

Project Scope - Green Park Renewal

File No: X099771.002

Summary

This report outlines the proposed scope of works for the renewal of Green Park, Darlington. Green Park has been identified as part of the parks and playgrounds improvement program.

The project brief is to refurbish the park to create a high quality, inclusive and accessible open space, and includes the restoration of the heritage bandstand and the creation of an AIDS memorial garden. The renewal will enhance the overall amenity of the park by upgrading the existing path network, adding new seating benches, retaining walls, park furniture, and lighting.

A draft Concept Plan was on public exhibition from 24 July to 21 August 2025. 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.

The proposed park renewal works include a new pathway network to improve accessibility and circulation through the park and maximise the usable lawn areas. The revised pathway network allows for more seating areas including accessible seating which can be directly accessed from pathways, while new lighting throughout the park will improve nighttime safety. The design aims to create an inclusive open space using simple, durable materials that reflect the character of the existing park and neighbourhood.

The proposed restoration works to the bandstand will return the bandstand to its original form and include new stair access to allow the space to once again be used by the public and the proposed AIDS Memorial garden will provide a space for memory, commemoration and reflection.

The proposal aims to balance the history of the site with the needs of a wide variety of user groups, including local residents and people sleeping rough, those who visit the park to access services provided by mobile voluntary service providers, as well as hospital staff and visitors, art students and those who want to visit the area in remembrance.

This report recommends that Council endorse the proposed scope of works for the renewal of Green Park, Darlington.

Recommendation

It is resolved that Council:

- (A) endorse the project scope for the Green Park, Darlington renewal, as described in the subject report and shown in the 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) note the estimated financial implications as outlined in Confidential Attachment D to the subject report.

Attachments

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

Background

1. The City of Sydney (the City) has an ongoing parks improvement program. This program is for parks which need upgrade, renewal or enhancement works, the replacement of end-of-life equipment, and to generally provide appropriate facilities for local residents.
2. Green Park is a neighbourhood park located at 301 Victoria Street, Darlinghurst. It is bounded by St Vincents Hospital to the east on Victoria Street, a sandstone wall to the Sacred Heart Hospice to the South, Darlinghurst Road and the National Art School (former Sydney Gaol) to the west, the Sydney Jewish Museum, residential apartments and some commercial frontages on Burton Street to the north.
3. The land is Crown Land under management of the City of Sydney and included in the City's General Crown Reserves Plan of Management.
4. In accordance with the Crown Lands Management Act 2016 and the Native Title Act 1993, the City notified NTS Corp Limited of the proposed works from 21 March – 18 April 2025 (28 days). NTS Corp Limited provide services to First Nations people who hold, or may hold, native title rights and interests in NSW. No submissions were received.
5. Green Park is characterised as a neighbourhood park. It is currently used by hospital workers and visitors, local residents and dog walkers, commuters and people sleeping rough.
6. The project team presented to the Design Advisory Panel (DAP) on 29 May 2025. In response to DAP feedback, the path layout around the bandstand was revised and additional seating was placed in the park.

Concept Plan and Scope of Work

7. A draft concept design was developed for the works and community consultation was undertaken from 24 July to 21 August 2025.
8. The draft concept design sets the overall layout. The key principles are:
 - (a) improve usable space within the park: improve turf areas and garden beds and activate underutilised areas in the park
 - (b) improve night-time safety: replace the existing park lighting with new standard light poles on the paths of travel to improve night-time safety in the park
 - (c) increase seating and amenity: install new seating areas in the park to offer a variety of seating opportunities in both sun and shade. New terraced seating walls will overlook the bandstand and lawn areas

- (d) restore the bandstand: restore the bandstand to its original form and make it accessible to the public via a new external staircase. The bandstand was erected in 1925 to host public band concerts which were a popular feature of Sydney life in the interwar years. The bandstand was converted to a café in the early 1990s and following a short period of operation it has been vacant for an extended period due to the constrained nature of the building. It is proposed to restore the bandstand to its original form to allow for the space to once again be used by the public including for public performances.
 - (e) create an AIDS Memorial: in 2019 Council noted and received the petition of 1,332 citizens requesting that Council support an AIDS Memorial and place of remembrance in Green Park, Darlinghurst. An AIDS Memorial Garden will form part of its renewed landscape, providing space for memory, commemoration and reflection.
9. The proposal includes the following:
- (a) improved park furniture and signage
 - (b) improved lighting throughout the park
 - (c) improved lawn areas and garden beds
 - (d) upgraded pathways for better access
 - (e) New drinking fountain with dog bowl
 - (f) More rubbish bins
 - (g) restoration of the bandstand building and a new staircase into the building
 - (h) a new AIDS Memorial Garden adjacent to the bandstand
 - (i) new irrigation to lawn areas and memorial garden
10. A review of Environmental Factors (REF) will be lodged for the works in accordance with the Environmental Planning Assessment Act 1979 and the State Environmental Planning Policy (Transport and Infrastructure 2021).
11. A Development Application (DA) will be lodged for the architectural changes to the bandstand building as a locally listed heritage item .

