

STRATEGY AND POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE
1 SEPTEMBER 2008

POLICY AND PLANNING

A7	MIDDLE PARK BEACH FACILITIES - CONCEPT PLANS
LOCATION/ADDRESS:	FORMER HAROLD ALEXANDER PAVILION, 255A AND 255B BEACONSFIELD PARADE, MIDDLE PARK AND SURROUNDING PUBLIC REALM
RESPONSIBLE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:	GEOFF OULTON, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING
AUTHOR:	KATE NAGATO, FORESHORE PLACE MANAGER & STAV ATHANASOPOULOS, PROJECT MANAGER
FILE NO.:	
ATTACHMENTS:	1. ASPECT / GREGORY BURGESS CONCEPT DESIGN 2. HASSELL CONCEPT DESIGN 3. ZEN CONCEPT DESIGN

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. As part of a design competition, three concept designs were prepared for public amenities and landscaping works at Middle Park Beach (site of former Harold Alexander Pavilion). As the site previously housed public toilets, it was identified in the City of Port Phillip Public Toilet Strategy as a key gap in the provision of public toilet facilities within the municipality.
- 1.2. Community input around what facilities they wanted at the site was incorporated into three designs and each was then presented to the community. The community was asked to rank the designs in order of preference and note any changes they would like to make to their favourite design as well as any other comments they had.
- 1.3. The three designs were assessed against selected weighted criteria and a preferred proposal has been recommended.
- 1.4. For the project to progress, a decision is required from council as to the winner of the design competition, and agreement to proceed with detailed design and documentation, and submission of an application for Coastal Management Act consent for the preferred design.

2. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 2.1. In February 2006 Council acted on a Building Order to demolish the Harold Alexander Pavilion at Middle Park Foreshore (adjacent to the intersection of

Beaconsfield Parade and Armstrong Street). The building had advanced stages of concrete cancer that made it unsafe for public use.

- 2.2. The former building housed the Middle Park Lifesaving Club, a kiosk, storage, rooms, public showers and toilets, and as such at the time Council requested that the future design for and use of the site should include considerations of landscaping, street furniture, drinking fountain, beach shower and public toilets.
- 2.3. After demolition, the seawall at the site was repaired with a simple concrete wall, the building footprint was filled and grassed over, and some of the standard suite of foreshore furniture was installed.
- 2.4. Council's Public Toilet Strategy identified Middle Park as a priority gap in the provision of toilet facilities and there has been a strong push from many in the community for toilets to be reinstated on the site.
- 2.5. Funding was allocated through the capital works budget for design and development of public toilet facilities at the site, however it was considered that a broader concept plan for the site was required to ensure an integrated approach between the facilities and the landscaping of the site. It is anticipated that capital funding for both the toilet construction and the landscaping aspects will be applied for through a future capital works budget.
- 2.6. Consistent with Council's Sustainable Design Policy and to provide a superior level of community consultation it was determined that a competition be held to provide a series of concept designs. These designs were to represent the very best in environmentally sustainable design (ESD), and would act as a catalyst for more informed and focused community discussions.
- 2.7. The first phase of this process concluded in June 2008 with 11 submissions being received in response to our advertising in May 2008 for Expressions of Interest for Sustainable Design Services (Contract No. 1136).
- 2.8. From these submissions three separate organisations were selected to provide a concept design for public amenities and broader landscaping of the site. Designers were encouraged to produce a design that was uniquely suited to the environmental, urban and social context of the site.
- 2.9. The participants were chosen for their experience and capability, with the final selection including a large, medium and small firm. These were Hassell, Aspect Studios & Gregory Burgess, and Zen Architects respectively.
- 2.10. Concept designs were submitted at the end of July 2008 and on 6 August 2008 each design was presented by their relevant designers to local residents during a community consultation session held at the Mary Kehoe Centre, Middle Park. The designs were then displayed at the Middle Park and Albert Park Libraries for a one week period and were also available online through Council's website to garner further community feedback. The designs were also presented to local children at the Middle Park Community Centre as part of Council's commitment to consultation with children.

- 2.11. Each of the designs highlighted different strengths and alternate means of addressing the brief. Feedback from the community and relevant council officers (such as beach cleaning, waste management, sustainable design and building maintenance) was collated and informs the recommendations in this report.
- 2.12. Council's planning department has advised that a planning permit is not required, only Coastal Management Act consent through the Department of Sustainability and Environment.

