

**ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL
22 FEBRUARY 2010**

7	LIARDET ST FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S CENTRE DESIGN PLANS
LOCATION/ADDRESS:	81-85 LIARDET ST, PORT MELBOURNE
GENERAL MANAGER:	VANDA IACONESE, CULTURAL AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENTNAME
PREPARED BY:	CHRIS PIKE, MANAGER FAMILY YOUTH AND CHILDREN SHEENA FROST, PROJECTS COORDINATOR
FILE NO.:	36/02/40
ATTACHMENTS:	1. CONCEPT DESIGN

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 Council's plans to build a new family and children's centre in Port Melbourne have been progressing more slowly than anticipated.
- 1.2 This report summarises the progress of the project and provides preliminary design plans for the centre.
- 1.3 The attached plans are based on a concept endorsed by the Liardet Street Family and Children's Centre Steering Committee at its meeting on 10 December 2009, and recommended by the Project Control Group at its meeting on 21 December 2009.
- 1.4 The preferred design achieves the objectives of increasing children's services places in the city and integrating early years services, including playgroups, kindergarten, long day care and maternal and child health services within a budget of \$5.54M.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 2.1 Proceeds to develop a detailed design of the Liardet Street Family and Children's Centre based on the concept design endorsed by the Liardet Street Family and Children's Centre Steering Committee and recommended by the Project Control Group.
- 2.2 Demolish all existing buildings on the site of the proposed Liardet Street Family and Children's Centre to make way for the new construction.

- 2.3 Lodges an application for a town planning permit for the development and use of a Family and Children's Centre at 81-85 Liardet Street, Port Melbourne once the detailed design of the centre has been endorsed by the Liardet Street Family and Children's Centre Steering Committee and approved by the Project Control Group.
- 2.4 Commences a competitive tender process for the construction of the Liardet Street Family and Children's Centre once a development permit has been issued.
- 2.5 Notwithstanding Council's agreement above, acknowledges 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.
- 2.6 Acknowledges the contribution-to-date of the Liardet Street Family & Children's Centre Steering Committee in developing the concept plan for the centre and thanks its members for their efforts.

3. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 3.1 The City of Port Phillip (CoPP), in partnership with the federal and Victorian governments has agreed to construct a new family and children's centre on land comprising approximately 3,700 sq m at the corner of Esplanade West and Liardet Street in Port Melbourne.
- 3.2 The construction of the Liardet Street Family and Children's Centre will provide space for 135 licensed children's places (50 of which are new), comprising kindergarten, long day and playgroup places; maternal and child health consulting suites; and room for playgroups to meet (with after hours use potential).
- 3.3 The project is overseen by a Project Control Group consisting of: Council's nominated councillors, the General Manager of Cultural and Community Development, the Manager of Family, Youth and Children and the Manager, Property Services. The Project Control Group is advised by a steering committee.
- 3.4 The steering committee was formed in June 2008 to inform the design and configuration of the Liardet St Family & Children's Centre. Membership comprised representatives from Lady Forster Kindergarten (LFK), Albert Park College Childcare (APCCC), Port Melbourne Rostered Playgroup, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD), the ward councillor and council officers (e.g. Maternal and Child Health Nurses).
- 3.5 In December 2008 Council resolved to expand the committee to include an additional councillor and a representative from Childcare Access Port Phillip. It was further expanded by Council resolution in June 2009 to include two community representatives.
- 3.6 The project has experienced a number of delays since its inception.

Status of Crown Land

- 3.7 Concern over the status of the Crown Land on which the centre is to be located led to delays in commencing consultation about the design of the new centre.
- 3.8 In its resolution of 27 April 2009 Council sought Committee of Management status for the land on which Lady Forster Kindergarten was located.
- 3.9 In May 2009 the State Government appointed CoPP as the Committee of Management for the two parcels of Crown Land on which LFK is located.
- 3.10 This was conditional upon engaging with LFK, Albert Park College Childcare Centre, the local community and encouraging their participation in the planning and design of the new centre to be located on the land. The Federal Government was also invited to nominate a representative on the Liardet St Family & Children's Centre Steering Committee.

