

## **Project Scope - James Hilder Playground Upgrade**

**File No: X013863.003**

### **Summary**

This report outlines the proposed scope of works for the upgrade of James Hilder Reserve Playground and new fitness station at 131 Campbell Street, Surry Hills. James Hilder Reserve Playground has been identified as part of the small parks and playgrounds improvement program.

The project brief is to refurbish the playground area and equipment, improve play provision, provide a fitness station, improve access, and provide additional seating and associated landscape improvements.

Concept plans were presented to the community between 17 May and 14 June 2019 and exhibited on the City's website.

Community feedback was broadly in support of the proposals with community suggestions incorporated into the Final Concept Plan. These include additional play for the 6-12 year old age group, consolidation of the fitness area and additional planting.

The key principles are to protect and enhance the existing landscape character, renew the playground to provide a local scale play space which maximises play opportunities for children 0-12 years, provide an accessible route in and around the playground, provide a range of seating opportunities that encourage social interaction, and use simple, robust, high quality, materials which reflect the local neighbourhood character.

## Recommendation

It is resolved that Council:

- (A) endorse the scope of work for improvements to James Hilder Reserve as described in the subject report and shown in the Final Concept Plan as Attachment B to the subject report, for progression to relevant approvals, preparation of construction documentation, tender and construction; and
- (B) note the estimated project forecast as outlined in Confidential Attachment E to the subject report.

## Attachments

- Attachment A.** Location Plan and Existing Site Photos
- Attachment B.** Final Concept Plan
- Attachment C.** Consultation Concept Plan
- Attachment D.** Engagement Feedback Table
- Attachment E.** Financial Implications (Confidential)

## Background

1. The City has an ongoing small parks and playgrounds improvement program for parks that are in need of upgrade or enhancement works, replacement of end of life equipment, and to provide appropriate facilities for local residents.
2. James Hilder Reserve is located on the corner of Campbell Street and Samuel Street, Surry Hills, and covers an area about 57 metres long by 33 metres wide. The park is accessible from both streets via a concrete footpath which becomes a stairway at the Samuel Street entrance.
3. The Park includes a playground (290m<sup>2</sup>) located in the eastern section, and lawn / grassy areas with several shade trees strategically positioned throughout. Other facilities include benches and lighting. Houses back onto the southern boundary of the park, where residents are able to directly access the park.
4. Surry Hills Police Station and Harmony Park are immediately north across Campbell Street, and the community centre, Estonian House, is along the eastern boundary of the proposal.
5. James Hilder Reserve Playground was identified for an upgrade due to the reserves overall condition, including: non-compliant play equipment and failing soft-fall surface, a limited range of play experiences, no shade to the playground, a lack of park seating and limited softscape.
6. The current playground is bound by a wrought iron fence and consists of a play tower, swing set, slide, a rider and a rocker. There is absence of imaginary, sensory and manipulative play types.
7. Consideration has been given to the provision of play equipment in surrounding parks within a 500 metre radius, to ensure a coordinated network of facilities that caters for a broad range of park users and age groups.

## Final Concept Plan

8. A Concept Plan was developed for the works and community consultation undertaken (refer to Attachment C).
9. Following consultation, feedback from the community has been incorporated into the Final Concept Plan (refer to Attachment B).
10. The Final Concept Plan sets the overall layout. The key principles are:
  - (a) protect and enhance the existing landscape character including existing trees and planting;
  - (b) renew the playground to provide a local scale play space which maximises play opportunities for children 0-12 years;
  - (c) provide an accessible route in and around the playground;
  - (d) provide a range of seating opportunities that encourage social interaction; and
  - (e) use simple, robust, high quality, materials which reflect the local neighbourhood character.

