

the everyday **collective** laboratory.



Memorial Avenue.

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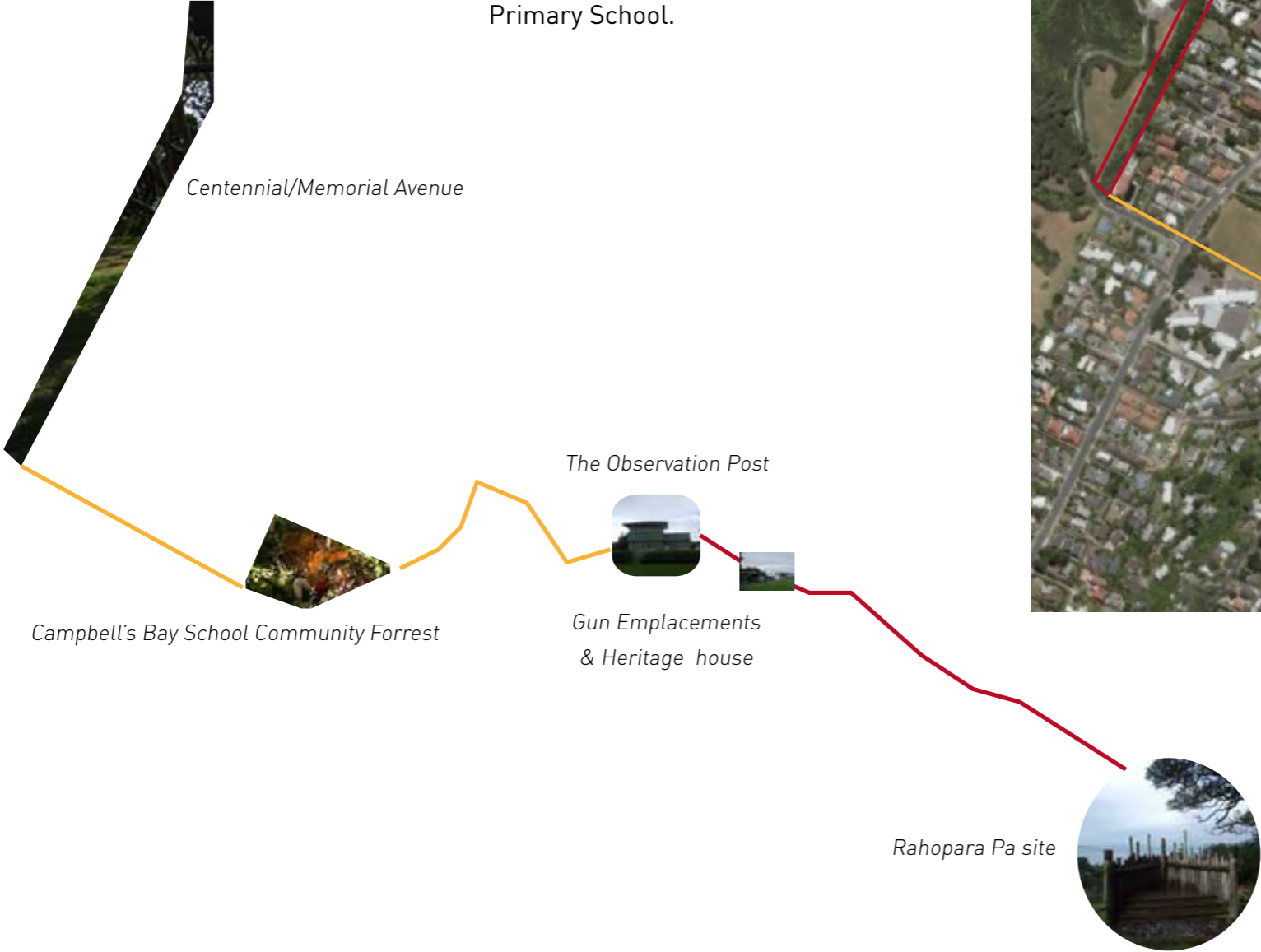
A landscape sensitive to change.

To tell the story.

Local heritage landscapes.



Centennial/Memorial Avenue can be connected to three other heritage sites through the Urban Sanctuary ecological restoration project at Campbell's Bay Primary School.



The result of connecting all the shown sites from Rahopara Pa to the Beach Road entrance of Centennial Park, could be the creation of a Heritage Site walkway that connects an historic Maori site, historic WW2 architecture, a locally driven environmental restoration site, and Memorial Avenue which contains essences of all of the previous sites.