Victorian Heritage Register

- 3.11 In June 2009, Council was informed the LFK building had been nominated for the Victorian Heritage Register. Inclusion on the register would have meant the LFK building would have to be retained on site.
- 3.12 The Heritage Council made its recommendation in September 2009 to not include the LFK building on the Victorian Heritage Register.
- 3.13 The concept design for the Liardet St Family & Children's Centre has been informed through consultation with the Steering Committee. It has met seven times since its formation in July 2008, five of which have occurred since July 2009.

LFK building

- 3.14 Between July and September 2009 the Steering Committee considered the condition of the LFK building and the merits of retaining the building or otherwise as part of the design solution for the site (pending Heritage Council decision).
- 3.15 A comprehensive building and services condition audit was tabled to the Committee at its meeting in July 2009. The building and services report identified significant urgent safety issues requiring further investigation. Council completed immediate replacement of all windows with safety glass, while further works were not possible due to the presence of asbestos throughout the building.
- 3.16 The Steering Committee had requested additional structural reports so the status of piles, which form the foundations of the building, could be determined.
- 3.17 Further advice was provided to the Committee at its meeting on 30 September indicating there was significant rot and decay to the existing LFK building.
- 3.18 At the 30 September 2009 meeting, the Steering Committee determined that demolition of the building would be required as retention was not feasible.

Design work would progress on the basis of a new building on the site and demolition of all other existing buildings across the site.

Memorandum of Understanding

3.19 In September 2009 a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed between CoPP, LFK and APCCC committing the signatories to participating in the design of the new centre.

Concept design

3.20 Since the MOU was signed by all parties, the Steering Committee has achieved the following:

3.20.1 Individual consultations with all members of the Steering Committee and the architect to inform the concept design

3.20.2 Identification of a number of design options, the merits of which have been subject to debate by members of the committee.

3.20.3 The endorsement of a preferred concept design at its meeting in December 2009.

3.21 All options considered by the Committee meet the requirements of providing a permanent home for APCCC, new accommodation for LFK, the provision of 50 additional children's services spaces, an integrated setting for playgroups and maternal and child health services, and the provision of adequate parking. Not all options would fall within the budget allocation.

4 CONSULTATION AND STAKEHOLDERS

4.1 The design and configuration of the concept design has been developed in close consultation with the following:

4.1.1 Liardet Street Family & Children's Centre Project Control Group.

4.1.2 Liardet Street Family & Children's Centre Steering Committee

4.1.3 Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

4.1.4 Federal Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

4.1.5 Council's traffic engineers

5 DISCUSSION

5.1 OPTIONS

5.1.1 The options considered by the Steering Committee were:

Option	Features	Committee decision/reasons
1	<p>Single storey facility accommodating:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ APCCC (south facing), LFK (north facing) and 50 additional places ○ Playgroup room ○ Multi-purpose room ○ Three MCH suites ○ Common reception and entry ○ Shared staff spaces <p>Parking solution:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increased precinct parking via reconfiguration of Esplanade West and Dow Streets. ○ Introducing time restrictions outside entrance on Liardet St. 	<p>ENDORSED</p> <p>Design accommodates needs</p> <p>Is based on principle of equal outdoor space allocations per child to allow for future flexibility</p> <p>Over budget at \$4.3M.</p>
1a	<p>As per Option 1, but with APCCC north facing and LFK south facing</p>	<p>NOT ENDORSED</p> <p>Location of the services at opposite aspects to original design led to poor design outcomes</p>
2	<p>As per Option 1 except</p> <p>Parking Solution:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ On site car parking for 17 cars 	<p>NOT ENDORSED</p> <p>On site car parking solution led to outdoor space allocation on minimum regulations only (ie: 7sqm/child).</p> <p>Unanimously considered a poor design outcome by the Committee and eliminated from consideration at the November 2009 meeting</p>
3	<p>Two storey facility accommodating:</p>	<p>NOT ENDORSED</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Children’s services (APCCC, LFK and additional places) at ground level ○ Common entry and reception at ground level ○ Staff services at ground level ○ MCH and playgroups on second floor <p>Parking solution:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increased precinct parking via reconfiguration of Esplanade West and Dow Streets. ○ Introducing time restrictions outside entrance on Liardet St. 	<p>Estimated at a minimum \$4.6M construction, therefore over budget.</p> <p>No additional funds are available.</p>
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5.1.2 The recommended option is to proceed with Option 1, the endorsed concept of the Steering Committee, but within a \$4.0M construction budget. This achieves a net increase in the parking pool in the Port Melbourne precinct, and an increase in children’s services places in an integrated setting

