

Project Scope - Palmerston Avenue Steps and Sarah Peninton Reserve Upgrade

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Summary

This report outlines the proposed scope of works for the upgrade of Palmerston Avenue Steps and Sarah Peninton Reserve, located between Lombard Street and Bayview Street, Glebe. Palmerston Avenue Steps and Sarah Peninton Reserve have been identified as part of the small parks and playgrounds improvement program.

The project brief is to refurbish the park, improve accessibility, replace cracked paving surfaces, provide slope attenuation to planting areas, improve the range of seating and enhance the opportunity for the provision of habitat.

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

Community feedback was associated with three broad themes: access; landscape and materials; and furniture and amenity. Community feedback will be incorporated into the detailed design where possible, including: simplified entry from Lombard Street, relocation of bike parking and bins adjacent to the light rail entry, provision of a dog bowl and bag amenity, as well as provision of standard park seats with backs.

The proposal for Palmerston Avenue Steps and Sarah Peninton Reserve includes improved access with stair improvements and balustrading, stabilising planting beds and stormwater management, as well as renewed planting across the site and a variety of additional seating opportunities to aid with accessibility.

Recommendation

It is resolved that Council:

- (A) endorse the scope of work for improvements to Palmerston Avenue Steps and Sarah Peninton Reserve as described in the subject report and shown in the concept design at 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 D to the subject report.

Attachments

- Attachment A.** Location Plan and Existing Site Photos
- Attachment B.** Final Concept Plan
- Attachment C.** Engagement Feedback Table
- Attachment D.** 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. Palmerston Avenue Steps was identified for a broader park upgrade due to the reserves overall condition, including: challenging access conditions, non-compliant seating, poor soil stabilisation and an opportunity to build upon the work undertaken by the City and the Blue Wren Bush Care Group in improving the provision of habitat planting in the reserve.
3. Palmerston Avenue Steps is a local park between Lombard Street and Bayview Street, Glebe. The land is owned by the City and is part of a series of reserves which provide a meandering pedestrian link to the Glebe Light Rail station. These parks are made up of Ernest Pedersen Reserve, William Carlton Gardens, Palmerston Avenue Steps and Sarah Peninton Reserve.
4. There are two Conservation Areas listed on the Sydney LEP (2012) within Palmerston Avenue Steps and Sarah Peninton Reserve: Glebe Point Conservation Area (C28) and Lyndhurst Conservation Area (31).
5. Palmerston Avenue Steps is approximately 1,000 square metres and is characterised by low sandstone retaining walls, a mature fig and other tree planting and steep topography that leads from Lombard Street down to Bayview Street.
6. The park is bound by Lombard Street, residential dwellings and the light rail corridor, and is dissected by Keegan Avenue. There are six properties that are accessible only by foot and face directly onto the park.
7. Sarah Peninton Reserve is a narrow park situated between a sandstone cliff face and Bayview Street, to the south of Glebe light rail station. The park is approximately 835 square metres and is considered to be in a fair asset condition. There are limited works proposed to the park as part of this upgrade.
8. The parks are well used by a variety of community members as thoroughfares to the light rail, and for play, rest and relaxation. Some anti-social behaviour has been reported in Palmerston Avenue which could possibly be attributed to the park's role as the main pedestrian access link to Glebe light rail station from Glebe Point Road.
9. The current planting consists of native and exotic trees, shrubs and groundcovers, which provide seasonal change and buffer planting to the light rail corridor. A mature *Ficus rubiginosa* provides shade to the upper open space area and is considered of high retention value. The Blue Wren Bush Care group take an active role in the care and upkeep of the Palmerston Avenue area.