3. RECOMMENDED OPTION

3.1. An internal panel consisting of Council's Place Manager Foreshore, Sustainable Design Officer and Project Manager Asset Services recommend Aspect Studios/Gregory Burgess Architects as the winner of the design competition and for this organisation to be selected to proceed with detailed design and documentation of the project, including the application for Coastal Management Act consent, with the understanding that the design will be subject to amendments based on feedback received during the community consultation process and internal discussions with council staff.

3.2. Criterion for recommendation

How each proposal responds to the decision criteria is included as an attachment to this report. The decision criteria are:

- Minimum 2 unisex cubicles accessed directly from street with at least one Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) compliant with baby change facilities
- Wash-down shower
- Other beach furniture included
- Signature project with best of architectural aesthetics
- Demonstrated high level Ecologically Sustainable Design principles
- Minimal building footprint
- Design to discourage public loitering, vandalism and inappropriate use
- Access for all users and abilities
- Easily maintained and cleaned
- Cost
- Community feedback

The Aspect/Gregory Burgess design received the highest weighted score, and also, the greatest number of primary votes from the 42 feedback forms received during the community consultation. A detailed evaluation spreadsheet scoring each of the proposals against Council's criteria and weightings is available if requested.

3.3. Sustainability assessment

Social Pillar	This option improves public access from Beaconsfield Parade down onto Middle Park Beach where the sand is about to be renourished. It encourages community interaction by creating an entryway to the beach via an open plaza space. The option includes four oversized toilet/changing room facilities and beach showers as well as a dog-friendly drinking fountain. It is expected that only during busy periods (such as over summer and for events) will all four rooms will be open and the entire facility will be locked at night. The toilet facilities have been designed to include passive surveillance to improve safety for those using the facilities. If the shelter at the end of Armstrong St is approved for inclusion, it will also provide significant shelter/shade for foreshore users.
Economic Pillar	This option responds to a documented community need for public toilet facilities and will maximise the benefits to residents and visitors to Port Phillip alike. This option provides for four toilet facilities within the available budget compared to two facilities in each of the other two designs.
Environmental Pillar	This option includes Ecologically Sustainable Design outcomes throughout the site including natural ventilation, stormwater and rainwater harvesting and water reuse, using energy efficient lighting and the use of recycled materials wherever possible. This option will increase community awareness of environmental issues through the nature play area. This option includes the planting of indigenous vegetation and will significantly improve the visual amenity and connectedness to the foreshore. This option has been planned around maximising walking and cycling opportunities and includes racks for bicycle parking. Energy efficiency could be improved through the incorporation of photovoltaics (solar cells).
Cultural Pillar	This design retains the open space feeling the site currently has but significantly improves the recreation space and access to the beach. It also includes a nature play area for children to provide a more environmentally aware play area than traditional playground equipment. This option would result in more opportunities for the public to be brought together through the beach steps which would provide additional seating and the BBQ facilities. This option values the community appreciation of the foreshore whilst providing a unique aesthetic to differentiate Middle Park from the surrounding foreshore areas.

3.4. Policy and legislative implications

- 3.4.1. Public Toilet Strategy 2007-2011 – the provision of public toilets must be accessible to all in the community and comply with the accessibility requirement of the Disability Discrimination Act 1992. Middle Park Beach (near Armstrong St) was recommended as a high priority and appropriate site for the location of future public toilet infrastructure.
- 3.4.2. At the time of demolition of the former Harold Alexander Pavilion, Council resolved to consider future uses for the site including toilet facilities, beach showers, foreshore furniture and a range of other suitable uses.
- 3.4.3. Life Saving Clubs Strategy 2003 - There is the potential for each of the designs to accommodate a life saving club outpost. All that is required is a large area of flat, accessible open space with the life savers bringing in their own equipment.
- 3.4.4. Foreshore Management Plan 2004 – A key principle of the plan is that the foreshore is public open space managed for public use and enjoyment. The plan recommends continuing to upgrade public amenity facilities to improved standards and respond to changing patterns with good design. It aims to ensure public toilets along the foreshore are: maintained to a high standard, light, clean and make users feel safe and it recommends introducing design measures to reduce inappropriate use of public toilets and to reduce public concerns of such use. It also recommends investigating shade structure options for the foreshore environment that are both functional and aesthetically contribute to the foreshore environment and continuing to reinvest in foreshore infrastructure which supports recreational activity, to maintain high standards.
- 3.4.5. Victorian Coastal Strategy 2007 (draft) – The strategy recommends not limiting public open space, enhancing public access to the coast and incorporating water sensitive urban design techniques into developments on the foreshore.
- 3.4.6. Coastal Management Act consent – This is required for any buildings or landscaping treatment on the site.
- 3.4.7. 2008-09 Council Plan – includes strategies to support and encourage inviting and accessible spaces and places; encourage community participation and involvement to adopt positive environmental behaviours; and create the conditions which support community and allow people to connect.

