

Adelaide Park Lands Preservation Association Inc

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9 June 2010

Mr Peter Smith
Chief Executive Officer
Att: Manager City Design (Ref: Victoria Square)
Corporation of the City of Adelaide
25 Pirie Street
ADELAIDE

VICTORIA SQUARE/TARNDANYANGGA DRAFT MASTERPLAN

Victoria Square is a key component of William Light's Adelaide Plan, and Adelaide's potential to meet at least six State Heritage criteria and three World Heritage criteria has previously been identified. Council would also be aware of the City of Adelaide's forthcoming 175th anniversary, which will coincide with the Adelaide Park Lands Preservation Association's 25th anniversary.

In light of these circumstances, the draft masterplan is disappointing, as it seems to be unaware of higher aspirations for promoting Adelaide internationally, does not intend progress towards these, and seems to intend destruction of several aspects of Victoria Square's distinctive heritage. The Association would have welcomed restoration of Victoria Square that respected and conserved the site, returned excess roadways and hard surfaces to accessible green open space, and repaired damage caused by inappropriate event usage.

The Association would also have preferred to assist the Corporation to address errors and omissions in the Victoria Square draft masterplan ahead of its release for public consultation. Having been denied that opportunity and given its current unsuitable form, the Association is unable to support the draft masterplan design proposed for Victoria Square on several grounds, and provides herein detailed comment on the following:

1. lack of credibility and unwarranted cost;
2. failure to recognise and conserve Victoria Square's landscape, natural and cultural heritage significance including vistas into, from, through, and within the Square, and
3. decrease in accessible green open space.

The Association would be pleased to assist Council to improve management of Adelaide's Park Lands and City Squares, and was disappointed that the Corporation was opposed to the Association seeking Australian Government conservation funding for the Adelaide Park Lands and City Layout National Heritage Place under the new National Historic Sites grant program. Notwithstanding this, the Association reiterates the urgency of preparing a Conservation Plan in accordance with the Australia ICOMOS Burra Charter, prior to further consideration of Victoria Square's redevelopment. This would ensure that Council is appropriately informed and guided in decisions that affect Victoria Square and the site's landscape, natural, and cultural heritage.

[Original signed]

Kelly Henderson
President

1. LACK OF CREDIBILITY AND UNWARRANTED COST

Failure to repair event damage is evident from examination of the central southern section of Victoria Square (greater than 29% damaged pavers). In comparison the central northern section is relatively well maintained (less than 1% damaged pavers).

The comparatively recent upgrade/repair of the central northern paving and the choice of this area for Stage 1 of the works seems odd, as this would remove infrastructure which still has a long residual serviceable lifetime, whereas the southern area, which has been operated as an event venue without adequate remediation, requires urgent and immediate reparation, viz:

Extract from Draft Victoria Square Dilapidation Study, June 2010

Central northern section (excluding circuit around fountain)
Percentage of cracked pavers = 0.6 % (less than 1%)

Central southern section
Percentage of cracked pavers = 29.4%

This disparity and lack of demonstrable need for replacement of the central northern section's infrastructure raises questions about whether Council's internal processes and preferences have affected the draft masterplan's elements and priorities. It also raises questions about the probity of directing borrowed funds towards remodelling an area which is in relatively good condition when urgent works are required elsewhere, including being required for reasons of public safety. Given the demonstrable need for remediation of the central southern section of the Square and the lack of an appropriate Victoria Square Heritage Conservation Plan it is questionable whether borrowings contrary to Council's policy are justifiable for the draft masterplan in its current form.

The inadvisability of the draft masterplan proposed is also emphasised by the absence of desirable benefits: it does not ensure conservation of the cultural significance of Victoria Square; does not deliver any appreciable increase in accessible green open space, and would divert Council resources from other more pressing needs such as remediation of Park Lands damaged by inappropriate use and which are threatened with a significant reduction in the Park Lands Budget.

