



PRESERVING OUR HERITAGE
PO BOX 85, HUNTERS HILL, NSW 2110

HUNTERS HILL TRUST SUBMISSION DRAFT PLAN OF MANAGEMENT FOR HENLEY PRECINCT OPEN SPACE

14-1-2022 HHT submission re Henley precinct Open Space Plan of Management F

Failure to consult the community

This Draft Plan of Management is flawed by the failure to conduct proper consultation with the community, before its formulation, relying instead on the results of a consultation conducted in 2020 for a different purpose, with no mention a Plan of Management); see further comment under '3.5 Community Consultation' below

Community Use

Throughout the draft PoM, “organised sport” is given preference as the primary community use for the Henley Precinct (and this seems to mean the winter sport of football/soccer), without presenting any measurement of, say, people-hours of use. We suspect this does not reflect the actual use of Henley Open Space, but is the result of energetic lobbying by the proponents of organised sport, and the way the 2020 consultation was conducted, and has disregarded use by the local community.

Inappropriate reference to the Draft Property Strategy

As the very title explains, any draft document is a document that has not been adopted by Council, and therefore has no standing. (Any Property Strategy adopted by Council in the future would doubtless differ from the document of 2020, and this Plan would need to be re-exhibited to allow examination of the inferences of the change(s).

We raised our concern about relying on a draft document with the Acting General manager (in writing, on 22 July 2021, and again on 1 August) in relation to the PoM for Figtree Park, and received the following assurance, in his letter dated 2 August 2021:

'I can assure you there is no intention to imbed the Draft Community Infrastructure Plan/Property Strategy into the Plans of Management for Figtree Park and Gladesville Community Reserve as detailed above, no such changes can occur without the exhibition of revised documents.'

As with that PoM, all mention of the Draft Property Strategy must be removed from this PoM (including from pp12 & 25). Specific proposals for the future of Henley Open Space can be inserted as text, without reference to a Draft Property Strategy.

Playing field: natural turf or synthetic turf?

We suggest that consideration of the nature of the playing surface of the sportsfield is not directly relevant to the Plan of Management, except for its environmental impact, since the Plan must cater for the Park and Natural Areas as well as for sporting use. The role of the Plan, therefore, should be to ensure that management of playing areas has no deleterious effects on the Natural Areas. (see also Appendix A 'Synthetic or Natural turf')

Accessing the reserve

- Identify points of access by public transport (bus and ferry)
- Active transport (walking and cycling) should be encouraged by way-finding signage from the various approaches, and installation of secure cycle parking rails
- Car parking is mentioned in many parts of the Plan, including Table 10.1, which perhaps could be covered by a general statement that:
 - Many on-street parking places are available in the surrounding streets, especially in Huntleys Point Rd outside school/commuter hours
 - There should be no conversion of open space to parking within the reserve, or other encouragement for cars to enter the reserve.
 - Parking within the reserve should be limited to the existing parking areas, principally serving those visiting the child-care centre, those with disability permits, and service vehicles.
 - Drop-off locations should be established near the sportsfield
 - The carpark near the corner of Victoria Rd and Crown St should have a time limit (say, 3 or 4h) to make it available for casual visitors to the reserve rather than commuters who catch a bus from here to the city.

Specific comments and suggestions:

Section 2 INTRODUCTION

p14 **Figure 2.1:** Extend this plan to include Henley Cottage

p15 **'Sportsground' vs 'Park':**

The requirement to categorise the reserve's Public Recreation land as either 'Sportsground' or 'Park' seeks to create an artificial distinction within this particular reserve, seeking to distinguish between '*informal sporting activities and games*' and '*casual playing of games*'. The playing field is used formally and informally by Riverside Girls High School and by local residents, as well as by various sporting organisations, while the ball court is used for formal and informal basketball

The most appropriate decision for the reserve would be to classify the whole of the Northern part of the reserve as 'Park', and add the explanation that the area shown in Fig 1.1 as Playing Field is used by local residents and their children for general outdoor activities as well for various school and sporting clubs. The surrounding area provides a shaded location for children's play equipment, and accommodates the amenities building.'

p16 **Figure 2.2:**

Insert a reference to Figure 2.2 in the text.

SECTION 3 RELEVANT LEGISLATION, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

3.5 Community Consultation

There is no evidence of any consultation with the community in regard to this Plan other than the current invitation on Council's website to respond to the current draft.

