



general
purpose
committee

2
section

infrastructure

GENERAL PURPOSE COMMITTEE - INFRASTRUCTURE

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INFRASTRUCTURE

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ITEM: 47 **Wilberforce School of Arts**

FILE NUMBER: P2355/380, GC318/002, GH001/009/ENG/INE25NBX.E01

PREVIOUS ITEM: 45, GPC Section 2 - Infrastructure (27.04.1999)

REPORT:

At the Ordinary Meeting of Council held on 11 May, 1999 it was resolved that the following report be deferred to the next General Purpose Committee Meeting.

As Council is aware there has been numerous reports submitted for consideration regarding the future of the Wilberforce School of Arts as well as representation from interested members of the community who wish to have the hall rehabilitated. Council at its meeting of 11 August 1998 resolved that:

- 1 A discussion document be distributed to the residents of the area in relation to the three options outlined to provide a community hall for Wilberforce, ie the rehabilitation of the existing School of Arts, utilisation of the Wilberforce School Hall and Construction of a new hall at the intersection of King Road and William Street. Following a survey/meetings to be held and be further reported.
- 2 The Woodland Park area be considered in investigations and discussions with the residents.
- 3 The survey be formulated in conjunction with the Management Committee.

The discussion document was distributed to the residents of Wilberforce and Ebenezer outlining the three options currently available to provide a community hall for Wilberforce. The options outlined were the rehabilitation of the existing School of Arts, the construction of a new community centre at the intersection of William Street and King Road and the construction of a new community centre at Woodlands Park. The option regarding the Wilberforce School Hall was removed from the survey at the request of the Principal of Wilberforce Public School. One thousand four hundred and twenty five (1,425) survey forms were distributed, 330 of those to the Ebenezer residents and 1,095 to the residents of Wilberforce.

Results of Survey

Survey Forms Distributed 1425

Wilberforce: 1095				Ebenezer: 330			
Rehabilitate School of Arts	New Centre	Woodlands	Other	Rehabilitate School of Arts	New Centre	Woodlands	Other
112	52	3	5	35	26	3	2

There were 238 responses to the survey. Of those 147 (62%) indicated a preference to have the School of Arts restarted whilst 78 (38%) indicated their preference for a new Community Hall at the intersection of William Street and King Road.

In terms of the population surveyed (1425) this equates to 10.3% preferring restoration of the School of Arts and 5.5% preferring a new hall at the intersection of William Street and King Road. It is felt that the result of the survey is not conclusive in terms of the needs of the community and as such further consideration needs to be given to the costs/benefits of both projects to the community as a whole.

The proposed community facility at Wilberforce and the history of the Wilberforce School of Arts has been reviewed by the Manager Community Services and Social Planning and his report is included in full for consideration.

In terms of rehabilitation of the existing School of Arts it was reported that the estimated costs would be in the vicinity of \$180,000 (one hundred and eighty thousand dollars). This is an estimated figure, with a firm figure only being obtained by calling tenders for the works. There has been some parallels drawn with the rehabilitation of the Maraylya Hall which cost \$130,000 (one hundred and thirty thousand dollars). The major difference between these two halls is that Wilberforce is 50% larger and unlike Maraylya Hall would need extensive works undertaken on the toilet facilities. Based on the works carried out at Maraylya Hall on cost per square metre and including the additional amenities and foundation work required, the cost could increase substantially.

It was originally stated that car parking could be provided on site at a cost of \$35,000 (thirty five thousand dollars). It was anticipated at that stage that around 10 vehicles could be accommodated on site. It has since been ascertained that the septic tank, a 19 metre long transpiration bed for the septic tank a 12 metre long transpiration bed for stormwater runoff from the roof are both located diagonally across the rear of the property which would preclude the use of this area for parking. A solution to this problem which would be more environmentally attractive would be to remove the septic system and install a small pump which could pump the sewage to the treatment facility located at the Heritage Farm on the end of Rose Street which would cost \$25,000 (twenty five thousand dollars). This would then enable the construction of the car park and access along the side of the building from Putty Road. It is also noted that this access width is less than the minimum required for development by Council's Parking Policy due to the location of the men's toilets and stairway.

Estimated Costs

Rehabilitation of Wilberforce School of Arts

Building Works	-	\$180,000
Sewage Disposal	-	\$25,000
Car Parking	-	\$35,000
 Cost	-	 \$240,000

Construction of new community Centre at the intersection of William Street and King Road

Stage I - \$350,000

In summary the survey indicates that whilst (10.3%) of the residents surveyed wish to have the existing School of Arts rehabilitated, (5.5%) of those surveyed wish to have a new facility built at the intersection of William Street and King Road. The results of the survey in terms of the total population which would access either the existing School of Arts or the proposed community centre does not give a firm direction for Council to follow. The report regarding a community facility at Wilberforce and the significant costs to rehabilitate the existing School of Arts do indicate that the provision of a new facility in the long term would be a much more cost effective solution to the provision of community facilities at Wilberforce.

