



Memorandum

14 May 2020

To Warren Duarte – Development Manager

Copy to

From	Lauren Harding – Senior Social Sustainability Consultant	Tel	+61 2 92397645
Subject	The Palms Social Impact and Community Needs Investigation – Open space addendum	Job no.	12527993

1 Purpose

GHD was engaged by Iris Capital to prepare a high level Social Impact and Community Needs Investigation (SICNI) for the proposed development 'The Palms' at 167-183 Hume Highway, Greenacre. This report was submitted to Iris Capital in March 2019 to support the Development Application (DA).

GHD understands that City of Canterbury-Bankstown (Council) have informed Iris Capital of a change to the planning proposal for The Palms which may have an implication for the SICNI. At the time of lodgment, Council indicated that they would decommission Peter Reserve, a 618 m² parcel of public open space with playground at the rear of the site.

In November 2019, Council advised that they would retain Peter Reserve and requested that Iris Capital dedicate a portion of their site to increase the size of the reserve. Iris Capital have proposed to dedicate a net 333 m² for this purpose, thereby increasing the size of the reserve to 947 m².

This addendum describes and assesses the community impacts from retaining and expanding the size of Peter Reserve.

2 Methodology

This addendum has been prepared according to the following steps;

- Review relevant Council plans and strategies and planning proposal documents
- Review relevant findings of previous SICNI for the site
- Assess and describe community impacts and benefits related to the proposed change.

3 Relevant findings from the SICNI

The SICNI found there is a low provision of public open space in the study area, particularly large parcels of open space. Public open space in the study area primarily comprises local parks and informal greenspaces which do not appear to be uniformly available within 400 metres of residences, which is best practice and considered a 'walkable' distance for most people. The SICNI found the

12527993-84286-5/12527993_MEM_The Palms Social Impact and Community Needs Investigation – Open space addendum_V2.docx



Memorandum

closest public open space to the development site was 700 metres away, however this did not consider Peter Reserve in the assessment.

The SICNI found that the low provision of public open space is currently not a significant issue as most residents would have access to backyards and private open space. However, the SICNI anticipates a growing need for public passive open space, particularly large-scale open space, as housing densities increase in the area.

4 Council plans and strategies

There are three Council documents that are relevant to this addendum. We reviewed these documents to understand the potential benefits of retaining and expanding Peter Reserve in relation to Council's strategic direction regarding public open space. These documents are described in Table 1.

Table 1 Summary of relevant City of Canterbury-Bankstown plans and strategies

Document	Summary
<i>2028 cbcity</i> (2018)	This is Council's Community Strategic Plan. According to this document, residents of Canterbury-Bankstown value access to a range of parks and open space. They also want open and public spaces to be integrated in the planning of local areas as opposed to being 'add-on' features. Council wishes for catchments to include safe and accessible open space within a 5-10 minute walk from most residents.
<i>Playgrounds & Play Spaces Strategic Plan</i> (2018)	The <i>Playgrounds & Play Spaces Strategic Plan</i> guides the future provision, development and management of playgrounds and play spaces to 2028. According to the Plan, Peter Reserve qualifies as a Play Level 3: a basic lower level playground that includes basic play equipment or a landscaped play setting that services children located within a 5-10 minute walk. This document recommends that Council consider not replacing Peter Reserve play equipment at its end-of-life.
<i>Open Space Strategic Plan 2022</i> (2012)	<p>This document is applicable to the former Bankstown LGA where the site is located. The <i>Open Space Strategic Plan 2022</i> provides a framework for protecting, enhancing and managing open space.</p> <p>The Plan recognises the standard NSW Government open space provision rate of 2.83 ha per 1,000 persons. In 2012, Bankstown had a city-wide provision rate above the NSW Government standard with 4.55 ha per 1,000 persons. However, in some suburbs of the LGA, the open space provision rate was significantly lower than the NSW Government benchmark (e.g. 0.73 ha per 1,000 persons in Bankstown CBD).</p> <p>Most residents (96%) lived within 400 m of public open space.</p> <p>This document recommends investigating divestment of Peter Reserve and redirecting funds to purchase and embellish other parcels of open space.</p>



Memorandum

5 Findings and recommendations

Despite both the *Playgrounds & Play Spaces Strategic Plan* and the *Open Space Strategic Plan* recommending that Council consider decommissioning the reserve, Council has now decided to retain and slightly increase the size of the reserve.

Iris Capital has proposed to dedicate a net 333 m² of the site to expand Peter Reserve which would increase the total size from 618 m² to 947 m² (54% increase in size). It should be noted that leading practice for public open space planning is concerned more with 'quality over quantity' particularly for urban infill developments. This is because of the significant challenges in meeting historical rates of provision for public open space. Due to a lack of available and affordable land in Sydney, meeting rates of provision (e.g. 2.83 ha of public open space per 1,000 people) is not possible, therefore many Councils are now considering how to embellish existing open space to increase functionality and allow more diverse uses of the space. For example embellishing local parks to provide district-level facilities, or upgrading sports fields with synthetic turf to allow for a range of sports to play for longer hours. Effectively, Councils are starting to implement strategies which work existing public open space harder, and explore innovative and alternative ways to increase community access to open space.

As described in the SICNI, there is currently a low provision of open space in and around the site. Retaining and expanding Peter Reserve would improve residents' access to quality public open space and, in turn, enhance benefits generally associated with access to open space. According to the *Open Space Strategic Plan 2022*, these benefits include:

- Improved physical and mental health and well-being
- Opportunities for passive recreation
- Opportunities for social interactions
- Strengthen social and cultural identity
- Contribute to a sense of place.

As a local public open space, Peter Reserve would continue to offer passive recreation opportunities for the existing local community as well as future residents of The Palms. This would provide opportunities for social interaction between existing and new community members, further enhancing community benefits.

As a Play Level 3¹, the reserve is expected to service residents located within a 5-10 minute walk (400 m). Play Level 3 assets should provide basic playgrounds or landscape play. As the local area is home to a higher proportion of infants and children, retaining Peter Reserve is expected to particularly benefit families in the surrounding area.

While retaining and increasing the size of Peter Reserve will help to address the current under provision of public open space in the local area, providing high quality public open space is more

¹ City of Canterbury-Bankstown, 2018. *Playgrounds & Play Spaces Strategic Plan*



Memorandum

important in urban areas than merely providing more space. GHD recommends that Council consider how Peter Reserve could be embellished in the future to increase the function and use by diverse community members. For example, this could include providing:

- Seating and/or shaded seating areas
- Shared pathways which connect to the local pedestrian/cycle network
- Play equipment
- Areas for passive recreation (e.g. ball kick-around area)

Overall, retaining and increasing the size of Peter Reserve is expected to deliver community benefits for both new residents of The Palms, and existing surrounding residents. These benefits would be enhanced with the inclusion of embellishments which improve the quality and functionality of the park.

Regards

Lauren Harding

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. Harding', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Senior Social Planning Consultant
02 9239 7142
lauren.harding@ghd.com