Centennial Park.

Entrances to the park.

There are entrances to Centennial Park at Rae Road Campbells Bay and at Beach Road Campbells Bay.

Memorial Avenue is accessed directly off the Rae Road entrance, although the walk is currently closed at the entrance by a series of barriers. At the Beach Road entrance Memorial Avenue is a few meters in and is one of three pathways including the road that are available to pedestrians.



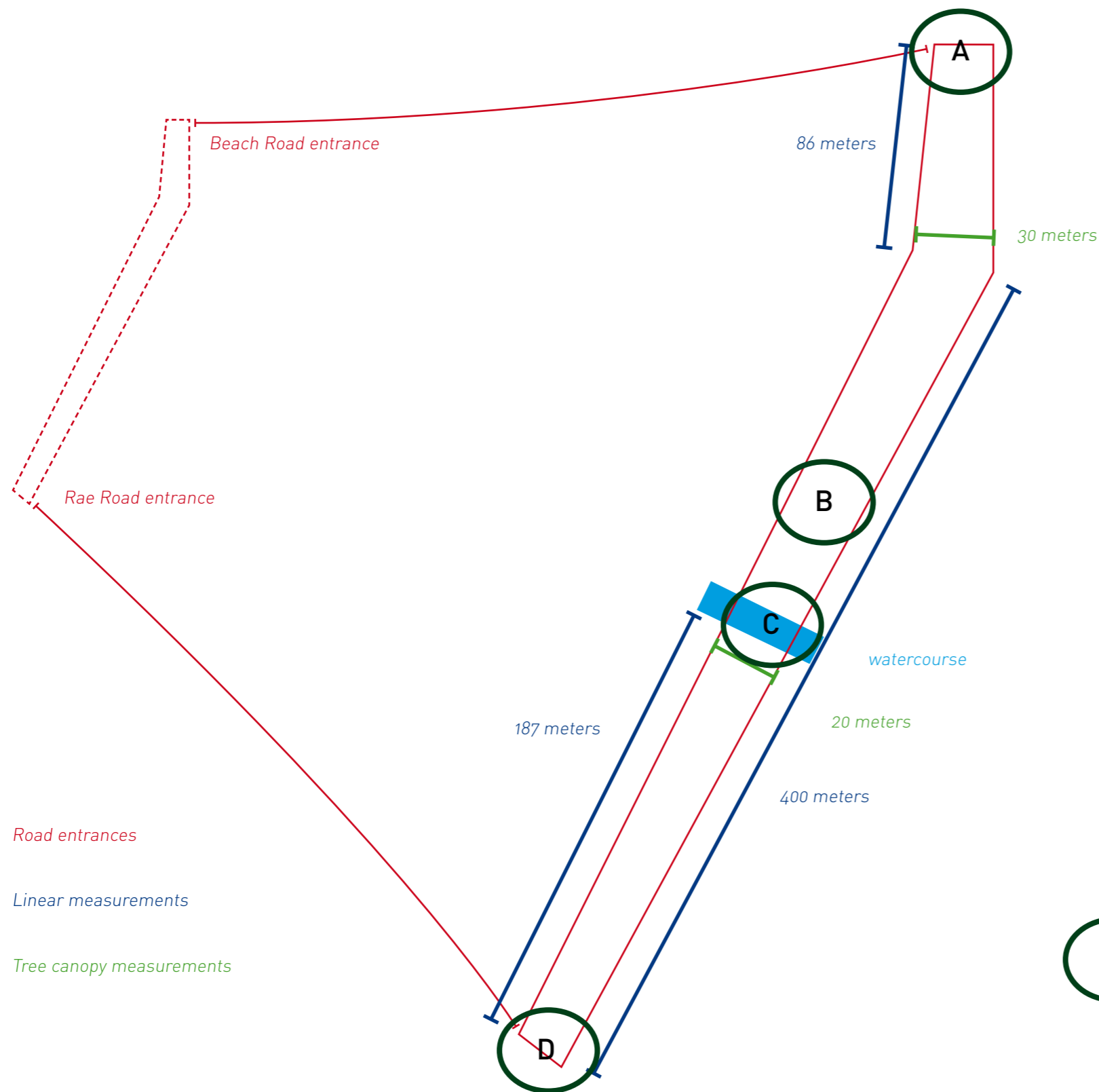
North Shore City's eastern bays



Top right; The Rae Road entrance, with the Memorial Avenue entrance immediately to the right behind the barriers.

