



Draft Sydenham Park Master Plan Addendum Update Report 2021

Prepared by Pollen Studio for Brimbank City Council
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POLLEN

1.1 Sydenham Park Investigations and Feasibility Studies

Based on Council’s resolutions from the Council Meeting on 17 March 2020, Council officers commissioned the following studies for Sydenham Park:

- Cultural Heritage Management Plan Summary Report
- Robertson’s Homestead Feasibility Study
- Flora and Fauna Assessment
- Park Access Infrastructure Design

The following highlights the outcomes of each report and the impacts on the Sydenham Park Master Plan (SPMP) that have been documented in the draft Sydenham Park Master Plan Addendum Update 2021 (refer Figure 1).

Cultural Heritage Management Plan Summary Report (CHMP)

The establishment of a CHMP involves three phases of assessment. For the proposed works associated with a new Shared User Path (SUP) and upgrade to existing paths without sub-surface impact, a Desktop and Standard Assessment has been undertaken for the CHMP. Future works will require additional Standard and Complex Assessment subject to the extent of ground disturbance.

The Desktop Assessment revealed 16 sites were registered with the Victoria Aboriginal Heritage Register (VAHR). The Standard Assessment was completed by traversing Sydenham Park on foot to complete a full survey coverage of the Activity Area. Field notes recorded ground conditions, the vegetation type, landform and details of areas of archaeological potential for Aboriginal cultural heritage.

Previously identified Aboriginal places and the high amount of surface artefacts indicate that Sydenham Park is highly sensitive. Artefacts in general were located in areas of higher visibility.

A site inspection took place with the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrng Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation as they are the Registered Aboriginal Party for this site. The outcome of this meeting was an agreement on the path alignment, lookout location and construction methodologies.

The CHMP recommends to the VAHR that Sydenham Park be considered as a multi-component Aboriginal Place.

Robertson’s Homestead Feasibility Study (RHFS)

Robertson’s Homestead is a regionally significant c.1860 bluestone house located within Sydenham Park to the north of the Golf Course. The Homestead and its curtilage are architecturally and historically significant. The Homestead has remained unoccupied for approximately twenty years and requires structural remediation and conservation works to preserve it and prevent further deterioration.

The RHFS has investigated the condition of the Homestead and what is required to restore the Homestead either in its current location or relocated to another site within Sydenham Park as highlighted as an option in the SPMP. Three options have been detailed as follows:

1. Restoration only in current location
2. Restoration and possible adaptive reuse in current location
3. Restoration in current location followed by relocation, if required.

The RHFS recommends Option 2 for Robertson’s Homestead to retain the Homestead in its current location as a landmark structure. However, further investigation is required to understand possibilities of adaptive reuse subject to current and future planning controls.

The RHFS estimates the cost to restore Robertson’s Homestead would be approximately \$1,000,000 with any adaptive reuse costing an extra \$400,000- \$600,000. Any adaptive reuse will likely need to include baffled lighting to achieve Melbourne Airport’s lighting requirements and to include building practices for acoustic mitigation.

As mentioned above, any works to the Homestead will need to comply with current and future planning controls and other regulatory frameworks including:

- Cultural Heritage Management Plan.
- National Construction Code.
- Designated Bushfire Prone Area.
- National Airport Safeguarding Framework.

In addition, any impact on native vegetation will need to comply with current and future planning scheme controls.

The proposed new Shared User Path will provide a connection to the Homestead and an interpretive sign is planned to allow park users to understand the historical significance of Robertson’s Homestead.

Flora and Fauna Assessment (FFA)

The FFA considers that Sydenham Park is an important local and regional asset that supports a range of significant flora, fauna and habitat values. In the context of the area where substantial native vegetation remnants are rare, in spite of the historic degree of modification and present levels of disturbance, this park currently offers good biodiversity values and this can be greatly improved with continued strategic planning and management. A broad range of values was assessed, with a focus on identifying listed and protected fauna and ecosystems within the park. The report also acknowledges the areas regional importance as a connection in the landscape, particularly along the waterways, and the value of this for the more ‘common’ species.

Sydenham Park also supports or provides habitat for a number of threatened and regionally significant fauna species with the potential for other species either migrating from surrounding areas or through reintroductions to permanently reside on the land. Similarly, to the neighbouring Organ Pipes National Park, with enhancement of key habitats, Sydenham Park has the potential to support sustainable populations of Krefft’s (Sugar) Gliders, a range of micro bats and Striped Legless Lizards (through translocation).

FFA recommends that further targeted surveys be considered to understand the extent of biodiveristy at Sydenham Park and to offer education and training opportunity for stakeholders to continue vital flora and fauna assessment.

Any future works to occur at Syden ham Park will require a Planning Permit due to the likely impact on native vegetation and this will be referred to DELWP. As such, a site inspection took place with DELWP officers, in advance of the Planning Permit phase for path works, to discuss the works and associated elements, such as the location of the proposed lookout. The feedback received has been incorporated in to the design of a new path network.

Park Access Infrastructure Design

A new Shared User Path access alignment and modifications to the exiting paths have been designed. The design process sought feedback from Wurundjeri Woi-wurrng Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation, DELWP and Council staff. A key direction from this engagement sought a ‘no dig’ approach to any works associated with path access to avoid damage to significant flora and fauna habitat and existing artefacts. This was considered and is seen as possible and was adopted in to the design and construction of the new path network.