The 'Past Consultation', referred to in the Plan, did not establish attitudes to this Draft Plan of Management, because it had been conducted in 2020 for a quite different purpose. All parts of that consultation (the '*Stakeholder Forum*', the '*On site Have a Say Pop-Up*' and the '*On-line survey*')

were conducted in reference to Council's then-proposed '*Lifestyle and Wellbeing Hub*', part of Council's Draft Community Infrastructure Plan (later renamed as the Draft Property Strategy and still only in draft form). The stated proposal was for '*a precinct that lends itself to services and facilities that support health and lifestyle*'; this represents only part of the stated purpose of this Plan of Management.

As stated, the emphasis of the '*Lifestyle and Wellbeing Hub*' was on the addition of facilities rather than protection of the management of the whole of the Henley Open Space. That consultation does not provide a satisfactory sampling of community concerns about the current Plan. In particular, The '*invited stakeholder forum*' referred to appears to have been somewhat selective in who it regarded as stakeholders. If it is to be included in this Plan, then, to establish its relevance, it must include the names of the organisations and individuals who were invited, and a reference to the published minutes of that forum.

In summary, if the results of the 2020 consultation are to be included in the PoM their origin and limitations should be clearly identified, and the detailed summary relegated to an appendix rather than being included in the body of the Plan.

P26 Activities:

Correct dotpoint 2 to read 'Council' in place of 'club'

'Council has obtained a grant to upgrade the field ...

p29 On-line survey

Amend dotpoint 3 as below to make clear that the grant was received by Council, not the Club:

Get an indication of the community views about the proposed synthetic field at Gladesville Reserve, a project promoted by the All Saints Hunter's Hill Football Club, **and for which Council has obtained funding from the NSW Government.**

4 HABITAT AND ENVIRONMENT no comment

5 HERITAGE AND CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE no comment

6 DEVELOPMENT AND USE

p39: Revise the second paragraph to read as follows:

The playing field, located near the corner of Victoria and Huntleys Point Road (see Fig 1.1) is used by Riverside Girls High School (located across Huntleys Point Road), by various sporting clubs, and by local residents for general exercise, for picnics and games, and to walk their dogs. Clubs use the playing field through seasonal hire arrangements with Council.

p40-41 **Table 6.1:** Add the Skate Park to Table 6.1

p41: Management of sports field usage

Since synthetic playing surfaces are acknowledged to have associated disadvantages as well as the advantage of being more durable, revise para 2 to read as follows:

That report identified a need to increase the number of fields by 40% by 2036. Lack of space for additional fields places the emphasis on increasing the availability of existing fields for community sports. **Both 'improved' natural turf and synthetic playing surfaces may be considered** where there is an inability to maintain current grass fields to suitable standards.

p42 Permitted use and future use

The second para below the many dot-points would allow the loss of open space merely by a decision that it would be 'more efficient' to use the space for other purposes; this phrase provides no real safeguard and should be removed, leaving the following:

Any use or development that would further encroach on the open space of the site should be minimised, unless it can be shown that the proposed use or development has a community benefit, and is consistent with the objectives of this Plan of Management.

7 A VISION FOR FUTURE MANAGEMENT

This heading is inappropriate because some of the items listed are for Works rather than Management.

p46 7.1 Vision: Reword the 'vision' statement (along the lines suggested by Wikipedia) to describe the aims of the PoM rather than the how they might be achieved. We suggest amending the text to become:

Vision: 'Conserve and enhance the natural foreshore and bushland environment of the reserves for use and appreciation by current and future generations. Cater for a wide variety of community uses including organised sports, informal leisure pursuits, and community activities and services compatible with environmental and heritage conservation objectives.'

7.2: Landscape Concept Plan

- 'A draft Landscape Concept Plan has been prepared ...' but although Table 7.2 contains its recommendations, the actual Landscape Plan is not included or otherwise made available on Council's website. For preference the Landscape Plan should be an integral part of the Plan of Management (unlike the Landscape Plan of the Riverglade Plan of Management, which is a separate document)
- Delete Para 2 which is counter to the very purpose of a plan by allowing anything in the PoM to be ignored.

P46 Table 7.2

- Delete the first of the two option for relocating the playspace because this green is currently used by the Community Garden

Table 7.2

p 46 'Lower park carpark': Explain what is proposed for the Return and Earn facility

p47 'Henley Green':

- 'Adaptive re-use of former bowling greens' appears to be a heading rather than a dotpoint item
- Explain why the West green is regarded as the preferred option, considering its lack of shade
- Delete 'long term building upgrade' because this is not appropriate under a Section heading of Management
- Similarly, delete 'potential covering of carpark to create usable space above' and installation of a lift which, too, are matters of capital works rather than management.

p47 Adaptive re-use of buildings

- Henley is above all valued by the community as public green open space. There should be a moratorium on any new built structures in the park, with existing built form being used more efficiently.