The draft masterplan is not a design which can be taken seriously due to the several errors, omissions, false assertions and assumptions which may be expected to render several of its components undeliverable or highly questionable:

- it proposes a forested plantation along the western edge of the western steel 'arbour' within the Tram Line Vegetation Clearance Envelope;
- it seems to be based upon a superficial/flawed grasp of the history and heritage of the City of Adelaide and South Australia's foundation history and Victoria Square's *raison d'être*;
- it represents a reversal of Council policy on the removal of buildings, including toilet buildings/potential cafés, from Victoria Square;
- it fails to be seen to avoid potential conflicts of interest and was based upon, and derived from, targeted and selective consultation rather than an open and accountable process, and
- it fails to acknowledge State and World Heritage potential and National Heritage values.

Note: Victoria Square is described as 329m x 179m and 61,000m² (Detailed Report, Section 3.4 Scale, p.15) and elsewhere reported to be 358.5m x 170.5m or 61,125m² (Appendix B – Management Information).

Tram Line Clearance Envelope

The purported tree plantings in the western Perimeter Gardens cannot be a valid depiction since it apparently breaches operational requirements of TransAdelaide that vegetation comply with the requisite Tram Line Clearance Envelope and Department of Transport, Energy and Infrastructure Guidelines for Electrical Safety for Trees and Powerlines, see 'Standard Detail for Tram Line Vegetation Clearance Envelope', TransAdelaide Drawing No. 735-A3-2010-193 (Attachment A) and www.dtei.sa.gov.au/energy/publications.

To comply with operational requirements for the Tram Line it is expected that the proposed symmetry of the draft proposal's Perimeter Garden tree plantings would not be achievable and that illustrations purporting to position trees along the tram line are not reasonable or realistic.

Superficial/flawed grasp of Adelaide's history/heritage and Victoria Square's raison d'être

The draft incorrectly asserts that Victoria Square is owned by "The Crown". The land comprising Victoria Square was nominally alienated from the Crown in February 1836 with the establishment of the British Province of South Australia, and was reserved and set apart for the citizens of Adelaide as a public walk in William Light's Plan for the City of Adelaide, 1837 (note: not 1836 as incorrectly stated by the draft masterplan).

In 1837 Victoria Square was named for Princess Alexandrina Victoria, later to become Queen Victoria (note: not 1836 as incorrectly stated by the draft masterplan).

William Light's Adelaide Plan set apart Victoria Square to be one contiguous area, not two separate rectangles as incorrectly asserted by the draft masterplan.

The centre of William Light's Adelaide Plan was the River Torrens, not Victoria Square in (South) Adelaide as incorrectly asserted by the draft masterplan. (South) Adelaide was symmetrical in two axes (albeit naturalised to avoid areas subject to inundation).

Light deliberately chose rising ground for the site of the City of Adelaide (North and South), so that these areas, including Victoria Square, would not be subject to inundation by stormwater.

In addition to providing a refuge and haven from the bustle of the city, Victoria Square was located in conjunction with the four Town Sections reserved by William Light for Public Offices, and the Corporation was subsequently located adjacent to one of these. This location engendered the Square with a civic role, and it became the scene of important public and civic occasions, commemorations such as the erections of the statues of Sturt and Stuart, and developed into the commencement point for processional rallies that gathered in the Square and marched along King William Street to Parliament House on North Terrace.

The draft masterplan's failure to acknowledge this role and to ensure this area remains freely and publicly accessible at all times must be considered to be a major flaw in the understanding of the cultural significance of the Square and proposals to erect massive steel structures, 'Arbours', to facilitate the exclusion of the public and serve as connection points for "Events Services" and for "fencing for major paying events" demonstrates a total lack of recognition of Victoria Square's civic role (Attachment B – Detailed Report, Event Infrastructure, p. 66).

Relevant Major Legislation is omitted including:

Australian Heritage Commission Act, 1975

Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act, 1999

Heritage Places Act, 1993

Reversal of Council policy on the removal of buildings, including toilet buildings

The proposal for six additional buildings in Victoria Square, including transport/commercial/retail buildings, and with toilets, changerooms, and showers, is totally inconsistent with Council's established position on removal/demolition of buildings to return Park Lands to open space.

The draft masterplan also represents an unjustified total reversal of Council's past practice of removing buildings/structures from Victoria Square.