The current site is zoned residential and it is suggested that it should be rezoned to Business General and sold with the proceeds of the sale being utilised in the provision of a new community centre.

Report on Community Facility, Wilberforce - Manager Community and Social Policy Planning

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the requirement for a community facility within the township of Wilberforce. I have read the file and reports relating to the history and recent developments surrounding the Wilberforce School of Arts and have reviewed the site and floor plan of this building.

It appears that the vigorous community debate about options for a community facility in Wilberforce and/or the restoration of the School of Arts has been considered as an *either/or* alternative - i.e. that Council either construct a new community facility or restore the School of Arts building to function as a community facility. This is based on the assumption that the School of Arts has the capacity to function as a modern community facility. For a number of reasons (detailed below) this is not the case. While the School of Arts could perhaps be restored as a community hall (subject to substantial building modification work), the limitations of its location, floor plan, and outside environs suggest that it will **not** have the capacity to adequately function as an accessible and multi-purpose community facility.

It is obvious that the School of Arts building has significant social and heritage significance for some residents of Wilberforce. The many letters written to Council favouring the restoration of the School of Arts, are concerned to maintain its function as a community hall which could also be made available for other community uses. Under this approach the School of Arts would primarily function as a community hall, but, in the interests of increasing its usage and generating income for its upkeep, it would be made available to other community groups to use. The viability of this approach is dependent on the extent to which the School of Arts could be made suitable for use by community groups to deliver a range of community services and programs i.e. immunisation clinics, before and after school care, vacation care, youth programs, outreach TAFE classes etc.

There is a danger that given the limitations of the building and the site the restoration of the School of Arts *will not address the need for an accessible, multi-purpose community facility*. In effect, despite the allocation of funds to restore the School of Arts, Council may still be required to

construct a purpose-built community facility which can adequately accommodate the range of community services and programs ordinarily provided from such a facility.

At best the restoration of the School of Arts will provide the residents of Wilberforce with access to a community hall which was designed in the 1930s. While such a hall may be aesthetically pleasing and socially significant, there is no guarantee that there is sufficient demand within the Wilberforce District to ensure the regular use of a community hall - given the proximity of Wilberforce to more modern facilities of this kind in Windsor.

Limitations of the use of the Wilberforce School of Arts as a community facility.

1. Location - The School of Arts is divorced from the main township area of Wilberforce. It is generally accepted that the most suitable location for a community facility is adjacent to an existing commercial and community precinct. Such a location maximises the potential for integrated community service provision, and the 'casual' use of facilities by passing residents. In addition, the School of Arts is separated from the shopping centre, pre-school and primary school by the Putty Road which will pose a safety risk to children and less-mobile residents required to negotiate this heavily trafficked thoroughfare to access the School of Arts.
2. Building Layout - The floor plan of the School of Arts is incompatible with generally accepted design standards for a multi-use community facility. Ideally, a well designed community facility should incorporate the following;
 - off-street parking;
 - a site which provides for an accessible path of travel from parking area to building entrances;
 - a level site which would provide easy access to all entrances and exits;
 - provision for a substantial fenced children's playground and recreation area;
 - a design which allows for multiple uses - which ideally would include provision for a meeting room, a separate room suitable for outreach service provision by allied health professionals, an office to accommodate a community worker, provision for ample storage space including an external store, wheelchair accessible toilets and nappy changing facilities, a large and centrally located kitchen area, covered verandah areas, and a hall area which can be divided to enable concurrent usage by different groups.
 - be constructed of robust building materials requiring minimum maintenance and repair.

Without substantial modification, which would essentially require the complete redesign and outfitting of the building, the School of Arts is unlikely to meet this criteria. Indeed some aspects of the building - the stage area, raised floor level, lack of on-site car parking - pose a substantial safety risk (particularly to young children) while the size of the hall and the lack of purpose built storage and amenity rooms would impose substantial constraints on groups seeking to use this facility.

3. Accessibility - Community facilities should be easily accessible to all members of the community. Australian Standards (1428.1, 1428.2, 1428.3) specify that public buildings should provide for one continuous accessible path connecting all facilities and spaces and that all entry and exit points should ideally be wheelchair accessible. The School of Arts does not meet the intent of this requirement, indeed a person with a disability using the facility could be placed at significant risk given that conceivably only one entrance to the building could be made wheelchair accessible (other entrances would require the installation of substantial ramps) - in the event of an emergency a person with a disability may not be able to safely exit the building.

Conclusion

In summary, the restoration of the School of Arts building will not necessarily provide for either an accessible and multi-use community facility, or a community hall that could generate sufficient income for its maintenance and upkeep. Funds for the development of community facilities are limited and it would therefore be difficult, from a Community Services perspective, to justify the costs of restoring the School of Arts building given the probability that such an undertaking would at best deliver only limited benefits to the community and/or be of advantage to relatively small number of residents.

