

Ashburton District DRAFT Reserve management plan

VOLUME 2 – Ashburton Domain and Gardens

May 2024

Ashburton DISTRICT COUNCIL

www.ashburtondc.govt.nz

29. Ashburton Domain and Gardens

Description

Ashburton Domain and Gardens (the Domain) is located at 337 West Street (State Highway 1), to the north and west of the civic and retail hub of central Ashburton.

The Domain is considered to be the most regionally significant reserve within the Ashburton District, an important and much loved open space in the centre of Ashburton, for residents and visitors alike. It provides a focus point for the town with attractive frontages along Walnut Avenue, West Street and Oak Grove. Many consider it as the 'jewel in the crown' for the Ashburton District. Ashburton Hospital borders the park to the west.

Address	337 West Street, Ashburton
NZRA Reserve Category	Public Garden Sport and Recreation
Total Size (in ha)	37.6147 ha

The Domain provides public open space with sport and recreation facilities, situated in beautiful gardens of botanical significance lined by mature trees.

Sports fields and facilities occupy the largest part of the Domain, covering the north and central part of the Domain.

The playground with its paddling pool is located in the south-east corner of the park. A pump track has been in the Domain since the 1980s.

The mature trees, educational plantings and ponds are key features in the south-west of the reserve (see site layout map in Appendix 1). Trees include a number of specimens that were planted to commemorate significant events of people (see Appendix 2 for a full list).



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Ashburton Domain is made up of four land parcels, which are all held as classified Recreation Reserves under the Reserves Act 1977.

Legal Description	Land Status
Sec 1277 Town of Ashburton	Recreation reserve
RS 41481 SO 15371	Recreation Reserve
Lot 2 DP 333567	Recreation Reserve
Part Section 598 Town of Ashburton	Recreation Reserve

Appendix 3 and 4 contain a larger scale location map and more detailed information about the land status, including Gazette Notice references.

Cultural/ Heritage Values

Though its development dates back to 1864, the Domain contains no heritage sites or features that are protected as scheduled items under the Ashburton District Plan. For information on the development of the Domain see the Background section below.

Natural Values

The Domain has many botanically diverse plantings. There are many mature and notable trees of botanical importance growing in the Domain. Over the years, a large number of commemorative trees have been planted throughout the Domain to commemorate significant events and people, many of which have commemorative plaques (see Appendix 2 for a full list).

The Domain also contains both formal and informal areas, with a broad range of horticultural and garden interest provided throughout the seasons via floral and leaf colour. This includes English country-style gardens and extensive rose gardens planted around a sundial in the south.

The many waterways and ponds provide habitat for birds and aquatic life and add to the amenity value of the park.

There are aquifers located under the Domain and several wells are located here which supply water for use in the Domain and for the reticulated town water supply for Ashburton.

Amenity Values

The amenity value of the Domain extends far beyond its boundaries with its prominence in the centre of Ashburton.

The amenity character throughout the Domain varies significantly, with the south-west dominated by dense plantings and ponds that provide for relaxation and solitude and the north-east dominated by open grassed areas and sports fields used for active recreation (see below).

The former sites of the aviaries have been redeveloped to include butterfly and invertebrate-friendly gardens.

Recreational Values

The organised sporting facilities in the Domain provide for football, hockey, cricket, tennis and athletics and include sports fields and ovals, tennis courts, as well as ancillary facilities including the sports pavilion and a number of changing rooms and club rooms.

The reserve also features expansive play areas in the south-east, with a playground, paddling pool and pump track. The play areas cater largely for pre- and primary-school aged children, with some elements suitable for older children.

Walking and shared walking and cycling paths meander through the Domain. The shared paths are part of Council's wider cycling network.

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A fitness trail with regular exercise stations has been established through the Domain. Runners also use the Domain boundary and pathways for running loops.

A BBQ and picnic area is located in the north of the reserve. Five public conveniences are located throughout the Domain. The main car parking area is located in the centre of the reserve and can be accessed from the main park entrance off West Street/SH1.

The Domain is regularly host to events. Circuses and Fairs occasionally use the south-eastern side of the Domain.

