



Haven Amphitheatre and The Howard Rubie Memorial Stage

Functional Specification for a new open – air theatre

1. Preface

The current amphitheatre stage, which was built in 1976, has reached the end of its viable structural life. Willoughby City Council, in conjunction with the Haven Amphitheatre Committee, proposes that a new open air theatre be constructed in the Castlehaven Reserve, and that the new stage commemorate the late Howard Rubie.

At its meeting of 5 July 2011, Council adopted a Mayoral Motion to develop a memorial for the late Howard Rubie. “ He was very passionate about local issues particularly the Castlecrag area. He was closely involved with the Castlehaven Amphitheatre and was a driving force in the annual Christmas Carols event held at the Amphitheatre.”

2. Planning context:

The site is located on Council-owned Community land categorised as ‘bushland”, is zoned Environmental Conservation-E2 under Willoughby LEP 2012, and is a Local Heritage Item.

The site is located in Bushfire Prone Land.

The site includes a creek and is Integrated Development for the purposes of any Development Application.

The site will require a Heritage Impact Statement for the purposes of any Development Application.

Land surrounding the site is zoned for low density residential E 4 – Environmental Living.

3. Community consultation context:

The public consultation undertaken in February 2014 primarily supported the continuing operation of the open air theatre at the Haven. In summary of the community views, renewal/ refurbishment of the stage should:

- Have minimal impact on its natural setting/ subservient to the natural landscape ie touch the earth lightly
- Have improved open-air performance and functionality

- Be cost effective
- Be compliant with building codes and planning requirements as much as possible.

4. Bushland setting:

The site is located in bushland, governed by the Urban Bushland Plan of Management 1997 (currently under review). A Reserve Action Plan was completed for Castlehaven Reserve in 2013.

Any new stage and associated structures is not to unreasonably impact on the surrounding bushland and trees.

5. Creek and stormwater:

The creek is known locally as Haven Creek. A hydrological study was undertaken in 2014 by Lyall & Associates, specialists in stormwater & flood risk management. Their findings in relation to Scenario 2 (new stage) are to be addressed in any new stage design and associated structures. There is to be minimal excavation on site so as to retain the natural qualities of the creek.

6. Heritage:

Willoughby Heritage Inventory (2010), lists the Haven Amphitheatre as State Heritage Item Number 2660239, and provides its history and Statement of Significance. Any new stage structure must address the Statement of Significance and not impact on the heritage setting of the amphitheatre. As stated previously, a Heritage Impact Statement will be required for the purposes of any Development Application.

7. New stage:

The current stage is an irregularly shaped 100 square metres; a new stage can be up to 120 square metres provided it has minimal impact of the heritage 1930 sandstone seating terraces and any trees over 4 metres in height. A preferred stage geometry has been provided by the Haven Amphitheatre Committee (HAC), as per their Haven Amphitheatre Stage Project requirements (29 May 2014), to improve performance area and audience sightlines; access to the undercroft and performers facilities must be included.

8. New stage canopy:

The current stage has no rain protection, which causes untimely performance cancellation. Ideally a new stage would have a canopy that can be easily put up and down in the event of wet weather. Such a canopy or roof should be of sturdy low maintenance materials given the bushland setting.

9. Undercroft:

The undercroft of the stage contains the mechanics of performances, and ideally contains a toilet wash room, kitchenette, green room, makeup area, technical secure room and storage. Any new undercroft to the stage must not impact on the natural creek line and storm flows , nor impinge on the integrity of the 1930s sandstone seating terraces. The HAC have provided a list, as per their Haven Amphitheatre Stage Project requirements.

10. Ancillary performance requirements:

The HAC have also provided a list of site facilities that they assess are required to undertake performances at the site. They are: control desk, stage speaker mountings, 6 lockable stage boxes, control desk box, 2 new remote lighting boxes at front stage level (+ the 3 existing remote lighting boxes), and emergency and house lighting.

11. Seating:

A maximum audience capacity of between 350-380 people is allowed on site given its location in a residential precinct. Current capacity is approximately 350. Additional seating can be included provided that the original sandstone seating is not disturbed, and that any new seating is in low maintenance materials.

12. Accessibility:

Given the site's heritage listing and natural steep terrain, it will not be feasible to comply totally with the Disability Discrimination Act. However provision is to be made to accommodate a viewing area for people who cannot safely access the terraced steps. Wherever possible all attempts are to be made to improve access to and into the site.

13. Materials for a new stage:

The current stage is composed of CCA treated pine poles, hardwood bearers and beams, with fibre-cement sheeting and waterproof membrane cover. There is evidence that these materials have reached their end of life. New materials that can be considered are: concrete, brick, timber (with special regard to bushfires) and steel (with special regard to the damp environment).

The materials and finishes of the stage are to satisfy the criteria provided by the community as set out under 3. Community consultation context.

14. Budget costs:

The project does not have an allocated budget at present; Council has offered a contribution of \$150,000 towards the new stage. The HAC foresee that they will be applying for grants from the State and Federal Governments, and also seeking individual donations. Given that the performance space is considered a local community facility and does not cater to district or regional audiences, the budget is required to be both cost appropriate and cost effective.

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