

Project Scope - Arthur Street Reserve, Surry Hills

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Summary

This report outlines the proposed scope of works for the park refurbishment at Arthur Street Reserve, Surry Hills. Arthur Street Reserve has been identified as part of the small parks and playgrounds improvement program.

The project brief is to refurbish the play area including replace end of life equipment and soft-fall as required, provide a range of play experiences, improve access into and through the park, improve the function of the existing turf areas, and provide additional seating and associated landscape improvements.

In response to initial community consultation significant scope was added to the Draft Concept Plan including the upgrade of the adjacent Arthur Street frontage footway paving and drainage and pavement improvements in Phelps Lane.

The Draft Concept Plan was on public exhibition from 25 July to 29 August 2022. A letter was distributed in the local area and the proposal was exhibited on the City's website. The proposed works are supported by the community and the response highlighted that an upgrade of this park would increase the current use of the park.

The proposal relocates the playground to the rear of the reserve and increases space for everyone in the park. It includes provision of a local scale play space which improves the play opportunities for children aged 1 to 10, a larger plaza area, including repaving Arthur Street footpath, a range of seating opportunities which encourage social interaction and use simple, robust materials which reflect the local neighbourhood character.

This report recommends that Council endorse the proposed scope of works for the park refurbishment at Arthur Street Reserve, Surry Hills, and increase the budget to cover the additional scope.

Recommendation

It is resolved that Council:

- (A) endorse the scope of improvements to the playground and streetscape at Arthur Street Reserve, Surry Hills as described in the subject report and shown in the revised Draft Concept Plan as shown at Attachment B to the subject report, for progression to relevant approvals, preparation of construction documentation, tender and construction; and
- (B) approve the additional funds required to deliver the project as outlined in Confidential Attachment D to the subject report.

Attachments

- Attachment A.** Location Plan and Site Photos
- Attachment B.** Revised Draft Concept Plan
- Attachment C.** Engagement Report
- Attachment D.** Financial Implications (Confidential)

Background

1. The City has an ongoing small parks and playgrounds improvement program. This program is for parks which need upgrade or enhancement works, the replacement of end-of-life equipment, and to generally provide appropriate facilities for local residents.
2. Arthur Street Reserve is a local park located on the corner of Arthur Street and Phelps Lane in Surry Hills. It is bounded by residential and retail properties (refer to Attachment A). The site is approximately 320 square metres.
3. The land is owned by the City of Sydney.
4. Arthur Street Reserve was identified for an upgrade due to the playground's overall condition, end of life play equipment and soft-fall surfacing.
5. The reserve is characterised as a small pocket playground, with a paved frontage along Arthur Street and Phelps Lane and a stand of mature trees providing shade to the reserve. Low hedge planting edges the play space.
6. The existing play equipment includes a climbing tower with slide and climbing net, and a rocker. It is well shaded from existing trees.
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.

Draft Concept Plan

8. A concept design was developed for the works and community consultation undertaken.
9. Following consultation, feedback from the community has been incorporated into the design .
10. The Concept Design sets the overall layout. The key principles are:
 - (a) provide an accessible, welcoming and safe park for the community and visitors;
 - (b) provide a local scale play space which improves the play opportunities for local children with a range of structured equipment, imaginative and nature play elements;
 - (c) increase the usable area and improve usability by consolidating and better arranging park elements;
 - (d) provide a range of seating opportunities which encourage social interaction; and
 - (e) use simple, robust, high-quality materials which reflect the local neighbourhood character.
11. The proposal includes the following:
 - (a) locate the playground to the rear of the reserve and increase the open 'plaza' space on Arthur Street frontage;

- (b) a new play structure with slide, deck and platforms, swings, and small nature play;
 - (c) the playground will include inclusive access to the play elements;
 - (d) more seats in the plaza and new seats to the play area;
 - (e) enhanced planting areas with new groundcover and low shrub planting;
 - (f) hedge planting as an enclosure to the play space; and
 - (g) new water bubbler and refurbished bin.
12. In response to community consultation the following has been included in the revised concept and will be further investigated in the detailed design as noted in Attachment C:
- (a) increased areas of planting and green spaces in the plaza area;
 - (b) repaving Arthur Street footpath;
 - (c) new pram ramp on Arthur Street for improved access and connection into the reserve;
 - (d) repairs to paving in Phelps Lane; and
 - (e) new planting to base of existing street trees.
13. Additionally, the following will be investigated for inclusion in the scope:
- (a) improvements to stormwater to assist with standing water and mosquitos in the reserve; and
 - (b) stormwater improvements in Phelps Lane.
14. The following tree management and planting is proposed as part of the park works:
- (a) remove one suppressed tree (self-seeded Eucalypt), retain and protect all other existing trees; and
 - (b) the preparation of an Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Tree Protection Plan to inform the detailed design and ensure appropriate construction methodology.
15. A Review of Environmental Factors (REF) will be lodged for the works in accordance with the Environmental Planning Assessment Act 1979 and the State Environment Planning Policy (Transport and Infrastructure) 2021.

