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**ISD CORRESPONDENCE TO WORKSHOP
STAKEHOLDER GROUPS**

Mr J Langan
 City of Sydney
 Town Hall House
 456 Kent Street
 Sydney NSW 2001

31st August 2005

email:Jlangan@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au

Mr Johnson

Re: Management Plan for the Wentworth Park Sporting Complex

Further to our conversation this morning, the Wentworth Park Sporting Complex Trust has been appointed by the NSW Minister for Lands to manage the Wentworth Park Sporting Complex, which is a dominant feature of Wentworth Park. The Trust has engaged Integrated Site Design to assist the Trust to prepare a Management Plan for the Sporting Complex. This Management Plan is being prepared in partnership with Sydney City Council, which manages the surrounding land at Wentworth Park.

The following factors have an important bearing on the Management Plan:

- Wentworth Park is public land, dedicated as a public park, and subject to the land management provisions of the Crown Lands Act, 1989;
- Greyhound racing is the primary activity of the Wentworth Park Sporting Complex. Racing is conducted under a licence that operates until 2027.
- The complex is also used by a very wide range of sporting and community groups including:
 - 36 Sporting associations
 - Eastern Suburbs Rugby League Football Club
 - Local schools, universities and educational institutions generally
 - Community Associations
- Since its dedication in 1885 as a public park, Wentworth Park has been actively used by the local community and with the increase in the number of residents in the surrounding suburbs new demands and expectations will need to be addressed.
- Wentworth Park is an important area of open space and landscaping. The Park contains many fine examples of original plantings, particularly the figs within the Sporting Complex and on the margins of the Park.
- Many of the structures in the Sporting Complex have reached the end of their useful life and/or function and need to be removed to allow new functions, facilities and landscaping to be provided.

In preparing the Management Plan for the Sporting Complex, the Trust is seeking input from the community and stakeholders. Comment will be sought at various stages during the process. Initially, the Trust is seeking comment, suggestions and even criticism on the form,

function and potential of the Sporting Complex bearing in mind the factors outlined above. After the Trust has received submissions from the community a draft Management Plan will be released for further public comment.

A similar letter has been sent to Mr Laurie Johnston at Council because of his role in determining community needs to invite him to provide comments on management issues associated with Wentworth Park and the Sporting Complex. We would also like comment on operational issues as well and any comments or matters that you would like the Trust to consider in the preparation of the Management Plan should be made by phone, letter or email by Monday the 12th September 2005 to one of the following:

Postal Wentworth Park Sporting Complex Trust
C/- Integrated Site Design
PO Box K 37 Haymarket NSW 1240.

Email dsin@i-site.com.au

Phone 92124022

Fax 92115200.

We would also like Council to nominate a representative from the property management side of your organisation to attend a focus workshop. It would be appreciated if you could let me know your availability (or the name of another person) would be available to attend a workshop on either the 14th or 15th September as soon as possible to enable arrangements for the workshop to be finalised.

Yours sincerely



Derek Sinclair
Director
Integrated Site Design

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Wentworth Park Sporting Complex Management Plan Focus Group

14 September 2005 at Sports House 6.00 – 8.00pm

1 Introduction

Derek Sinclair welcomed the group and provided an overview of the process the new Trust had initiated to prepare a Management Plan to guide activities at the Wentworth Park Sporting Complex. This Plan is being prepared in co-operation with Sydney City Council.

The Purpose of the Management Plan is to:

- Provide a clear vision for the Sporting Complex;
- Provide a strategic focus for the Trust's activities
- To sit above and guide the development and implementation of the Trust's Policies; and
- Provide a flexible management framework for the Trust's activities over the next 3 - 5 years.

The scope of the workshop and the intended outcomes from the discussion were:

- To enable stakeholders and community representatives an opportunity to participate in the planning process;
- To provide the Trust with feed back from stakeholders and community representatives on the operation, use and management of the Complex.
- To enable stakeholders and community representatives to contribute to a 'vision for the Complex'.

Existing contractual arrangements between the Trust and the two Greyhound Associations, being the National Coursing Association (NCA) and the Greyhound Breeders Owners and Trainers Association (GBOTA), Easts and Sport and Recreation were briefly explained.

2 Historical Context

Peter Mann provided a snap shot of the range of activities at Wentworth Park and particularly the Sporting Complex. Greyhound racing has been the primary activity since the 1930s.

Historically Wentworth Park hosted more large community events including events such as the circus. During these times (1950s and 60s) the Park was used more intensively by the people of Glebe and Pyrmont and there was increased interaction with the local community. In more recent times the Complex was used to host

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cultural events like the Highland Games, Jewish celebrations etc. As a result the locals were more involved in the facilities. However there have been no such events for some time.

3 Use of the Complex

Over the past 15 years the uses of the Complex have expanded significantly. For example:

- the facilities are in use 6-7 days and nights a week;
- 36 amateur sporting associations have offices in the Grandstand building;
- greyhound racing takes place 2 nights per week plus dog trials are held;
- monthly antique fair; and
- Easts rugby league training.