At the time of Council's demolition of the historic red-brick Victoria Square Toilet Block Council was well aware of suggestions for conversion of that structure to a café (Lou-Lou) and steadfastly carried out demolition of the structure. It is therefore unclear why the draft masterplan would propose to utilise the Square to facilitate construction of cafés, nor why Council would seek to convert Victoria Square to commercial uses in competition with private businesses. Businesses which invested in establishing coffee shops and eateries adjacent to the Square following the

removal of the Victoria Square Toilet Block (ala Café Lou-Lou), were presumably secure in the knowledge that there would not be competing commercial businesses in the actual Square.

In any event, the functions of the proposed constructions are duplications of existing facilities: Tarndanya provides aboriginal cultural heritage information and performances; there are dozens of cafés within less than a minute of Victoria Square (including Council's own Town Hall Garden café); the SA Tourism Centre was once located in the Treasury Building (Tourist Information Bureau) and chose to relocate closer to North Terrace hotels and Rundle Mall; and functions could easily be accommodated in buildings around Victoria Square or nearby without requiring constructions in Victoria Square's precious open space.

Potential conflicts of interest and lack of open and accountable process/selective 'conversations'

In ignoring values that could secure Adelaide a place on the highly prestigious World Heritage List along with associated publicity and marketing as an international destination for cultural tourism, the Victoria Square draft masterplan seems reprehensibly focussed on providing Council event staff with yet another event venue when Council has already repeatedly proven to be incapable of sustainably operating existing devastated event sites within Victoria Square and the Park Lands.

In addition to the above concerns, selective consultation including with tenants of the Council is noted with concern, and raises questions as to whether Council has ensured it quarantines decisions as custodian of the Park Lands and City Squares from various other roles.

Failure to acknowledge State and World Heritage potential and National Heritage values

As stated by Professor Randy Stringer, World Heritage is a 'pro-development initiative', albeit a different type of development to that which many may be familiar with. The Association believes that every effort should be made to avoid copycat imitations of Melbourne, Brisbane, or any other such place, which dilutes and degrades the unique characteristics and qualities of Light's Plan.

The conservation of Adelaide's distinctiveness, its market advantage, should be the central consideration in any proposals affecting Light's Adelaide Plan and its several components, including Victoria Square, rather than copying anywhere else.

The draft masterplan fails to acknowledge the site's inscription on Australia's Register of the National Estate as 'The Victoria Square Conservation Area', ignores its potential for State and World Heritage listing, has no regard to the significance and heritage associated with these and has failed to address the crucial issue of whether or not, and to what extent, the draft masterplan conserves the landscape, natural and cultural heritage values of the site.

The Association's State Heritage nomination, dated 3 September 2009, included recommendation that the South Australian Heritage Council exercise powers pursuant to the *Heritage Places Act 1993* Section 14 (7)(b), for designation as a State Heritage Place 'of archaeological significance'. The draft masterplan fails to address Victoria Square's archaeological heritage.

It is disappointing that Council has not made any progress with its World Heritage initiative, or with engendering an appreciation of Adelaide's distinctive qualities which offer such unparalleled potential benefits for the City of Adelaide and South Australia, however the site should not be degraded by taking the retrograde step of permitting the draft masterplan to ignore inherent opportunities and constraints.

2. FAILURE TO RECOGNISE AND CONSERVE CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE, AND VISTAS INTO, FROM, THROUGH AND WITHIN THE SQUARE

The draft masterplan's lack of detailed knowledge of the history and heritage significance of the site and lack of recognition of basic historical facts, meanings and understandings compromises its recommendations. In addition to the broader understanding and awareness the design seems to fail to acknowledge and/or conserve:

ADELAIDE Park Lands—Unique in the World

- existing park use as a place of respite, public walk and haven from the bustle of the city;
- the State Survey marker;
- Halley's Comet time capsule;
- Horse Tram Memorial;
- RSSILA(SA) War Memorial Plaque and Desert Ash specimen;
- Queen Victoria statue and rectangle;
- Stuart statue;
- Sturt statue;
- cast iron Benchmark No.9;
- northern square paving;
- southern square paving;
- Three Rivers fountain;
- drinking fountains;
- Flinders Street kerbing;
- Franklin Street kerbing.

