

ITEM 3. CHARLES KERNAN RESERVE – COMMUNITY CONSULTATION AND CONCEPT DESIGN PLAN**FILE NO: S052657****SUMMARY**

This report describes the Community Consultation and Concept Design Plan options for the refurbishment of Charles Kernan Reserve, Darlington.

The park provides an existing playground facility containing a small range of play equipment with wood mulch soft fall, and an area of grass fronting Abercrombie Street.

A community consultation day was held in the park on 15 November 2008 where ideas for the park were displayed and community comments invited. The consultation day was well attended. Sixty three written responses and a petition for a community garden were received during the consultation period. Responses have been incorporated into the Developed Concept Design Plan.

The Developed Concept Design Plan proposes to refurbish the popular play area to cater for a range of children from toddlers to teenagers. The design also makes provision for a community garden area, BBQ facilities, a basketball hoop, large nature play areas, additional shade planting and improved access and pathways, as requested in the consultation.

The plan maximises environmental performance of the park including energy efficient lighting, minimising water demand and the use of indigenous species wherever possible to support habitat.

RECOMMENDATION

It is resolved that Council approve the Developed Concept Design Plan (Option B) for the upgrade of Charles Kernan Reserve, as shown at Attachment B to the subject report, for progress to detail design and tender.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Existing Park – location and photographs.

Attachment B: Developed Concept Design Plan

Attachment C: Community consultation display boards

Attachment D: Community consultation feedback schedule

Attachment E: Concept Design Environmental Report

BACKGROUND

1. Charles Kernan Reserve is located at the corner of Abercrombie Street and Shepherd Street, Darlington.
2. The park is elevated from street level with sandstone retaining walls dating from the 1950's. An existing playground is located in the western corner of the park adjacent to the neighbouring residential property and Wilson Lane. The park also contains an open grass area and several mature trees. (**Attachment A**)
3. The park and playground are a popular destination for local residents, university students and workers from local businesses. The playground was highlighted for a general upgrade by the Parks, Trees and Aquatic Facilities Unit due to existing non-conforming play equipment and mulch softfall and the parks general poor condition.
4. Display material identifying park issues and two concept alternatives were prepared and presented to the community at a consultation day (**Attachment C**) in November 2008, to generate discussion and feedback. The day was well attended and a high level of community interest in the park was evident. 63 written responses were received as well as a petition for a community garden. The community liked elements from both schemes presented.
5. Comments from the community were received and reviewed (**Attachment D**). The main preferences include:
 - (a) improving playground equipment for a broad age range, rubber soft fall and shade to playground area;
 - (b) nature play areas and more trees;
 - (c) maintaining the open grass area, and keeping the wall to Abercrombie Street;
 - (d) BBQ facilities;
 - (e) a community garden;
 - (f) maintaining and improving pram/ramp access from Abercrombie Street, and better access into the park;
 - (g) a basketball hoop and half court area; and
 - (h) more seats and tables.
6. The playground is currently fenced and the park is designated as 'off-leash'. There were mixed views on dogs in the park, however, the current arrangements are not proposed to be changed. Any community garden or BBQ areas would be prohibited areas for dogs under the Companion Animals Act.
7. In response to the community feedback, a Developed Concept Design Plan was prepared (**Attachment B**). In addition to an improved play area and equipment, the design proposes:
 - (a) a small community garden;

- (b) improved access from the corner of Abercrombie and Shepherd Street and through the park;
 - (c) additional nature play and toddler play areas;
 - (d) a basketball hoop;
 - (e) BBQ facilities; and
 - (f) additional seating, bins and planting.
8. **Sustainability** – in accordance with the Councils Draft Sustainable Asset Guidelines for the City of Sydney, this project aims to maximise environmental performance of the park (**Attachment E**). These measures include:
- (a) use of indigenous planting to contribute to habitat and minimise maintenance and water demand;
 - (b) low energy park lighting;
 - (c) provide a community garden with opportunities for edible plants, and community composting . Water reuse will be investigated for the community garden and general park use.
 - (d) recycle/reuse of materials; and
 - (e) material lifecycle and energy input considerations.
9. **Tree Management** – it is proposed to remove one small tree in poor condition and three Cocos Palms. These trees have been assessed by Council’s Tree Management Coordinator as in very poor condition/ diseased or exotic weed species (cocos palms) and are recommended for replacement. At least four new advanced trees of a similar height and broader canopy are proposed to replace these trees to provide shade.
10. **Park Naming** – Charles Kernan Reserve is named after Charles Kernan (1909–1976), a former City of Sydney and South Sydney Council employee and resident of Darlington. Charles Kernan also worked for many years as Secretary for the West Sydney Labour Party and was involved in community work in the Darlington area.