Key Implications

Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision

12. 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 enhance accessibility and inclusivity, upgrading the park will ensure it serves as a welcoming space for all community members 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 parks and reserves across the city. It will provide an improved quality of open space. Incorporating sustainable materials and practices in the park's renewal, promoting environmental responsibility and resilience to climate change.

Organisational Impact

13. Upgrading the park assets in Green Park will improve the quality of these existing assets and represent a mitigation of risk to the City. The assets will require ongoing maintenance.

Risks

14. Risks of not implementing the scope of these works include further deterioration of the parks condition including, paving, irrigation, turf areas and non-compliant lighting.
15. This approach is within the City's risk appetite, which states:
 - (a) We acknowledge our responsibility to protect and enhance the social and environmental wellbeing of our community. Our risk appetite emphasises the integration of sustainable practices into infrastructure asset management, considering environmental impacts, climate change resilience and community engagement.

Social / Cultural / Community

16. The site is an important open space within the Darlinghurst area where many people have limited access to outdoor areas within their own homes. The site is also used by workers and visitors during the daytime especially from St Vincents hospital. Improving the amenity offering within the park represents an investment in this community, providing opportunities for people to enjoy the park into the future.
17. In 2019 the Darlo Darlings Community Group established a community campaign which proposed an AIDS Memorial in Green Park, Darlinghurst to honour those who lost their lives during the AIDS crisis, and to provide the community a dedicated place of remembrance. The campaign received wide community support. Green Park is of special significance to the community, as it was a place where many sought comfort and reflection during difficult times.

Environmental

18. Protection and enhancement of the existing planting and trees through this work is in line with the Urban Ecology Strategic Action Plan.
19. No trees are proposed to be removed as part of this proposal.

Financial Implications

20. There are sufficient funds in the 2025/26 capital budget and forward estimates to complete the works included in this project.
21. Current project cost estimates and financial implications for the delivery of the Green Park renewal are detailed in Confidential Attachment D.

Relevant Legislation

22. 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.
23. Attachment D 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.
24. 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.
25. Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979.
26. State Environment Planning Policy (Transport and Infrastructure) 2021.
27. Disability Discrimination Act 1992.
28. Native Title Act 1993

Critical Dates / Time Frames

29. Current Program Dates:

(a) Council consideration of Concept Design	September 2025
(b) Detailed Design	October 2025 - Mid 2026
(c) Tender	Mid - Late 2026
(d) Construction Start	Early 2027
(e) Completion	Late 2027

Options

30. Proceed with the progression of the improvement works as outlined in this subject report including relevant approvals, preparation of construction documentation, tender for construction.
31. Project does not proceed - this option is not recommended as the current condition of the park is in need of renewal.

Public Consultation

32. Community consultation was undertaken as a 2-part process: early engagement (pre-consultation) and public consultation / exhibition. For a detailed description of the consultation process and findings refer to Attachment C.
33. An early engagement notification letter/email was issued to residents. A total of 41 submissions were received during the period. The purpose of the early engagement was to seek input from the community about how they used the space and how the park could be improved.
34. The public consultation involved the following:
- (a) A webpage on Sydney Your Say showed the plans from July 24 to August 21 2025. The page included an electronic copy of the concept design, survey and other key information about the consultation.
 - (b) An email was sent to 6,643 of our Sydney Your Say e newsletter
 - (c) A letter was posted to residents in properties surrounding the park, inviting them to give feedback on the proposal. 850 letters were distributed.

- (d) A pop-up consultation feedback session was held in the park on Saturday 9 August 2025, 10am to 11:30am. City 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 6 people attended the sessions.
 - (e) The community and stakeholders were able to give feedback using an online feedback form. A link to the feedback form was provided on the Sydney Your Say website.
 - (f) Signs were placed in the park directing people online to leave their feedback.
35. There were 54 submissions received during the consultation period. The Sydney Your Say page was visited 1318 times during the consultation period. This included 22 submissions via email and 32 submissions via the online feedback form.
36. 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. Responses to the key comments and suggestions are included in Attachment C.

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