3.5. Risk implications

- 3.5.1. This option provides limited risk to council. It is well supported by most of the community (based on the responses received during the community consultation). The residents along Beaconsfield Parade opposite the location for the amenities building have expressed some concerns about the building being located across from their property. The former building on this site was located further to the south east (towards Armstrong St) than in

this proposal, however this proposal retains the largest area of open space for wider community enjoyment. The building height is low and residences opposite would still retain views of the sea from their second storey.

3.6. Resource implications

- 3.6.1. Funds are available within the current 08/09 financial year for the design and documentation of the toilet facility.
- 3.6.2. The costs for toilet construction are within the estimates provided in the 5 year capital works budget, however a business plan will need to be lodged for funding through the 2009-10 capital works budget process.
- 3.6.3. Additional resources would be required for the landscaping component and a separate capital works business case is also anticipated to be prepared and submitted for consideration through the 09/10 capital works process.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

4.1. Alternative 1

- 4.1.1. Alternative option 1 is for Council to choose Zen Architects as the winner of the design competition and proceed to detailed design with their concept plan, subject to amendments based on feedback received during the community consultation process.
- 4.1.2. **Sustainability assessment**

Social Equity Pillar	Also improves public access down onto beach though not to the same extent as the preferred option. Proposal expected to minimise impact on views from residents opposite though would provide more visual impact for those driving along Beaconsfield Parade. This option provides fewer toilets and no changing facilities.
Economic Viability Pillar	This option would be the most expensive for the design and construction of the toilet facility however the landscaping component is expected to cost less than the preferred option.
Environmental Responsibility Pillar	This option appears to have the most Ecologically Sensitive Design of the three options as it includes a high level of energy generation and water capture and reuse.
Cultural Vitality Pillar	This design would not have the same level of open space as the preferred design or the current situation; however it would provide an appealing destination.

4.1.3. **Policy and legislative implications**

No change from preferred design

4.1.4. Risk implications

There is a risk that people may try to hang off the winged roofs. There is also a risk that the strength of the tanks may be insufficient to hold up the roof and that some of the design aesthetics may be lost by the need for additional reinforcing.

4.1.5. Resource implications

The toilets would cost more to build than the preferred option but the landscaping would likely cost less.

The wind turbine indicated on the drawings is a separate element that would need to obtain funding as none is currently allocated for a project of that type in that area.

4.2. Alternative 2

4.2.1. Alternative option 2 is for Council to choose Hassell as the winner of the design competition and proceed to detailed design with their concept plan, subject to amendments based on feedback received during the community consultation process.

4.2.2. Sustainability assessment

Social Equity Pillar	This option also improves access down to Middle Park Beach though not to the same extent as the preferred option, however it does improve access for disabled and elderly people better than the preferred design does. This option will also provide shade/shelter for foreshore users. This option provides fewer toilets and combined the disabled toilet with the changing facilities.
Economic Viability Pillar	This option would likely cost less to build the toilet facilities than the proposed option, however no costings have been provided for construction of the shelter or the landscape components.
Environmental Responsibility Pillar	This option also includes rainwater collection and limited grey water recycling, with the tanks to supply each being partially submerged. Such submersion does make these elements more susceptible to damage from increased catchment based flooding and storm surge activity resulting from climate change.
Cultural Vitality Pillar	This option would provide significant visual bulk along the foreshore which could make it a destination, however could also be reminiscent of the bulk of the former building. It provides the potential for a kiosk which whilst supported by some members of the community is not supported by many others.

4.2.3. Policy and legislative implications

No change from preferred design

4.2.4. Risk implications

This option would entail significantly more risk than the preferred option or Alternative option 1. There is a risk to council that if

people were to climb over the railing part way up the roof that they may fall and be seriously or fatally injured. If the railing were to be made significantly higher to prevent this it would compromise the aesthetics of the design and impact further on views from residences opposite.

4.2.5. Resource implications

This option may be cheaper to implement however this is unclear as detailed costing estimates have not been provided.

4.3. Alternative 3

4.3.1. Alternative option 3 is for Council to decide not to choose any of the concept designs and instead commission another concept design following another round of community consultation.

