

## **Project Scope - Ernest Pedersen Reserve, Glebe**

**File No: X019475**

### **Summary**

This report outlines the proposed scope of works for the upgrade of Ernest Pedersen Reserve located on the corner of Ferry Road and Avon Avenue, Glebe. Ernest Pedersen Reserve has been identified as part of the small parks and playgrounds improvement program.

The project brief is to refurbish the reserve, including the playground area, replace end of life equipment and soft-fall as required, increase the range of play experiences for children of different ages and abilities, improve the range of seating and enhance the opportunity for the provision of habitat.

Draft concept plans were presented to the community between 17 May 2019 and 14 June 2019 and exhibited on the City's website. In response to community feedback, significant amendments were made to the draft concept plan to interpret the historic garden layout associated with the adjacent state heritage listed 'Rothwell Lodge'. A second round of community consultation was held between 28 January and 25 February 2020 which exhibited a Revised Concept Plan. This Revised Concept Plan was also exhibited on the City's website.

Community feedback on the Revised Concept Plan was strongly in support of the amendments. Generally respondents indicated that the Revised Concept Plan better reflected the unique character of the reserve and balanced the need for play provision with more passive recreation activities. Respondents were also very supportive of the proposed interpretation of the historic garden layout and of the revised materials for the play equipment and soft-fall.

The key principles of the proposal are to protect and enhance the existing landscape character, including its heritage and habitat, to enhance opportunities for passive recreation, and to renew the playground to provide a local scale play space which improves play opportunities for local children. In addition, the proposal will provide improved access, increased 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 Ernest Pedersen Reserve, Glebe, as described in the subject report and shown in the Revised Concept Plan as Attachment B to the subject report, for progression to relevant approvals, preparation of construction documentation, tender and construction;
- (B) note that feedback from the community will be further investigated and incorporated into the improvements to Ernest Pedersen Reserve, Glebe during the detailed design phase; where possible; and
- (C) note the estimated project forecast as outlined in Confidential Attachment F to the subject report.

## Attachments

- Attachment A.** Location Plan and Site Photos
- Attachment B.** Revised Concept Plan
- Attachment C.** Engagement Report
- Attachment D.** Historic Plan and Garden Image
- Attachment E.** Draft Concept Plan
- Attachment F.** 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. Ernest Pedersen Reserve is located at the high point of a series of reserves which provide a meandering pedestrian link to the Glebe Light Rail stop. These parks are made up of Sarah Peninton Reserve, Palmerston Steps and William Carlton Gardens, as well as Ernest Pedersen Reserve.
3. Ernest Pedersen Reserve was identified for an upgrade due to the reserves overall condition, including non-compliant equipment, no equal access to the play equipment, limited range of play experiences and an opportunity to build upon the work undertaken by the City and the Ferry Road Bush Care Group in improving the provision of habitat planting in the reserve. Refer to Attachment A for the site location plan and photos of the existing reserve condition.
4. The reserve contributes to a functional corridor of 'stepping stone' open space habitats extending from the Glebe Foreshore Walk East to Orphan School Creek. It has a distinctive landscape character. It has mature Eucalyptus trees, a mix of native and exotic understorey planting, and views over the adjacent reserves and down to Blackwattle Bay. It is contained by low formal sandstone walls and stairs.
5. Ernest Pedersen Reserve is located within the Glebe Heritage Conservation Area in the Sydney Local Environmental Plan 2012. It is adjacent to Rothwell Lodge, which is listed on the local and State Heritage register. The reserve was formerly the front garden of Rothwell Lodge and is therefore considered as important to the Rothwell Lodge, however, the reserve itself is not listed.
6. The land was purchased by the City in two stages between 1949 and 1953. Funds were provided by the Kirsova Children's Playground Endowment Committee to construct 'Kirsova Playground No 4' at the site.
7. There is a strong and active community in the Glebe area. The Ferry Road Bush Care group take an active role in the care of the reserve. The reserve is currently used by a variety of community members for rest and relaxation, and it provides a space for youth to gather and socialise on their way to and from the light rail. It has been identified that there is some anti-social behaviour in the reserve which is a result of the connection and proximity to the high street and public transport route. Whilst it has been noted that the current use of the reserve by families is inconsistent and low, it is understood that this is in part a result of the condition of the play offering, rather than a reflection of community needs.
8. The existing play equipment includes a single swing and a four-person rocker. These are located in a raised mulched bed edged by treated timber. There is a limited variety of play experiences, with a clear absence of more active elements such as climbing / balance and imaginative / sensory play particularly for younger children. The landscape setting provides opportunity for informal play and the provision of a turf area allows for free play.
9. A brick-lined bitumen path was established after the council took ownership. To the rear of the reserve, a cyclone mesh fence is located on top of the sandstone wall which separates Ernest Pedersen Reserve from William Carlton Gardens. There are four seats, two lights and an electrical box.

