

Submission by
Adelaide Parklands Preservation Association Inc.:

Proposed Hockey Stadium with two recessed and fenced artificial playing pitches, Park 17.

Introduction

This submission follows the questions put in the ACC Yoursay webpage. Additionally, it includes other pertinent points that are not raised by the Yoursay questions.

Do you currently use/visit Tuthangga Park (Park 17)

Park 17 is currently a balance of open sports areas and treed park land, with outstanding community sport, casual recreation and visual qualities. Along the street frontages, there are belts of large trees while within the park there are impressive clumps of native and exotic trees, including an impressive double avenue of elm trees.

The area designated for the proposed hockey stadium and fenced artificial playing pitches is currently primarily used for a wide range of community sports activities during both summer and winter, during school and after hours. It is highly utilized and very well maintained. These uses would be pushed aside were the stadium and the two recessed and fenced artificial playing pitches interposed.

APPA members and the general public use this park because of its openness within a beautiful treed environment, and the current licence holder facilitates a multitude of uses. It's there for anyone to enjoy. It is not fenced; the built facilities are discrete and low scale. Even during touch football matches, cricket matches, etc., the casual user can still walk unimpeded through the park, diverting around the areas being used. No one is precluded from using the area. Recently APPA observed two casual cricket matches and touch coaching occurring during a Sunday afternoon.



Figure 1 Casual cricket in a beautiful treed environment

The park is certainly one of the more visually satisfying parks in the Park Lands. There are several less that satisfactory areas of the Park Lands, but this is not one of them. It is a mystery as to why the hockey clubs would choose this location, when clearly it is already

fully utilised and so beautiful. Why didn't they choose an area that is in a degraded condition, such as the southern end of Park 22?

Indeed, APPA submits that Park 17 in its current configuration is a model example of how Adelaide Park Lands can serve the wider community for both active and passive pursuits. It's a park that Council can be proud of. Park 17 does not need 'improving', it's totally enjoyable as it is.



Figure 2 Long vistas to beautiful trees will be lost

List all the facilities/features that you use in Tuthangga (Park 17)?

Of course, not everyone who enjoys Park 17 needs to use facilities/features. A stroll or cycle through the park, even just driving past; these are all the more enjoyable precisely because there are limited facilities/features.

The low-key change facility is well used and can be easily modified to make it a perfectly adequate facility for sports and school groups who currently use the park, and indeed for the public, with the possible addition of public toilets. The building is in very good condition and is well maintained. This facility (owned by Council) is not “aging” nor is it “redundant”.

And it must be emphasised, the hockey stadium would mean that the general community and sports groups, including the schools, would be ejected from the area: the whole of the playing field area would be despoiled and the proposed hockey facilities would not be available for general casual use and in any case, are fenced out, with a 2.2 m drop.

Indeed, APPA submits that there is no real need for additional facilities/features: they would only spoil the experiences outlined above.

Describe your favourite aspects/features of Tuthangga (Park 17).

APPA is strongly of the opinion, as stated above, that Park 17 is currently very valuable as it is: a balance of open sports areas and treed park land, with outstanding visual qualities. It can be validly said, one of the finest features of the sports area is the unimpeded grassed playing fields, affording long vistas across to the vegetated background including the elm avenue. See Fig 2. In some respects, it reminds one of the spaciousness of Wormwood Scrubs park in London, although arguably Park 17 is far better. Both of these urban parks have edge belts of large trees along with clumps of native and exotic trees that frame the

long vistas. The elm avenue in Park 17 is an outstanding asset, and the proposed building will certainly obstruct views to that.

Another favourite aspect of this area is that it remains unfenced. None of the current sports areas are fenced, there is no opportunity for the current licence holder to fence out the public even on a temporary basis, and that is how it should be.

Another positive aspect of the park is the manner in which the existing change facility is tucked away in the south-east corner, so it is entirely unobtrusive and does not obstruct longer vistas.



Figure 3 Existing change facility, entirely unobtrusive and does not obstruct long vistas

What improvements or changes to Tuthangga (Park 17) would increase your use of this Park?

Park 17 is already enjoyed by a good many school/sports and casual users: there is no demonstrated need to search for ways to increase utilization. However, it might be noted, with the rezoning for intense residential development along Greenhill Rd, the utilization of Park 17 as public open space is likely to increase. The proposed stadium and the two fenced and walled artificial playing pitches are not compatible with increased public use. To the extent that any improvements are required, APPA would propose the provision of public toilets co-located with the existing change facility.

Tell us how a new hockey facility would affect your use of Tuthangga (Park 17)

There is no doubt that community organisations, particularly sports users will NOT be “better placed to increase participation in formal and informal recreation opportunities”. To the contrary, the proposal as it stands would mean a substantial area of the southern end of Park 17 would be fenced and walled, unavailable for general use by the public.

Additionally, and this point could be tested by Council during licence discussions, the hockey clubs will likely resist the opening of the facility to other sports or general public open space users. In point of fact, the current licence holder is not a party to the proposal and would have no real say about when and how often it might use the facilities.

What opportunities or constraints would a new hockey facility in Tuthangga (Park 17) bring to your use and/or enjoyment of this Park?

Opportunities and Constraints

Genuinely, APPA submits that the only opportunity afforded by this proposal is that of being excluded from a significant proportion of Park 17. There will be no

opportunity for casual users of the area occupied by the stadium and fenced and walled artificial playing pitch.

Further comments on the proposed perimeter wall and fence.

In appearance, the two fenced and walled artificial playing pitches will look like empty swimming pools, inserted into the broad sweep the Park Lands. This is because each pitch is surrounded by a 1200mm high concrete wall, set down into the pitch but protruding 250mm above surface level. No amount of ‘disguise’ of the walls will ameliorate this visual abomination.

The drawings also show permanent fencing extending up from the wall, 1000mm high. The total drop from the top of the fence would be 2200mm. One can but speculate, how many ‘intruders’ will flip over the fence late on a Friday night on the way back from a night out?

Additionally, each field will have a bright blue 5 m (minimum) wide ‘run-off’ area surrounding the pitch. This is apparently a requirement of hockey pitch rules. The artificial playing surface is an iridescent green colour. (See Fig 4). It might be noted, Adelaide Hockey Club currently uses an unfenced grass pitch in Park 20, which just shows hockey can be played on grass and does not necessitate fenced artificial pitch.



Figure 4 State Hockey Centre, Gepps Cross

This visual blight should not be introduced into the Park Lands.

Finally, this proposal is clearly not in accord with the provisions of the City of Adelaide Development Plan. For example, the floor area of the proposed building is so much larger than the existing one, which is contrary to the development plan for the Park Lands. Additionally, in appearance the proposed building is obtrusive and unnecessarily grandiose, which is also contrary to the provisions of the Development Plan, which calls for unobtrusive buildings. In several other aspects, this proposal goes beyond the provisions of the Development Plan.

Recommendation

This proposal for a Hockey Stadium with two recessed and fenced artificial playing pitches should be sent back to the clubs for further consideration. The feedback to the clubs should make it clear that:

- *the proposed stadium is excessively obtrusive and too large in floor area and footprint;
- *the two recessed and fenced artificial playing pitches are unacceptable, rather grassed pitches at ground level would be mandated if the hockey clubs wish to use this area.