



adelaide road and keith stephenson park master plan - final report

for district council of mount barker



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ADELAIDE ROAD AND KEITH STEPHENSON PARK MASTER PLANS

For District Council of Mount Barker

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1. INTRODUCTION

Mount Barker is a town rich in history and natural assets at the heart of a rapidly growing rural district. The cool hills climate and undulating landscape with beautiful, established native and exotic trees, extensive open space, creeks and wetlands inter-connected with great walking and cycling trails make it an attractive place to live, work and visit, especially for young and growing families.

As a result Mount Barker has undergone unprecedented growth over the last decade and this trend is continuing. It has brought services, facilities, employment opportunities and tourists to the town but places a considerable strain on existing infrastructure, most notably Adelaide Road.

DC Mount Barker has commissioned some significant studies to address these issues, to develop and reinforce the character and identity of the town and to address the Community Vision described in the Community Strategic Plan 2004-2007, especially regarding lifestyle, environment, recreation and community assets. These include:

- 2001: Keith Stephenson Park Concept Plan prepared by PPK Consultants
- 2002: Mount Barker Regional Town Centre Action Plan prepared by Hassell Consultants
- 2004: Street Tree Master Plan prepared by URS Consultants

With Council funds becoming available to undertake infrastructure works over the next few years, the approved PLEC funding for under-grounding of power lines from Druids Avenue to Gawler St, and potential access to external funding sources there is now the opportunity to act on recommendations of these studies.

This report relates to the more detailed Master Plan that has been prepared by Hilary Hamnett and Associates to enable cost effective planning of the staging and budgets. They will provide the basis for on-ground capital and infrastructure works, and preparation of long term management plans for Keith Stephenson Park.

A fully integrated programme of collaborative and creative public art throughout the study area has been proposed as a complementary initiative to increase the richness, relevance and attraction of Mount Barker and the Keith Stephenson Park as a destination.

2. PROJECT OBJECTIVES

Council required the consultants to prepare more specific plans to:

- develop an overall thematic landscape and streetscape character linking the main Mount Barker approach from the South Eastern Freeway to Gawler Street and beyond to the Keith Stephenson Park,
- recommend an appropriate yet cost effective street tree planting for the main approach which reflects the character and themes of Adelaide Road,
- acknowledge and integrate the design proposals with the historic Auchendarroch backdrop and Dumas Street entrance,
- provide specific design guidelines for the Keith Stephenson Park based on the Concept Plan and compatible with the above themes,
- review and make recommendations for all aspects of the park infrastructure including
 - enhance its function as a local and regional park and a tourist destination
 - to host civic functions and events
 - to provide a hierarchy of spaces for a variety of functions at different scales
 - to meet current water sensitive urban design bench marks
 - to be environmentally, socially and economically sustainable
 - to include hard and soft landscape elements, furniture, signage
 - native/exotic/formal/informal planting
 - to fully integrate public art opportunities
- to give full consideration to
 - play
 - equal access
 - safety
 - links to adjacent facilities
 - sustainable, effective and economical use of maintenance resources
- to develop an arts strategy that will help create
 - a sense of arrival
 - a sense of place
 - a statement of community identity
 - cost efficiencies through early integration of artistic elements with infrastructure design

and can inform design elements for:

- markers and signage
- play structures
- street furniture
- paving
- general public art opportunities
- the overall design and materials palette

3. ADELAIDE ROAD IMPROVEMENTS

3.1 Issues and Opportunities

Adelaide Road has some wonderful assets. The open eucalypt forest at the freeway entrance heralds the network of 'bushland' creeks and trails that thread their way throughout the town, while the avenues of oak, claret ash, plane trees, and other ornamental deciduous tree planting closer to the town centre focussed on the historic Barr-Smith residence of Auchendarroch, evoke the heritage qualities for which Mount Barker is renowned.

There are many places along the road, however, where safety and ease of access is compromised as a result of incremental development and the pressure of the ever increasing traffic volumes. Improving accessibility and the ways in which historic places and the Keith Stephenson Park address Adelaide Road will enhance the attraction of Mt Barker, better integrate the two sides of the busy road and celebrate the history and culture of the town.

