

PARK CONCEPT KEY IDEAS

Acknowledge the History of the Tank

While the water tank itself will be demolished, the design of the park acknowledges the former presence of the tank by creating a circular lawn area at the centre of the park. The central, circular, irrigated lawn creates a functional and flat surface on an otherwise sloping site, which can be used for a variety of activities. The lawn becomes a central gathering and focal space for the park. This area is sufficiently large to accommodate a range of informal activities, including ball games and picnics.

This new park level uses cut from the basement excavation of the development to fill in the existing significant hole where the tank is currently located.

Surrounding the lawn are planted embankments which negotiate the significant grade change across the site. The central lawn is accessed at grade from the adjacent perimeter pathway, or alternatively via bluestone steps that lead down into the lawn. Around the perimeter of the lawn is a granitic sand pathway and a low steel edge that provides protection to the adjacent garden beds, as well as informal seating and play (balance beam). Additional DDA compliant seating with backrests is attached to the low steel edge at regular intervals to allow people to sit in the sunshine at different times of the year.

Bluestone pitchers from the demolition of the bluestone retaining wall surrounding the tank will be re-used within the construction of the public park. The activity lawn and granitic sand pathway is edged in reclaimed bluestone from the existing adjacent retaining walls.

Access to Sunshine

The lawn circle has been carefully located to ensure that it receives maximum sunlight all year round and is not overshadowed by the development. The location of seating around the edge of the lawn will ensure that there is always seating that receives full sun in winter, as well as seating that is in shade from adjacent trees in the summer.

Accessible Pathways

Circumnavigating the central activity lawn and planted embankments is an elliptical access pathway that traverses the significant fall across the site. The new development ground floor level is RL 96.00 and the existing level at the south western corner where the park meets Forster Street is RL 93.00. The design carefully manages this 3 metre fall across the site by creating access pathways that are no steeper than 1:20 (to avoid the need for handrails) with generous landings at regular intervals. The pathways are edged in reclaimed bluestone.

Site Permeability

The design of the park recognises that people may choose to walk through the site as a diagonal short cut to avoid the Bell Banksia / Heidelberg Road intersection. The adjacent conversion of the existing lane way (ROW) into a pedestrian connection will improve pedestrian and cycle movement within the precinct and the site and help provide passive surveillance of the park.

Planted Buffer to Development

The design of the park recognises the need to separate the public park from the development’s landscape to ensure that the bulk of the development does not negatively impact the sense of ‘public-ness’ of the park. Tree plantings located in garden beds provide a tall planted buffer between the buildings and the park to help mitigate the impact of building heights and bulk.

There are further opportunities to link the park landscape with the ground floor of the development via [paths connections and steps. These connections will be developed once the ground floor of the building is resolved through planning permit phase.

Indigenous & Native Plantings

Significant native tree and indigenous garden bed plantings across the site to provide access to nature and natural materials and to buffer the surrounding development. The park design has a strong focus on longer term climate change mitigation and biodiversity enhancements through the planting of substantial indigenous trees and ground covers, minimisation of hard, impervious pavements and the provision of wildlife nesting boxes when the trees are sufficiently tall.

Toilet

A theme that emerged during the consultation was the need to provide, or have easy access to a disabled compliant toilet and change room for people of all ages. While the park itself is too small to include a public toilet (Council’s Local park definition does not typically include public toilets), there is an opportunity for a publicly accessible toilet to be located within a ground floor tenancy in the adjacent development (for example a small cafe overlooking the park).

Significant Shade Trees

The park design allows for significant areas of indigenous garden bed plantings as well as substantial taller trees to provide shade during the warmer months. This excellent canopy of trees will provide shade during the summer, and help to reduce the urban heat island effect.

Yarra Valley Water Easement

A significant constraint on the park design is the presence of the Yalley Valley Water easement which contains a number of important, functioning water assets (including pits and pipes) which must be retained. Existing surface levels around these assets must be retained, as well as service vehicle access. All works within the easement will be subject to approvals from Yarra Valley Water. Ongoing discussions with Yarra Valley Water will be necessary in the detail design phase to ensure the successful resolution of the park design.

Nature Based Play

The provision of substantial areas of garden bed allows for the integration of nature based play opportunities within the overall park design (all of park design philosophy), including rock stepping stones, tree logs for climbing and planting that can provide materials for play. Nature based play elements were strongly supported by the community during the Stage 01 consultation.

Other Comments

A number of community requests have not been provided due to the limited size of the park, including dog park, pump (bmx) track and basketball half court. Instead, there has been a focus on the central lawn as a permeable, green and flexible activity space that can accommodate a wide variety of activities while avoiding excessive amounts of hard pavement. Care has been taken to provide enough ‘flexible’ open grassed areas and to not ‘fill’ the park with too many elements.

Other functions have not been included due to potential conflicts (e.g. excessive noise) that may adversely impact adjacent residential properties (including the development). This includes the request for skate facilities and basketball half court.

Lighting

The park design incorporates pole mounted lights located along the perimeter of the 1:20 elliptical access pathway, ensuring safe movement of people at nighttime. The lights are shrouded (pointed downwards), ensuring no light spill to the night sky (as well as adjacent residences). There is an opportunity for a LED strip light to the underside of some park elements providing dramatic yet subtle lighting that emphasises the circular lawn.