

BEFORE THE PALMERSTON NORTH CITY COUNCIL

In The Matter Of

Resource Management Act
1991 and a Plan Change under
Schedule 1

And In The Matter Of

Plan Change 23 to the
Palmerston North District Plan

STATEMENT OF G J M TOWNEND



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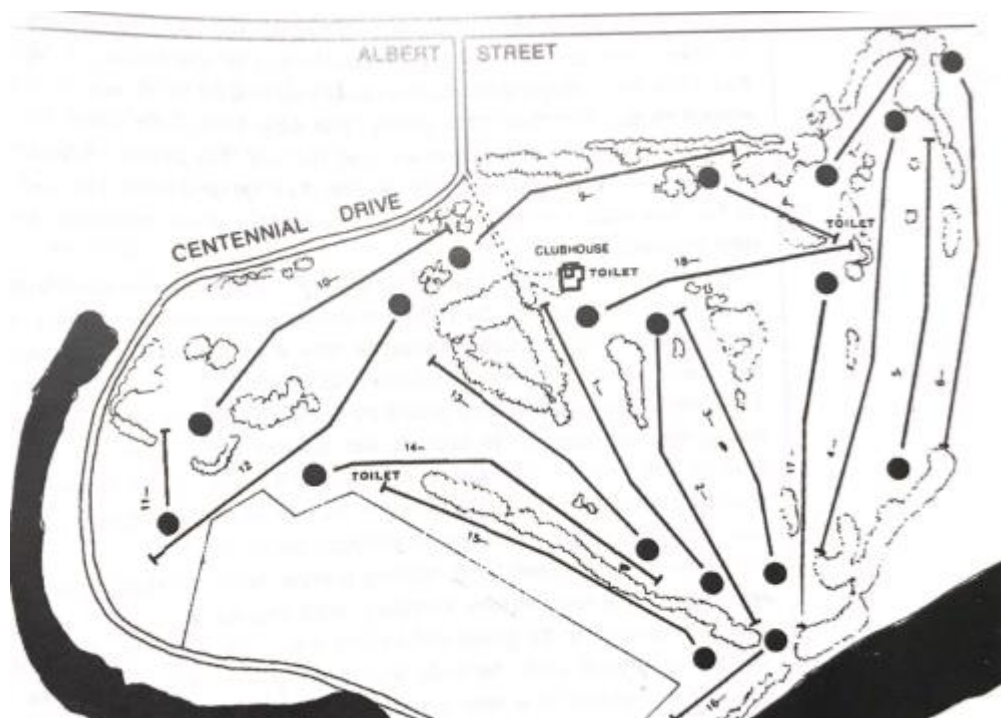
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1. My full name is **George Joseph Martin Townend**. I am known as Martin.
2. I live at 470 Albert Street, Palmerston North and have lived in Palmerston North since 1964. In 1981 I was on the committee of the Manawatu Golf Club and served as president in 1985/86 and 1997/98. I was also chairman of the centenary committee. I am also on the Manawatu-Wanganui District Association serving as President. NZ Golf is divided into 15 associations of which the Manawatu-Wanganui district is one.
3. Throughout my career I ran a textile business located in Joseph and West Streets in the City. At its peak it was employing 35 people and was known as Town and Country Textiles Ltd and Lana Spinning Company Ltd.
4. I joined the golf club as a 14 year old in 1964 and like so many people in Palmerston North regard it as an important cultural , sporting and social institution providing much needed amenity to the residents of Palmerston North.
5. The Manawatu Golf Club has been built on voluntary contributions of its many members. It is testament to their work that the Manawatu Golf Course ranks as one of the best in New Zealand and the oldest. It was formed in 1895. In addition, compared to resort or other member courses the annual membership fee is very reasonable and represents great value for money. This means that a high quality golf experience can be enjoyed by many members of the community including the young.
6. The early history of the Manawatu Golf Club is recorded in the centenary publication: "*A Century of Golf at Hokowhitu*". Some of that

history in potted form I will relate here. From 1964 I am able to speak from more personal experience.

7. The book *A Century of Golf at Hokowhitu* records the early days of the Manawatu Golf Course commencing at 1895. The early history is a fascinating story of the pioneering community of Palmerston North. Much of this early history was obtained from the records of the Manawatu Golf Club and with assistance provided by the Palmerston North city archivist of the time, Ian Matheson QSM. The foundation of the club was the work of some of the earliest European settlers in Palmerston North : L Abraham and C J Munro (first President). The latter being famous also for introducing rugby to New Zealand.
8. The Club's main land purchase occurred in 1907 and this involved the acquisition of 116 acres for a price of £3,000. The current land holding is around 106 acres and some of that is on the apron of the river and therefore not part of the overall course. Additions and reductions in the area have occurred as a result of negotiations between the Crown in relation to the adjacent land on Centennial Drive known as the Hokowhitu Campus and negotiations with the Horizons Regional Council and its predecessors in relation to a realignment of the Manawatu River and its flood bank.
9. For much of the early part of the 20th century the entire eastern part of the City between Centennial Lagoon and the Manawatu River was used for recreation purposes. These included a rifle range, polo club , race track and other facilities that have relied on the natural amenity adjacent to the Manawatu Golf Course and because built development tended to avoid the flood prone land. The largest flood being as recent as 1953.