3.2 Design vision

The vision for the Adelaide Road is:

- to create an inspiring entry experience from the freeway into town
- upgrade the streetscape to improve the visual amenity and physical environment
- establish safe universal access both sides, the full length of Adelaide Road
- provide a stronger sense of the town centre and identity
- promote local heritage, particularly in the vicinity of historic Auchendarroch house.
- ensure safe connections to facilities and destinations beyond the town centre

3.3 Design Strategies

ENTRANCES

- improve eastbound freeway exit with hardy orchard trees typical of local area, or similar ornamental flowering species, to form a backdrop to existing tree planting
- develop a small transport interchange hub at the west-bound free way entry which can:
 - create a more dramatic entry experience by providing a new bus shelter designed with a contemporary but enduring artistic theme
 - improve pedestrian safety and vehicle access to Adelaide Road and Old Adelaide Road
 - provide safe, shaded short term and long term parking and drop off bays
 - recognise historic cultural elements by reinforcing remnant hedgerow on Old Adelaide Road

- provide an upgraded and more attractive safety fence opposite Cornerstone College, custom designed with contemporary artistic structures
- improve the Information Bay with realigned fence and retaining wall
- reinforce the entry from Dumas St with stronger avenue planting
- place artwork at the corner of Keith Stephenson Park by roundabout

ADELAIDE ROAD

- upgrade footpaths: improve gradients and definition of public and private land with different materials and remove of obstacles from footpaths where required (e.g. poles)
- extend Autumn Walk, restore and re-create avenue planting
- upgrade the appearance of the median strip using local Kanmantoo stone
- provide a stronger sense of commercial centre by upgrading streetscape following under-grounding of powerlines between Druids Ave and Gawler St
- create 'nodes' along the road to improve orientation including a small park with informal gum trees at Hawthorn Road intersection

AUCHENDARROCH / DUMAS ST PARK

- realign and supplement trees at Dumas St to create a colourful tree-lined entrance
- redevelop the park in front of Auchendarroch to make it more user-friendly while retaining its stormwater detention function and extending soft landscaping towards the Auchendarroch boundary in alignment with the former road.
- keep the 'memory' of the original road by retaining part of the alignment as an open area featuring a major sculptural artwork.
- minimise paved area of road to restrict access to emergency and occasional vehicles only, with sympathetic bollard or other treatments at each end
- re-grade the road reserve cutting at the Gawler St roundabout and provide a pedestrian thoroughfare along the entire southern side of Adelaide Rd in front of Auchendarroch
- Provide a signalled pedestrian crossing to improve connections and safety across Adelaide Road from Gawler St (and the town centre) to Auchendarroch, the TAFE college, library, cinema, skate park and Keith Stephenson Park

TREE SELECTION

- new avenue planting to mark approach to commercial centre: Zelkova 'Green Vase' with bright foliage to contrast with existing oaks
- existing gum trees: spotted gums to reinforce groups of eucalypts
- narrow footpaths: ornamental pear trees and crepe myrtles to match existing plantings
- trees missing from avenues or rows: infill with existing species e.g. plane trees; claret ash

BUS SHELTERS

- create a 'family' of bus shelter designs which can be used throughout Mount Barker including:
 - a basic design for general use
 - the basic design capable of variation and elaboration to create unique identities at specific locations, e.g. the freeway entry

4. KEITH STEPHENSON PARK

4.1 Issues and Opportunities

Keith Stephenson Park, which services both the local and regional population, is an extraordinary asset but requires a stronger presence and better definition to be fully appreciated. A better relationship between the large open gathering spaces for public events, the more intimate play and picnic areas and the services which support those activities, (parking, toilets, lighting and access for temporary installations) will improve the experience. Integration of spaces and functions with the natural environment can be improved. While the park adds to the quality of the experience from the Adelaide Road, the heavy traffic has a negative impact on the experience from within the park.

Having one of the few 'Liberty Swings' for the wheelchair-bound in the Adelaide area, there is clearly potential for the introduction of more dramatic, innovative and genuinely equal access play spaces within the park. It will become a special environment where all children can play together, rather than isolating those with special needs in a separate, fenced off area.

With some restructuring the Keith Stephenson Park has the potential to be the defining gathering place for families, visitors and the community, while maintaining the existing qualities for which it is already highly valued. It has the potential to become an exciting destination in its own right.