Other Values/Facilities

The Open Spaces team's operational depot, including equipment and machinery storage, plant nursery with glasshouses and buildings to accommodate staff are located in the south of the park, adjacent to West Street.

A curator dwelling (known as Domain Lodge) was built in the Domain in 1949. It is located at the corner of Elizabeth and Grigg streets.

A helipad is located in the park between the hockey turf/ pavillion and tennis courts. This facility provides for helicopter landings for the adjacent Ashburton Hospital.

Background

Established in 1864, Ashburton Domain was planned as an area for gardens and recreation. The area of the park located between Walnut Ave and the waterways was originally known as 'The Grange'. Early records describe the area as approximately 100 acres of 'miserable wilderness' that was a jungle of scrubby broom, spear grass and tussock.

Over time, with the help of volunteers, unemployed labourers, plant donations, the area underwent significant beautification.

In 1874, a Domain Board was formed to manage the land, using grants for planting trees and building fences. Under guidance from the Domain Board and Council, water races and two dams were built in the park which formed lakes. Water races and pipes were installed in the area of a naturally occurring ephemeral waterway. Of the two dams created in this way, one was developed into a swimming pool, the second, to provide for pumping water to fill large tanks.

Today the water in the ponds comes from the Winchmore Rakaia Main stockwater race. Water supply for the Domain branches off from the mains supply at the Coniston Farm Gate junction and exists the Domain at the corner of Wills Street. Water is then piped through underground channels along SH1 and flows into the Hakatere River south-west of Dobson Street West.

Due to insufficient finances, the Domain's administration was taken over by the Ashburton Borough Council in 1889. That same year, swimming baths were inaugurated, offering separate facilities for males and females, and ice-skating during winter.

In 1899, a Sports Association was formed, enabling more direct communication between the sports organizations, the Domain Board and the Council. The domain flourished, hosting sports clubs and community events. Cherry trees were added along West Street in 1939, enhancing its appeal.

The King Edward Coronation Gates (see photo below), located at the corner of Wills Street and SH1, were gifted to the Domain from the Ashburton County Council in 1903.

These gates were later replaced with gates donated by Captain Coleman (originally located at Baring Square East). The fence donated at the same time can be found at Ashburton Cemetery, at Seafield Road. The whereabouts of the original gates is unknown.

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A 1905 New Zealand Government publication on Public Domains[1] listed the following information for Ashburton Domain:

ASHBURTON DOMAIN, CANTERBURY LAND DISTRICT.

Area, 90 acres.

Work done during year: Propagating-house and tool-shed erected, new flower-beds laid out, maintenance, and general improvement. Improvements now on domain: About four miles fences, curator's lodge, propagating-houses, tool-shed, meteorological station, tennis-pavilion, and two small pavilions on sports-ground, bathing-sheds, asphalt cycling-track, three asphalt tennis-courts, croquet-green, bowling-ground, cricket-ground, water-supply, ornamental water-dams, &c. The domain is well planted and partially laid out as flower-gardens, walks, &c. Used for general recreation, sports, cricket, football, cycling, hockey, tennis, bowls, croquet, and swimming. Picnic parties from all over Canterbury visit the domain during the summer months; over five thousand excursionists visited the domain in January, 1905. Proposed operations for ensuing year: General maintenance and retarring asphalt cycling-track.

It also included photos of the sports ground and coronation entrance to the reserve.





Cooper photo.

ASHBURTON DOMAIN, CANTERBURY: SPORTS GROUND.

[1] PUBLIC DOMAINS, APPENDIX TO THE JOURNALS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, 1905 SESSION I, C-10, Source: https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/parliamentary/AJHR1905-I.2.1.4.15

Despite the challenges of World War II, the Domain remained an integral part of Ashburton's community life. However, in 1948, high bacteria levels caused the swimming pool's closure. Diving board fixings are still in place, located at the southern end of the North pond, behind a large Swamp Cypress (*Taxodium*) tree.

The 1950s saw an increase in leisure time, leading to various celebrations and sports events in the Domain, including rugby, which was player here, before moving to the Ashburton Showgrounds. Although some proposals for the addition of new facilities led to public debates, the Domain maintained its place as a central sports venue through the 60s, 70s and 80s, with major events and contributions enhancing its features despite economic challenges.

