

Relevant Information for Council

FILE: X019606.003 **DATE:** 16 August 2019

TO: Lord Mayor and Councillors

FROM: Amit Chanan, Director City Projects and Property

THROUGH: Monica Barone, Chief Executive Officer

SUBJECT: Information Relevant To Item 7.8 - Project Scope – Palmerston Avenue Steps and Sarah Peninton Reserve Upgrade, Glebe

For Noting

This memo is for the information of the Lord Mayor and Councillors.

Purpose

At the meeting of the Environment Committee on 12 August 2019, a response was requested to issues raised by The Glebe Society by Councillor Scott.

Background

During the community consultation period from 17 May to 14 June 2019, correspondence was received from The Glebe Society as circulated by Councillor Scott.

A number of concerns with the concept plan were raised, and these have been included and responded to in the Engagement Report (Scoping Report - Attachment C). The City also held an extraordinary meeting on 8 August 2019 with The Glebe Society to present these responses.

Comments raised and responses by the City:

Concern over the requirement for a new park entry on Lombard Street in preference for additional planting.

This comment will be considered in detailed design. The new entry will improve sightlines and surveillance into the park as well as provide secondary access for users and maintenance to the park.

Request for park seating with backs

This comment will be incorporated into detailed design, park seating to include seats with backs.

Concern over paving extent in front of seats in preference for additional planting

This comment will be considered in detailed design, with paving minimised under and in front of seating to maximise planting area.

Request for small shrub replacement planting to Lombard Street

This comment will be incorporated into detailed design. Planting along Lombard Street to maintain sightlines and surveillance into the park from the street. Planting palette to be confirmed during detailed design and to be co-ordinated with The City's urban ecologist.

Tree removal request

Requested trees are located outside of park boundary and not on City owned land.

Request for retaining existing and providing an additional tap for watering

An additional tap will be provided and the existing tap retained.

Request for tool storage within the park for the Glebe Palmerston and Surrounds Landcare Group

The location and provision of storage amenity is being investigated.

Request for larger planting extent

In order to strike a balance between providing planting for habitat and bush regeneration as well as usable green space for the current and future use of our small parks, the upgrade proposes to dedicate the upper park provision to planting / bush regeneration while retaining the open turf area in the lower park area for recreational use.

Request for doggie bag dispenser

Doggie bag dispenser to be incorporated into detailed design.

Amit Chanan, Director City Projects and Property

Prepared by: Lucy Farley, Design Manager and Belinda Graham, Delivery Manager

Attachments

Attachment A. Project Scope - Palmerston Avenue Steps and Sarah Peninton Reserve Upgrade - Glebe Society Comments

Approved

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P.M. Barone', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

MONICA BARONE, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Attachment A

**Project Scope - Palmerston Avenue Steps
and Sarah Peninton Reserve Upgrade
- Glebe Society Comments**

12 June 2019

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Dear Sir/Madam

**Proposed changes to Ernest Pedersen Reserve,
and Palmerston Avenue Steps and Sarah Peninton Reserve, Glebe**

Thank you for your e-mails of 17 May 2019 about the City's proposed changes to the above parks in Glebe. For more than seven years these parks have been cared for by the volunteer members of two very active landcare groups in our suburb. The groups have worked closely with Daniel Harris and the late Rae Broadfoot (Community Garden and Volunteer Coordinators) and Sophie Golding (Urban Ecology Coordinator), as well as CitiWide, the City's park maintenance contractors and have held community planting days and working bees to establish native flora and foster biodiversity in the parks.

Earlier this year, an onsite "pre-consultation" meeting was held with the City at 3:00 pm on Tuesday 5 February in Ernest Pederson Reserve between eight volunteer members of the Ferry Road Bushcare Group and the Glebe Palmerston and Surrounds Landcare Group together with Judy Christie from the Blue Wren Subcommittee of the Glebe Society and six City of Sydney staff led by Ali Dexter, Senior Project Manager - Community Consultation, Community Relations. The meeting was most important as it gave the landcare volunteers the opportunity to speak about their ideas for the parks prior to the City issuing its park renewal documents. Unfortunately, the recommendations made at this meeting do not appear to have been adopted. This is extremely disappointing, particularly for those involved in the meeting.

The parks provide a quiet oasis of greenery and wildlife in a densely populated part of the local government area. Many of the proposals take no account of this background and will disrupt the equilibrium of the current usage of the parks by local residents and visitors.

Our particular concerns about the proposed changes are given below.