Concept Design

10. A Concept Design was developed for the proposed works (refer to Attachment B) and community consultation undertaken.
11. Heritage and access consultants have been engaged to advise on the proposal.
12. The concept proposes to improve accessibility, amenity, landscape and planting quality as well as increase biodiversity.
13. The concept design sets the overall layout and proposes the following works:
 - (a) access:
 - (i) provide a new low scale entry to Lombard Street to improve sightlines and passive surveillance into the park. This secondary access will increase permeability into the planted area as well as provide secondary access for maintenance; and
 - (ii) provide new, and retain where possible, handrails and balustrading to stairs and walkway to aid accessibility;
 - (b) landscape:
 - (i) repair the broken gutter and install measures to reduce stormwater velocity and prevent washout of planting areas;
 - (ii) stabilise planting areas; and
 - (iii) improve the usable green space; and
 - (c) materials, furniture and amenity:
 - (i) improve surface material to the walkway;
 - (ii) provide a range of seating opportunities throughout the reserve to aid accessibility along the path of travel;
 - (iii) relocate the bike rack and bin amenities;
 - (iv) install a water bubbler with provisions for dogs;
 - (v) improve lighting; and
 - (vi) upgrade park signage.
14. The following tree management and planting is proposed as part of the park works:
 - (a) preparation of an Arborist Impact Assessment to inform the detail design and ensure appropriate construction methodology;
 - (b) removal of eight Nerium oleander trees. These trees were assessed by an arborist to be in a failing condition and are considered weeds species;
 - (c) removal of four small Buckinghamia celsissima to improve surveillance into the park from Lombard Street;

- (d) retention and protection of existing trees and planting throughout the park; and
 - (e) provision of extensive new native and habitat planting with shrubs and groundcovers.
15. In response to community feedback, as outlined in the subject report and detailed in Attachment C, the following has been incorporated into design development:
- (a) reduction of the informal steps and access path proposed from Lombard Street;
 - (b) provision of additional standard park seating with backs;
 - (c) revision of stormwater management to slow stormwater flow and erosion;
 - (d) amended bike rack and bins locations;
 - (e) provision of a dog bowl with the new water bubbler;
 - (f) provision of a dog bag dispenser to bin in Sarah Peninton Reserve; and
 - (g) investigation of a location and storage provision for Bush Care Group tools.
16. A Review of Environmental Factors will be lodged for the park upgrade in accordance with the Environmental Planning Assessment Act (1979) to determine the approval pathway.

Key Implications

Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030 Vision

17. 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

18. This upgrade will provide improved amenity for the community visiting the park. The rectification of the stormwater gutters and installation of handrails and balustrades along the path of travel represent a removal / mitigation of risk to the City. The assets will require ongoing maintenance.

Risks

19. Risks to not implementing the scope of these works is potential failure of infrastructure and risk to the community.

Social / Cultural / Community

20. The project will provide improved access and passive recreation facilities that can be used by all members of the local community, encouraging healthy activity and social interaction.

Environmental

21. The upgrade of Palmerston Avenue Steps and Sarah Peninton Reserve includes a range of environmentally sustainable elements to improve the environmental performance of the park. The key elements include:
 - (a) re-use of park furniture where appropriate;
 - (b) recycled surplus material from council depots where possible in line with Council policy; and
 - (c) additional planting of tree and shrub species.

Budget Implications

22. 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 D.

Relevant Legislation

23. Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (EP&A Act).
24. State Environmental Planning Policy (Infrastructure) 2007.
25. Sydney Local Environmental Plan 2012.
26. 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 D 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.
27. 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.
28. 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.
29. Companion Animals Act 1998 No 87 - Division 1 Section 13 - Responsibilities while dogs are in public places.

Critical Dates / Time Frames

30. Current Program Dates

- 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 26 weeks

Options

31. Option 1: 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.
32. Option 2: Undertake Proposal - This is the recommended option. Improvement works to be undertaken in accordance with the asset renewal brief and as recommended in this subject report.

Public Consultation

33. Consultation was undertaken as a two part process: pre-consultation and public consultation /exhibition (refer to Attachment C).
34. Early consultation notification letters / emails were issued to the following local stakeholders to notify them of the project and provide a link to a pre-consultation survey:
 - (a) Glebe Blue Wren Group;
 - (b) Bushcare Volunteer Group; and
 - (c) nineteen nearby residents.
35. Three early engagement submission were received via Survey Monkey from a nearby resident.
36. Early engagement feedback included:
 - (a) four submissions referring to planting, with the majority of submissions requesting habitat and screen planting to the light rail corridor;
 - (b) two submissions referring to anti-social behaviour;
 - (c) one submission requesting improved pedestrian safety and traffic calming measures on Keegan Avenue;