The Domain remains a premier spot for botanical displays and sports to date. Its significance is underscored by a limited number of curators over the years, and its high regard among visitors and locals. In 2014 the Domain celebrated its 150th anniversary, cementing its place for future generations.

For more detailed information about the history of the Domain see Appendix 5.

Occupation/ Leases (as at April 2023)

Occupier	Instrument	Final Expiry
Canterbury Hockey (Mid Canterbury Hockey Association)	Deed of Lease	Expired
Canterbury Tennis Centre (Mid Canterbury Tennis Association)	Deed of Lease	Expired
Technical Cricket Club	Deed of Lease	Expired
Ashburton Athletics Club	Deed of Lease	Expired
Waireka Croquet Club	Deed of Lease	Expired
Ashburton Bowling Club	Deed of Lease	June 2028
Ashburton Domain Pavilion Trust	Deed of Lease	Expired
Ashburton Sports Turf Trust	Deed of Lease	Expired
Various mobile vendors (at Layby)	Licence to Occupy	30 June 2024

Key issues

The following key issues are identified:

- Sec 1277 Town of Ashburton still notes the Ashburton Domain Board as administering body. Though the Ashburton District Council is the administering body of the land through NZ Gazette 1889 p 4 and subsequent local government reorganisation.
- The reserve lacks a central focus point.
- The play area has been developed over the years and is slightly disjointed. There is opportunity to improve play value, providing for a wider range of ages and abilities and better utilise the space. The playground also currently lacks shade.

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- There is opportunity to further develop the gardens and plantings.
- A number of the specimen trees in the reserve are coming to the end of their useful life. Ongoing maintenance and management, as well as succession planting will be required to retain healthy specimen trees in the reserve.
- There is also opportunity to highlight particular areas of interest such as the history of development of the Domain and the tree and other plant collections via additional interpretation.
- There are limited pedestrian facilities on either side of the car park and connecting to the main entrance on West Street.
- The use of the helipad in park by Ashburton Hospital has not been formalised.
- The redevelopment of the intersection of SH1 and Walnut Ave has limited vehicle access to the Domain from the north-east.
- All leases, apart from the lease for the bowling club have expired and are currently rolling over on a month-by-month basis, leading to uncertainty for occupiers.
- The operation of the two sports pavilions in the park is currently in the process of ownership review with a possibility of being handed over to the council. These will be administered by council in due course. Consideration may need to be given to options for future of the existing buildings, whether they are required and should be retained.

Specific policies

The following specific policies apply in addition to the policies outlined in Volume 1[2]:

1. Continue to manage the Domain as a regionally significant open space for active and passive recreation, the 'jewel in the crown' of Ashburton township and provide for diverse recreation and amenity green space for locals and visitors.
2. Maintain and enhance the picturesque environment and high amenity values of the reserve, including memorial trees, display/educational gardens and other vegetation that contribute to the attractiveness and enjoyment of the Domain.
3. Work with the Department of Conservation and Land Information New Zealand to update the administering body of Sec 1277 Town of Ashburton to Ashburton District Council.
4. Progressively and as resources allow, implement the Ashburton Domain Development 2020.
5. In the short- to medium term, retain an operational presence in the Domain through the Open Spaces depot, acknowledging that with limited space at the Domain, alternative locations for parks operations may need to be found in the district.
6. Retain the ponds at their current size.
7. Consider provision of all abilities play and shade for the playground.

[2] If in conflict, specific policies in this section override general policies in Volume 1 of this plan.