Financial input from Greyhound Racing, Easts and Sport and Recreation enables the Complex to be maintained. Community groups and local schools can use the facilities for free or minimal charge.

Greyhound Racing

Greyhound Racing has been using the Complex for approximately 73 years. The Greyhound Associations host a total of 104 races per year (52 each) on Monday and Saturday nights. Their use of the Complex is subject to an existing Licence Agreement which finishes in 2007. The Licence Agreement has a further 20 year option which the Associations indicated that they would be taking up.

Schools and Universities

The Park is now a busy place with many diverse uses including wide usage by local schools as a playground. Ultimo Public School and International Grammar School use the southern areas of Wentworth Park numerous times a week. This use is through informal agreements with Sydney City Council. Both schools have also used the Complex for other activities including annual art show, athletics, and exams.

Tertiary institutions and schools use the facilities to hold exams. This type of commercial use provides money to maintain the Complex. UTS are interested in using the Complex for sporting activities and indicated that they would be happy to investigate a financial contribution to upgrade lighting facilities so the field could be used at night. The University has 32 sporting clubs that could potentially use the Complex. Concern was expressed that the local community could be alienated if there were agreements with big groups such as universities or sporting bodies which excluded other potential users and/or branded the Complex with their particular identity.

Easts Rugby League

Easts has been using the facilities for the past 2 years and has a contract until 2007. Main uses are the gym located in the grandstand, coaching offices and training on the field which is maintained at a high quality.

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Other Issues/Uses

Locals have noticed a significant increase in use of the surrounding area of the Complex for golf practice and walking of dogs (currently illegal). Sydney City Council is relaxed about the multiple uses in the areas under its control.

Police have noted that there is significant crime in the vicinity of the southern and western area of the Park due to the large population, dark streets and proximity to the city. Crime in the Complex is minimal.

At present the outside lighting covers the track but not the playing surface. Upgrading the lighting has been investigated and would have considerable cost, although the demand is there for improved illumination.

4 Needs and Opportunities

Proposed Upgrade to the Entrance

The Trust has conceptual plans for upgrading the entrance to the Complex which would include restoring the tower, one of three heritage items in the Complex. The plans include removing the large metal structure around the tower and opening up the entrance area visually and physically. The aim is to make the Complex more attractive and therefore more welcoming to the Public at large.

Other Initiatives

One proposal was for a licensed club within the Complex for the community as there is none in the local area. The Complex could also lend itself for use as a canine park due to the increased ownership of dogs in the community. Another suggestion was developing basketball courts for youth. Comment was made that in earlier years there were ladies evenings and special event evenings at the races which were popular with the community at that time.

There is a need to integrate the Complex with the other areas of the Park. 100 years ago Wentworth Park was one of the premier parks in Sydney. This is not the case now and significant upgrades within the Complex and links to the outer areas of the Park, including visual links to the waterfront, would improve its attractiveness to the community and use by the community.

The walls around the Complex are an issue as they act as a visual and physical barrier. People are unaware of the many existing uses of the Complex because of the forbidding nature of the walls. Removal of the walls and replacement with wire that is still secure could make the area more open and visual.

Wider uses of the Complex can bring issues relating to parking and transport. Pedestrian access is often made difficult as Wattle Street is very busy and hard to cross. Maybe another footbridge is required and better access to the Park from the light rail.

The venue is seen as a premier venue for Greyhound Racing in NSW. As a premier venue it needs to be maintained for patrons so that the environment is safe, welcoming, modern and has a good atmosphere. To continue to achieve these things there needs to be some significant improvements to the Complex. There is a

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need for a balanced commercial focus. Currently the complex costs a lot to maintain and financially Greyhound Racing contributes significantly.

Opportunities may open up for other uses when the Sport and Recreation Offices move to Homebush in 2007. A replacement strategy needs to be in place for when this occurs.

Other opportunities raised include creating a sporting museum, hosting the Pymont/Ultimo exhibition currently at the Powerhouse Museum and creating an artists colony that could be rented out.

5 Vision for Wentworth Park Sporting Complex and the Park

Integration is the key to making Wentworth Park and the Complex more attractive in the future. This could involve for the Complex:

- Increase opportunities for more community access
- continue the use of the Complex for active recreation;
- increase multiple uses of the Complex;
- commercial sustainability of the Complex; and
- need to make the Complex (and the Park) more inviting and visually attractive.

Other key points to consider in a vision for the Park:

- integrating the many uses of the Park;
- integrate the Park and Complex with the harbour/waterfront;
- more walkways;
- better access to the light rail;
- better landscaping that could highlight historical aspects of the Park; and
- more visual continuity including opening up the viaduct.

Note: Written responses will continue to be received over the next couple of weeks.

Derek Sinclair
ISD