Bottom right; The Beach Road entrance to the park, with Memorial Avenue just around the corner.

Bottom left; The Beach Road entrance to the avenue. You can see the differing levels of tree canopy and track formation between the two entrances of the avenue.



Road entrances

Linear measurements

Tree canopy measurements

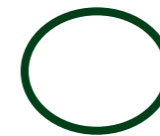
Memorial Avenue is situated on the south east boundary of Centennial Park, properties on Aberdeen Road and Beach Road back on to the avenue.

Access is from Beach Road or from Rae Road that runs off Aberdeen Road, both entrances are barrier controlled at night to prevent vehicles from using the road that runs through the park, this road has recently been named Morton Way, after Professor Morton, one of the founders of the Centennial Park Bush Society; centennialparkbushsociety.org.nz.

The avenue is known by several other names, each dependant on who is mentioning it. A North Shore City brochure on the park names it "Centennial Avenue", in reference to the 1940 centenary the park was re-named after, (the original being Takapuna Reserve). The bush society has named it on a small plaque at the Beach Road end "Avenue of Rememberance". The avenue has also been called by local residents in the past; "The soldiers trees".

Areas identified as key landscape features.

- A. Beach Road entrance.
- B. Bank overlooking Tennis Courts, and with a view to the sea .
- C. The creek crossing and steep bank leading into the avenue.
- D. Rae Road entrance.



Early images of the site.



Above; Campbell's Bay in 1945, Centennial Park is centre left with the six year old avenue clearly visible even after wartime neglect.

Above right; Detailed close-up of the avenue in 1945, showing the newly built art deco house on the left adjacent to a park entrance pergola.

Left; Aerial view from 1963 of the avenue seen running through the centre of the photograph.

Right; Mrs Clay on a planting day in 1939, well dressed for the occasion!



Constructed in 1939 for the 1940 Centenary Celebrations, it employed the grand avenue style of design and used two single row plantings of Pohutukawa trees.

When war came, and with it conscription, tree planting continued on the avenue, and each tree was given a plaque bearing the name of a soldier from the district who was departing for war, hence the term; "the soldiers trees".

A brief history of the site.

In 1939 when the country was preparing for the 1940 Centenary Celebrations, Centennial Park was known as Takapuna Domain and resided on the boundary of what was Waitemata County and Takapuna District. The park was undergoing some planting by the Campbell's Bay Beautification Society, which was probably involved in the decision to re-name the park and construct the avenue as part of the country's centenary celebrations. The width of the avenue is consistent with the width of the main road, Beach Road, and as early images show it was a major landscape feature that would have taken a bulldozer to form through the low Manuka scrub that then covered most of the park.

There are several recollections of the making and intent of the avenue that were published in the local newspaper; the "Northshore Times Advertiser", and each one has a slightly differing story, but they all express a similar theme, and this theme is that the avenue was originally created for the 1940 Centenary and intended as the main route through the park from Beach Road to Campbell's Bay Primary School. But when war broke out and men were leaving for overseas service, trees were either planted and given plaques with the mens names on, or existing trees were dedicated with a plaque to the departing serviceman. By the early 1960's any trace of the plaques had disappeared and the avenue's status as the main thoroughfare through the park was eliminated by the construction of the road now known as Morton Way, and the avenue was all but reclaimed by grass. But in the late 1970's the formation of the Centennial Park Bush Society eventually resulted in a partial renovation of the Beach Road end of the avenue through crushed concrete being laid on the surface, and the narrow track between the two ends made by local children being widened, and a small wooden duckboard crossing placed across the creek. A small plaque for "Centennial Avenue" was also placed at the Beach Road end of the avenue. It is quite clear that the avenue has a unique history by being a dual memorial site, as a memorial to the centennial of the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi, and a memorial to the men of the district who went to fight in the second world war.