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8. Facilitate the renewal of the hockey turf at Ashburton Domain in the short-term. Consider relocation of the fields in the long-term.
9. Monitor ease of vehicle access to the Domain from the north-east in collaboration with NZTA. If necessary consider development of an alternative vehicle access to the Domain from Walnut Ave.
10. Continue to maintain, enhance and where necessary replace significant and memorial trees located in the Domain (see Tree Policy in Volume 1 for general guidance on tree planting and maintenance).
11. Consider selectively pruning of vegetation around the upper pond and picnic areas to create more cohesion of the site.
12. Manage any existing and proposed buildings in line with the relevant policies in Volume 1 of this Plan and adopted design guidelines for the reserve.
13. Formalise use of the helipad by Ashburton Hospital.
14. Contemplate leases and licenses within existing footprints of facilities for the continued provision of organised sport and recreation facilities e.g. football, cricket, hockey, tennis, athletics, croquet and bowling in line with the general policies in Volume 1 of this Plan.
15. Contemplate licences for commercial use by mobile vendors e.g. for operation of food trucks or coffee carts, etc in the layby area off SH1 in line with the general policies in Volume 1 of this Plan and the under Council's Trading in Public Places Bylaw. No more than three mobile vendors may operate concurrently at the site at any given time.
16. Re-energise community interest in the Domain through community events, markets and other programming.

Development opportunities

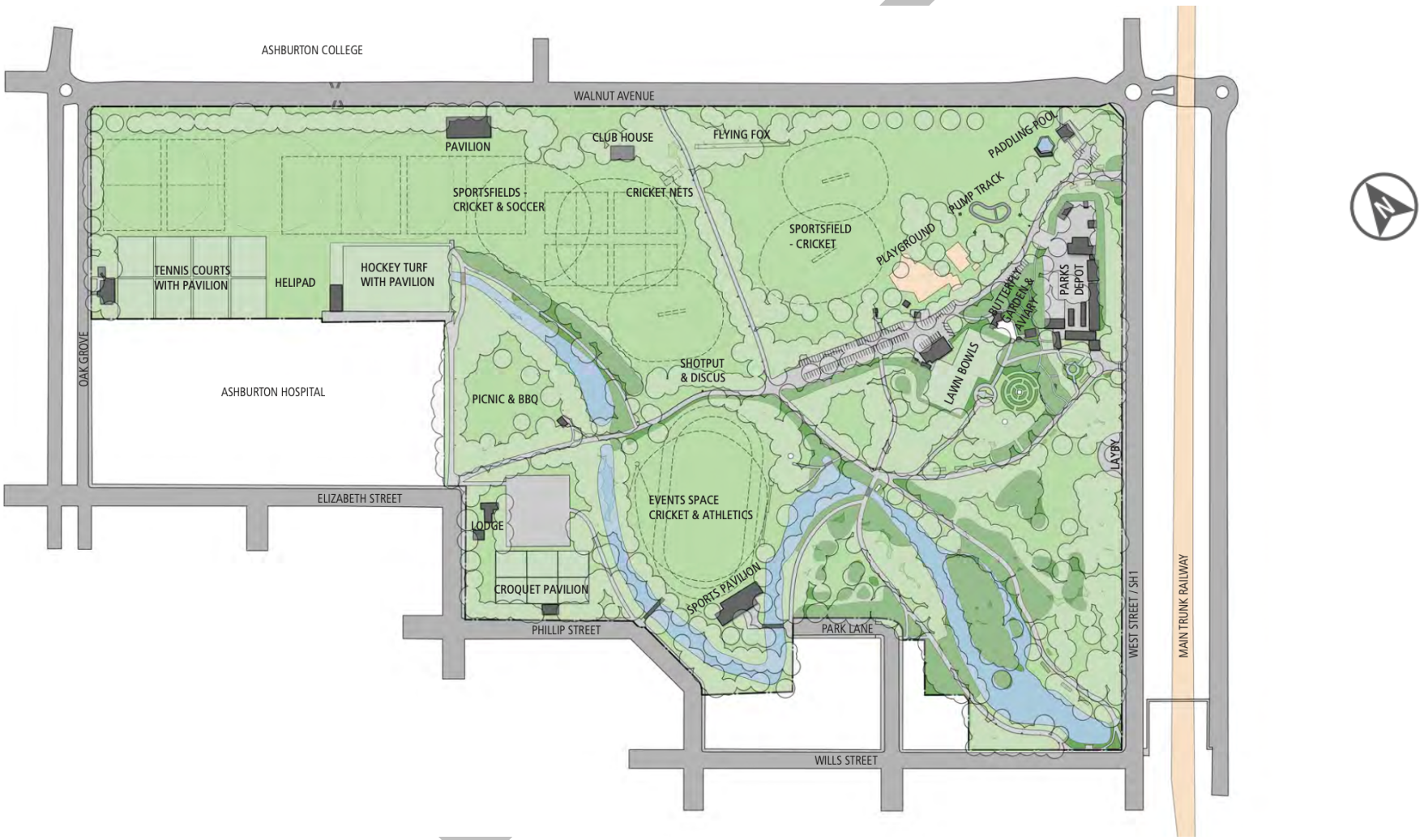
A range of opportunities for development are identified in the 2020 Ashburton Domain Development Plan. They include, but are not limited to:

- improving the waterways through planting, improved structures (including bridges), new connecting pathways and passive recreation and respite areas adjacent to the water.
- redesigning the play area, with clustering of activities and relocation of the paddling pool closer to the playground.
- developing a central focus point such as a pavillion or partially covered gathering space.
- improving pedestrian access and connections adjacent to the carpark, to the main entry on West Street and other areas of interest in the reserve.
- developing a promenade/ shared path along Walnut Ave.

Any development is to be carried out in line with the relevant provisions of the Reserves Act 1977, the General Policies outlined in Volume 1 of this plan and as resources permit.

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Appendix 1 – Site Layout (2018) [3]



[3] Source: Ashburton Domain Development Plan, Oct 2020

Appendix 2 – Tree Register Ashburton Domain and Gardens

1. *Cedrus deodara* - Deodar Cedar*
   Plaque reads "To the memory of Private John Readhead, Curator of Ashburton Domain. Killed in France 22 September 1916."
2. *Quercus rubra* – Red Oak*
   Plaque reads "This Oak planted 22nd June 1956 commemorates 21 years progress in Mid Canterbury CWI."
3. *Sophora teraptera* - South Island Kowhai*
   Plaque reads "Dominion Kowhai. Planted by the Mayoress Mrs H Davis 26th September 1907."
4. *Quercus robur* - English Oak*
   Plaque reads "Coronation Oak. Planted by the Mayoress Mrs W H Collins, Ashburton, August 9th 1902."
5. *Quercus robur* - English Oak*
   Plaque reads "Coronation Oak planted by Mrs V J Harper, Ashburton August 9th 1902."
6. *Fagus sylvatica* - English Beech*
   Plaque reads "This tree was planted by the Mayoress Mrs Henry Davis on September 1st 1910 in memory of Florence Nightingale O M. Great Benefactress to suffering mankind. Born May 12 1820, Died August 13 1910. A Lady with a lamp shall stand. In the great history of the land. A noble type of good. Heroic womanhood."
7. *Quercus robur* - English Oak*
   Plaque reads "This Oak was planted by Mrs H Galbraith, Mayoress on July 19th 1919. In commemoration of Empires victory in Great War 1914-18."
8. *Prunus autumnalis* - Autumn Cherry*
   Plaque reads "Queen Elizabeth II Coronation. Planted by Mayoress Mrs E C Bathurst 2nd June 1953."
9. *Tilia vulgaris* - Lime*
   Plaque reads "This Lime tree was planted by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II on the 13th October 1981."
10. *Cedrus atlantica glauca* - Blue Atlas Cedar*
    Plaque reads "Planted by Mid Canterbury Executive WDFF. To commemorate the Centennial Year of the Province 1950-51."
11. *Catalpa bignoniodes, ovata speciosa* - Bean Trees*
    Group of trees planted by the Governor General and Lady Beattie on October 26th 1984.
12. *Fagus sylvatica Zlatia* - Golden Beech*
    Plaque reads "Planted 7th February 1977 by the Mayoress Mrs D O Digby to commemorate the 25th year of the reign of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II."
13. *Quercus robur* - English Oak*
    Plaque reads "Planted 7th February 1977 by the Mayor Mr D O Digby to commemorate the 25th year of the reign of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II."
14. *Cedrus deodara aurea* - Golden Deodar*
    Plaque reads "Mid Canterbury Federation Country Womens Institutes 1935-1985."*