- We oppose the suggestions for changes to Henley Community Centre for “enabling sports club use for post-game day functions etc ...activating functional use of lower level of building” with the idea of a new “yoga terrace” suggested. In addition, “Long term building upgrade or replacement to provide more sympathetic built form / architectural design to foreshore location” is flagged.
- The Henley Community Centre is currently a generously proportioned multipurpose space with excellent architectural bones. It is highly subjective to suggest that a more “sympathetic built form/ architectural design to the foreshore location” is needed when the current building is fairly low rise and well settled into its environment. A light-touch adaptive reuse of the existing building to update facilities to better accommodate a broad range of community uses is warranted. To entertain a replacement building or significant additions is not fiscally realistic, environmentally sustainable, nor needed, and there is a danger that such a new facility would become yet another single user group building, as has become the case with the Boronia Park Rugby Club.

p48 8.1 Reporting, evaluation and review

Include provision to review every 4 years, but delete option to review 'on an as needs basis' because this trivialises the purpose of a Plan of Management, and is incompatible with the stated need to place changes on public exhibition.

9 SPORTSGROUND AND PARK

p50 9.1 Introduction

Sport ground/Core objective: extend item (b) to read 'to ensure that such activities are managed having regard to any adverse impact on nearby residences or the natural environment'.

P51 Community Use,

dotpoint 1: amend text to read 'level of use of sportsground regularly exceeds preferred maximum hours per week for the current turf'.

dotpoint 3: amend text to read 'provision of improved surface would benefit sports club users and Riverside Girls High School who also use the field

p51 Buildings and facilities:

dotpoint 2: delete: Club rooms are not necessary for outdoor games

dotpoint 5: delete: The Community Centre is further away from the main playing and exercise areas, and additionally inconvenient for those with disabilities due to the steep gradients. If necessary, upgrade existing facilities. This point is explained below in Maintenance dotpoint 2

Table 9.1 (p52-56)

Item 2.1.2 Amend Column 3 entry to read:

'Liaise with users, including those who use the sportsground for *'informal activities and games'* ,to determine long term requirements for amenities including change rooms, public toilets, sports storage and other requirements as determined - plan and implement improvements'

Item 2.1.4 The requirement to *'Undertake yearly review of field usage and bookings and confirm approach to sporting allocations for the year'* is inconsistent with granting leases or

licences of greater than 12 months duration proposed in Table 9.5.

Item 2.3.1 We support the inclusion of the words: The requirement to *'Ensure that sports field areas are generally accessible for appropriate general community use in non training and game times ...'* precludes granting leases or licences to any body for their exclusive use (ref Table 9.5)

Item 2.3.3 Possible relocation of playspace ; Option 1 (near current location) is superior to Option 2 for several reasons, including:

- Being within sight of people associated with games being played on the sportsground, it is more appropriate for their children
- There is better shade here than on the open grass of Option 2

Item 2.3.5 Use of the Henley Community Centre toilets? As stated above, the Community Centre is further away from users of Park and Sportsground areas, and due to the steep gradients, is additionally inconvenient for those with disabilities.

Item 2.3.7 Fitness elements Judging from the little use of the items installed at Boronia Park, these are not valued by park visitors

Item 4.1.1 Identify items of heritage significance from Aboriginal and historical perspective, but to protect them do not identify their locations

Item 4.3 Public Art Since the appreciation of art is so subjective, limit this to temporary public art, but include aesthetic quality in the planning and installation of functional items. Luke-warm acceptance of public art elsewhere in Hunters Hill suggests permanent public art should not be given high priority in Henley.

p57 Table 9.2 Permissible Uses and Developments

Column 2, dotpoint 11

Equipment sales/hire areas': must be limited to items for use in and adjacent to the reserve (e.g. bike and/or canoe hire)

p58 Tables 9.3 and 9.4 Additional Specific Category items

Exclude the construction of 'permanent' facilities such as 'professional rooms' and 'facilities for sports training' that would be managed other than by Council

p60 Tables 9.5 and 9.6 Leases, licences and other estates

Note (comment on Item 2.3.1, above) the conflict between any lease or licence, but especially one lasting many years, with the stated requirement to *'Ensure that sports field areas are generally accessible for appropriate general community use in non-training and game times ...'* .

Any proposal to allow leases and licences of up to 30 years is excessive considering that no commercial improvement consequential to the granting of a lease could conceivably have a pay-back period of more than 10-15 years. If there is to be a maximum tenure it should be consistent across all PoMs, and preferably no greater than 15 years to allow periodic consideration of competing uses of a scarce resource.

Henley Open Space is limited in size, and no leases or licence should be granted for a

purpose which excludes others from using that land or facility.