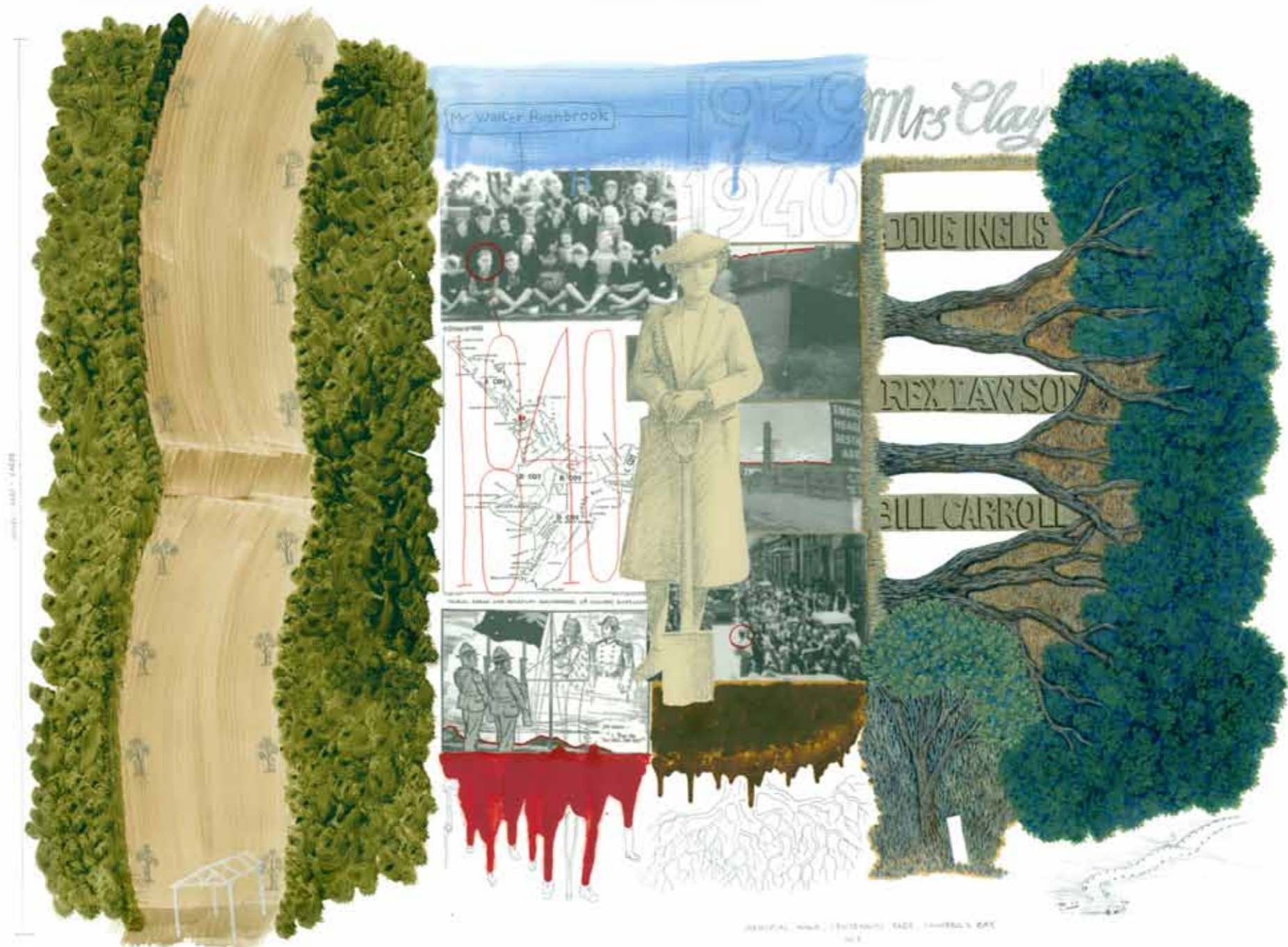


Campbell's Bay School children in 1940. The school contained only four classrooms during the war.



The 1940 Centenary celebrations dedicating the avenue. The photograph is looking north east from the Beach Road entrance of the avenue towards what is now Morton Way.

Site analysis.



Historical Research.

This image explores the physical and cultural events that shaped the avenue, especially the correlation between the centenary of the Treaty of Waitangi and the formation of the 28th Maori Battalion. School children and staff from Campbell's Bay Primary School were by some accounts involved in the plantings on the avenue. This work identifies the links between historic events, community, and the creation of the memorial landscape.

Local knowledge.



The Beach Road entrance.

The Beach Road entrance is the most visible of the two entrances, and according to the aerial photograph of 1945, it contained a brick and tile shelter. This suggests that it was considered the official way of entering the park, as well as the 1940 Centenary celebrations being held at this end of the park.