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15. *Quercus robur* - English Oak*
    Plaque reads "Ashburton Borough Centennial 1979-1978. Donated by Netherby C W I."
16. *Betula costata*
    Planted by the Governor General & Lady Reeves.
17. *Fagus sylvatica 'Luteovariegata'* - Variegated English Beech
    Planted by Mrs Kath Read, Past President Ashburton Horticultural Society, on 26 November 1990 to commemorate the 1990 Anniversary.
18. *Metasequoia glyptostroboides*
    To commemorate Earth Day 22 April 1990
19. Abies holophylla*
    Planted by Ashburton Diabetic Society Inc on 27 June 1991 to commemorate World Diabetes Day.
20. *Podocarpus totara**
    Planted by Telecom New Zealand and the New Zealand Police on 21 April 1995, and is symbolic of the need to nurture the young people of Ashburton.
21. *Olea verdale (3)* - Olive Tree
    Planted on 15 August 1995 to mark 50th Anniversary of V J Day
22. *Fagus sylvatica 'Riversii'* - Purple English Beech
    Planted by the Mayoress Mrs Anderson on 11 September 1997 in memory of Princess Diana.
23. *Dacrydium cupressinum* - Rimu*
    Planted on 24 May 1991 to mark 25th Anniversary of Amnesty International.
24. *Davida involucrate* - Dove Tree*
    Planted by the Mayor Mr Anderson and representative from St Josephs School on 25 September 1997 in memory of Mother Teresa.
25. *Liriodendron tulipifera 'Aureo-marginatum'*- Variegated Tulip Tree*
    Planted by Rural Women New Zealand in October 1999.
26. *Aseculus hippocastanum* - Horse Chestnut*
    Lions Club International District 202J.
    Planted by Maryann Mathews, Wife of District Governor John on 16 May 1992, to commemorate 75 years of Lions.
27. *Acer rubrum* - Red maple
    In memory of Coral Jones, Mid-Canterbury Plunket Nurse 1968-1996.
28. *Zelkova serrata*
    Planted on 7 April 1992 to mark 10th Anniversary of the Mid-Canterbury Playcentre Federation.
29. *Agathus australis*
30. *Fagus sylvatica 'Purpurea'* – Purple Beech*
    Plaque reads "This tree was planted by the Mayoress, Mrs H Woods, on 6 May 1935 to commemorate the Silver Jubilee of their Majesty King George V and Queen Mary".
31. *Acer rubrum**
    Plaque reads "Commemorating 75 years of CWI in NZ. Planted by Mid Canterbury Federation 1996".
32. *Quercus robar* – English Oak*
    Plaque reads "King George V Coronation Oak, planted by the Mayoress, Mrs B Davis, June 22nd 1911".

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33. *Quercus palustris* – Pin Oak*
    Plaque reads "This tree was planted by Mrs H Sutton Mother of Five Soldiers on July 21st 1919. In memory of the men who fell in the great war 1914-18. GREATER LOVE HATH NO MAN".
34. *Davidia involucrate* – Dove Tree
    Planted on 5 June 2001 to mark World Environment Day by Soroptimist International Ashburton.
35. *Quercus ellipsoidalis* – Northern Pin Oak*
    This tree was planted by, ASHBURTON GARDEN CLUB, to COMMEMORATE 50th ANNIVERSARY, 1951-2001
36. *Sorbus aria 'Lutescens'**
    Planted by Ashburton Branch of NZ RED CROSS SOCIETY INC on the 25th June 2007, to commemorate the 75th Jubilee of Red Cross in NZ, 1931-2006
37. *Tilea tomentosa* - Silver Lime*
    Planted on 29 July 2012 in Memory of Ian Fraser Bonisch, A valued Ashburton Lion, Domain Curator, District Councillor, 1920-2011
38. *Fagus sylvatica 'Pendula'* - Weeping English Beech
    Planted in memory of the Domain Parks Superintendent 1982-1988. Planted by Mrs L Thompson, 23 September 1988.

