

**ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL
10 AUGUST 2009**

6.	ST KILDA FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S CENTRE PLAN
LOCATION/ADDRESS:	171 CHAPEL ST, ST KILDA
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:	SAM HEWETT, ACTING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, COMMUNITY ASSETS AND SERVICES
PREPARED BY:	JO SMALE, ACTING MANAGER, COMMUNITY SERVICES SHEENA FROST, SPECIAL PROJECTS COORDINATOR, COMMUNITY SERVICES
FILE NO.:	36/02/39
ATTACHMENTS:	1. ARCHITECT PLANS FOR ST KILDA FAMILY & CHILDREN'S CENTRE. 2. COUNCIL RESOLUTION MAY 2008 3. COUNCIL RESOLUTION DECEMBER 2008

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. This report summarises the consultation process through which the attached plans for the integrated family & children's centre in St Kilda have been achieved.
- 1.2. The plans as attached have been endorsed by the St Kilda Family & Children's Steering Committee appointed by Council in May 2008, and extended by Council in December 2008, to provide advice and guidance to Council on the design and configuration of the centre.
- 1.3. The design achieves high levels of environmental sustainability and creates at ground level, up to 116 place children's centre, and on the first floor three maternal and child health and family support consulting suites, two playgroup rooms and a large multi-purpose room for the delivery of 0-8 curriculum activities during the day, and for general community use after hours.
- 1.4. A competitive tender will be conducted to seek the most efficient delivery of this project by the end of 2010.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 2.1 Acknowledge the extensive consultations with key community, including children, and government stakeholders that has resulted in the plans produced to date.

- 2.2 Approve the commencement of a competitive tender process for the construction of the Centre once planning application processes have been completed.
- 2.3 Notwithstanding Council's agreement above, acknowledge that this report does not fetter or restrict the power or discretion of Council, as responsible authority for the Port Philip Planning Scheme, to make or impose requirements or conditions in connection with any use or development of the land on which the integrated family & children's centre is to be located, the granting of any planning approval relating to this project or, the approval or certification of any plans relating to this project.
- 2.4 Acknowledge the contribution of the St Kilda Family & Children's Centre Steering Committee in developing these plans and thank them for their continuing efforts.

3. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 3.1 In May 2008 Council resolved to proceed with plans for an integrated Family & Children's Centre at the site of the current St Kilda Children's Centre at 171 Chapel St.
- 3.2 The Centre was endorsed to provide more children's places, new maternal and child health (MCH) consulting suites, space for playgroups and other community and family support spaces.
- 3.3 A Steering Committee was established in Council's resolution of May 2008, to provide advice to council on design and configuration of this centre (Attachment 2). The committee membership was extended in Council's resolution of December 2008 (Attachment 3).
- 3.4 A public tender process for design services commenced in June 2008. The tender brief specified a building that delivers basement car parking as well as space for 75-120 long day care places, kindergarten, playgroups, consulting suites for MCH services, community meeting space, meeting and/or training rooms and family support services. It also specified a 6 star Greenstar rating was a requirement of the project, although acknowledging a tool through which to achieve that rating does not yet exist.
- 3.5 In October 2008 the Federal and State Governments' announced the project had successfully received \$1.6M and \$500,000 respectively in funding. The project met funding criteria as it increases childcare places in St Kilda and is an integrated service delivery model. The Federal Government funding is contingent upon delivering a minimum 50 additional childcare place, taking the number of childcare places to be accommodated on site from the current 50 places to a minimum of 100 places.
- 3.6 Following the tender selection process, Woodhead Architects was appointed to design the centre.
- 3.7 The Steering Committee first met in June 2008, and then commenced consultations in December 2008 through to June 2009.