11. The proposal includes the following works:
  - (a) new play equipment including:
    - (i) new play tower with slides, cubby, climbing nets and imaginative play panels for ages 0-12 years old;
    - (ii) new triple swing-set;
    - (iii) new balance beams and steppers;
    - (iv) new double see-saw;
    - (v) new nature play and sensory planting to playground edge with social play tables and stools; and
    - (vi) new soft-fall across the play areas. Soft fall areas will be minimised and colours muted;
  - (b) new fence, gates and sitting walls to the playground perimeter;
  - (c) new shade structure over the play tower;
  - (d) new fitness station;
  - (e) widened footpath to Samuel Street and reworking of paving to the north-west park edge to increase landscape areas subject to cost; and
  - (f) general park improvements including:
    - (i) new and widened concrete pathways;
    - (ii) a new paved entry forecourt to Campbell Street;
    - (iii) additional park seating;
    - (iv) new trees and planting; and
    - (v) a new paved edge to the southern boundary.
12. The park and play area will be accessible from the Campbell Street entry.
13. In response to community feedback, as outlined in the subject report, the following amendments have been incorporated in to the Final Concept Plan:
  - (a) maintenance of the bench seat along Campbell Street;
  - (b) provision of additional seating within the park;
  - (c) provision of fencing to the playground perimeter;
  - (d) reduction in size of the fitness hub;
  - (e) provision of taller buffer planting to the eastern boundary fence;

- (f) provision of an additional swing and more planting and nature play within the playground; and
  - (g) provision of more challenging play equipment for children 6-12 years.
14. The following tree management and planting is proposed as part of the park works:
- (a) removal of one existing Eucalyptus microcorys tree which is small in size and in poor health;
  - (b) retention and protection of other existing trees, low-mass plantings and grass/turf;
  - (c) new tree planting including 12 new trees to be planted along the existing footpath and within the new playground;
  - (d) new buffer planting along the eastern boundary of the park, between the playground and partition wall of the adjacent commercial property;
  - (e) new sensory planting in the playground and along the existing access path;
  - (f) preparation of an Arboriculture Impact Assessment to inform the detailed design and ensure appropriate construction methodology when installing equipment and soft-fall.
15. A Development Application will be lodged for the shade structure and a review of Environmental Factors will be lodged for the remaining park upgrade in accordance with the Environmental Planning Assessment Act (1979).

## Key Implications

### Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030 Vision

16. Sustainable Sydney 2030 is a vision for the sustainable development of the City to 2030 and beyond. It includes 10 strategic directions to guide the future of the City, as well as 10 targets against which to measure progress. This plan is aligned with the following strategic directions and objectives:
- (a) Direction 6 - Vibrant Local Communities and Economies - this project will provide an improved open space infrastructure which meets the needs of a wide variety of user groups and provides opportunities for social interaction.
  - (b) Direction 9 - Sustainable Development, Renewal and Design - this project is part of a wider program of renewal of small parks across the city; it will provide an improved quality of open space infrastructure.

### Organisational Impact

17. This upgrade will provide an improved play experience and amenity for children, their carers and other community members visiting the park. The replacement of the non-compliant assets represents a removal / mitigation of risk to the City. The assets will require ongoing maintenance.

**Risks**

18. Risks to not implementing the scope of these works is potential failure of play infrastructure and risk to the community. Daily inspections are carried out by the City as per standard parks/playground maintenance operations.

**Social / Cultural / Community**

19. The playground within James Hilder Reserve is used by a range of community members including pre-schoolers, school-aged children and members of the community for play, for dog walking and passive use.
20. The park itself is a well-loved community asset which was established as a result of strong community. Residents are passionate about the park and the upgrade represents an investment in this community, providing opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to use the park alongside each other.
21. The limited quality of play equipment and lack of shade currently inhibit the use of the park for play. Upgrade to the park and the playground will provide an improved provision of play and exercise facilities for a wide range of ages and abilities.

**Environmental**

22. Protection and enhancement of the existing planting through this works is in line with the Urban Ecology Strategic Action Plan.

**Budget Implications**

23. There are sufficient funds allocated for this project in the current year capital budget and future year forward estimates. Cost estimates and financial implications are detailed in Confidential Attachment E.

**Relevant Legislation**

24. Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (EP&A Act).
25. State Environmental Planning Policy (Infrastructure) 2007.
26. Sydney Local Environmental Plan 2012.
27. Local Government Act 1993 (NSW) - under the Act, a council's charter is to provide adequate, equitable and appropriate services and facilities for the community and to ensure that those services and facilities are managed efficiently and effectively. Attachment E to the subject report contains confidential commercial information which, if disclosed, would:
  - (a) confer a commercial advantage on a person with whom Council is conducting (or proposes to conduct) business; and
  - (b) prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied it.
28. Discussion of the matter in an open meeting would, on balance, be contrary to the public interest because it would compromise Council's ability to negotiate fairly and commercially to achieve the best outcome for its ratepayers.

