



*PRESERVING AUSTRALIA'S OLDEST GARDEN SUBURB*

*P.O. Box 85, HUNTERS HILL, N.S.W. 2110*

The General Manager  
Hunters Hill Council  
Alexandra St  
Hunters Hill

**SUBMISSION REGARDING THE REVISED DRAFT PLAN OF MANAGEMENT  
FOR BORONIA PARK**

10 September 2015

**SUMMARY**

In its submission of 20 Feb 2015, The Trust supported the general thrust of the Draft Plan of Management (Nov 2014), particularly its emphasis on the protection, conservation and enhancement of this heritage-listed site, whilst also providing for the social, educational, and active and passive recreational needs of the community.

The Trust is pleased now to see that measures in the Revised Draft Plan of Management (PoM) have added support for:

- The requirement that any proposed physical change to the Park would require a Development Application to be submitted to Council.
- Ongoing maintenance of the Park. Although the only specific mentions are for sporting facilities, clearly there should be a commitment to bush regeneration and the maintenance of paths, play equipment etc.
- Improvements to Park entries and signage
- Upgrading the existing gravel path and stairs, and completing the footpath between Boronia Ave and Princes St
- An additional public toilet, near the High St playground
- Provision of drinking water across the site

**CONCERNS**

While generally supporting the Updated Plan, we wish to comment on the following items:

1. Whether private cars should be admitted to Princes St for the convenience of those attending sporting events.
2. Whether a Community Facility might be incorporated into the proposed amenity block adjacent to Oval #3.
3. Providing for disabled access
4. Exercising dogs
5. The need for continuing consultation
6. Lighting of Oval #3
7. Protection against alienation of public access
8. Guidelines for future management and maintenance of the Park.

## **1) Whether private cars should be admitted to Princes St**

The Revised PoM proposes to allow private cars into Princes St to ***'Improve access and circulation'***.

As stated in our submission on the original draft PoM in February 2015, *'The Trust supports the draft PoM in its general exclusion of private vehicles from the Park. We understand the need for emergency vehicles to have access and the need for Council to be able to exercise its discretion in relation to particular circumstances. We would also support any minor work that would improve existing deteriorating road surfaces, ensure proper site drainage and prevent runoff into the bush and the river.'*

The character of Boronia Park is defined by a number of different aspects and uses. The sporting ovals take up 31% of the total area, cleared areas and the internal road 14% and bushland 55%. Passive recreation thus accounts for 69% of the Park.

At present vehicular access and associated parking is restricted to the Park's perimeter, consequently an important defining feature of the park is the lack of vehicular access into its centre. The revised Plan of Management's proposal to allow private vehicles and parking in Princes Street will undermine this *vehicle-free* character. This represents a major negative impact on the character of the Park.

Princes St is one of the main entries to Boronia Park used by pedestrians. Transforming it into a parking lot, with its attendant vehicle movements, would unnecessarily endanger those using the street, particularly children and the disabled. The Revised PoM does recognize that there would be *'Pedestrian safety concerns associated with the use of Princes Street for overflow parking'*, but fails to address these concerns.

Compounding the danger to pedestrians is the proposal to locate a drop-off zone for the bottom end of Princes St. In addition to cars entering and leaving the parking spaces along the road, there would be a stream of cars 'shuffling' to and from the drop-off zone. This would create a hazardous situation for pedestrians using Princes St.

As well, the Revised PoM fails to establish any real need for this additional parking in Princes St. Except on carnival days, there is adequate parking in the Park Rd carpark and the streets in the immediate vicinity. Even on the few major sporting days during the year, there is no need to allow private cars into Princes St. As detailed in the Appendix, Princes St would contribute little additional parking (a mere 14%) to what is currently available within easy walking distance of the sporting fields. This small increase does not justify the risk of injury to other Park users. Finally, having cars and traffic in Princes St is not compatible with Council's continuing efforts to restore the adjacent bushland.

The Trust therefore opposes the entry of private vehicles into the Park via Princes Street. We would support additional signage in the surrounding streets, especially Park Rd, to clearly explain parking arrangements.

To cater for cars wishing to drop off or collect people we suggest there be a 'Drop-off/Pick-up' zone, in Park Rd. Such zones are common around schools and stations, and allow cars up to two minutes to drop-off or pick-up passengers while the driver remains within the car. This signposted zone should be located clear of the existing carpark to help separate those using the zone away from cars manoeuvring in the carpark.