- 3.8 The floor plans and design attached to this report were endorsed by the Steering Committee at its meeting of 4 June 2009.
- 3.9 Functionally, the design provides:
- 3.9.1 A children's centre will occupy the ground floor, capable of accommodating 116 licensed children's services places. It includes a family style kitchen and dining area, and north and south facing outdoor play areas.
- 3.9.2 The first floor will accommodate:
- a common reception/waiting area
 - three consulting suites for maternal and child health, family support and other related uses
 - two rooms for use by playgroup, which are licensed for 40 children's services places, and adjoining large outdoor play space
 - a meeting room for new parent groups
 - a large multi-purpose room internally connected to the children's centre down stairs, for curriculum activities for the 0-8 age group during the day and general community use after hours. There is also an adjoining outdoor play space.
- 3.9.3 The basement will accommodate parking for 49 cars and secure facilities for bikes and prams; shower and toilets facilities for bicycle commuters and water tank storage.

4. CONSULTATION AND STAKEHOLDERS

- 4.1 Consultation around the design and configuration of the building has taken place via the following: the steering committee, with children and visits to benchmark sites.
- 4.2 Steering Committee
- 4.2.1 A Steering Committee comprising key service users, councillors and officers was formed in May 2008, to provide advice to council on the design and configuration of the St Kilda Family & Children's Centre. The membership at May 2008 comprised representatives of: St Kilda Children's Centre staff and families; St Kilda Maternal and Child Health staff and families; St Kilda Playgroup Association; St Kilda Uniting Church; Port Phillip Community Group; St Kilda Primary School, the ward councillor and council officers.
- 4.2.2 In December 2008, the membership of the St Kilda Family & Children's Centre Steering Committee was extended to include a

representative from Childcare Access Port Phillip and a second councillor.

- 4.2.3 The Steering Committee met for the first time in June 2008 to provide a comprehensive briefing about the project, context, and processes that would follow throughout the project. This meeting was held prior to the appointment of an architect.
- 4.2.4 Following the appointment of the architect, dedicated consultations with each of the key service user groups were held in December 2008 with the architect team. Participants were: families from St Kilda Children's Centre, MCH and St Kilda Playgroup and staff of St Kilda Children's Centre and MCH. Childcare Access Port Phillip had a consultation meeting in January 2009 with the architect.
- 4.2.5 Based on these initial consultation sessions, and the feedback received from the children's consultations conducted in October 2008, Woodhead Architects compiled a comprehensive 'reverse brief' document of all feedback received. This was discussed at the January 2009 Steering Committee meeting, and further opportunity to provide additional feedback was provided.
- 4.2.6 The 'reverse brief' formed the basis of the first draft concept plan produced by Woodhead Architects for the February 2009 Steering Committee. At each subsequent meeting Steering Committee members were asked to seek feedback from their representative groups and provide it to the architects within a set time frame. The Steering Committee has seen a total of four design iterations, each incorporating feedback from Committee members.
- 4.2.7 A first concept, based on consultations with Steering Committee members, was prepared for the February 2009 Steering Committee meeting. This broad concept was over two levels, including: basement car park, ground level 116 place children's centre; three MCH consulting rooms, two playgroup rooms and a multi-purpose room on the first floor. It also presented a street entrance frontage to Carlisle St, a proposed entry to the carpark from Carlisle St and an interface with the St Kilda Primary School. This early concept, based as it was on key criteria identified by stakeholders, was endorsed by the Steering Committee for the architects to progress work on.
- 4.2.8 Key concerns that members raised, and been addressed through the design process, included:
- retaining the family feel of the children's centre whilst maximising the number of children's places
 - integrating services over two storeys
 - creating links with the primary school
 - access to the car park and entrance from Carlisle St
 - interaction with the neighbouring site, particularly with regard to the redevelopment plans for the Mission site

- location of toilets throughout the facility
- environmentally sustainable design and use of materials

4.3 Children

4.3.1 Children of St Kilda Children's Centre, St Kilda Primary School and St Kilda playgroup participated in consultations around the design of the new centre. Responses were asked to three queries: what do you like currently, what don't you like, and what would you change? This consultation was conducted over October 2008.

4.3.2 Themes that came through strongly from children's feedback was use of colour inside and out; improving the welcoming feel of the building; ensuring sensory experiences outdoors; retaining use of photos and pictures to add to the warmth of a building; and interesting outdoor surfaces and plantings.

4.4 Site visits

4.4.1 Architects and staff undertook site visits to Poets Grove, a council owned integrated family and children's centre; Treehouse Childcare, a multi-story children's centre; and Lady Gowrie's new centre in Docklands, an integrated family and children's centre located on the first floor of an urban office building to inform the design.