Key Implications

Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision

16. Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision renews the communities' vision for the sustainable development of the city to 2050. 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 3 - Public places for all - this project will provide an improved open space and streetscape which meets the needs of a variety of users and provides opportunities for social interaction.
 - (b) Direction 4 - Design excellence and sustainable development - this project is part of a wider program of renewal of local small parks and reserves across the city. It will provide an improved quality of open space.
 - (c) Direction 5 - A city for walking, cycling and public transport - this project will improve the streetscape and amenity of the area, encouraging walking and active recreation.
 - (d) Direction 6 - An equitable and inclusive city - this project will provide public play and gathering spaces for all ages and abilities.

Organisational Impact

17. Upgrading the playground will provide improved play experience and amenity for children and their carers. The replacement of the play assets represents a mitigation of risk to the City. The assets will require ongoing maintenance.
18. Upgrading the footpath pavement and stormwater on Arthur Street and Phelps Lane will improve the quality of these existing pavements and represent a mitigation of risk to the City. The assets will require ongoing maintenance.

Risks

19. 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 the standard parks and playground maintenance operations.
20. Risks of not implementing this scope of works could result in failure to meet community expectations.

Social / Cultural / Community

21. Improving the amenity and play offering within the park represents an investment in this community, providing opportunities for people of different ages and abilities to use the park alongside each other.

Environmental

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

Financial Implications

23. The project budget for the delivery of the Arthur Street Reserve upgrade is detailed in Confidential Attachment D. There are insufficient funds allocated to the project to deliver the increased scope. Additional funds have been sought from the Open Space renewal provision included in the Long Term Financial Plan as outlined in Confidential Attachment D.

Relevant Legislation

24. Local Government Act 1993 - Section 10A provides that a council may close to the public so much of its meeting as comprises the discussion of information that would, if disclosed, confer a commercial advantage on a person with whom the council is conducting (or proposes to conduct) business.
25. Attachment D to the subject report contains confidential information which, if disclosed would confer a commercial advantage on a person with whom the Council is conducting (or proposes to conduct) business.
26. 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.
27. Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979.
28. State Environment Planning Policy (Transport and Infrastructure) 2021.
29. Sydney Local Environmental Plan 2012.
30. Disability Discrimination Act 1992.

Critical Dates / Time Frames

31. Current Program Dates:
 - (a) Council approval of Concept Design December 2022
 - (b) Detailed Design early to mid 2023
 - (c) Tender late 2023
 - (d) Construction start early 2024
 - (e) Completion mid 2024

Options

32. Proceed with the progression of the improvement works as outlined in this subject report including relevant approvals, preparation of construction documentation, tender and construction.

33. Project does not proceed - this option is not recommended as the current condition of the playground has a number of associated risk and compliance issues.

Public Consultation

34. Community consultation was undertaken as a two-part process; early engagement (pre-consultation) and public consultation / exhibition. For a detailed description of the consultation process and findings refer to Attachment C.
35. An early engagement notification letter/email was issued to residents. Twelve submissions were received during the period. The purpose of the early engagement was to seek input from the community about how they used the playground and how the reserve could be improved.
36. The public consultation involved the following:
- (a) Letters advertising the online feedback portal were distributed to the Surry Hills area. 275 letters were distributed.
 - (b) A webpage on SydneyYourSay showing the plans from 25 July to 29 August 2022. The page included an electronic copy of the revised concept design, survey and other key information about the consultation.
 - (c) A pop-up consultation feedback session was held in the reserve on Saturday 6 August. Council staff were available to answer questions and obtain feedback about the proposed concept plan. Respondents were also encouraged to view the plans and provide feedback on the Sydney Your Say website. Approximately 12 people attended the session.
 - (d) An online feedback form.
 - (e) Two signs were placed in the park directing people online to leave their feedback.
37. There were 15 submissions received during the consultation period. The Sydney Your Say page was visited 41 times during the consultation period. This included submissions via email and the online feedback form.
38. The proposal was well supported by the community and the responses highlighted that an upgrade to this park would increase the current use of the park. A summary and response to the key comments and suggestions are:
- (a) Support the relocation of the playground to increase the amount of open space adjacent to Arthur Street.

- (b) Support for a plaza communal space between the street and the playground, and there was preference for more green and softer elements such as lawn and planting. The Concept Design has included more opportunities for groundcovers and planting beds. This will be further investigated in design development.
- (c) Some concern that the adjacent restaurant may overuse the plaza area. Approval for outdoor seating is required, and typically provided for footpath areas adjacent the property only. It is important for the city's open spaces to provide a range of seating opportunities for the community to encourage social interaction.
- (d) A sunshade over the playground to stop leaves and branches falling on the play equipment. To manage fallen leaves and any branches, all trees are inspected annually and can be pruned as needed to improve amenity and reduce the likelihood of branch failure. Ongoing maintenance of the reserve will include sweeping of leaves. The playground is well shaded by the mature trees, therefore a sunshade is not proposed.
- (e) Address the issue of mosquitos. This will be further investigated in detailed design, reviewing the stormwater, any areas of standing water and planting opportunities.
- (f) New paving along Arthur Street footpath and Phelps Lane to create a continuous public domain and to repair lifting pavers from trees. This scope is proposed to be included in the project works and is shown in the Concept Design.
- (g) Mixed responses on whether there should be hedging to areas or left open. Detailed design will continue to review best use and placement of hedges.
- (h) Request to create an area for adult exercise is not supported. This project is to replace the existing play equipment. The overall reserve is too small to accommodate both play equipment and fixed exercise equipment. The design will investigate smaller, incidental opportunities for balance and basic movements that can be used by everyone.

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