The question of the social and heritage significance of the School of Arts should be separated from a consideration of its potential role as a viable and productive community services outlet. In the long-term, the preservation of the Wilberforce School of Arts is probably dependent on identifying a commercial use for this building.

RECOMMENDATION:

That:

- 1 Council call for expressions of interest in the land and building from interested parties to include proposed future uses that may require a site specific local environmental plan for those uses.
- 2 Plans and specifications complete with estimate of cost be prepared for the construction of a new community building at the intersection of William Street and King Road, Wilberforce.

ATTACHMENTS:

There are no supporting documents for this report.

Oooo END OF ITEM 47 Oooo

ITEM: 48 **Currency Creek Native Vegetation Management Plan****FILE NUMBER:** GR060/082/ENG/INE25NBX.E03**PREVIOUS ITEM:** 28, GPC Section 2 - Infrastructure (26.05.1998)

REPORT:

The Currency Creek Native Vegetation Management Plan was a project jointly funded by Hawkesbury City Council and the Middle Nepean Hawkesbury Catchment Management Committee (MNHCMC) under the National Landcare Program. The project's main aim was to prepare realistic management strategies for remnant vegetation in the Currency Creek catchment. Its objectives include the preparation of a comprehensive vegetation survey, wide ranging community consultation, and ultimately, strategies for the management of remnant vegetation areas.

The plan addresses both public and private land holdings, and provides identification of, and recommendation for, opportunities to protect and conserve remnant vegetation resources within the catchment. It includes a summary of strategies, including problems, effects, and possible solutions, to achieve objectives of native vegetation management. An action plan is included to prioritise the activities needed to manage native vegetation efficiently.

The plan was undertaken by environmental consultants, with the direction and co-ordination of the project carried out in conjunction with MNHCMC and Currency Creek Landcare Group.

The plan was presented to Council at its meeting on 9 June 1998. At this meeting Council resolved that the plan be placed on exhibition for public comment. The plan was on exhibition for a period of three months, ending in October 1998. Copies of the plan were forwarded to all interested parties and relevant organisations, as well as being available for review and purchase at the Council offices. The only submission received during this time was from Fire Control, who recognised the recommendation of including ecological principles in hazard reduction assessment, but stated that "from time to time there will be areas of fuel build up that will need to be addressed". These comments were reviewed, however the existing legislative framework under which hazard reductions are carried out negates the need for this issue to be integrated into the plan.

During 1998, Council was successful in obtaining a grant from the Natural Heritage Trust to assist in the promotion and increased awareness of the plan and its strategies. The consultants that undertook the original plan are currently developing information sheets and promotional material to assist in this aim.

It is recommended that the summary of strategies be adopted in principle and then a report be prepared for the Council advising of costs, implications for private and public lands and any other reserves required.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Currency Creek Native Vegetation Management Plan strategies be adopted in principle with a further report regarding costs and consequences.

ATTACHMENTS:

AT-1 Summary of Strategies

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ITEM: 49 **Request For Council To Become Trust Manager Of New Crown Reserve, Springwood Road, Yarramundi - Lots 188-191 DP 803295, Lot 90 DP 786549, Portions 57 and 293 in Parish Nepean, County Cook**

FILE NUMBER: P825/105 & P825/130/ENG/INE25NBX.E04

REPORT:

The Department of Land and Water Conservation (DLWC) have recently made an approach to Council in relation to several parcels of land on Springwood Road, Yarramundi. The two portions listed are already Crown land and the other parcels listed are currently owned by Boral Construction Materials Group. DLWC gave approval in 1994 for the reservation of these parcels for the purpose of "Public Recreation and Environment". The transfer of these lots is reaching conclusion and DLWC have requested that Council confirm its willingness to become the Trust Manager for the whole area.

The land is situated at the confluence of the Nepean and Grose Rivers and has an area of 88.92 hectares. It offers a unique recreational setting which is not otherwise available in the Hawkesbury. This uniqueness is due to its location allowing access to both the Nepean and Grose Rivers, the presence of several lagoons, and also the presence of a large number and variety of native birds. It is valuable as a recreation resource due to its potential for a wide range of recreation activities including swimming and wading, canoeing, fishing, walking, picnicking and nature based activities such as bird watching. It is also valuable as an environmental resource with excellent potential for revegetation and also as a part of the wildlife corridor network within the Hawkesbury.

The land has previously been utilised for many years by Boral and is consequently quite disturbed in some locations, with major weed infestations and a considerable amount of rubbish and fill dumped on the site. There appears to have been no requirements placed on Boral by DLWC in relation to remediation of the site, however, Boral have recently indicated some willingness to contribute to fencing of the reserve. It is proposed that Council agree to become Trust Manager conditional upon achieving satisfactory contribution from Boral or DLWC for fencing and weed control on the site, and the removal of dumped rubbish and fill from the site.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council agree to become the Trust Manager for the proposed reserve pending satisfactory resolution of issues relating to the remediation of the land.

ATTACHMENTS:

AT-1 Locality Map

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LOCALITY MAP

oooO END OF ITEM 49 Oooo