***** Trees have a plaque in place

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Appendix 3 – Land status map



Appendix 4 - Detailed land status information

The following land parcels make up Ashburton Domain and Gardens:

Legal Description	Classification	Owner/ Administering Body	Title	Area (ha)	New Zealand Gazette Reference
Sec 1277 TOWN OF AHBURTON (formerly Res 1711, part Res 308, 1643 and 1710, Secs 979 to 988 and 1019 10 1037 Town of Ashburton and Crown Land, SO Plan 15100)	Recreation Reserve	Ashburton Domain Board	No record of title	37.5461	1883 p 1225 (brought land under Public Domains Act 1881, appoints Ashburton Domain Board and delegates powers to the Board – this notice was corrected in NZ Gazette 1883 p 1291) 1885 p 166 (added land to the Domain) 1889 p 4 (revokes the powers of the Domain Board and appoints the Borough of Ashburton to be the Domain Board) 1980 p 2267 (classifies the land, but does not update appointment to manage the reserve)
RS 41481 SO 15371	Recreation Reserve	Ashburton District Council (via Ashburton Borough Council)	CB23B/11	0.0404	None recorded yet
Lot 2 DP 333567	Recreation Reserve	Ashburton District Council	1337605 (prior reference CB11B/1189)	0.0202	None recorded yet

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Legal Description	Classification	Owner/ Administering Body	Title	Area (ha)	New Zealand Gazette Reference
Part Section 598 Town of Ashburton	Recreation Reserve	Ashburton District Council (via Ashburton Borough Council)	CB230/181	0.008	None recorded yet

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Appendix 5 - History of Ashburton Domain[4]

The Ashburton Domain was planned for when Ashburton was first laid out in 1864 with the area identified for the purpose of gardens and recreation. The land was designated a domain reserve and was known as 'The Grange'. Early records describe the area as approximately 100 acres of 'miserable wilderness' that was a jungle of scrubby broom, spear grass and tussock.

A Domain Board was established in 1874 to administer the land. Income from government and County Council grants, or earned from leasing areas to early settlers for stock grazing or cropping, was then used to plant trees and erect fences. Under the guidance of the Domain Board, and the Council, water was brought from a local waterway into a water race which then traversed the Domain. Two dams were subsequently built which formed a lake.

Early records indicate that a donation from Council in 1878 allowed the local cricket club to sow a cricket field in the south east corner of the area, heralding the beginning of the use of the land for community sport and recreation. 1879 saw the Ashburton Hospital built on land that had been part of the west end of the Domain. As per an early plan for Ashburton, this area was to be the cemetery.

The Ashburton Recreation Ground was then established under the Public Domains Act 1881 in 1883 and placed under the control of the Ashburton Domain Board.

In 1888 the Corporation of the Borough of Ashburton was delegated as the Ashburton Domain board.

In 1889 the Domain was vested with the Ashburton Borough Council due to the Board finances being insufficient to continue the desired level of maintenance of the grounds. At this stage the Domain included a curator's cottage located near the site of the present Domain office off West Street. One of the first tasks of the Borough Council's newly formed Domain Board was to develop a sketch plan of the area's layout, taking into account the needs of the cricket club, Caledonian Society, and bicycle club as well as provisions for a running track, paths, driveways and planted areas.

Swimming baths were also opened in 1889 in a dammed area of the Domain, which provided separate bathing opportunities for males and females. The first swimming race was held two years later in 1891. When winter conditions permitted the baths were used as an ice-skating rink.

Applications from a multitude of sports clubs began to pour into the Board requesting different rental arrangements to use the Domain land. This resulted in cricket and football sharing a ground in the alternate seasons, tennis laying down an acre of courts, the swimming club taking over control of the dressing sheds, the cycling clubs taking responsibility for the maintenance of the clay track, outdoor bowls and croquet clubs developing playing areas, hockey building a pitch in front of the hospital and the enlarging of the sports pavilion on the sports ground. The rentals paid by the various sports clubs assisted the finances of the Domain Board. In 1899 a Sports Association was formed representing the collective voices of the sports located within the Domain and this enabled a more direct forum for communication between the sports organisations and the Domain Board.

Throughout these formative years, the Domain was beautified through donations of plants that were often planted by volunteer working bees.

