

21 REPORTS FROM OFFICERS - INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES DIRECTOR

21.1 THE HAVEN AMPHITHEATRE IMPROVEMENTS - FUNCTIONAL SPECIFICATION

ATTACHMENTS:	1. HAC PROJECT REQUIREMENTS - MAY 2014 2. WCC FUNCTIONAL SPECIFICATION – JULY 2014
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	PAUL COLLINGS - ACTING INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES DIRECTOR
AUTHOR:	JULIE WHITFIELD - MANAGER OPEN SPACE
CITY STRATEGY LINK:	1.3.1 ACCESSIBLE OPEN SPACE AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES FOR THE COMMUNITY ARE PROVIDED
MEETING DATE:	28 JULY 2014

Purpose of Report

To adopt a functional specification for the renewal / refurbishment of The Haven Amphitheatre.

Background

Council at its meeting of 28 April 2014 considered a report on the public consultation for improvements to the Haven Amphitheatre, and resolved that:

- A functional specification be provided to Council by the officers in conjunction with the Haven Amphitheatre Committee within two months detailing the intended capabilities, appearance and interactions with users and the natural environment as a guideline for design options for the renewal/ refurbishment of the stage based on the views expressed by the community, namely:*

 - Minimal impact on its natural setting / subservient to the natural landscape i.e. 'touch the earth lightly'.*
 - Improved open-air performance and functionality.*
 - Cost effective.*
 - Compliance with building codes and planning requirements as much as possible.*
- After the report (in point 1 above) has been adopted by Council, design options be prepared and a community consultation on the design options take place with a subsequent report to Council with proposed costing.*
- A full Council inspection of the site be carried out at the earliest opportunity.*

New stage requirements by the HAC

The Haven Amphitheatre Committee (HAC) has provided Council with their requirements for a new stage and associated facilities – see Attachment 1.

They wish to continue to carry out performances at the amphitheatre for the next 50 years. In general, their requirements are:

- A code compliant structure built to provide a modern low maintenance open air theatre facility for the next 50 plus years
- Temporary stage cover
- Ramps stage left and right from the stage to the undercroft
- A dry lockable undercroft comprising toilet and shower facility, kitchenette, Green Room, dehumidified technical room and storage
- Provision for disabled attendance

These requirements and the community's requirements form the basis of the functional specification for the new stage, which is the subject of this report and is contained in Attachment 2.

Intended capabilities of a new open air theatre

At the time of its creation by Marion Mahony Griffin in the 1930s, the Haven Amphitheatre “was the site of many theatrical events, which attracted people from artistic circles far beyond Castlecrag” (ref *Building for Nature: Walter Burley Griffin. Walker, Kabos & Weirick 1994*). It is the uniqueness of the theatre that attracts interest from outside the immediate area; however it remains primarily a local community facility.

In respect to the site's capabilities, the Haven website –www.thehaven.biz - advises that:

Dozens of community parties, meetings, visits, weddings, tours, tai chi and yoga classes, picnics and other informal gatherings take place in the Haven every year. The Christmas Carols attract an overflow audience every year exceeding 350-400 on occasions. Film nights have attracted varying numbers from 50 plus. Many theatrical productions have had audiences of many hundreds over several evenings.

The HAC have confirmed that the current seating capacity of the site is approximately 350; the proposed additional seating would bring the audience numbers to 380. Given the physical constraints of the site, its location in a residential precinct and access for scheduled performances, there would need to be a limit to audience numbers in a new theatre structure.

Appearance

The natural setting and the constructed 1930 sandstone seating terraces are the main challenge in ensuring that any new stage fits into the bushland setting and still remains subservient to the natural landscape. Heritage advice in conjunction with a theatre specialist and an architect are pivotal in producing viable options for the community to consider.

Concerns have been voiced in the previous public consultation about the type of materials to consider for a new stage and the expected compliance of any new structure to the Building Code of Australia (BCA), the Disability Discrimination Act, and the Rural Fires Act / Building

in Bushfire Prone Lands. Advice received from Council's Building Services Branch concerning a new stage indicates that:

- the stage is determined as a Type C construction under the BCA requirements which is less restrictive in respect to fire ratings and types of materials;
- accessibility is less prescriptive;
- bushfire risk exposure does not exclude the use of certain timbers in any renewal design.