At this entrance to the park on Beach Road, you are confronted with a choice of three pathways; Memorial Avenue is on your left, the road called Morton Way is central, and to your right a low path that wanders down into the boundary of the park. This track was once the main route through the park before the avenue was constructed, and is clearly seen in the 1945 photograph.

The central figure is the well known beachcomber Frank, someone who knows the local landscape history better than most people as he has been an eastern bays identity walking the coast since the 1960's.

If you have any photographs, memories or stories of the avenue, send them to the address at the back of this document, we would be very interested in discussing how they relate to what we have discovered so far.

The seven atmospheres of the avenue.

The work below revealed that the avenue has seven distinct environments within it, and each represents a different experience in walking the path, with varying light effects and a changing ambience quite obvious as you pass through the varying vegetation and topographical experiences.

The work on the right shows an area adjacent to the avenue, just down from section one and two on the large image, with the low path from the Beach Road entrance visible in the bottom left with the site of what was the only constructed childrens play area in the park, this was demolished in the early 1970's.



Above; Below the avenue.

Below; Memorial Avenue in seven parts with accompanying symbols, light effects and artifacts.



The spirit in which it was made.

The large image explores the dual nature of the avenues creation, and also suggests an historic and social connection between the neighbouring sites of Rahopara Pa and Kennedy Park with Memorial Avenue through shared military history.

The work on the right reflects the fact that the avenue is a place that holds stories that local residents have over the years recounted to reporters in the local papers, but have never been officially published in any researched historical document.



The impact the preparation for WW2 had on this landscape, and on the relatively small population was significant, as Campbells Bay was intensively millitarized, and Memorial Avenue was by scale similar to the one in Devonport.



Views and vistas.

One of the most valuable aspects of a site are the views taken from places regarded as spectacular in aesthetic terms. This work helps establish some site lines and views that form the experience of the walker in the avenue.

It also comments on the movement of water through the pathway, this affected the choice of place in which to take the view, as the ground could be very wet underfoot or be broken by a watercourse during winter.

The image on the right is of the area just beyond the Rae road entrance to the avenue, where John Coates the local artist has lived all his life, he has based many of his works on this park and takes a keen interest in it's welfare.



The involvement of local residents in the plantings and maintenance of tracks in the park has been significant in shaping the landscape. Many aspects of the landscape hold an important meaning for locals, and this had lead at times to conflicting ideas of planting aesthetics.



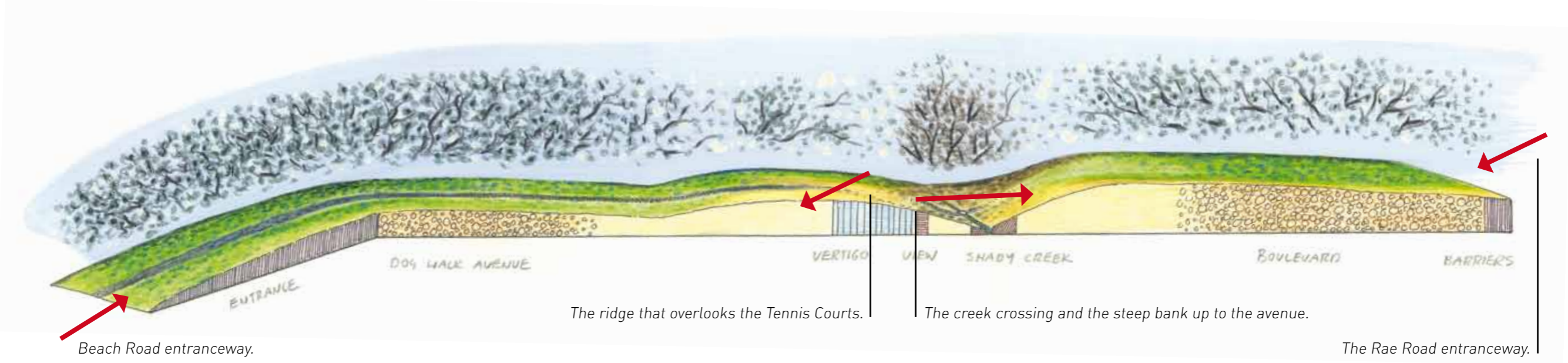
A landscape sensitive to change.