Ernest Pedersen Reserve

1. The proposed changes are aimed at redesigning the park for young children. The park, however, is mainly used by a large variety of people for passive activities including having their lunch, walking their dogs or reading and relaxing.
2. The park is small and the proposed expansion of the play area will impinge on other grassed areas. Large areas will be covered in a thick rubber surface-matting and the current wood-chip mulch will be removed (it contains many grubs and insects - a food source for kookaburras and other birds).
3. The features of the present park are excellent and demonstrate the work of the Ferry Road landcare volunteers. Many of the proposed changes are unnecessary and will not add to its amenity - they include:
 - The entirely satisfactory bitumen paths are to be replaced with brick paving which will require a 30cm sand bed. Contiguous tree roots will be damaged, and the pavers are more likely than bitumen to become uneven over time and create trip hazards,
 - An unnecessary 90 cm fence with a gate is to be constructed on the eastern boundary of the park. It has no useful function and will further clutter the small park.
 - A large garden bed is to be installed on the southern boundary of the park (at its border with William Carlton Gardens). It will reduce the grassed area in the park and remove access to the viewing area adjacent to the boundary fence with its outlook over the city and William Carlton Gardens.
4. The scale of new playground equipment and other contemporary features shown in the concept design indicates that the proposed design fails to recognize the Heritage significance of the park.
 - The park adjoins Rothwell Lodge, listed as Heritage Item No 1681 in the Sydney Local Environmental Plan 2012, with State significance classification.
 - The Rothwell Lodge Statement of Significance as detailed on the website of the Office of Environment and Heritage particularly notes its Setting as adjoining the Ernest Pederson Park and that the Park was originally the site of the front garden of Rothwell Lodge.
 - The Park is located within the Glebe Heritage Conservation Area 5.
5. The proposed design fails to meet the controls of Section 5.10 of Council's own Local Environmental Plan. Notably:
 - (1) (b) to conserve the heritage significance of heritage items and heritage conservation areas, including associated fabric, settings and views.

The significance of the Ernest Pederson Park to the setting of Rothwell Lodge cannot be underestimated, and a comparison could be drawn to the setting to State listed Elizabeth Bay House, Elizabeth Bay.

6. The proposed design is against the spirit of Section 13 of the Sydney Heritage Development Control Plan 2006 in so far as the relationship between Heritage Items, Heritage Conservation Areas and Public Domain, and the extent of intrusiveness of one into the other.
7. Further, it was suggested at the onsite meeting on 5 February 2019 with the landcare volunteers that the City install a plaque in the park to recognise that the land was originally purchased and donated to Glebe by H el ene Kirsova (its original name was Kirsova Park no.4).
8. *In conclusion, the proposed changes to Ernest Pedersen Reserve are expensive, unnecessary and will not improve the experience of the park for its users. The Society believes other more appropriate improvements could be made to reflect the current usage and history of the Reserve.*

Palmerston Avenue Steps and Sarah Peninton Reserve

Palmerston Avenue Steps is a steeply sloping site and provides a number of functions to the surrounding community. It acts as a walkway between Bayview and Lombard Streets, is open space for people walking dogs, and is an outdoor area for people on a work break or wanting to consume take-away food purchased nearby. The plantings increase biodiversity and improve bird habitat, and are an important link in the green corridor that runs from Pyrmont to Annandale & Leichhardt.

The proposed design for this area has a number of important benefits, including:

- retaining and protecting existing plantings, and providing supplementary plantings,
- stabilising garden beds,
- new screen planting to the light rail boundary,
- adding a tap in lower Palmerston Avenue,
- providing new seating,
- removal of eight plants of the toxic species *Nerium olander* which will be replaced by screen plantings,
- providing a new balustrade in lower Palmerston Avenue, and
- providing new bike racks and a bin.

At the same time, the design proposals carry some features which are of concern. These include:

1. The building of an additional entrance into the area from Lombard Street is unnecessary. Further, the artists impression of the new seating area, habitat planting and park entry shows a rock, concrete or sandstone seat, which would be cold to sit on, and unsuitable for older visitors to the park, who could well require seating with back support if they were to stay for any length of time. The extent of the brick paving in front of the seat is unneeded. That entire new proposed entrance area would be better filled with additional plantings.

2. If the removal of the four small trees along Lombard Street is necessary to improve sightlines into the park to increase safety, a suitable replacement would be small shrubs growing up to the height of the balustrade along Lombard Street. This would still allow visitors to the park to see a maximum amount of greenery when looking up towards Lombard St, rather than getting a clear view of the cars parked along the street.
3. The removal of a *Celtis sinensis* tree in lower Palmerston Avenue is an urgent priority. The tree is an invasive weed. It should then be replaced by a new tree from the Species Planting List recommended by Council.
4. In the proposed plans it is not clear whether the existing tap in upper Palmerston Avenue would remain. We strongly ask that this tap be retained, in addition to a new tap being located in lower Palmerston Avenue.
Such a tap is urgently required as Keegan Avenue, which separates the upper and lower sections of the site and the Palmerston Avenue walkway, is especially busy during morning & evening peak hours. A hose stretching across this roadway (as presently required) is an obvious trip hazard not only for passers-by, but also for our volunteers.
5. We have proposed that a small shed for tools be placed on the bottom north-western corner of upper Palmerston Avenue. We ask that allowance be made for this.
6. Both grassed areas could be filled with habitat plantings. There are open areas for dogs in nearby parks, Sarah Peninton Reserve and William Carlton Gardens.
7. A doggie bag dispenser be placed near the bin in Sarah Peninton Reserve.

The Society looks forward to further discussing the proposed changes with you and trust that they can be modified in the light of the concerns raised by our suburb's landcare volunteers and Society members.

Yours faithfully,



Verity Firth
President