10 GENERAL COMMUNITY USE

p63 Table 10.1 Management Framework

- Item 2.3.2 To ensure that Henley Cottage is in a safe and functional condition for community use
- Delete reference to 'replacement' which contradicts the heading
- Item 4.1.3 Heritage conservation: Seek to have Henley Cottage heritage listed

p69 Table 10.3 Leases, licences and other estates

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P81 Table 11.3 Leases, licences and other estates

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P84 Table 12.3 Leases, licences and other estates

Any proposal to allow leases and licences of up to 30 years is excessive considering that no commercial improvement consequential to the granting of a lease could conceivably have a pay-back period of more than 10-15 years. If there is to be a maximum tenure it should be consistent across all PoMs, and preferably no greater than 15 years to allow periodic consideration of competing uses of a scarce resource.

Some minor points:

- **COVER:** Correct the spelling to become 'Wallumedegal'
- **Tables:** Some tables (e.g. on p61) don't have titles: Title all tables, and refer to them in the text
- Define all abbreviations as they are first used, including: GPTs (p31, Figure 4.1), DDA (p47/Table 7.2)

Appendix A: Synthetic or Natural Turf

p51p. states that “level of use of sports field regularly exceeds preferred maximum hours per week for natural sports turf... provision of synthetic surface would benefit sports club users and riverside girls school [sic] who also use the field”

It is unreasonable to tailor a large part of the park to the specific needs of a relatively small group of users, who according to the document, use this area for 26 hours a week in winter months only and an additional 10 hours a week during school term. The change to synthetic turf—which has serious environmental implications and precludes other users from enjoying the benefits of a naturally grassed area— are being proposed for users who occupy the space for only 18% of the permissible hours of use per year. It is therefore a very poor management decision to install synthetic turf and create a mono-functional open space, that will be used by a small (and possibly diminishing demographic of users—refer population stats pp. 8-9 NSROC Regional Sportsground Strategy Review) number of people for only 18% of permissible hours of use per year.

p. 41 Reference to the NSROC Regional Sportsground Strategy Review with respect to Management of sports field usage

It is misleading to selectively reference the NSROC Regional Sportsground Strategy Review 2017 by connecting its identification of “a need to increase the number of fields by 40% by 2036” with the need for conversion of natural turf areas to synthetic turf where “there is limited provision, high use of existing facilities and/or the inability to maintain grass fields to suitable standards” (p. 41 quoting NSROC RSSR p. 17). While this may be the case on a regional basis, the detail in this report indicates clearly that population in the prime organised sport playing age group of 5-19 years is set to diminish in Hunters Hill in the next 10+ years. Moreover, this report states that Hunters Hill already has a much higher supply of playing space as H/1000 population than nearby LGAs of Lane Cove, North Sydney, Willoughby. The burden of sportsground provision or capacity for the region clearly does not fall upon the LGA of Hunters Hill and should not be used as a management justification for synthetic turf.

Appendix B Council's consultation webpage

huntershill.nsw.gov.au/news/lifestyle-and-wellbeing-hub 12-1-2022



News

October 17, 2020

We are looking to create a Lifestyle and Wellbeing Hub and want your feedback about what the focus of this amazing new community space should be.

It is part of consultation on our draft Community Infrastructure Plan and we want as many people as possible to participate.

The vision for this hub – located in the Henley Precinct that includes Henley Community Centre, Henley Cottage, Riverside Preschool, Gladesville Reserve, the skate park and basketball courts and The Happy Hens community garden – is for a precinct that lends itself to services and facilities that support health and lifestyle.

Opportunities

Facilities and associated uses:

- Construct synthetic field/s with a shared Sports and Community Facility.
- Improved amenities for sporting activities including storage, change rooms, etc.
- Consider gym/café to service users and local sporting clubs as part of the new amenities.
- Relocate the current cricket pitch either elsewhere on the site or subject to agreement relocate to another site.
- Cafe/restaurant to service visitors to the reserve.
- Meeting rooms to cater for community groups with associated back of house facilities such as kitchen and amenities.
- Produce/craft markets.
- Community gardens.
- Provision of infrastructure to enable the staging of outdoor music/cultural events.
- Community playground.
- Preschool and potential for increased childcare centre.
- Public amenities.
- Potential for increased access to the waterfront.
- Potential for residential development with a sustainable focus.

Have you visited the current location? Would you support the Lifestyle and Wellbeing Hub? Do you have any suggestions?

Please share them with us.

Go to: huntershill.nsw.gov.au/participate/cip for more information and [click here to participate](#) in shaping the future facilities and services offered to our community.

Inspiration images