Additionally Council's Property Maintenance Manager has advised that replacement of the existing structure should be built in concrete and masonry, with *"some special treatment of the concrete finish utilised, through the use of special forms and/or pre-cast sections, that would lessen the 'harshness' of the typical off- form look of concrete."*

Design options

In anticipation of Council adopting the functional specification at Attachment 2, RTM International, the theatre specialist previously engaged for The Concourse, has been asked to provide a fee for preparing design options for the new stage at the Haven. As Council's Purchasing Policy requires 2 quotes for goods and services up to the value of \$20,000 (or 3 quotes if more than \$20,000), another quote/s will be sought from the Local Government Procurement consultancy list. It is intended that the design consultant would work with an architect to prepare design option/s as concept plans only for the public consultation process.

Financial Implications

Funds are available within the Priority Improvements Program Open Space Buildings budget 2014/15 to engage consultant/s to develop design options (in concept form) for community consultation.

Council inspection of the site

Given the Council meeting timetable and the July mid-year recess, a full Council inspection of the site is scheduled for Saturday 26 July 2014.

Discussion

The HAC requirements are focussed on a new stage for outdoor performances. They seek a re-orientated and oval shaped stage area of 120 square metres, which is an increase on the existing stage area (100 square metres), but the new shaped stage would be better positioned for performances and audience sightlines.

The desired undercroft to the stage would be smaller than the stage area – at 80 square metres. However it is the manner in which this undercroft structure fits into the natural creek contours without impacting on natural stormwater flows that must be addressed at a more detailed design stage.

A demountable stage canopy is requested due to unexpected wet weather provoking the cancellations of performances, due to high safety risks for performers and technicians. The audience can address wet weather with rain coats and umbrellas; a stage canopy would allow the performance to continue in the event of rain. The design and material of such a canopy will be paramount given its long term maintenance requirements and exposure to the elements.

Improvements to the power supply at the site and distribution points around the site are essential to allow easier setting up for performances. The current arrangements of wiring and power leads are not acceptable, and are overdue for upgrade.

Improvements to the lighting system are needed to provide safe access for stage technicians and time efficiency for the setup volunteers.

A functional specification

A functional specification has been compiled utilising the HAC requirements, the planning and building code requirements, the community concerns, the site's natural and physical constraints, the site's residential context, heritage issues, accessibility and material choices. See Attachment 2.

This specification – if adopted – would be the basis for developing design options for the next stage of community consultation.

Conclusion

Performances at the Haven Amphitheatre are primarily run by volunteers within the Castlecrag community; events at the Haven are targeted to the local community who have previously provided their verbal support of the facility and its continued operation.

The design process, having regard to the functional specification, will need to examine how the replacement stage will achieve the Council's requirements as indicated in the resolution of 28 April 2014. This is particularly necessary in respect to the selection of the new stage materials and /or the finished treatment of the surfaces.

The manner in which a new open-air theatre is accommodated into the heritage listed setting, in bushland, straddling a creek, with low maintenance requirements and efficient stage operations, will be the subject of the next stage in the Haven Amphitheatre improvements.

OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION

That:

- 1. The functional specification for the Haven Amphitheatre improvements, as per Attachment 2 dated 14 July 2014 be adopted and be used to prepare design options to renew / refurbish the Haven Amphitheatre.**
- 2. Community consultation on the design options for a new open-air theatre take place with a subsequent report to Council, detailing proposed costings and results of the community consultation.**



Po Box 4010
 Castlecrag
 NSW 2068

The Haven Amphitheatre Stage project



The proposed stage profile

Required is

- A code compliant structure built to provide a modern low maintenance open air theatre facility for the next 50 plus years.
- Temporary stage cover.
- Ramps stage left and right from the stage to the undercroft.
- A dry lockable undercroft comprising, Toilet and shower facility, Kitchenette, Green Room, Dehumidified technical room, Storage.
- Provision for disabled attendance.