4.2 Design vision

The vision for the Keith Stephenson Park is to:

- develop the park as a distinct regional attraction
- retain the open character
- retain ornamental gardens
- incorporate more looped pathways, defined activity areas and focal attractions
- improve layout and facilities for large events
- provide a greater range of recreation, picnic and play experiences
- reduce watering and maintenance costs

4.3 Design Strategies

RECREATION

- provide more interesting pathways and additional bridges across the creek to create a variety of loop walks
- restructure the layout of ornamental planting beds to create a more intimate garden with seating, and to consolidate maintenance activities
- extend the autumn walk with deciduous tree planting and the new footpath connection with Adelaide Rd.

PLAY

- create a major central play ground fully accessible to all abilities
- provide smaller themed play experiences with natural elements complementing commercial play equipment in creek and woodland settings
- individual small play elements located away from the main playground but close to picnic settings
- locate and design the playground and surroundings so that fencing is not required

INTEGRATED ARTWORK

- art works may be employed both as focal points and/or destinations within the park
- playful custom design and artistic elements to be integrated into structures, park furniture and play equipment
- bush sculpture park beyond the lake for permanent and temporary displays to encourage more widespread use of the park
- a detailed Public Art Strategy for Keith Stephenson Park and Adelaide Road is included in the Appendices.

HERITAGE

- protect and make a feature of the old gum tree above skate park
- recognise the generosity of Keith Stephenson and his family by locating signage near the site of the former Stephenson residence close to the carpark
- provide interpretive signage

FACILITIES

- spaces reorganised so that:
 - public events can take place with improved views using the lake as a backdrop
 - the main playground is closer to the carpark and proposed toilets
- new shelters provided and improved facilities at key positions
- improved facilities and access for users of the skate park
- existing toilets to be converted to a kiosk as:
 - a central gathering place

- convenient outlet for food and drink close to the playground
- convenient for large events
- new, larger toilet facilities closer to the carpark and playground
- space for overflow parking, weekend markets and other similar events
- a play and picnic node adjacent to the TAFE carpark to improve connections between TAFE, the library and the park
- improved access to adjacent residential streets

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

- New planting around the lake and a new island to encourage wildlife and improve water safety
- A fountain or other water feature to improve water quality in the lake and provide interest
- better access to the lake including:
 - a jetty
 - a 'wharf', with shelter, for larger groups and events
 - retained grass to the water line in some places
 - framed views to the water
 - framed views across the water
- zoning of ornamental (exotic and deciduous) planting and indigenous (native) planting
- screen planting for adjacent residents where required
- rationalising areas of water usage for efficient irrigation and maintenance

5. APPENDICES

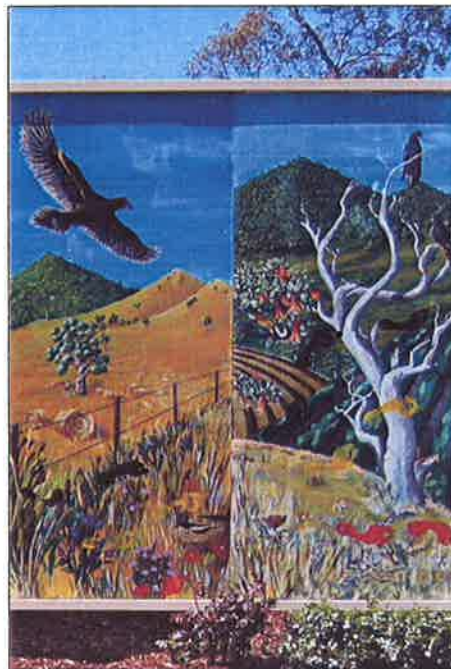
Appendix A: Plans L1 to L6

Appendix B: Public Arts Strategy

district council of mount barker
adelaide road and keith stephenson park masterplan

Appendix B

public art strategy



PUBLIC ART STRATEGY

Public art can invigorate a community, create a more interesting, attractive environment and a better sense of who we are. It can stimulate civic pride and a sense of ownership in the community and attract additional tourism with its commensurate economic activity. And it can take many forms, from the small interventions in design bringing character to the otherwise mundane, to a major landmark feature and tourism drawcard. This report has focussed on a range of practical initiatives that enhance both the perceived and actual environment of the township, making the town a richer and more rewarding place to visit and live.

