



# LATHLAIN PARK

Public Submission

Victoria  
Park  
Urban  
Tree  
Network

## Victoria Park Urban Tree Network – Lathlain Park Public Submission

Our primary concern relating to this demolition and earthworks application, is the absence of an approved DA for associated works to the site and the prospect of significant tree and canopy cover losses and resulting impact to heritage fabric from this proposal. It is difficult to provide a comprehensive analysis of the proposal when it is unclear how it is meant to relate to future works. It is also of concern that proposed earthworks and associated demolition may force certain aspects of the proposal to become non-negotiable such as the location and layout of buildings which are yet to be finalised.

To provide feedback for this application we have 'spoken' to relevant sections of the proposal and include our remarks below:

### Development Application Scope

The development proposal includes the following works, for which VPUTN is either supportive or not supportive:

- Resurfacing and resizing of the existing Perth Football Club oval (Oval 1) to match the dimensions and surface quality of Perth Stadium – **SUPPORTED**
- The creation of a new oval available for community access (Oval 2) immediately to the east of Oval 1 to match the dimensions of the MCG – **SUPPORTED**
- Lower tier Perth FC Grandstand remediation works to align the existing grandstand lower tier with the resurfaced Oval 1 level – **SUPPORTED**
- A new boundary line fence to align with the resized Oval 1 – **SUPPORTED**
- New retaining walls to the north and east of Oval 2 (at McCartney Cr and Roberts Rd) – **SUPPORTED**
- The demolition and/or removal of existing single storey buildings, dog park, tennis courts, trees and car parking to the east of Oval 1 to allow for Oval 2 – **NOT SUPPORTED**
- The removal of the spectator stand and grass bank to the south of Oval 1 to allow for the preparation of Oval 1 and the future WCE training, administration and community facility (yet to be designed). This will necessitate the loss of some trees – **NOT SUPPORTED**

Further to the development scope, VPUTN is not supportive of the training, administration and community buildings being omitted in the forward works which have significant bearing on the overall strategic planning of the site.

### Community Engagement

It is unclear how and when community engagement has been factored into the forward works proposal. Absent from the report is any detail relating to what feedback was received, how it was entertained and whether any input was actually considered. An appendix containing this information along with comments and actions made during the DRC is also absent from the development application.

## **Existing Site**

The analysis of the existing site plays down the importance of the current built form and environmental fabric and how these will be impacted by the proposal. The earthworks application undermines these aspects by proposing to remove, demolish or alter the material fabric of the site which has been unchanged since the site was developed over 60 years ago.

## **Site Analysis**

Site access is discussed in the context of vehicle traffic only and should investigate the manner in which pedestrians visit the site.

Alternative oval configurations are not explored in the application and the feasibility of such alternatives not discussed transparently. Given the impact oval configuration has on the site layout, oval configuration should have been discussed comprehensively, and widely promoted during the leasing agreement stage. Evidence of this occurring is scant and should form the basis on which the leasing agreement is revisited.

## **Design Intent**

The proposal does not indicate why the location and composition of Zone 3 best maximises the opportunity to integrate the development with Lathlain Place. The brief is to 'better connect' Lathlain Park and Lathlain Place, yet the strategic design of the site misses a critical opportunity to locate some key administrative functions at the north of the site to support the Lathlain town centre.

Spreading building bulk across the site will assist in sharing traffic equitably across local streets, rather than a single entry from Bishopsgate St which is not ideal for a main entrance given its winding course. It will also provide incentive to use pockets of land that are free from existing trees.

The location of the two ovals leaves little room in the middle of the site to enhance pedestrian permeability. Furthermore, the portion of land in zone 3 identified as the location of the future WCE training facility (and all concept plans/illustrations of this space to date), show a building so large in floor area that it will prevent movement and permeability across much of the southern portion of the site.

The leasing agreement has stymied a legitimate strategic plan of this site by zoning the land arbitrarily into sections of ownership as a matter of convenience rather than a matter of good planning.

## **Earthworks and Stabilisation**

The application proposes to demolish associated buildings and clear vegetation from Zone 3 to create a clean slate for the WCE training/administration buildings, despite no subsequent DA or approved plans for the space. This process cannot be supported as it encourages developers to treat existing vegetation as expendable rather than producing plans that incorporate the extensive amount of mature vegetation that exists at the site.