5. DISCUSSION

5.1 OPTIONS

5.1.1 The recommended option is to proceed to tender based on the endorsed plans attached.

5.1.2 Mechanisms will be built into the recommended option whereby respondents to the tender will be required to provide detailed costings that will allow council to consider further reductions, if budget constraints require it.

5.1.3 The recommended option has the advantage of putting the plans to market for actual costs. Council can determine the final scope of the centre once responses to the tender have been received.

5.1.4 An alternative option is to reduce the scope of the design prior to going to tender and testing the market. This will reduce functionality and the green star rating of the building and would no longer represent the view of the Steering Committee.

5.2 ALIGNMENT TO COUNCIL PLAN

5.2.1 The establishment of an integrated family & children's centre in St Kilda is consistent with 3.1.6 Ensure the quality and accessibility of children's services

5.2.2 Reducing water use via water collection, incorporating environmental design to optimize natural heating, lighting and cooling options and reducing reliance on mechanical interventions is achieved in the

proposed design, aligning the recommended option with 2.1 Reducing consumption and emissions.

5.3 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.3.1 Establishing integrated family & children's centres has been identified as a key action of Port Phillip's Municipal Early Years Plan (MEYP). The MEYP has identified six goals that support the establishment of these facilities - improved child development and wellbeing, promote a 'whole of child' perspective, increase children's participation, adopt a fully integrated approach, work in partnership and building on research evidence
- 5.3.2 The designs attached to the recommended option exceed the 2006 Sustainable Design Policy. Both designs aim to achieve a rating of 5 star or equivalent, consistent with the leadership position Council aspires to achieve in environmentally sustainable design and policy commitments as expressed in the:
- Council Plan 2009 (Taking action on climate change)
 - Toward Zero Sustainable Environmental Strategy policy, adopted in June 2007.
- 5.3.3 The recommended option is consistent with the Council's Community Hubs Policy in 2004 which provides the framework for the planning and delivery of integrated family and children's services models for Port Phillip.
- 5.3.4 The recommended option is consistent with research evidence about the importance of the early years and the benefits of integrated service planning and provision, and a range of state and federal government strategies to improve outcomes for children and their families e.g. the State Government's Department of Education and Early Childhood Development 'Blueprint for Early Childhood Development and School Reform' and the national 'Early Years Learning Framework for Australia'.

5.4 FINANCE / RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.4.1 A quantity surveyor has provided a cost estimate as at June 2009. The estimate excludes soil remediation, playgrounds and furnishings.
- 5.4.2 Council has received \$1.6M from the Federal Government to develop a family & children's centre which will increase childcare places in Port Phillip and \$500,000 from the State Government to develop this centre as an integrated facility.
- 5.4.3 Council's has forecast its commitment to this project over three financial years (commencing 08/09).
- 5.4.4 The federal funding is contingent on the Centre achieving, as a minimum, an increase of 50 children's places. Therefore a minimum of 100 children's places must be delivered on site to satisfy the federal government's funding requirements.

5.5 LEGAL & RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 5.5.1 The attached designs meet licensing requirements of the Children's Services Regulations 2009. Throughout the design process, the licensing requirements have taken precedence over all other requests, to ensure the functional requirements of the building can be achieved.
- 5.5.2 Any future changes to the Children's Services Regulations 2009 may have an impact on the total number of children's services places that can be accommodated on the site.

6. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

6.1 TIMELINE

- 6.1.1 Planning application due to be determined in September 2009.
- 6.1.2 Public tender process for the construction of the Centre to commence at the end of September 2009 subject to approval in planning process. A tender evaluation panel has already been appointed and documentation in preparation for this stage of the project has commenced.
- 6.1.3 Tender for the construction of the Centre to be awarded prior to end of calendar year with a view to commencing construction in early 2010.

6.2 COMMUNICATION

- 6.2.1 Council is fulfilling its commitment to increasing the number of childcare places in the city
- 6.2.2 Council is seeking to create a facility that sets benchmarks in integrated family & children's services delivery and environmental design.