The opportunities for Public Art and Design incorporated into these plans have been selected with particular regard to

- a) Achievability
 - safety issues in regards to road reserves
 - heritage issues
- b) Value in regards to
 - community enrichment
 - enhancement of a particular environment
 - providing impact in targeted areas
 - improving the overall attraction of Mt Barker for both residents and visitors
- c) Need - some areas are clearly more in need of a lift than others
- d) Effective in terms of perceived resources available
- e) Potential funding partners and a staged approach

Each idea can be adapted and moulded to make best use of opportunities as they arise. One should always be open to new ideas - every development around the town could in fact be seen as an opportunity to use creative interventions to make a better quality design or public space, though with limited resources one has to look realistically at relative value and long term benefit.

To pursue the initiatives described here, and do it well requires a significant investment, not necessarily financial though some would clearly be but certainly in time, emotion and good will. The 'can do' attitude of certain individuals can be an inspiration to those accustomed to being bogged down in due process and red tape, but it is well to remember that public art on the whole is reasonably permanent. We live with our mistakes!

The proposals are described in the following sequence, as a visitor would perceive them coming from the freeway.

1. Artworks that can provide a more dramatic entrance

- A new Entrance sign on the bank to the left of Adelaide Rd (already underway).
- Contemporary designed bus shelter and environs
- Upgrade existing fence at school crossing and towards the bus shelter

2. Artworks that will enhance the streetscape along Adelaide Road

- Auchendarroch / Dumas Street Park
- Bridge over the creek at Keith Stephenson Park

3. Artwork to create a more enriching experience at Keith Stephenson Park

- A limited number of significant focal art works to be positioned around the park
- Bush Sculpture Park
- Children's play area
- Creative design in the development of picnic and seating areas
- Bridge artwork
- Interpretive Signage

Artworks that can provide a more dramatic entrance to Mt Barker from the Freeway

1. A new entrance sign on the bank to the left of Adelaide Rd (already underway).

2. Contemporary designed bus shelter and environs

The existing shelter has significant visual impact due to its size, elevation and position on the bend. With limited accessibility, poor kerbing and steep slopes, an overhaul of this rustic structure would be welcome.

A contemporary designed structure with appropriate paving and artistic bollards / railings could provide strong visual impact and image support to new entrance sign on the left. Without actually providing another entrance statement, it will build a subliminal gateway effect and immediately fix Mount Barker as a contemporary, design orientated town in the minds of the visitors.



3. Upgrade existing fence at school crossing and towards the bus shelter

Immediately following the bus shelter is another existing structure with significant visual impact. Prominently positioned by the bend of the road, the railings along the footpath are an ideal device for further reinforcing the sense of entry. Artistic interventions at the crossing repeated at intervals in the panels along the fence would reinforce the sense of arrival and draw attention to the information bay opposite.



Artworks that enhance the streetscape along Adelaide Road

From a vehicle point of view Adelaide Road is and will remain a very busy thoroughfare. Densely planted at the edges with many signs, both directional and promotional vying for attention it is generally felt that upgrading the landscape design along the street is probably the only intervention warranted. Pressures on the traffic are plenty enough without introducing additional distractions.

From a pedestrian point of view however there could be a few more intimate interventions to add richness and punctuation to the lengthy walk along this road. These could include pavement inclusions, interesting bollards and interpretive signage. Such interventions would best be considered as part of particular developments as they occur or as a part of larger infrastructure initiatives such as a heritage or autumn colour walk.

We ask ourselves that if one was to put resources into creating for example, a significant pavement artwork, would this be the optimum place in the township to place it?

1. Auchendarroch / Dumas Street Park

An opportunity exists here for a significant artwork to enhance this historic building and the developing park immediately in front. Sight lines down busy Dumas Rd, along Adelaide Rd and diagonally across from Morphett St make this an important site in a park with significant potential for increased use.



2. Bridge over the creek at Keith Stephenson Park

The low, green painted concrete bridge wall on the western side of Adelaide Road is unattractive but would provide a solid basis for a cost effective, artistic mosaic, adding colour and drawing attention to the excitement and creativity one can anticipate in Keith Stephenson Park.