The architect will detail the design, actual layout and materials.

THE HAVEN AMPHITHEATRE COMMITTEE: "Conserving The Haven Amphitheatre's architectural natural and cultural heritage by operating a community-based open-air stage for music, theatre and the performing arts."

Celebrating 40 years of continuous performance

A S.355 Management Committee of Willoughby City Council
 ABN 59836485481

All correspondence to: info@thehaven.biz

Website: <http://www.thehaven.biz>

Specifications

The Stage

Say approximately 120 m square. A minimal increase in size.
See Appendix. "Proposed Stage Geometry".

Demountable Stage Canopy

Control desk

The existing desk will be used with provision for a temporary umbrella and clear sides.

Ticket position and disabled viewing platform

1. A small platform 2000 x 4000 mm will be installed to the northern side of the top of the main staircase from The Barricade.

Seats across the creek at Northern side of stage

New well-constructed seating to be spanned across the creek at the northern edge of the stage.

The Undercroft

A dry contained area to maximize all the available space under the stage, (80m² or more).

Kitchenette

With hot water.

Undercroft Technical Room a Secure (dry) Audio Lighting Equipment Room

Stage speaker mountings

Provision will be made for speaker support columns in the hand rail design

Stage boxes

Six lockable stage boxes for Audio, communications, 240v power and lighting dimmers.

Control desk box

This waterproof lockable facility box.

Three existing remote lighting box outlets (currently installed)

Two remote lighting boxes at the front stage level (new) located under the proposed creek bench seats

Disabled Portaloo Platform

Current portable toilet location configured for a disabled Portaloo

Bridge

The bridge structure is to be reviewed and replaced as required.

Emergency and house lighting

The Non interruptible power supplies will be relocated to the secure dry technical space in the undercroft.

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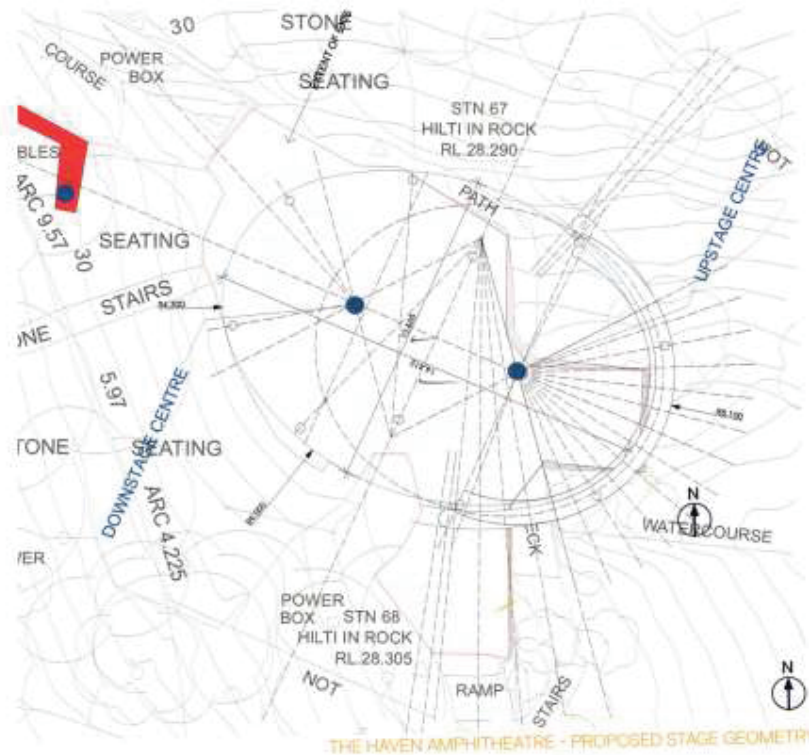
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Proposed Area Estimates

- Stage 120m2
- Undercroft Total >80m2
 - Toilet wash room 10m2
 - Kitchen Catering 10m2
 - Green Room 14m2
 - Make up 10m2
 - Technical secure room 12m2
 - Storage 24m2
- Ticket Booth 8m2

Appendix: Proposed Stage Geometry



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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.

14 July 2014