centre.



WelTec campus redevelopment

Redeveloping an existing site is never straight forward, but when the site in question holds a large tertiary institution confined by an historic residential area, the task is even more challenging.

Boffa Miskell was able to assist the Wellington Institute of Technology (WelTec) in Petone with this challenge by providing inter-related planning, landscape design and way-finding services.

“The Institute was faced with cramped and rundown facilities built more than 50 years ago and an increased student roll due to the closure of the Central Institute of Technology,” says Boffa Miskell planner, Robert Schofield, who was responsible for obtaining the necessary resource management approvals.

He says the client was keen to reuse existing facilities as much as possible, while also unifying the campus through upgraded linkages and outdoor areas.

“The redevelopment also had to allow for more flexible teaching facilities to cope with the changing demands of teaching, both now and in 20 years’ time.”

Clear direction

To bring together the various elements of the proposed changes, Boffa Miskell landscape architect, Steve Dunn, worked closely with DesignGroup Stapleton Architects to prepare an overall campus development plan at the early stages of the design and consultation process. The plan showed how the existing, modified and proposed new buildings would be integrated within the campus by redesigned outdoor areas, pedestrian linkages, traffic management measures and parking facilities.

Steve subsequently developed the detailed design and supervised implementation of the external landscape works.

Clear signage was a particularly important consideration.

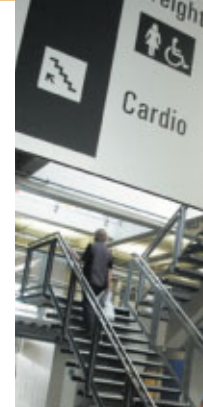
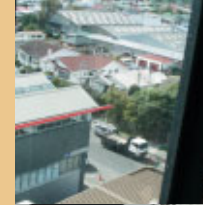
“On campuses, students need to find their way easily to very specific destinations,” he says. “In this instance, the campus sprawls over several blocks and has several outliers in the vicinity, so clear external and internal signage is essential.”

The signs also needed to suit a range of architectural styles and withstand the severe climatic conditions near Petone’s foreshore. Materials were chosen to reflect the technical content of WelTec courses, and were designed as derivatives of the new architectural elements.

Consultation

Using a draft plan to identify potential issues of contention, Boffa Miskell consulted with the local community and council to gather feedback on the redevelopment. Numerous changes were made resulting in a final plan that met with positive comments from residents.

“WelTec had a positive and co-operative attitude in responding to the concerns of local residents – and that went a long way to making the project a success,” says Robert.



▲ Landscape design had to provide for student needs and also integrate the campus with the surrounding residential neighbourhood.

▲ Signage reflected the technical content of WelTec’s courses.

Signage and much of the landscape work was completed before students arrived in February 2002, but work will continue for another year.

Other campus redevelopment projects Boffa Miskell has completed include; Auckland University Tamaki campus, Auckland University of Technology Waitakere campus and Lincoln and Canterbury universities.

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Ecological inventories

Significant ecological sites in Porirua and Palmerston North can be better protected now they have been identified by Boffa Miskell ecologists, Paul Blaschke and Isobel Gabites.

The respective councils engaged Boffa Miskell to prepare inventories to determine the location and condition of the sites and address any threats to their health and viability.

In Porirua, remnants play a vital role in the health of Pauatahanui Inlet and Taupo swamp, and numerous rural remnants have great restoration potential due to the vigorous species they contain and the benign climate.

Most of Palmerston North's natural areas, however, are confined to the hill country.

"On the flat, fertile lowlands, bush remnants have competed unsuccessfully with horticulture and urbanism, and altered water tables have permanently deprived us of a return to the swamp vegetation that was previously there," says Isobel.

She says user-friendly flow-charts were devised for Porirua City to guide the assessment of relative significance of ecological sites both for sites that had had continuous native vegetation cover and those that had reverted from pasture.

"These flow charts consider the history of the sites, their resilience to impacts, and their potential to become diverse habitats representative of successional stages within their ecodeviation [see BM News 04]," Isobel says.