Memorial Avenue or Centennial Avenue, whichever name is put to this landscape, is a place that has over the years both kept its untouched charm and had significant pressure put on it. Memorial Avenue is a regional heritage landscape treasure, that lays within a park that is bordered on most sides by intense residential development, whose residents place great value in the un-manicured state of the grasslands, regenerating native bush and relative privacy the two small entrances afford such a large park.

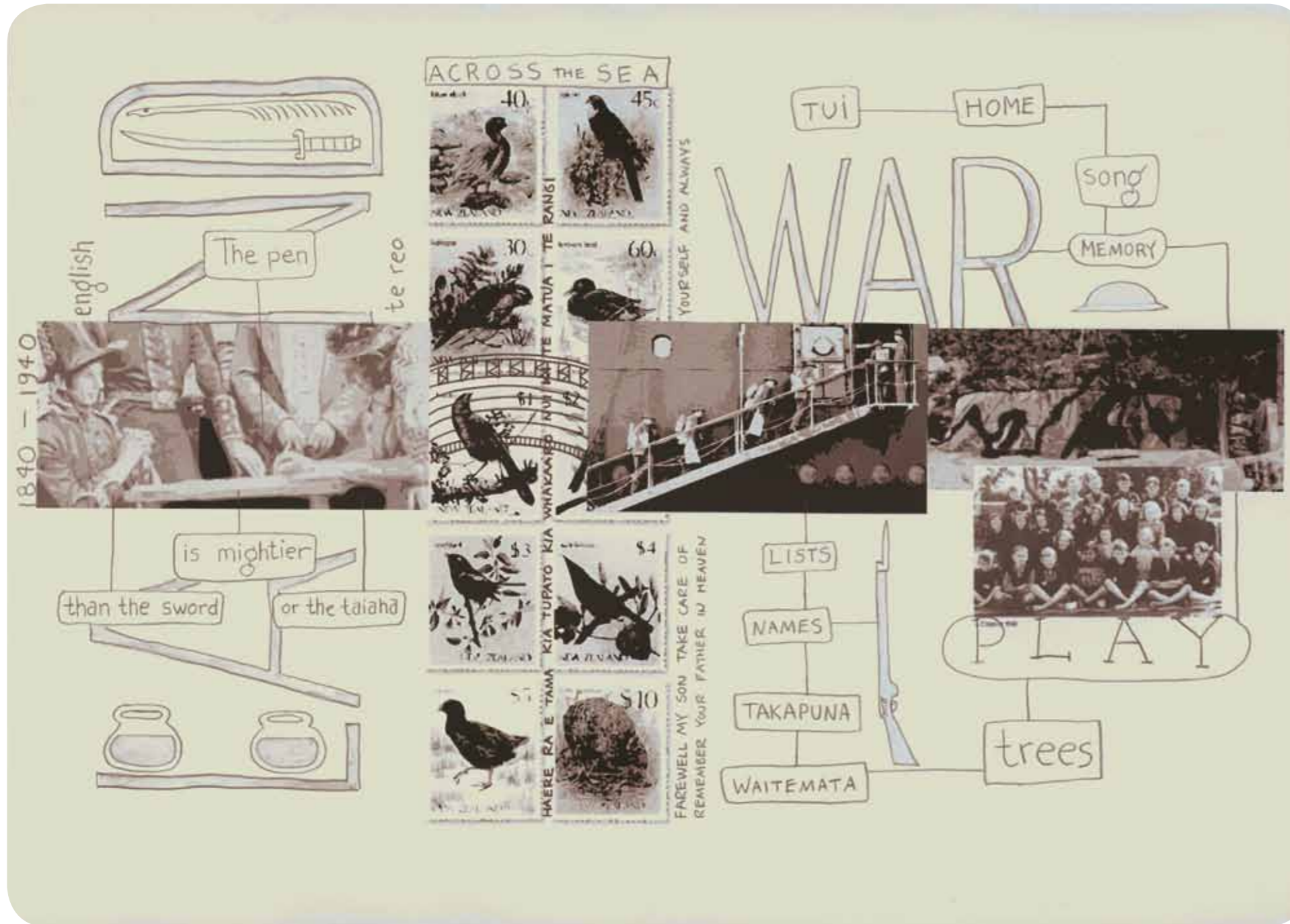
The avenue is thankfully without any non-permeable surfaces such as a footpath, and what all weather surface does exist is at the Beach Road end, and consists of crushed recycled concrete that when bedded in looks natural and is pleasant to walk on. The local residents who live near the park are acutely aware of the need not to spoil the long standing naturalness of the avenue, and through the Centennial Park Bush Society have undertaken some important conservation and restoration work with planting and weed removal.

