

Club may lose site

By MARNIE HALLAHAN

MEMBERS of Takapuna's 100-year-old croquet club are concerned Auckland Council's intensification plans could see them kicked off their site.

The club, which has operated out of its Auburn Reserve site for 60 years, has been told it is unlikely to get another lease after its current one expires in 2017, according to club president Judy Hocquard.

Auckland Council is proposing a plan change to allow intensive development in the area around Anzac St west of up to eight stories.

And while buildings will not be permitted on the reserve the plan change report says that current clubs will be moved on and the reserve will be redeveloped.

Preliminary drawings given to the club show this is to include open green space but also an access road that would replace a section of the croquet greens to service new apartment blocks.

Mrs Hocquard says that not only was the club not notified of the council's plans, despite being greatly affected by them, but it has been kept in the dark about the submissions process.

"The council tells us that people's thoughts and feelings will be listened to but we were not even notified at all of their plans," she says.

"If you have a facility right on the perimeter of where you're planning a big change don't you have a moral responsibility to tell them what's going on."



What's going on?: Takapuna Croquet Club captain Marion Lee, second to left, with members who say they weren't told of the council's plans to intensify the area around their club.

Club members have had to dig around and request meetings with the council to find out what could happen to their club grounds.

They were told by Devonport-Takapuna Local Board adviser Chris Dee last year that it is unlikely the land the club leases will be available indefinitely.

"With this in mind an option would be to investigate alternatives while there is still plenty of time to consider and implement the most appropriate alternative," Mr Dee says.

But local board chairman Chris Darby says it would be very unusual for the council

not to extend a lease that has been running for such a long time.

"We have given the club every assurance that we are aware they have a key interest in this land," he says.

This has done little to allay the fears of club members who say finding another site could be tricky and even if a site was found it would take two years to get the greens up to scratch.

"Let the council be innovative and instead of removing an asset that is being well used why not work around it and integrate it into future plans," Mrs Hocquard says.

The club has about 80 members who come from all over the North Shore to play socially and competitively.

"Croquet is a game that can be played for a long time that's both physical and mentally challenging," Mrs Hocquard says.

"They are talking about parks where people can sit but we're talking about a place where people can do things and join in."

"Very few of the council amenities and parks are used every day of the year like our club is."

They are one of three parties appealing the Anzac St West Plan Change.

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