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Greening central Wellington

Voted Top Town 2000, Wellington is no longer the grey home of bureaucracy it once was, but a city known for its café culture where people mingle on tree-shaded sidewalks.



However, Boffa Miskell landscape architect, Boyden Evans, says there is still a lot that can be done in terms of 'greening' the central city.

A comprehensive guideline produced for Wellington City Council (WCC) by Boffa Miskell outlines an overall vision, guiding principles and site-specific recommendations for greening Wellington's central city area.

Called *Greening Central Wellington*, the guideline recommends a greening approach for each of the city's unique character areas, including types of plant species best suited to the natural and built environments.

Boyden says there is little opportunity for grand gestures, such as wide, tree-lined avenues, as the central city is densely developed on the little flat land available. Instead, a creative approach is needed to enhance the limited spaces available. He also points out that the city needs to make the most of its existing green elements, by protecting plants and giving them the best conditions possible to thrive.

WCC senior parks planner, David Clelland, says that although the document is still in draft form, it already has practical applications.

"This analysis was so badly needed, that the Parks Business Unit is already using it as a guideline to work from," he says. "It's a very visual document, with aerial and ground-level photos to illustrate the recommended greening actions, so a very useful guide to work from – it's not abstract."

Many departments in the council have an influence on greening, through streetworks, resource consents and urban design, as well as parks and gardens. David says the document provides guidance for all these departments and is likely to improve internal communication.

"The management of central city greening has never been brought together in one plan like this before. We've been wanting something like this for a long time."

Greening Central Wellington will be presented to the Built and Natural Environment Committee in April before going out for further consultation. A final report will then be presented to the committee mid-year.

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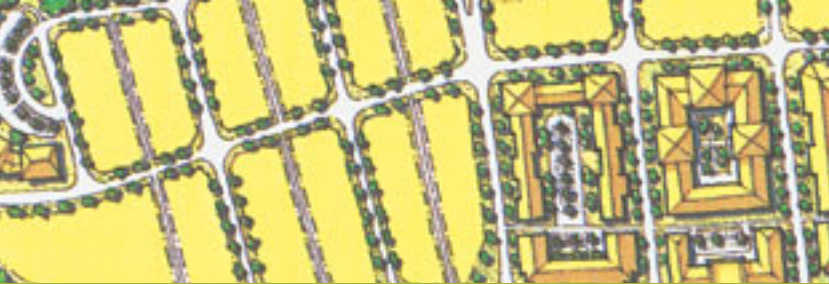
▲ Street trees are becoming a feature of downtown Wellington.



◀ Taranaki Street, Wellington: many areas of the central city would benefit from 'greening'.

▶ Left Bank, Wellington: there are various ways to use plants innovatively where space is limited.





New methods to manage urban growth

A centre plan for Browns Bay

Browns Bay’s town centre was like a “an engine firing on only three cylinders”, according to local citizens at a planning workshop last year.

The North Shore City Council agreed, which is why Boffa Miskell was engaged to develop a long-range strategy and plan of action to improve the town centre.

Boffa Miskell team leader Doug Leighton held a series of planning workshops with the community to come up with a plan that would capitalise on the “beautiful coastal setting and relatively affluent surrounding market”.

► Various environmental initiatives as well as economic revitalisation are planned for the Browns Bay Centre.



Market and demographic analysis was used to determine the future needs of the town, and the resulting Centre Plan includes a wide range of environmental and physical improvements, land acquisition and divestment, and management initiatives.

“We also need to reposition the centre, and encourage a more specialised mix of shops and services,” says Doug.

The adopted plan is scheduled to begin in 2003.

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▼ New shops and services will be encouraged to attract people into the Browns Bay centre.



▼ The Lake Park structure plan will guide the transformation of a former quarry into a residential neighbourhood.



“Structure and centre plans are filling a gap in planners’ tool kits, and proving to be invaluable for councils wanting to be proactive about planning,” says Boffa Miskell urban designer, Doug Leighton.

“They bridge the gap between strategy and implementation,” he says. “A council may have a vision for a piece of land, but not know how to implement that vision, which is where these techniques are useful.”