10. The existing planting includes:
  - (a) A mix of exotic and native shrubs and groundcovers;
  - (b) twelve trees in total with the majority being native species; and
  - (c) one Peppercorn tree which reflects planting associated with the State Heritage Registered Rothwell Lodge.

#### **Draft Concept Plan**

11. A draft concept plan was developed for the proposed works and community consultation undertaken (refer to Attachment E) between 17 May 2019 and 14 June 2019. This draft scheme included the following works:
  - (a) retention and protection of existing trees and habitat planting throughout the reserve;
  - (b) new opportunities for habitat planting;
  - (c) a renewed play space - providing a variety of flexible local scale play experiences suitable for a range of age groups and abilities, including a double swing set, a small climbing structure with slide, balance wall and stepping stones;
  - (d) new softfall - both bark mulch and rubber;
  - (e) new seating opportunities;
  - (f) repair of the existing chain mesh fence at rear of site;
  - (g) new brick paving to existing path;
  - (h) new accessible path to the playground; and
  - (i) upgrade of the reserve signage, including heritage interpretation.

#### **Revised Concept Plan**

12. In response to community feedback, particularly around the heritage significance of the reserve as the former garden of the adjacent Rothwell Lodge, significant amendments were made to the draft concept plan. A second round of community consultation was held between 28 January and 25 February 2020, which exhibited a Revised Concept Plan (refer to Attachment B).
13. The Revised Concept Plan sets the overall layout. The key principles are:
  - (a) Improve the reference to and understanding of the reserve's history and relationship to the adjacent Rothwell Lodge for all park users.
  - (b) Protect and enhance the existing landscape character including its habitat, heritage and passive recreation values.
  - (c) Renew the play offering within the reserve with consideration of the historic setting and views.
  - (d) Provide a range of seating opportunities that encourage social interaction.

- (e) Use simple, robust, high quality, materials which reflect the local neighbourhood character.
14. The revised proposal re-configures the path layout to proximate the historic garden plan. Planting and other elements are located to support the historic setting. (Refer to Attachment D for the Historic Plan and example of period garden style planting).
15. Specific proposals include:
- (a) Layout
- New path alignment interprets the original garden layout associated with Rothwell Lodge. The proposed levels are at or above existing levels to minimise any impact on existing trees. Material is decomposed granite with a brick edge.
- (b) Play
- Provide a low-key play space including a timber swing, see-saw and a range of informal natural play elements, such as timber steppers, balance beams and sandstone blocks.
- (c) Elements
- New seat locations to maximise internal and external views.
  - Relocation of bin enclosure and provision of dog poo bag dispenser.
  - New raised bird bath with sandstone boulders.
  - New habitat fence 450mm high to protect new and existing planting.
  - Removal of existing lighting within the park (two poles).
  - New hand-rails to steps.
  - Update of the existing signs to provide additional information about the site's history, including local Indigenous histories.
  - Repair of the existing fence. Retention and protection of the existing fig located on the reserve fence.
  - Removal of two existing light poles within reserve to;
    - discourage night time use,
    - reduce night light spill or 'sky glow' in accordance with Councils Lights code
    - reduce unnecessary energy consumption to help Councils energy and Greenhouse gas reduction targets, and
    - reduce unnecessary light impact on the heritage setting of Rothwell Lodge.