The proposal to construct massive steel pillars and 'Arbours' along the eastern and western sides of the Square fails to conserve the Grote-Wakefield views to the hills and the sunset, and other proposed elements would alter the King William St north vista and King William St south vista, and views within the Square, and to adjacent historic buildings.

The obstruction of sight lines proposed via buildings and other constructions, excavations, changes to levels, steps, walling, and dense plantings do not seem to have been informed by any regard for the historic views or the conservation of historic elements and intervisibility.

The proposal's intention to undertake massive excavations, radically alter ground levels, artificially flood areas of Victoria Square and install plantings which are neither indigenous to the Square nor connected with its European heritage seems damaging to landscape, natural and cultural heritage.

One of the six buildings proposed, a 'Kaurna Centre of Culture', and the proposal's assertions that "the traditional custodians are the Kaurna people", ignores the fact that the Kaurna Peoples Native Title claim has been publicly disputed by the Ramindjeri (Attachment C, 'Tribal war on native title', Kim Wheatley, *The Advertiser*, 20 November 2009).

3. DECREASE IN ACCESSIBLE GREEN OPEN SPACE

Although reduction of the area occupied by roadways is welcome, the Association notes with concern that the draft masterplan does not propose to deliver an increase in accessible green open space. In fact, the proposal intends a large *decrease* in accessible green open space from approximately 31% down to 7%.

Garden and planted beds, such as evidenced on North Terrace and in Victoria Square, are constructions which occupy areas that are thereby denied to the public for other uses, requiring a careful balance between the aesthetic benefit and the loss of accessible space. Proposed large scale excavations, changes of level and construction of steps would introduce new obstructions to wheelchair, pram/pusher, and walking access, whereas Victoria Square currently offers relatively level and unobstructed movement once the central areas are reached.

