



# camberwell community parklands green

17 November 2019

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Director City Planning  
City of Boroondara

## RESTORATION OF HISTORIC PARK IN CAMBERWELL JUNCTION

Dear Shiran

Thank you for inviting us to make a public presentation to Council at the Services Special Committee Meeting on 18 November 2019. Having read the report that Council officers have prepared for Committee Meeting (“Camberwell Green Association Presentation and Next Steps”), there are a few issues that we would like to draw to your attention in advance of the meeting.

- 1. Section 7 of the Report relating to “Governance Issues” states that “the officers responsible for preparing this report have no direct or indirect interests requiring disclosure”.**

Our understanding is that all staff of Boroondara Council have the right to free all day-parking, which includes parking in the Reserve Road Carpark [which Council previously referred to as its Western car park]. If this is the case, then staff will have a direct interest in maintaining that right, regardless of whether or not they avail themselves of it. Even if the officers who prepared this report do not, for some reason, have a direct interest, arguably they have an indirect interest because their work colleagues have such a right, and because their employer has an interest in maintaining those rights for their staff. In these circumstances, where at the very least there is doubt that there is no conflict of interest, full disclosure would, we suggest, be the most appropriate approach.

- 2. The report does not clarify whether Boroondara Council sought and obtained permission from the Minister for the Environment to put parking on crown land allotment 113D, which is permanently reserved by state legislation for public gardens.**

Council officers made no reference to the provision of parking on this allotment in any of the various Council and Committee reports from 2010 when the current arrangements were established. These reports state that Ministerial approval was obtained for allotment 113C, and that this is where the car park would be situated. We suggest that Councillors should be fully informed as to whether approval was obtained in relation to allotment 113D. In the absence of this matter being directly addressed, there is an inference that approval was not obtained and if this is wrong, it should be corrected.

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### 3. The proposed community consultation is premature

We welcome that Council officers are recommending that Council undertake community consultation on the proposal. Section 5 of the report "Consultation/Communication" recommends that this occur for a four-week period commencing on 25 November 2019. This is premature given that Council officers are, to our knowledge, yet to develop a detailed concept plan that would best give effect to the restoration of the historic park (on crown land allotments 113C and 113D) and the closure of Reserve Road. You will appreciate from our previous communications (including our recent letter to you of 1 September 2019) that we have not prepared a detailed concept plan because we are a community group asking Council to restore our parklands, rather than developers seeking planning permission for a commercial development. It is for the Council to decide whether it sees sufficient merit in the proposal to develop a detailed concept plan, including traffic management strategies that may or may not be consistent with the suggestions made, and then to open the proposal up for public consultation. We consider that there is sufficient merit in the proposal for Council to prepare a detailed concept plan. Whether in all of the circumstances this is most appropriately done by an independent consultant is, in the first instance, a matter for council.

If this is not done, there is a risk – indeed we would say a high probability – that the lack of detail and certainty will cause community consultation to be ineffective and a waste of council resources. As I'm sure you are well aware, the potential apprehension of bias on the part of the council in this matter requires careful management. We respectfully suggest that a short consultation in the lead-up to the summer holiday period before Council has prepared a detailed concept design will not assist any such potential apprehension of bias.

Accordingly, we consider that a revised recommendation allowing time for the preparation of a detailed concept design is the most sensible approach. We are therefore writing to Councillors to suggest that they consider moving the following revised recommendation:

*That the Services Special Committee resolve to:*

- 1. Note the petition and the presentations made today in support of restoring the historical parklands in Camberwell Junction on Crown Land allotments 113C and 113D, and dedicating a portion of Reserve Road to parkland ("Camberwell Green").*
- 2. Prepare a detailed concept plan for the best solution to give effect to Camberwell Green.*
- 3. Consider the prepared detailed concept plan at the meeting of the Services Special Committee in March 2020 with a view to approving a detailed concept plan for public consultation.*

Yours sincerely



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cc CEO, Mayor and Councillors