As such, the new Shared User Path alignment has been supported by all stakeholders and will be constructed with granitic sand placed on top of existing ground levels. A new escarpment lookout will be built on top of the exiting landscape and provide spectacular views along the Jackson Creek valley. All improvements to existing paths that lead into the river valley will be on top up of existing levels to make them even. A new path is proposed at the confluence of the Maribyrnong River to create a loop for walkers. Granitic sand will be placed on existing ground once the area is sprayed.

It is proposed to continue to allow cars to park at the Kings Road Interchange where community members can walk from here using the new Shared User Path or alternatively, when the gate is open at the Kings Road interchange, providing access to the Golf Course car park. It is proposed to close Farr Parkway to cars just past the pedestrian access to the Golf Course Driving Range to create a Shared User Zone for the remainder of Farr Parkway. Cycling and walking will be allowed in addition to Council maintenance staff and members of the Keilor and District Model Aircraft Society. Car parking will be signed posted at both locations.

The next step for Park Access Infrastructure is to apply for a planning permit, which has commenced and is anticipated to be completed in 2022. Following this, tender documents will be prepared for advertising with the aim to begin construction around mid-2022 and complete path works by the end of 2022. The installation of paths may need to be staged depending on available budget and tender prices.

1.2 Sydenham Park Master Plan 2020 - Proposed Addendum Updates

As a result of the above studies, an update to the SPMP has been prepared as a Draft Sydenham Park Master Plan Addendum Update Report 2021 (refer Figure 1). The main changes include:

- Final layout of walking trails that includes a new Shared User Path (shown in red) that creates a circuit from Kings Road Interchange in to Sydenham Park that includes a loop around Robertson’s Homestead and back to Kings Road via the existing road alignment.
- Upgraded existing paths (shown in blue) to enable walking in to the river valley including the confluence of the Maribyrnong River. Includes a new loop at the confluence of the Maribyrnong River
- Proposed locations for new lookout, seating, signs, gates, fencing, bins and drinking fountain.
- ‘Potential Future Sports Field Expansion’ component within the existing Golf Course to be removed as no longer required given Council was not successful in its Expression of Interest for the Home of Football (Matildas) Bid and the area proposed for the replacement golf holes would not be suitable given the high level of artefacts and biodiversity.
- ‘Possible Future Sports Field Expansion’ component proposed to the west of Kings Road to be removed due to (1) the alignment of the Shared User Path through this area, which was chosen to limit its environmental impact while providing the best connection to the Kings Road Shared User Path, and (2) the majority of this area is affected by the Melbourne Airport contours in relation to Lighting Distractions which may impact on lighting provision for future sports facilities, and (3) this this area is considered more appropriate as a potential revegetation zone for grassland species. This revegetation is seen as a crucial component of improving biodiversity in Sydenham Park in the long term by creating a new seed source. The seeds produced will be used for propagation of new grassland species for use in revegetation works across Sydenham Park. Extent and timeframes of grassland restoration will be considered by Council as part of future Annual Budget processes.
- ‘Potential Commercial Opportunity’ component also proposed to the west of Kings Road to be removed, as this area is considered more appropriate as a potential revegetation zone for grassland species, as per the above dot point.

The studies discussed above and the Draft Sydenham Park Master Plan Addendum Update Report 2021 have provided Council with the necessary framework to continue working towards creating Sydenham Park as an accessible open space destination. As mentioned above, work is ongoing in order to commence on-site works to build a new access path in 2022.

Further consideration in relation to the funding for restoration works and possible future use for Robertson’s Homestead and feasibility analysis in relation to future sporting facilities will be considered by Council as part of future Annual Budget processes.



Figure 1. Draft Sydenham Park Master Plan Addendum Update 2021.
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- Study Area
- Significant trees to be retained and protected
- Existing trees to be retained and protected
- Significant vegetation to be retained and protected
- Existing access road
- Existing concrete path
- Proposed 3m wide shared use and vehicle maintenance path - cement stabilized beige dromana toppings
- Proposed 2.5m wide shared use and vehicle maintenance path with channel edges - compacted granitic sand with scattered bluestone aggregate
- Proposed bitumen shared zone
- Existing fence to be retained and protected
- Existing fence to be repaired
- Proposed fence
- Proposed public gate entry
- Proposed maintenance gate
- Future playground to be constructed at this location above ground. Subject to detailed design by others
- Proposed drinking fountain / picnic table / bench seat
- Proposed wayfinding / information signage / rubbish collection point
- Existing toilet facility
- Proposed Council / Golf Course Depot location
- Restoration zone
- Proposed Grassland
- Proposed Community & Sports Hub
- Existing Golf Course / Golf Course Driving Range
- Existing golf course layout to be retained
- Senior Oval 165m x 135m with 5m run-off
- Rectangle pitch (soccer/rugby)
- Stormwater Harvesting Basin

Notes:

- Refer to 'Sydenham Park Trails Landscape Design' (August 2021) for detailed design of Sydenham Park Walking Trails undertaken by Brimbank City Council.
- Location of Robertson's Homestead to be retained as recommended. Refer to 'Robertson's Homestead Feasibility Study' (August 2021) by RBA Architects + Conservation Consultants, for further detail and recommendations.
- All works to be undertaken in accordance with recommendations to avoid impacts to adjacent cultural heritage, flora and fauna sites as documented within 'Flora and Fauna Assessment - Sydenham Park, Keilor North - Final Report' (June 2021) by Wildlife & Ecology and 'Restoration Plan for Sydenham Park Reserve' (July 2021) by TREC Land Services.