5.1.3 Council can proceed to detailed design on any of the options noted above, however only Option 1 has been endorsed by the Steering Committee. Option 1a and Option 2 are within the project budget, but Option 3 will not be achieved within the project budget.

5.1.4 The parking solution has been informed by advice from Council’s traffic engineers and independent traffic consultants. It achieves an increase in the parking available in the precinct, while ensuring the maximum amount of outdoor play space is available for children’s services at the site.

5.1.5 The parking solution also assumes introduction of time restrictions along Liardet St, to facilitate short-term drop off and pick up points for families using children’s services at the Centre.

5.1.6 The parking solution has also been informed by ongoing works within the Port Melbourne area that will increase the parking availability, namely:

5.1.6.1 Creation of 12 new spaces by June 2010 due to kerb renewal on Liardet St, between Notts and Princes St.

5.2 ALIGNMENT TO COUNCIL PLAN

5.2.1 The establishment of an integrated family & children’s centre in Liardet St is consistent with 3.1.6 *Ensure the quality and accessibility of children’s services.*

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 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.
- 5.3.3 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 The overall project budget is \$5.54M. Funding sources are \$1.6M from the federal government, \$1.2M from the state government and \$2.74M from Council.
- 5.4.2 This will meet all of Council's planning, design, construction and finishing costs.
- 5.4.3 The budget provides contingencies for soil remediation and the relocation of LFK services during the construction period.
- 5.4.4 Council has forecast its commitment to this project over three financial years (commencing 08/09). This will need to be revised in light of the aforementioned delays.

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.
- 5.5.3 Pending the outcome of a site assessment (i.e. soil testing) the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has suggested no Environmental Audit is necessary at this stage. Should the EPA alter its position in light of the site assessment, the Project Control Group will reconsider the matter.

6. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

6.1 TIMELINE

- 6.1.1 February 2010 Commence detailed design works and consultations with user groups. Communication of plans to community.
- 6.1.2 April 2010: Planning permit application
- 6.1.3 August 2010: Construction tender advertised.(pending permit approval)
- 6.1.4 January 2011: Demolition and construction to commence.

6.2 COMMUNICATION

- 6.2.1 Council will place signage and information boards on-site to inform the local community about the proposed development, as well as ensure the website is updated and use other opportunities to keep the community informed.
- 6.2.2 Council's key messages are that:
 - 6.2.2.1 Council is delivering its promise to provide high quality care and education for children and families
 - 6.2.2.2 The new centre will provide integrated family services for the first eight years of a child's life
 - 6.2.2.3 Three levels of government working together to improve child care services - \$1.6M fed; \$1.2M state; \$2.74M local
 - 6.2.2.4 Council is taking a coordinated approach to parking in the area and increasing parking by 17 spaces in addition to other precinct wide improvements.

7. OFFICER DIRECT OR INDIRECT INTEREST

- 7.1 No officers involved in the preparation of this report have any direct or indirect interest in the matter.