But erosion and uncontrolled drainage have in some places caused a degradation of the avenue, in particular erosion on the ridge overlooking the Tennis Courts as well as the steep bank that leads from the creek, this being caused through stormwater drainage flowing onto the avenue from adjacent properties at the Rae Road end. The Rae Road entrance way to the avenue has been obstructed by traffic barriers to an extent that the original entrance to the avenue is no longer accessible.

The philosophy behind the concept drawings in the following pages is to restore the avenue to its status as a Treaty of Waitangi Centenary and War Memorial heritage landscape, while remedying some of the issues that threaten the use of the avenue as a walkway in its entirety and without impacting on its natural state through an intrusive development that spoils the qualities that we enjoy so much when walking the avenue.



To tell the story.



Speculative drawings.

These drawings offer ideas of how to restore the significant past of the avenue to the present in a way that enables contemplation, conversation, and enjoyment of the environment. The images suggest ways the avenue could be used as an educational tool for local history, as well as possible solutions to practical problems such as access, rest areas and encouraging bird life.

Beach Road entrance.

Centennial Memorial. 1840 to 1940.

A tribute to the local residents who built the avenue and who planted the trees to celebrate the Waitangi Centenary in 1940.

For Maori and Pakeha, the Treaty demonstrates that the pen is mightier than the sword.

The pen also reflects the strong literary heritage of the North Shore.





Above the Tennis Courts.

Re-created elements of the pillboxes that are currently hidden within the park's bush that date from from 1942 provide plantings for Poor Knights Lilly, and a place to rest and take in the views, watch some tennis and enjoy the sun. A reminder of our constant attention towards the coast.



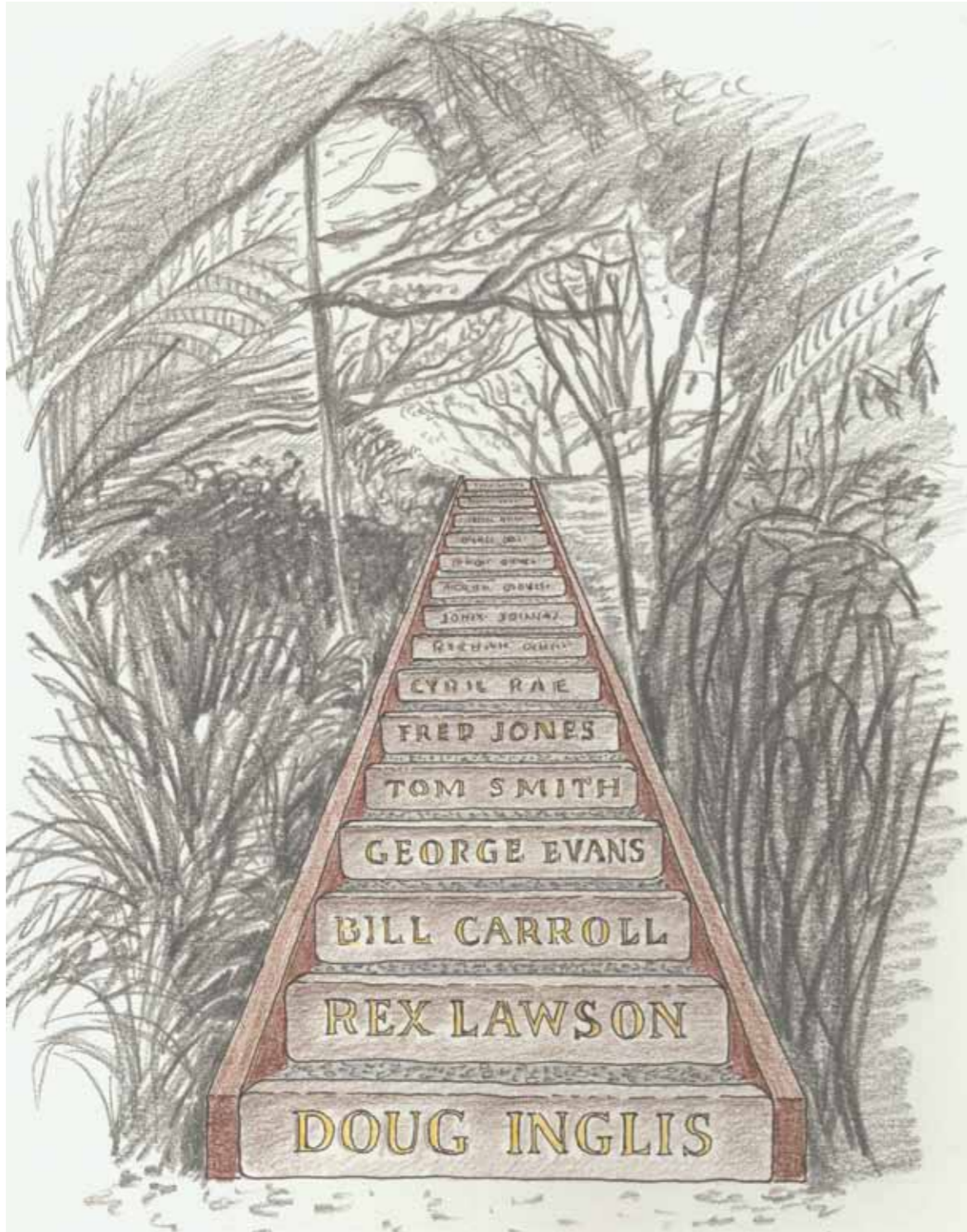
Crossing the creek.