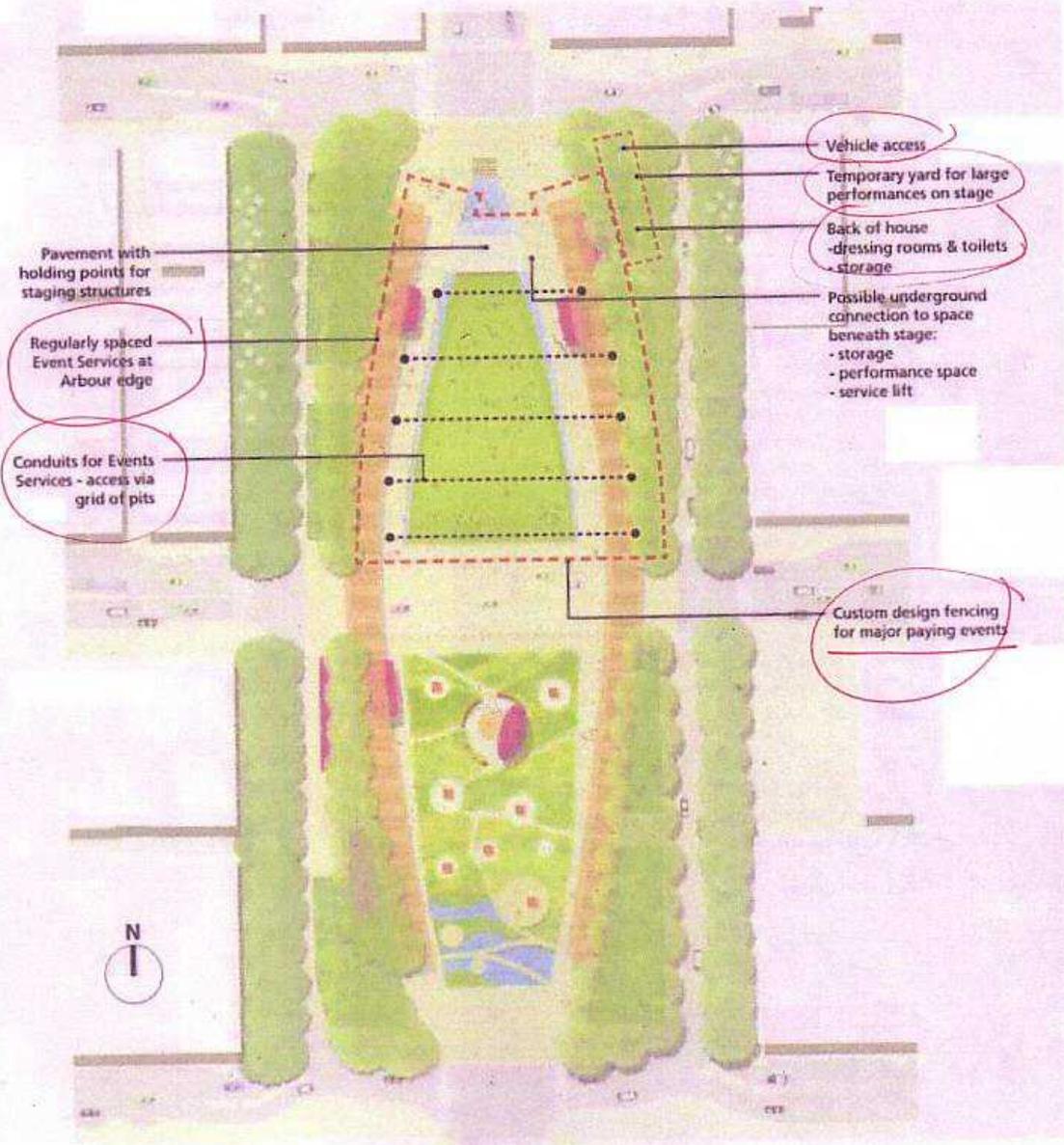
Existing

39%	Roadway
32%	Soft landscape (31% lawn and 1% flower beds)
24%	Hardscape (plaza, footpath, fountain, statues, etc)
5%	Tramline

Proposed

38%	Hardscape (plaza, footpaths, fountain, statues, etc)
32%	Soft landscape (7% lawn and 25% gardens)
25%	Roadway
5%	Tramline

Event Infrastructure



Tribal war on native title

- KIM WHEATLEY
- From: *The Advertiser*
- November 20, 2009 12:01AM

A VERBAL war has broken out among key Aboriginal groups over a native title claim on land stretching from Adelaide to Kangaroo Island.

Ramindjeri spokesman Karno Walker says his people are the true owners of the land, while the Kaurna and Ngarrindjeri are merely "Johnny come latelys".

"We're making it quite clear we have always been a nation to ourselves and the Kaurna and Ngarrindjeri have never spoken for us and never represented the rightful people of Ramindjeri country," Mr Walker told *The Advertiser*.

"The reason for the proposal is that we're sick and tired of the State Government, and (local government) councils and the Kaurna and Ngarrindjeri playing games."

The land in question extends from south of the River Torrens to the Murray Mouth and Kangaroo Island. It also reaches 12 nautical miles into the ocean.

The Ramindjeri have briefed lawyers including a QC and plan to have a public meeting on December 16 to determine the best course of action for a Federal Court claim.

Mr Walker however says that non-Aborigines should not be worried about the prospect of a native title claim.

"I have always said that Ramindjeri ... has got blackfella/whitefella dreaming together and they've got nothing to worry about," Mr Walker said. "All we want is simple recognition. We want the same respect, I can't put it any simpler than that."

The SA Native Title Services says that the Ramindjeri claim overlaps a significant proportion of the claims made by the Kaurna (lodged in 2000) and Ngarrindjeri (lodged in 1998).

Chief executive officer Parry Agius says if the Ramindjeri people are found to be related to the other mainland petitioners, the claim may not be registered. "He (Mr Walker) is faced with an uphill battle," Mr Agius said.

"And potentially he may not have so much land to claim for, but he may be able to claim for national parks, crown land, crown waters, coastline and pastoral leases."

He also stressed that people shouldn't fear the claim.

"I don't want people to be spooked into thinking that their backyards are being claimed - because that's not happening," Mr Agius said.