

Questions & Answers Session – 7 December 2021

(held via webinar due to COVID-19)

Members of the public are invited to submit questions in writing to the Harbour Trust prior to Questions & Answers Sessions which are held twice a year (immediately following Meetings in Public).

In addition to questions submitted prior to a Q&A Session, the Chair has the discretion to allow questions without notice to be taken from the floor during a Q&A Session.

Questions from members of the public received in writing prior to Q&A Session

GEORGES HEIGHTS

Jill L'Estrange

It is apparent from recent posts on social media by contenders for election to Mosman Council that there is likely to be a push to instal lights on Georges Heights Oval (GHO) which is leased to Mosman Council. This push comes on the back of a precedent set by the Trust in approving the installation of lights on the Drill Hall netball courts. The Georges Heights Plan of Management 2008 does not support the lighting of the oval due to a number of visual and amenity impacts. It seems inevitable that an application for the installation of lights will be made in the future. If that is the case, how does the Trust propose to respond to such an application.

Answer

The Chair advised that there is no ambition at all to light Georges Heights Oval.

The Harbour Trust's *Management Plan for Georges Heights* does not support the lighting of Georges Heights Oval due to a range of potential impacts, including the visual impact of lighting structures protruding above the ridgeline in such a highly visible location. The Harbour Trust's *2019 Recreation Strategy* confirms that the Harbour Trust's preference is to maintain the prohibition against floodlighting at Georges Heights Oval. This continues to be the Harbour Trust's position. No formal proposal for lighting the Oval has been made to the Harbour Trust.

SUB BASE PLATYPUS

Loretta Moy

- Q1. Is the Trust at Platypus out of step with Walkable City planning, open green space, and sustainability in readapting the Torpedo Factory for essentially a carpark?**
- Q2. At Platypus can it re-divert money to installing a sought-after walkway to Adderstone St which was removed form 2007 plans to improve access to the locals north of the site.**
- Q3. At Platypus, how can the Trust justify the need for extra carparking when North Sydney Council sees no need and usage to date shows no need?**
- Q4. When is the Trust going to provide recreational facilities at Platypus and make it truly a park and not a dull commercial site? A basketball rings? Community art gallery?**

- Q5. The Trust's initial heritage consultants saw the Torpedo Factory could be removed for public amenity as it was only of some significance. Why then is the Trust keeping it when North Sydney LGA has one of the lowest per capita of open space in the Sydney region and is only going to get worsen.**
- Q6. What can be said about Platypus when to date there has been no solar panels, water recycled, or reduction of hard surfaces for green space - basically zero sustainability for the environment, financially and socially.**

In the interests of allowing time for questions from the floor, the above questions were not answered individually during the Q&A session. However, in summary, the Chair highlighted that Sub Base Platypus – formerly a contaminated Defence site – is now an award-winning site that has been recognised by experts in the fields of architecture and heritage.

Answers

- A1.** The Sub Base Platypus renewal project has involved the demolition of a number of buildings to create new open space and improvements to public access. Access improvements have included the construction of an over-water boardwalk connecting the site with the North Sydney ferry wharf in Kesterton Park; and construction of two sets of stairs, a lift and a pedestrian bridge to connect the site's various levels.
- The demolition of part of the Torpedo Factory will continue this work and will deliver a new foreshore park, a welcoming entry to Sub Base Platypus, and a semi-covered public space overlooking the harbour. Adaptation of the remnant portion of the building will enable the site's heritage values to be interpreted and provide functional and community benefits including public space, heritage interpretation, a small amenities facility, and parking for site visitors.
- In the future, there is the potential for a pedestrian path to link the new foreshore park with Kesterton Park.
- A2.** The Platypus Management Plan continues to identify the potential for a pedestrian connection to Adderstone Ave. There are significant challenges to such a link being achieved, including the difficult topography of the location, and that the potential connection crosses privately-owned land. Pedestrian access at the northern end of the site, forming part of the Bondi to Manly Walk, is provided via Kiara Close and Hipwood Ave, and has been supported by Harbour Trust-installed signage.
- A3.** The provision of public parking in the Torpedo Factory is an important component of managing site access, to support the site and provide for the needs of visitors, while protecting local amenity. The planned outcomes for the Torpedo Factory have always identified some provision of car parking to meet demand, helping to address the potential for parking demand to 'spill' onto surrounding streets. Following demolition of the harbour-end of the building, only part of the remaining building will be used for parking, and the northern and eastern sides will be opened up for public space. As we emerge from the impact of the pandemic, and once the Torpedo Factory project is completed, the site will be progressively reoccupied with existing and new tenants, and site visitation will increase.
- A4.** Recently, the Harbour Trust installed a basketball ring at Sub Base Platypus, as well as activating the site with a pop up café, which has been greatly appreciated by the community. The Retort House provides a space for community activities and has been used for art exhibitions and community days. The COVID-19 pandemic has presented challenges over the past two years in pursuing activation opportunities for this site, however, however the Harbour Trust has recently

relaunched the Walking Tour of Sub Base Platypus – a 60 minute guided tour of the site’s layered history. These run select Saturdays, and can be booked through our website.

- A5.** The Conservation Management Plan for the site identifies the Torpedo Factory as having ‘Some’ heritage significance, which contributes to the site’s potential Commonwealth Heritage Values. The Torpedo Factory project has been sensitively designed to conserve and interpret heritage values while maximising the provision of new public open space. The retained portion of the building will allow for the interpretation of the Torpedo Factory’s heritage values, while its adaptive reuse will provide long term functional and community benefit. The new foreshore parkland created on the demolished portion of the building will focus on First Nations interpretation and connection to Country.
- A6.** The Harbour Trust is committed to environmental sustainability. The Torpedo Factory Renewal project will deliver environmentally sustainable initiatives such as the adaptive re-use of part of the building for community benefit, installation of solar panels on the remnant roof, and rain water harvesting.

End of questions submitted prior to the Questions & Answers Session

Questions/comments received ‘from the floor’

Questions and comments ‘from the floor’ were submitted by members of the public via the webinar. Answers to questions were provided either via the ‘chat’ function or live on screen.

Questions ‘from the floor’:

Q: At what stage are discussions with Mosman Council as to its tenure of Middle Head Oval and Georges Heights Oval?

A: The licence agreement with Mosman Council has not yet been finalised. When finalised, the licence will formalise the current arrangements in relation to the use of the ovals.

Q. Has the Harbour Trust any commitment to maintaining the natural values, and also plan to enhance/strengthen these important values, on both Cockatoo Island and North Head Sanctuary?

A. The Harbour Trust has been working with the Australian Wildlife Conservancy and the North Head Sanctuary Foundation to look at enhancing natural values, as well as working on a bushfire management plan.

Q: Is the Trust coordinating planning for Cockatoo with Goat Island, which I understand NSW is planning presently?

A: The Harbour Trust will soon be having discussions with NSW regarding their planning for Goat Island. At this stage we have not gone into any level of detail with NSW about this. The Harbour Trust has a very good working relationship with NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service.

Comments ‘from the floor’:

- Please consider recording Meetings in Public and posting to website; and publishing minutes within 14 days.
- It would be beneficial if there was a meeting so that the Community Advisory Committee and others who are interested can meet the Trust Members personally.