The cutting and filling of spaces on the site is generally supported. However, we have concerns regarding the removal of the south grass bank and associated trees as there is currently no reason for this to occur other than to make it easier to plan and design this space.

### **Retaining Wall Sections**

The need for and execution of retaining walls is generally supported. There is concern about the type of fencing at these pinch points to prevent balls from leaving the site. No tree removal is supported for the development of these spaces. All attempts should be made to incorporate existing vegetation. Materials used for walls should be complimentary in design and colour to the existing built form on the site.

### **Environment and Vegetation**

The extent of works associated with the environment and vegetation of the site is concerning given that no environmental impact assessment has been conducted. 98 trees out of 271 (36.2%) are proposed to be removed with only 6 deemed ok for transplant. The proposal is seeking permission to remove any tree within zone 3 where necessary. We are not supportive of this ambiguous approach - Unnecessary tree loss will result and the opportunity for comprehensive plans that include retention of significant species to be drawn and acted upon, will be missed.

Recently published reports relating to the health and environmental benefits of urban trees and canopy cover in Perth highlight the importance of tree preservation. Victoria Park already has critically low canopy cover, therefore the removal of 98 trees will impact greatly on the amenity, biodiversity and health and wellbeing of the town and should not be supported.

### **Tree Transplanting**

We are supportive of tree transplanting in principle however we question the necessity of this idea to begin with. The six Jacaranda mimosifolia are close to the boundary on a steep gradient between the street level and the ground plane behind the PFC grandstand. This landscape area is small and narrow and would provide little extra space worth removing established trees for. The vista along Bishopsgate St is enhanced by these trees and shade is provided along the length of the path adjacent to the site. Their removal and relocation will impact negatively on this particular streetscape by damaging the established feel and positive benefits the trees provide.

### **Drainage**

The application makes no mention of current Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) practices. The size and general landform of the site indicates the potential for a comprehensive water management strategy to be designed cognisant of the landscape plan. Recognising the potential for WSUD and including this as part of a drainage strategy would add value to the surrounding community and increase opportunities for biodiversity repair, whilst assisting in achieving an integrated landscape plan that does more than just look good.

No mention of water capture and reuse/recycling for landscaping and oval maintenance. This would be a basic requirement to achieve any sustainable future for this site.

## **Traffic and Parking Management**

The loss of car parking on-site is accepted, however the use of surrounding open space facilities such as Carlisle/Lathlain Bowling Club as overflow parking is unacceptable. Parking shortfall created as a result of this development should not become a periodic burden to residential open space provisions, given these provisions are already being impacted on by the development and in comparison to other areas of Perth, are too low.

## **Concluding Remarks and Recommendations**

Our general consensus on the development application is that the process is being rushed to satisfy the demands of the applicant, at the expense of a proper evaluation of the proposal.

The separation of demolition and earthworks from the design and execution of buildings has created a confusing process in which to evaluate the proposal. The lack of an approved plan for the site further amplifies the issue and its submission should have been the first step before demolition and earthworks was even considered.

We have reservations that the lease agreement will achieve the best outcome possible for the site. Zoning boundaries separating ownership between the town, PFC and WCE are simplistic in nature and fail to recognise the complexity of spatial relationships between uses on site and the surrounding urban fabric. We request that a SWOT analysis be performed on the site layout in its current, planned and ideal format to determine a better outcome for all stakeholders.

We believe many of the issues relating to the development are a result of the lease agreement or at the very least are going to be difficult to remedy because of the agreement. We are supportive of this being renegotiated to ensure planning of this site is conducted in a comprehensive and well thought out manner.

The application lacked detail regarding community engagement. From VPUTN's perspective the reoccurring sentiments regarding trees, layout and car parking at community events/forums are an indication that these aspects are not being addressed. Given that the concept plans have barely changed over 3 years is an indication that overall, the applicant has not entertained any of the feedback provided. We would like to see these processes represented in the DA as appendixes and a written report dedicated to addressing the feedback.

In conclusion, Victoria Park Urban Tree Network is not supportive of the removal of trees within Zone 3, in preparation for an incomplete development application. We consider this approach undermines the process of orderly and proper planning of the site. Our position is that architects are briefed that the site shall be designed in a manner first and foremost, to respect and integrate the existing built form and environment into their future development as aligned with extensive past community feedback relating to development of this site.