10. Land acquisitions occurred in 1954 to 1957. It enabled major change in the course layout made in accordance with a design by H G Babbage. The development including completing new holes on the 11th, 15th and 16th which are close to the Hokowhitu Campus. These land acquisitions include:
 - (a) Exchange of 2.5 acres with the City Council to accommodate a new 11th hole and tee for the 12th enabling development of the Centennial Drive and Centennial Reserve.
 - (b) Purchase of 8 and 3¼ acres previously designated as rifle range.
11. Later boundary adjustments occurred with the Manawatu Polytechnic that occupied the Hokowhitu Campus. That involved purchase of a 500m² area on which the 15th tee was located.
12. H G Babbage was commissioned to provide a new course architecture in the 1950s. The stated purpose of these alterations was to enable the Club *“to provide a first class course at all seasons of the year”*.
13. The final design was largely faithful to the H G Babbage plan and is shown in the figure below.



14. The following text from the *New Zealand Golf Illustrated* in 1956 with the by-line “*The constructed course will present as challenging*” observed the following:

In recent years most, golf clubs whose courses that are within urban areas have been forced to realise they are being, or are likely to be, squeezed out. The Manawatu Golf Club, on the other hand bestirred itself from its peaceful surroundings and with vision and foresight, expanded. A fortunate opportunity to expand occurred a year or two ago and the extra land was acquired. The Club then decided to put aside any suggestions regarding half measures or minor improvements and with a wise and far sighted committee to carry out the undertaking the bold step was conceived of partly reconstructing the present course and adding holes in the new area which have been designed along the lines of the best overseas standards.

If one has lived and played in golf in other parts of New Zealand one cannot but feel how fortunate the people of Palmerston North and the Manawatu have been in being able to play their golf in such pleasant surroundings almost in the heart of the city.

15. In the 1960s the development of the tertiary institutions that presently exist on Hokowhitu Campus were established. This was large physical infrastructure funded by the government in recognition of the considerable growth in education facilities requirements of Massey University. Over time the facility was occupied by the Teachers College, the Manawatu Polytechnic (now UCOL) and now contains a number of tenants including , I believe, the New Zealand Defence Force.
16. Management of the boundary with the Crown entities since the 1960s has been largely satisfactory. Mutual planting on the boundaries is recognised as appropriate and provided for in the layout of the Hokowhitu Campus. On much of the built perimeter is an access road servicing the Crown institutions. These institutions are largely day based facilities. Indeed, on some parts of the Crown land planting reinforced the landscape treatments of the boundary with extensive vegetation. The Memorial Grove is but one example.
17. Even with the mature planting there are problems from time to time with errant golf balls. For example, from time to time in the past the Golf Club has been requested to reimburse the cost of damage to windscreens near the 15th tee where there is a car parking area on Crown land.
18. I am aware of neighbourhood issues that effected the Brookfields Course in Palmerston North and ultimately lead to its demise following

neighbourhood disputes with organic farming on adjacent land. This was a tangible example of how lack of controls to accommodate existing activities can lead to conflict. While it was an extreme case it demonstrates in my opinion a powerful need for sensitive management of the boundaries of a golf course. The membership of the Manawatu Golf Club jealously protects the amenity that has been built up as a result of many years of strategic planning and resists imposed decisions that affect the ultimate architecture and layout of the golf course without reasonable and legitimate input from the Club.

19. As a non-expert but as a person with strong sense of the need to be a good steward of the club's inheritance it seems to me that the important management of the effects of future development of the Hokowhitu Campus has not been well addressed in the Plan Change. More importantly for the Manawatu Golf Course, while some recognition of the importance of the interface has come through in the documentation it is largely toothless in that it will inevitably lead to problems in the future that should be avoided. It is regrettable that as an important stakeholder in the city, the Manawatu Golf Club did not have a more significant voice in the preparation of the plan change.
20. I am also concerned as a long term resident at the lack of design consideration of Centennial Drive in Plan Change 23. I understand that Centennial Drive was only recently dedicated as a road by Palmerston North City Council. It currently has open space quality with significant reserves on either side. At the immediate frontage of the campus most built form is set back. As I understand the proposal houses will front on to a significant part of the Hokowhitu Campus frontage to take advantage of views of the Centennial Lagoon. The landscape impacts of that sort of frontage are not modelled or understood well from the Plan Change material. I am concerned that the significant amenity

values of Centennial Drive will be lost unless there is thoughtful consideration for that design and that those design requirements are fully acknowledged in the Plan Change.

Martin Townend