- (d) one submission requesting ramp access be retained to enable easy garbage bin and suitcase movement along the walkway;
 - (e) one submission requesting a dog bag dispenser and water bubbler with a dog bowl.
37. A pre-consultation meeting was held on 5 February 2018 with the Glebe Society - Blue Wren Group / Bushcare Volunteer Group to get feedback before the concept design was created. Seven people were in attendance.
38. Early engagement feedback from the pre-consultation meeting included:
- (a) removal of eleven tree species considered weeds; eight Nerium oleander and three Celts sinensis (outside of the park boundary);
 - (b) provision of an additional tap between Keegan Avenue and Bayview Street;
 - (c) native and habitat planting;
 - (d) provision of seating within the reserve; and
 - (e) concerns over pedestrian safety crossing Keegan Avenue.
39. The concept design was on exhibition from 17 May to 14 June 2019. Twenty-seven submissions were received (via Survey Monkey, Sydney your Say email address, letter and / or phone) Two submissions were made on behalf of organisations / local community groups, as listed below:
- (a) Glebe Society President; and
 - (b) Bushland Volunteer Group.
40. The public consultation / exhibition involved the following:
- (a) a letter sent to 660 local residents about the concept design and inviting them to provide feedback;
 - (b) a stakeholder email sent to key stakeholders, inviting them to give feedback on the proposal. The email was sent to:
 - (i) Glebe Society Blue Wrens; and
 - (ii) Bushcare Volunteer Group;
 - (c) a webpage on SydneyYourSay showing the plans for consultation from 17 May to 14 June 2019. One hundred and seventeen individual users viewed the page and 18 users downloaded the plans; and
 - (d) two Have your Say A2 panels installed in the park notifying park users of the proposed works, providing contact details of the Design Manager and a web address to the SydneyYourSay page.

41. Key feedback included:

- (a) three submissions requesting a mechanical intervention to aid with access along Palmerston Avenue Steps, such as a hillside inclination /lift / moving pathway. This is not being considered;
- (b) five submission referring to safety and accessibility concerns, with the majority of submissions requesting additional ramps or stairs. This is not being considered due to space constraints, impact on access to private property and ease of access for all users;
- (c) eight submissions regarding the new entry and seating area adjacent to Lombard Street, with the majority of submissions concerned about anti-social behaviour and the impact to the Ficus rubiginosa, as well as opposition to an increase in provision of paving;
- (d) three submissions supporting slope attenuation;
- (e) four submissions requesting the removal of the turf area for planting;
- (f) three submissions opposing the removal of the eight Nerium oleander trees;
- (g) two submissions supporting the removal of the eight Nerium oleander trees;
- (h) two submissions requesting the removal of three Celts sinensis trees;
- (i) one submission requesting the removal of a Populous nigra tree;
- (j) four submission regarding lighting, with the majority of submissions requesting improved provisions;
- (k) two submissions supporting the additional tap;
- (l) two submissions requesting repairs to the existing stormwater gutter;
- (m) one submission requesting formal seats with backs;
- (n) one submission requesting repairs to the light rail boundary fencing;
- (o) four submissions requesting a dog bag dispenser in Sarah Peninton Reserve;
- (p) one submission requesting the relocation of the bike rack and bin;
- (q) one submission requesting a dog bowl in Sarah Peninton Reserve;
- (r) two submissions requesting an upgrade to the playground in Sarah Peninton Reserve; and
- (s) one submission requesting a small tool shed to store equipment for the Bush Care Group.

42. In response to this consultation the following will be incorporated into design development:
- (a) reduction of the informal steps and access path proposed from Lombard Street;
 - (b) provision of additional standard park seating with backs;
 - (c) review of stormwater management to slow stormwater flow and erosion;
 - (d) amended bike rack and bins locations;
 - (e) provision of a dog bowl with the new water bubbler;
 - (f) provision of a dog bag dispenser to bin in Sarah Peninton Reserve; and
 - (g) investigation of a location and storage provision for Bush Care Group tools.

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