He says structure plans outline the basic planning framework for the development of an area, and centre plans do the same, but at a finer level of detail for a town or city centre.

“They provide both councils and developers with some certainty as to the scale and standard of comprehensive development, and typically lead to a Variation or Plan Change to the District Plan,” he says.

They also guide non-statutory planning, and help determine the timing and scale of hard infrastructure, such as transportation and sewer systems, and soft infrastructure, including recreation and community facilities.

Doug says structure planning is less common in established areas, but is often used to integrate brownfield sites with their surrounding urban environment. A case in point is the Lake Park development in Auckland’s former Mount Wellington Quarry (see ‘Brownfields’, BM News 05).

“Successful structure plans start with sound analysis of an area’s inherent community, landscape and ecological values, and involve research, community consultation, multi-disciplinary teamwork, and big picture urban design.”

To help communicate options to the public and decision-makers, Boffa Miskell uses digital technology for photo-realistic visual simulations, and static and dynamic ‘walk through’ 3D models of planning and urban design options.

Boffa Miskell has worked with numerous councils to develop successful plans for growth areas, including coastal structure plans for the 600 unit Omaha Beach development (see BM News 03), and the 1400 unit Whitianga Waterways development (see BM News 05).

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New principals

Boffa Miskell has a principals' group of senior staff responsible for the company's strategic direction. We are pleased to announce three new appointments:



Nicola Rykers

Planner, CHRISTCHURCH

Nicola joined Boffa Miskell's Christchurch team six years ago as a planner, having previously worked in consultancies and local authorities. She has experience in planning a variety of high profile projects in the retirement industry, and in urban development and expansion.

More recently, Nicola has developed expertise in facilitating the consultation involved in multi-disciplinary projects. She was responsible for developing and implementing the consultation strategy for Caroline Bay in Timaru, and assisted Meridian Energy in planning and implementing consultation for a major hydro development project.



Vaughan Keesing

Ecologist, TAURANGA

Vaughan is a research and field ecologist who came to Boffa Miskell in 1998 from a background in academic research and teaching. He recently moved from Boffa Miskell's Auckland office to the Tauranga office where he is working in forest lands, marine, inter-tidal and coastal environments, wetlands, freshwater systems and inter-tidal habitats.

Vaughan is skilled in assessing the health and significance of ecosystems and also works on broader issues such as national biodiversity, riparian monitoring and management, and natural heritage.

Addressing ecological issues relating to infrastructure, such as roading and wastewater treatment, is a speciality of Vaughan's – he develops creative but practical solutions to remedy or mitigate potential adverse ecological effects.



Diana Robertson

Ecologist, CHRISTCHURCH

Diana joined Boffa Miskell in 1999, after working for ecological consultancies and government departments in New Zealand and the UK. She has extensive knowledge of the South Island where she has carried out much field survey work.

Diana is highly skilled in assessing ecological values and the effects of development, and formulating creative but realistic mitigation solutions. She has specialised interests in restoration ecology and monitoring programmes.

More recently, Diana has been managing a team of ecologists to provide ecological input to a large hydroelectricity proposal. Diana brings an efficient systems approach to her work through her highly developed skills in information management, including databases and GIS.

Recent staff appointments

AUCKLAND

Cheryl Pott
RECEPTIONIST

Diane Budd
ADMINISTRATION MANAGER

Debbie Upton
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT

Melanie Burleigh
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT

Tom Chapman
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT

TAURANGA

Richard Turner
PLANNER

WELLINGTON

Bron Bennetts
LANDSCAPE PLANNER

CHRISTCHURCH

Nancy Simovic
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT

Clearwater Golf Resort opens

After 10 years in the making, Christchurch's multi-million dollar Clearwater Golf Resort was officially opened by Prime Minister Rt Hon Helen Clark in March this year. Boffa Miskell was involved in the project since 1992, providing feasibility studies, planning services for a district plan change and resource consents, as well as ecological assessment and landscape design.