[4] Source: Ashburton Domain and Gardens, Reserve Management Plan 2013

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The use of unemployed labour was also a vital aspect to the maintenance and upkeep of the Domain in the early years. A waterwheel used for water reticulation was placed in the domain in 1904. The direction of the various beautification projects over the years was largely down to the drive of the park curators/ superintendents of the time, or managers as they are known today.

The Domain continued to be developed as a key asset for the local community and was often the venue of landmark community occasions. For example the King Edward Coronation Gates were gifted to the Domain from the Ashburton County Council in 1903, a tree planting ceremony was undertaken in the Domain to commemorate the Ashburton Borough's 50th Jubilee in 1928, and in 1939 the Woolston Brass Band gave a concert on the island.

Beautification projects in the Domain continued with a belt of cherry trees planted along West Street in 1939. These were replaced approximately three years ago. When a call for donations of bulbs from the community was made around this time over 14,000 were received, reflecting the community pride in the area. Despite not having a large paid workforce, the Domain utilised 'Scheme 13' (an unemployment scheme) workmen extensively throughout this period.

World War II impacted on the progress of Ashburton due to shortages of labour and resources; therefore the 1940s are largely regarded as a 'mark-time' period for the Domain, with few new initiatives undertaken. Water samples from the swimming pool in 1948 showed high bacteria levels and the pool was then closed at the end of the season, ending an era. The new curator's house, known as the Domain Lodge, was built in the Domain in 1949 on the corner of Elizabeth and Grigg Streets.

The 1950s saw a shift in focus for the Domain from the previous decade, with a number of celebrations taking place in and around the domain.

The Queen's coronation in 1952 was commemorated with a flowering cherry tree being planted in the Domain, with Queen Elizabeth II visiting the Domain in 1953 as part of her New Zealand coronation visit. The 75th anniversary of Ashburton was celebrated in September 1953 with an eight day calendar of events, including a children's afternoon in the Domain featuring a Punch and Judy Show and free ice cream.

From a sporting perspective the 1950's saw an increase in leisure time in general with the introduction of the 40 hour working week and greater personal disposable income. This boded well for many sports based from the Domain and a significant event of the decade was when the Ashburton Women's Hockey Association hosted the first dominion championship ever staged in the town in 1957. This no doubt set the precedent for many other sports to host future championships in the Domain.

The 1950's saw a proposal made for a sports hall to be built near the Creek Road entrance to the Domain. Public outcry resulted with the proposal opposed due to the 'sanctity' of the Domain and subsequently the sports hall was located in Tancred Street. A similar situation arose some 60 years later following a proposal to locate the new Indoor Stadium and Pool in the picnic area of the Domain.

During the 1960's and 70's the Domain catered for all major weekend sport except rugby, and was utilised by primary and secondary schools mid-week. Notable sporting events held during this time included the Mid Canterbury Cricket Assn. hosting an international cricket game between the New Zealand Colts and Marylebone Cricket Club in 1964, the Mid Canterbury cricket team defeating the touring Fijian team on the Oval in 1968, and a pre-Commonwealth Games athletics meeting held at the Domain in 1974 with visiting overseas athletes competing against the local athletics club.

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Local service clubs have had a long association with the Domain and through their endeavours have added to the range of features of the Domain. Projects have included the construction of a bird aviary by Rotary in 1965, a skateboard track gifted by the Kiwanis and the paddling pool built in 1978 was a Centennial Project for the Ashburton Rotary Club.

Strong winds in 1975 knocked down part of the brick wall along West Street, with a decision made to create the lay-by which is still present today, enabling people to see into the domain from the roadside.

Despite challenging economic times in the 1980's sport continued to play a key role in leisure time activities in Ashburton. The Domain was considered to have a 'village green' atmosphere. During this time the Ashburton Cricket Association built a new pavilion on the Domain.

The last twenty years have seen the Domain maintain its position as the premier open space, botanical and sports venue facility of the District.

The high regard in which the Domain is held is reflected in the fact that it has only had ten curators/ superintendents over the last 130 years. The Ashburton Domain is highly regarded by both locals and visitors to the area as a key asset of the District, and this is certain to continue for future generations.

The Domain will celebrate its 160th birthday in 2024.

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