KEY IMPLICATIONS

11. **Strategic Alignment** – the proposal is consistent with key principles outlined in the 2030 Strategic Plan and Corporate Plan 2009 – 2012, including:
- (a) Sydney 2030 Strategic Elements
 - (i) Liveable green network – continuous green corridors integrated with liveable streets; and
 - (ii) Transformative development and sustainable renewal – high quality public space and design.

- (b) Sydney 2030 Strategic Directions
 - (i) A leading environmental performer;
 - (ii) Vibrant local communities and economies; and
 - (iii) Sustainable development, renewal and design.
 - (c) In accordance with the City of Sydney Corporate Plan Key Focus Area for Quality Urban Environment & Public Domain and Facilities, the proposal will:
 - (i) incorporate nature play elements and a range of equipment and spaces to provide a challenging and broad play experience;
 - (ii) improve the visual and physical links between the playground, park and street; and
 - (iii) provide a park and facilities that respond to community requirements and allow for a range of passive activities for the community in a quality park setting.
12. **Social / Community** – the proposed refurbishment improves the park quality and provides a broad facility for local children. The proposal also allows for flexibility to cater for a range of community users and age groups. Feedback from the community consultation held strong support for the inclusion for a community garden in the park. This idea was reviewed with the Community Garden Coordinator, with regard to community organisation and on going support, and a sufficient area. A barbeque area was also strongly supported as a community building idea and is included in the enhanced option.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

- 13. The initial scope of works prepared for public consultation included the playground upgrade only. However, this was subsequently extended to comprise a comprehensive reserve upgrade as illustrated in the Developed Concept Design Plan.
- 14. The recommended scope can be accommodated in the Parks General Capital Works Program forward estimate for 2009 /10.
- 15. The Parks General Capital Works Program 2009/10 also includes Flora and Knight, Pinkstone Park and Kirsova 2 Park in Erskineville; Goddard Playground and Rochford Playground in Newtown; and Under the Freeway area in Pymont.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION

- 16. South Sydney LEP 1998. The park is City of Sydney land zoned 6(a) Local Recreation.

CRITICAL DATES / TIME FRAMES

17. The proposed program for the project is:

Endorse concept design plan and indicative cost	March 2009
Design development and documentation	March – May 2009
Construction tender phase	June 2009
Commence construction	September 2009
Completion	3-5 months

OPTIONS

18. The following two options for the scope of works for the park upgrade have been identified:

(a) Option A – Base works

Improve the playground only with new equipment and softfall, to keep within the initial budget allocation. This option is not recommended.

(b) Option B – Response to the broad community requests

More comprehensive works that respond to the community feedback and requests including an improved playground and play options with expanded nature and toddler play, shade and pram access, a small community garden, additional seats and furniture, a BBQ, basketball hoop, additional access paths and additional planting. This option is recommended.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

19. A community consultation day was held in the park on 15 November 2008. The purpose of the day was to explore ideas for how the play area and park might be improved and to seek community ideas, requests and input. Ideas were displayed and staff and consultants were present on the day. The consultation day was well attended. The feedback from the day was positive and generally supported a broader improvement program.
20. Display material identifying park issues, upgrade objectives and concept ideas were prepared and presented to the community (**Attachment C**).
21. 63 written responses were either received on the day or via email, and have been collated and summarised (**Attachment D**).
22. Subsequent to the community consultation day, a petition with 131 supporting signatures was received containing a proposal for a community garden.

23. The community comments were reviewed, and, where possible or appropriate, incorporated into the Developed Concept Design Plan. These include:
 - (a) improving playground equipment for a broad age range, rubber soft fall and shade to playground area;
 - (b) nature play areas and more trees;
 - (c) maintaining the open grass area, and keep the wall to Abercrombie Street;
 - (d) BBQ facilities;
 - (e) a community garden;
 - (f) maintaining and improving pram/ramp access from Abercrombie Street, and better access into the park;
 - (g) a basketball hoop and half court area; and
 - (h) more seats and tables.
24. The idea for opening the wall along Abercrombie Street and a broad stair entrance into the park was not supported.
25. Shade for the play area was a major theme, with the preference being that it be provided by trees if possible.
26. The residents and owners of the neighbouring property at 294 Abercrombie Street, Darlington, did not attend the community consultation day. They have been contacted and have no issues with the proposals.
27. The Developed Concept Design Plan will be made available on the City's website and the stakeholders that provided comments will be notified.
28. Notification will be sent to residents one month before construction begins. The notification will include the final design plan and an updated program of works.

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