Working with award winners

Boffa Miskell provided landscape design services for three projects that won awards in the New Zealand Architecture Awards, 2002. These were the Manukau District Court, the New Lynn Community Centre and the Fisher & Paykel Healthcare building. As well as concept and detailed landscape design, all three projects involved Boffa Miskell in contract management and construction supervision.



◀ 'Whenua 1' (1996), acrylic on canvas, 1200 x 900mm by Kura Te Waru-Rewiri, (private collection)

Sponsorships

Every year, Boffa Miskell sponsors events or projects that promote understanding or enhancement of the environment. Sponsorships have included educational publications, conferences, lecture tours, and site-based projects.

This year Boffa Miskell is proud to support the following events:

> **IMPACTS 2002 – NEW ZEALAND PLANNING INSTITUTE / ROYAL AUSTRALIAN PLANNING INSTITUTE CONFERENCE, 2002**

Impacts 2002, the first joint conference held by the two institutes, ran from 8-12 April in Wellington. Boffa Miskell was a sponsor of the conference, and Robert Schofield of the Wellington office chaired the organising committee. Frank Boffa was a speaker at the "Housing in the Rural Landscape" workshop, using a Tasman District project, carried out with Montgomery Watson Hazra, as a case study.

> **URBAN EDGE – NEW ZEALAND INSTITUTE OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS CONFERENCE, 2002**

Boffa Miskell is a sponsor of the *Urban Edge* conference, which will be held in Wellington from 22-24 June.

> **THIS OTHER WORLD: SIX ARTISTS EXPLORE SPACE AND PLACE – DOWSE ART MUSEUM, LOWER HUTT**

Boffa Miskell's Wellington office and Massey University are joint sponsors for this exhibition, which runs from 20 April to 30 June. *This Other World*, features the work of several internationally known artists who are recognised for their striking landscape images.

A way forward for a special place



▲ Fort Takapuna occupies a strategic headland on Auckland's coastline.

Operetu, Fort Takapuna, Defenders Point, Takapuna Head – the many names for this headland on Auckland's coast reveal its varied past and its special meaning for different sectors of the community.

Various iwi, the army, navy and local community have all had a close relationship with the land, which was bought by the government in 1885 for a coastal defence fort to deter Russian attacks. Prior to that, it was part of a complex web of successive Maori occupations, migrations and conquests – so it has significance to a number of iwi.

When the defence force decided the land was surplus to requirements, protracted litigation followed to determine the land's legal status. As a result, it was given reserve status and the Department of Conservation (DoC) was charged with the role of administrator.

Finding a way forward and reaching consensus on the reserve's future form and management was never going to be easy given its complex history, but Boffa Miskell was engaged by DoC to do just that.

▼ Participants at a one-day workshop discuss the future of the land at Fort Takapuna.

To gather information and set the scene for a workshop with stakeholders, meetings were held with various sectors of the community, consultation brochures were distributed and an open day was held.

In the one-day collaborative workshop, Boffa Miskell planner, Ewen Henderson, and urban designer, Rebecca Skidmore, drew on their facilitation and visioning skills to lead five groups through a series of sessions to explore the current values of the site, the areas of conflict, and the potential for the reserve's future.

"Getting people in one place at one time to talk in an open forum with clear parameters about the outcomes proved to be an effective means of gaining consensus and moving forward," says Ewen.

The result was a clear vision statement, which was documented in a report to DoC last year, along with a number of principles and a series of action plans to achieve the vision.

"The vision the groups had for the land was to create a legacy for the future by embracing the ideals of harmony and tranquillity, and honouring the wairua of the place," he says.

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Community visioning training workshop

John Goodwin and Rebecca Skidmore, from Boffa Miskell's Auckland office, last year attended a training workshop by Steven Ames from Portland, Oregon. Steven, who developed the well-known "Oregon Model" for comprehensive community visioning, is internationally recognised for his work in the field.

The training session focused on the perspectives, tools and resources that facilitators need when assisting communities to plan strategically for their own future.

Rebecca, who is enthusiastic about using the 'Oregon Model' to assist communities in being proactive, believes it complements the consultation and participation techniques that Boffa Miskell has already developed and uses regularly.

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