- (d) Planting
- Retention and protection of existing trees and habitat planting throughout reserve.
  - Provision of new opportunities for habitat planting while maintaining key views from the reserve.
  - Removal of diseased River Red Gum and replacement with equivalent species.
16. A Heritage Impact Statement has been prepared to assess the proposal and an exemption will be sought from the Heritage Council to carry out the works, as required under the NSW Heritage Act 1977. The Heritage Impact Statement notes:
- (a) The proposed playground replacement, and changes to the path material and seating arrangement in the reserve, will not affect any fabric of heritage value, and when these works are complete, they will create an improved space with enhanced amenity and visual values but which also retains an historical presence through design that reinstates the Lodge's former front garden layout.
- (b) The new playground height and scale and form will not result in the overshadowing or domination of Rothwell Lodge or disrupt any recognised heritage views or curtilage. The proposed play-space equipment will be mainly timber and sandstone in material that will have an attractive visual appearance that will not detract from the significance of the Glebe Conservation Area and surrounding streetscapes via over-shadow or bulky design.
17. A Review of Environmental Factors will be lodged for the works in accordance with the Environmental Planning Assessment Act 1979.
18. In response to the second round of community consultation, as outlined in the subject report, the following amendments will be investigated during the Detailed Design Phase:
- (a) Review location of proposed bin to avoid conflict on footpath.
- (b) Provide a drinking fountain with dog-bowl.
- (c) Review requirement for fence rectification works.
- (d) Review if a second swing would fit within the proposed play area.
- (e) Review the number of seats provided.
- (f) Ensure that the proposed play equipment minimises any impacts on views to Rothwell Lodge.
- (g) Review the provision of lighting within the reserve.
- (h) Review construction methodology to minimise construction impact on existing habitat in reserve particularly with regard to resident kookaburra.

### Tree Management

19. The current condition of the existing trees within the reserve has been assessed by the City's consultant Arborist. Following this assessment it is recommended that one tree is removed due to disease, a River Red Gum. This tree will be replaced as part of the proposed upgrade.
20. The following tree management and planting is proposed as part of the upgrade works:
  - (a) Preparation of an Arboriculture Impact Assessment to inform the detailed design and ensure appropriate construction methodology.
  - (b) Retain and protect existing trees.
  - (c) Replacement tree planting to ensure a diverse age of trees present in the reserve.
  - (d) New infill groundcover planting which provides both habitat, sensory experience and reference to the heritage significance of the adjacent Rothwell Lodge Reserve.

### Key Implications

#### Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030 Vision

21. 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 report 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

22. 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

23. Risks of not implementing the scope of these works include potential failure of play infrastructure and risk to the community. Daily inspections are carried out by the City as per standard parks and playground maintenance operations.
24. Risks of not implementing this scope of works could result in failure to meet community expectations.

25. The timing of construction will minimise the impact of construction on kookaburra breeding season (September to January). Advice will be sought from the City's Urban Ecology Coordinator and/or external experts to mitigate risks as required.
26. A minor works exemption under the Heritage Act 1977 is required to undertake the works. If the Heritage Council does not grant the exemption and a full approval process is required there is a risk of significant delay.

### **Social / Cultural / Community**

27. Ernest Pedersen Reserve is used by a wide variety of people for passive recreation. The limited quality of play equipment currently inhibits the use of the reserve for play. This upgrade to the park and the playground will provide an improved provision of play for a wide range of ages and abilities.
28. Ernest Pedersen Reserve is located within the setting of Rothwell Lodge, a State Heritage Listed Item. The proposed upgrade aims to provide an improved reference and understanding of the reserve's history and relationship to the adjacent Rothwell Lodges for all park users.

### **Environmental**

29. Ernest Pedersen Reserve is part of a functional corridor of 'stepping stone' habitats extending from the Glebe Foreshore Walk East to Orphan School Creek. Protection and enhancement of the existing planting through this works is in line with the Urban Ecology Strategic Action Plan.

### **Budget Implications**

30. There are sufficient funds in the current year capital budget and future year forward estimate. Current cost estimates and financial implications are detailed in Confidential Attachment F.

### **Relevant Legislation**

31. Local Government Act 1993 - Section 10A provides that a Council may close to the public so much of its meeting as comprises information that would, if disclosed, confer a commercial advantage on a person with whom the Council is conducting (or proposes to conduct) business.
32. Attachment F to the subject report contains confidential commercial information which, if disclosed, would confer a commercial advantage on a person with whom Council is conducting (or proposes to conduct) business.
33. 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.
34. Heritage Act 1977
35. Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (
36. State Environmental Planning Policy (Infrastructure) 2007;

37. Sydney Local Environmental Plan 2012;
38. Disability Discrimination Act 1992 -;
39. Companion Animals Act 1998.

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

40. Current Program Dates
  - (a) Council Approval of Concept Design April 2020
  - (b) Tender Phase June 2020
  - (c) Construction Start September 2020
  - (d) Construction Duration 16 weeks

### **Options**

41. Proceed with progression of improvement works as outlined in this subject report including relevant approvals, preparation of construction documentation, tender and construction.
42. Project does not proceed - this option is not recommended as the existing reserve has a number of associated risks and compliance issues with regard to the current playground condition.