4.3.2. Sustainability assessment

Social Equity Pillar	Increased length of time before any facilities can be built on the site is likely to lead to frustration in the community especially amongst those who have provided comment on the current designs.
Economic Viability Pillar	Depending on the new design it could cost more or less than the proposed design
Environmental Responsibility Pillar	This could be seen as an inefficient use of resources given the amount of energy, paper etc that has already been consumed to get to this stage
Cultural Vitality Pillar	No change

4.3.3. Policy and legislative implications

No change

4.3.4. Risk implications

Risk of community perception of poor process.

4.3.5. Resource implications

Additional staff time to undertake new round of consultation and oversee development of new design.

5. PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT

5.1. Internal

5.1.1. The people who have been engaged with in relation to this issue are:

- Street and Beach Cleaning
- Waste Management
- Building Maintenance

- Sustainable Design Officer
- Urban Design and Heritage
- Judith Klepner (Councillor Albert Park Ward)
- Parks and Open Space
- Community and Health Development
- Joint Councils Access for All Abilities (JCAAA)
- Traffic, Transport and Parking
- Sport and Recreation

In relation to the preferred and recommended design:-

- 5.1.2. Beach cleaning advised that it would not impact on beach cleaning activities.
- 5.1.3. Waste Management advised that it would not impact on the ability to empty foreshore litter bins.
- 5.1.4. Building maintenance advised that it appears to be relatively easy to maintain. They identified the need to ensure safety aspects are adequately considered in the detailed design including handrails and trip hazards between garden/lawn area and concrete paths and identified that there may be some issues with getting wet/drying out of the timber roof around the water tank holes and the potential for some algae growth however if the roof was constructed with a different material this could be rectified.
- 5.1.5. Council's Sustainable Design Officer advised that this was the only design to include considerations of sea level rise and represents an overall more informed understanding of this site's unique environmental conditions. The 'nature play' concept presents an opportunity to achieve wider community appreciation for the natural environment and thus care for its protection. Given the layout of the building and rainwater tanks, this design is most suited of the three to accommodate the issues of sea level rise as the lower areas of the building could be flooded without adverse impacts on its use after the event.

This design's approach to the responsible use and re-use of water is good, with the additional consideration indicated with the inclusion of the rain garden to collect run-off from the showers. However, beyond demand management this design does not currently present a very high level of environmental performance in terms of energy, although photovoltaic cells can be incorporated into this design to accommodate this omission.

- 5.1.6. From an urban design perspective, the design by Aspect/Gregory Burgess is the most resolved in terms of:
 - understanding context;
 - encouraging casual surveillance from an urban design perspective;
 - creating a coordinated architectural aesthetic; and

- encouraging workable ESD initiatives.
- 5.1.7. The ward councillor was happy with all three designs and keen for community feedback to help shape council decision
- 5.1.8. Parks and Open Space advised they did not consider there to be any maintenance issues from their perspective. They were satisfied with the use of drought tolerant native vegetation and water sensitive urban design.
- 5.1.9. Community and Health Development advised that in order to maximise safety and minimise unwanted behaviour in toilets, Parks Victoria has released guidelines for the design of public toilets in their parks. This design meets all the standards set out in those guidelines including passive surveillance, individual cubicles, cubicles facing the street and low vegetation. The concrete walls also prevent vandalism and peepholes.
- 5.1.10. JCAAA advised that large changing rooms/toilets are good as it means the disabled toilet is always available for disabled use. They would like a long low gradient access ramp and handrails on beach access for disabled people and the elderly.
- 5.1.11. Sport and Recreation advised that a life saving club outpost along the foreshore would require toilets, shade, water and easy access to the beach. This option provides all of these things. They have also developed a policy around personal trainers and boot camps that prevent any static training along the foreshore. If any issues arise regarding use of this site by personal trainers there is the potential under the policy to declare the area an exclusion zone.
- 5.1.12. Traffic, Transport and Parking advised that as this is a public toilet, the proposed location of positioning the structure midway between the crossings would be most appropriate. This will give equal degree of accessibility for pedestrian coming from either one of the crossings. Also if indeed more traffic may be generated as a result of the toilet upgrade, any potential increase of parking will not be localised to one particular side street. The utilisation of the toilet will mainly be those using the beach, and it is expected these users will preferably use available parking on Beaconsfield Parade before considering using the side streets, particularly it is 4 hour 8am to 10pm and All Day parking on Beaconsfield Parade, while Nimmo and Armstrong Streets are restricted 1 hour between 8am to 10pm all days.