Crossing the watercourse that divides the two halves of the avenue takes you into a deviation from the original track, one that has been formed naturally by the route people have chosen to take over the decades.

This small valley of Manuka and regenerating forest contains the only dense shelter and water supply for birdlife within the avenue.

Bird feeders/watercontainers could offer some protection from the many domestic cats that hunt in this area, as well as bring birds to a viewing distance for walkers of the track.

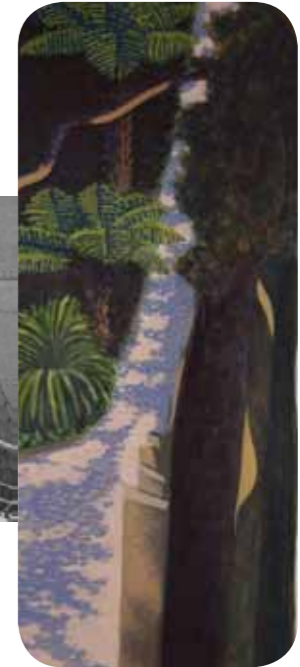




The staircase.

What is now a slippery muddy bank that forces the walker to deviate from the avenue, could be restored using steps that provide a direct entry to the grand avenue of trees beyond.

The men from the district that left to fight in WW2 and whose names are no longer underneath their trees have their names in bronze once more, and these are placed onto the steps that help people ascend into the avenue of Pohutukawa that continues to Rae Road, just as those men ascended into the ships that took them overseas and returned them home again.



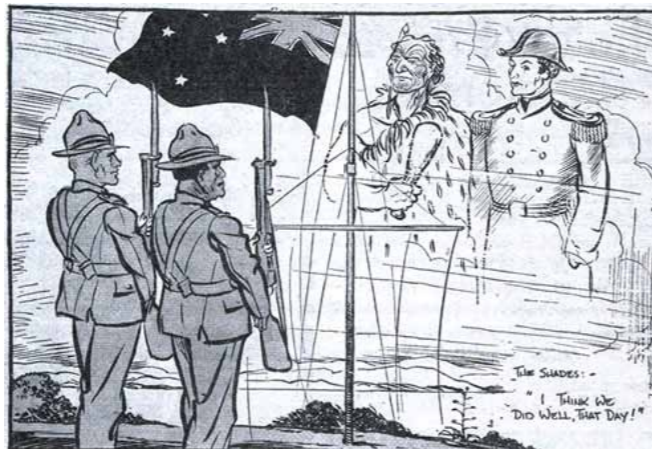
Rae Road entrance.

The entrance lays in close proximity to the 1942 bunker that existed on the nearby Coates property, and once acted as a command center for the pillboxes now hidden deep within the park's bush areas.

A place to sit and wait for a friend, and a structure children can play on.

A structure that provides easy access for pedestrians but prevents vehicles.

Children helped plant the trees in 1939, and still attend school just across the road, their knowledge of the ANZAC and Treaty of Waitangi history of the memorial is now made possible.






the everyday **collective** laboratory.

With the assistance of;



The Centennial Park Bush Society.



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Photographs courtesy of; Archives NZ, Centennial Park Bush Society and North Shore City.