## **2) Location of an amenity block and a Community Facility**

We support the construction of a basic amenity block adjacent to Oval #3, as proposed in the Updated Plan, but oppose the suggestion that it could be expanded to include a Community Facility of any form. In our opinion, any such Community Facility should be located close to the Park Rd carpark.

A Community Facility here would see little use without adjacent car parking, and we have argued above that car parking within the Park is unacceptable. The obvious place for a Community Facility is in the vicinity of the Grandstand and the existing carpark. Perhaps it can be accommodated within the existing structure. If not, then it should be built close by.

### **3) Providing for disabled access**

To support access to the Park for people with disabilities, both during sporting events and for other visits, we propose the following:

- Upgrade (and maintain) the existing carpark off Park Rd, with clear marking of an adequate number of disabled parking bays,
- Construct sealed paths between the Park Rd carpark and all three ovals, suitable for those who wheelchairs, but also useful for moving sporting equipment (on trolleys) between locations,
- To navigate the steep bank between the cricket nets and Oval #3, (an area recommended for mass planting) we suggest this part of the path between Boronia Ave and Princes St be constructed as an inclined zig-zag path, rather than as steps.

### **4) Exercising dogs**

We urge Council to include specific provision for off-leash exercise of dogs. To repeat the suggestion in our previous submission, 'The survey of park visitors found that 41% of them walk dogs in the Park. The Trust proposes that dogs be allowed off-leash in Finlay's Paddock (which has been the practice for decades), and also on the playing fields when they are not being used for organised sport. This policy has proved successful at Riverglade Reserve, where it is incorporated into that Plan of Management, with the provision of poo-bins and clear signage.'

### **5) The need for continuing consultation**

To avoid a repetition of the problems that arose during the upgrade of Oval #3, and those associated with the construction of the cricket nets and storage shed, the Plan requires a firm commitment to continuing consultation with residents and users of Boronia Park. To be effective, such consultation needs to include all types of users of the park, and must precede any formal planning. It certainly should come before the preparation of a formal Development Application. For these reasons, the Trust believes that the Plan of Management must include a firm commitment to continuing consultation with residents and users regarding the ongoing management of the park, or any proposal to vary the Plan of Management.

### **6) No need to light Oval #3**

There is no need for lights to be installed on Oval #3, and lighting here would adversely impact on wildlife in the adjoining bushland. Ovals #1 and #2 are already lit, and it is inconceivable that there could be training or games on all three ovals after dark.

### **7) Protection against alienation of public access**

To prevent alienation of any part of the Park from public use the Plan needs to forbid any lease or licence for the exclusive use of any part or structure by a select group.

### **8) Guidelines for future management and maintenance of the park**

Although stated as one of the aims of the Plan, the task to '*Prepare guidelines for future management and maintenance of the park*' is not addressed specifically in the Updated Plan. Besides mentioning 'maintenance' under the headings of 'Means of implementation' and 'Indicative cost estimate', there needs also to be a separate, comprehensive maintenance plan to allow budgeting, and to help allocate priorities between the various needs of the Park.

Tony Coote  
President The Hunters Hill Trust  
Phone 9817 3466

## Appendix

### Estimate of carparking spaces in the streets immediately surrounding (and within) Boronia Park

**Basis:** Parallel parking except 90° angle parking on the East (park) side of Park Rd between Princes St and High St, and in High St near the Montefiori Home.

Allowance for each car = 6m x 2.6m.

Location	Description	Total number of places	Number of car places on the park side of the road
P1	East side of Park Rd between Ryde and Princes St	25	25
P2	East side of Park Rd between Princes St and High St	77	77
P3	West side of Park Rd between Ryde and Princes St	30	-
P4	West side of Park Rd between Princes St and High St	30	-
P5	Existing carpark (general + disabled)	25+2=27	25+2=27
H1	South side of High St between Park Rd and Ramleh St*	12	12
H2	South side of High St between Ramleh St and Gaza St*	29	29
H3	North side of High St between Park Rd and Ramleh St*	8	-
H4	North side of High St between Ramleh St and Gaza St*	7	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>Total in surrounding streets</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>170</b>
<b>Princes St within Park</b>	<b>South side of Princes St, west of bridge over creek</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>35</b>
	<b>Increase by allowing parking in Princes St</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>21%</b>

\* This part of High St is heavily parked on week days, by the staff of the Montefiore Home, but is relatively free at weekends.

There is, of course, additional parking in Boronia Ave, in Mary and Everard Streets, in Princes and High Streets west of Park Rd, and in other surrounding streets.