29. Disability Discrimination Act 1992 - the City has a responsibility to ensure, as far as practicable, that people with disabilities have the same rights to access services and facilities.
30. Companion Animals Act 1998 No 87 - Division 1 Section13 - Responsibilities while dogs are in public places.

### **Critical Dates / Time Frames**

31. Current program dates are:

• Community Consultation	May 2019
• Council Approval of Concept Design	August 2019
• Complete Final Design	August 2019
• Tender Phase	Late 2019
• Construction Start	Early 2020
• Construction Duration	20 weeks

### **Options**

32. No action taken - this option is not recommended as the existing park has a number of associated risks and compliance issues with regard to access and equipment compliance.
33. Improvement works to be undertaken in accordance with the asset renewal brief and as recommended in this subject report.

### **Public Consultation**

34. Consultation was undertaken as a two part process; pre-consultation / early engagement and public consultation / exhibition.
35. One pre-consultation notification letter / email was issued to 11 local stakeholders to notify them of the project and provide a link to a pre-consultation survey. There were three responses to the pre-consultation survey.
36. The concept design was on exhibition from 17 May to 14 June 2019. Eleven submissions were received, including nine via Survey Monkey and two via the Sydney Your Say email address, with the majority in support of the proposed works.

37. The public consultation/exhibition involved the following:
- (a) a letter / email sent to 1093 local residents about the concept design and inviting them to provide feedback;
  - (b) a webpage on Sydney Your Say showing the plans for consultation from 17 May to 14 June 2019. The webpage was viewed 129 times and the concept design was downloaded eight times;
  - (c) Three Have your Say A2 panels were installed in the park notifying park users of the proposed works, providing contact details of the Design Manager and a web address to the Sydney Your Say webpage; and
  - (d) a pop-up consultation was held at the park on Sunday 26 May 2019 from 9am to 11am. Approximately 15 people attended this event.
38. Overall, there was strong support for the proposed works, and there was acknowledgment that the current condition of the playground is poor which discourages its use.
39. Key feedback included:
- (a) eighteen submissions referring to the play offering and requesting more variety and more engaging play opportunities for children aged 6-12 years. A larger slide and fireman's pole were among some of the suggestions;
  - (b) four submissions requesting more swings with open seats within the playground;
  - (c) one submission suggesting that the fitness station would better be located at Harmony Park;
  - (d) five submissions supporting the proposal of a new shade structure to the playground;
  - (e) three submissions supporting barrier protection around the entire playground;
  - (f) three submissions supporting the inclusion of a water bubbler, but requesting one be placed by the playground;
  - (g) one submission requesting tall buffer planting to the eastern boundary fence to provide a privacy screen to Estonian House;
  - (h) two submissions requesting that the fitness hub make provisions for chin-up / pull-up bars, dip bars and rowing bars;
  - (i) one submission requesting a grassed area within the playground fence line;
  - (j) four submissions requesting a community vegetable garden instead of the fitness station;
  - (k) three submissions requesting additional seating to the park and playground;
  - (l) eight submissions regarding planting within the park, with the majority of submissions requesting the incorporation of native Australian plant species;



- (m) four submissions raising concerns about the influx of pigeons within the park;  
and
  - (n) three submissions requesting a dog-free park and that dogs be restricted to  
across the road at Harmony Park.
40. In response to this consultation the following has been incorporated into the Final  
Concept Plan (refer to Attachment B):
- (a) maintenance of the bench seat along Campbell Street;
  - (b) provision of additional seating within park;
  - (c) provision of fencing to the playground perimeter;
  - (d) reduction in size of the fitness hub;
  - (e) provision of taller buffer planting to the eastern boundary fence;
  - (f) provision of an additional swing and more planting and nature play within the  
playground; and
  - (g) provision of more challenging play equipment for children 6-12years.

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