### **Public Consultation**

43. Consultation was undertaken in three parts. Refer to Engagement Report (Attachment C) for full details:
  - (a) Pre-Consultation - Early 2019
  - (b) Community Consultation May 2019 - June 2019
  - (c) Additional Community Consultation January 2020 - February 2020

### **Pre-Consultation Early 2019**

44. A pre-consultation notification letter/email was issued to the following local stakeholders to notify them of the project and provide a link to a pre-consultation survey.
  - (a) Social Housing Tenants Neighbourhood Advisory Board contact;
  - (b) Glebe Society Blue Wren Group; and
  - (c) Ferry Road Bush care volunteer group.

45. A pre-consultation meeting was held on 5 February 2019 with the Glebe Society, Blue Wren Group and Ferry Road Bush Care Group to get feedback before concept designs were created. Seven people were in attendance.

#### **Community Consultation May/June 2019**

46. The concept design was on exhibition from 17 May to 14 June 2019. Forty-eight submissions were received (via Survey Monkey, email, letter, and phone). Three submissions were made on behalf of organisations and local community groups, as listed below.
- Ferry Road Bush Care Group – part of the Glebe Society Blue Wrens;
  - Glebe Society; and
  - Glebe Palmerston and Surrounds Landcare Group.
47. Overall, respondents value the quiet, reflective nature of Ernest Pedersen Reserve, which currently balances the needs of the community with the provision of seating, habitat planting and a local scale play offering. There was repeated feedback highlighting the importance of the heritage context of the reserve and the potential impact of the upgrade on the heritage context. There was also an acknowledgement that there is a need to address the safety concerns and poor state of the existing play equipment. Other comments included:
- (a) concern that there are not many children in the area and/or sufficient offerings elsewhere in Glebe;
  - (b) request that the reserve retains the existing function and scale, specifically the play elements rather than increasing the play offering;
  - (c) request for the proposed cubby to be removed due to concerns around visual impact, materials and colours, anti-social behaviour;
  - (d) request that materials of play equipment are selected that reflect the local heritage context;
  - (e) request the playground be removed entirely;
  - (f) request that there was no impact on the areas dedicated to wildlife habitat or existing trees;
  - (g) general support for proposed playground upgrade and proposed seating;
  - (h) request that no additional fences are provided; and
  - (i) request that rubber soft fall is not used in the reserve.

#### **Additional Community Consultation January/February 2020**

48. In response to community feedback, significant amendments were made to the draft concept plan. A second round of Community Consultation was held between 28 January and 25 February 2020 which exhibited a Revised Concept Plan. This Revised Concept Plan was also exhibited on the City's website.

49. Community feedback to the Revised Concept Plan was strongly in support of the amendments made to the draft concept plan. Generally, respondents indicated that the Revised Concept Plan better reflected the unique character of the reserve and balanced the need for play provision with more passive recreation activities. Respondents were very supportive of the proposed interpretation of the historic garden layout and of the revised materials for the play equipment and soft-fall.
50. Seventeen submissions were received (via Survey Monkey, email, letter, and phone). One submission was made on behalf the Glebe Society.
51. 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;
  - (c) the consultation was included in the Sydney Your Say February 2020 e-Newsletter (4064 subscribers);
  - (d) a webpage on SydneyYourSay showed the plans for consultation from 28 January to 25 February 2020. Two hundred and twenty-three individual users viewed the page;
  - (e) two Sydney Your Say A2 panels were installed in the reserve notifying park users of the proposed works, providing contact details of the Design Manager and a web address to the SydneyYourSay page; and
  - (f) a pop-up was scheduled to take place on 8 February 2020 at the reserve. This was cancelled due to intermittent weather and rescheduled to 20 February 2020. Approximately 15 people attended this pop-up consultation.
52. In response to the second round of community consultation, as outlined in the subject report, the following amendments will be investigated during the Detailed Design Phase:
  - (a) Review location of proposed bin to avoid conflict on footpath.
  - (b) Provide a drinking fountain with dog-bowl.
  - (c) Review requirement for fence rectification works.
  - (d) Review if a second swing would fit within the proposed play area.
  - (e) Review the number of seats provided.

- (f) Ensure that the proposed play equipment minimises any impacts on views to Rothwell Lodge.
- (g) Review construction methodology to minimise construction impact on existing habitat in reserve.
- (h) Review the provision of lighting within the reserve.

**AMIT CHANAN**

Director City Projects and Property

Helen Rogers, Design Manager