Image displaying locality of signalised pedestrian crossings in relation to proposed toilet location

5.2. External

- 5.2.1. The external people and/or organisations who have been engaged with in relation to this issue are:

Middle Park/Albert Park community and property owners who attended the community consultation evening on 6 August 2008

Community members who responded via feedback sheets from the Middle and Albert Park libraries

Community members who responded via feedback survey on the council website

Children from Middle Park Civic and Middle Park Kindergarten

- 5.2.2. Community engagement took the form of consultation. Feedback gathered from the community at a meeting in March about what facilities they wanted to see on the site was provided in the brief to the designers and these concept plans were then presented to the community for feedback. Community feedback has informed the recommendation being presented to Council and is summarised in an attachment to this report.

- 5.2.3. Residents and owners of nearby properties were targeted for the consultation as those likely to be most affected by the proposals. Residents and owners of properties in the vicinity of the site were letter dropped. Additionally all residents within the City of Port Phillip were targeted as those likely to use the facilities and were advised of the consultation via Divercity, advertisements in the local newspapers, notices at the Middle Park Library and via Council's website.

- 5.2.4. Children also favoured the Aspect/Gregory Burgess design. In particular there was reasonably strong support for the nature play area. Given the nature of this consultation detailed feedback was difficult to obtain, however there was a strong emphasis by the children on the shape of each proposal, with this being used to determine what many of them liked or disliked about each design. Similarly the preference towards more natural elements (trees, sand, grass etc) was strongly supported by the majority of the children who provided feedback. Some suggestions they had for the beach were for more trees, more shells, more flowers, a boogie board hire, a jumping castle on the sand, a shop for icecream and snacks, a trampoline, a skateboard ramp, a road for rollerbladers and a shop that sells bathers.
- 5.2.5. The Aspect/Gregory Burgess design received the majority of first preference votes from feedback forms and second preference from most of the people who chose another design as their first preference.
- 5.2.6. Community feedback has been used to help select the winner and will be used to shape the detailed design of the amenities block and landscape features.
- 5.2.7. Some of the issues raised during the community feedback were raised with council officers as part of consultation with internal stakeholders. These included parking, pedestrian crossing proximity, ongoing maintenance and cleaning.
- 5.2.8. Community feedback expressed both at the community meeting and through the feedback forms indicated a strong desire to see both the toilet facilities and the landscaping works undertaken at the same time rather than constructing only the toilet block and then waiting a year or longer for the landscaping works to be undertaken as part of a second stage of works.

6. IMPLEMENTATION

- 6.1. There was a strong community preference for all stages of the works to be undertaken simultaneously rather than the toilets in one stage and the landscaping in a second stage.
- 6.2. Funding is currently only available for the detailed design and development of the toilet.
- 6.3. Stage 1 – Design and development of toilet facility to council budget (\$330K)
- 6.4. Further Stages - Development of business case for 2009-10 capital works budget process for toilet construction, and development of business case for 2009-10 capital works budget process for design and development of landscape component.

7. COMMUNICATION

- 7.1. The feedback loop should be closed by responding to local residents and the wider community about the overall responses and council's decision. This should be undertaken in a number of ways:
 - 7.1.1. Article in Divercity

- 7.1.2. Media releases
 - 7.1.3. Updating the Port Phillip internet site
 - 7.1.4. Responses to those who submitted feedback forms with their contact details on them or those who wrote their contact details down at the beach renourishment or toilet community sessions.
- 7.2. Provide official certificates signed by the mayor to each of the three competitors.

8. RECOMMENDATION

- 8.1. That the Strategy and Policy Review Committee recommend that Council resolve to:
- 8.1.1. Declare the Aspect Studios/Gregory Burgess concept design the winner of the Middle Park Sustainable Design Competition 2008.
 - 8.1.2. Provide official certificates signed by the mayor as follows:
 - Winner: Aspect Studios & Gregory Burgess Architects
 - Special Commendation: Zen Architects
 - Finalist: Hassell Architects
 - 8.1.3. Proceed to detailed design and development of the Aspect Studios/Gregory Burgess concept plan.
 - 8.1.4. Advise the community of the winning design and the reasons for this decision, including the outcomes of the community consultation and how their feedback will be incorporated into the detailed design.
 - 8.1.5. Refer funding for the construction of the toilet facility, and separately, the associated landscaping concept plans, to the 09/10 capital works process for further consideration.