Artwork to create a more enriching experience at Keith Stephenson Park, promoting visitor numbers at both the park and, by making a regional attraction, to the township as a whole

1. A limited number of significant art works to be positioned at focal points around the park

Opportunities for four significant artworks have been proposed, designed to

- create a strongly iconic image for the park
- to encourage people to move throughout the park to see them
- to help understand the layout of the park and presence to the individual precincts



They have been strategically positioned

- A) At the corner by the Strathalbyn Road roundabout, at the entrance to both park and town
- B) With the central Children's Playground, (though this may actually be the playground itself)
- C) In the lake at the south western end.
- D) On the hill down from the skatepark, visible from much of the park and Adelaide Rd.

2. Bush Sculpture Park

A woodland sculpture park in the natural bush setting north of the lake with combination of permanent and transient works of art. It might extend throughout the treed area and down to that side of the lake. Council would be able to promote this sculpture park as a permanent drawcard and also co-ordinate annual sculpture weeks when invited artists could gather and create works from natural materials to be situated in this setting. Some permanent works, some ephemeral it would also ensure a changing display in the park and promise new experiences for regular visitors.

It could be a unique attraction, a children's wonderland, and an extraordinary addition to the cultural landscape of the state. A bush sculpture park would enliven this under utilised section of the park and provide a quieter, contemplative area.



3. Children's play area

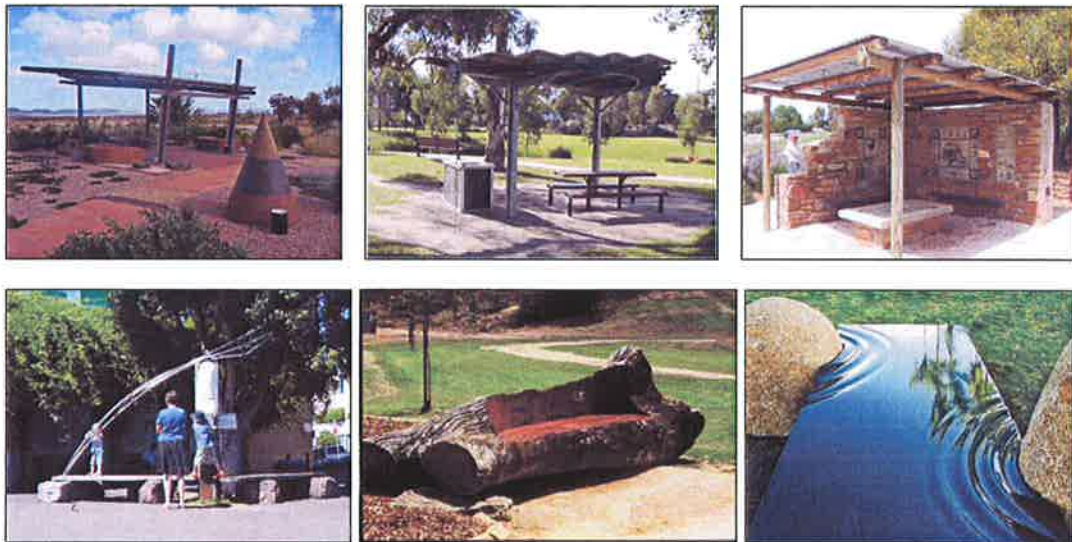
Many towns are realising that one way of encouraging new families into the area is to provide a landmark Children's Play Area. The combination of art, design and off the shelf play equipment with attractive picnic facilities can offer a special day out for families far beyond the local catchment area. The development of a major new play area here would reinforce the status of the park as a unique regional facility and build on Mount Barker's attraction as a destination point.



This could be supported by smaller alternative play opportunities at different picnic sites dispersed throughout the park.

4. Creative design in the development of picnic and seating areas

Picnic areas developed with families in mind can include quirky or playful elements as well as off the shelf furniture. They should be individually considered during the design phase but in general terms provide a different experience at each node.



5. Bridge Artwork

The wall of the Adelaide Road bridge over the creek could be seen as a blank canvas to celebrate the importance Mount Barker places on the environment. Given the difficulty accessing the site for installation and maintenance, some kind of fixed metal structure or stencil artwork could be cost effective and manageable.



6. Interpretive Signage

While a proliferation of signs should be avoided there are three opportunities in the park and along Adelaide Road which should be mentioned.

• Environment signs

Environmental signs currently installed along the Laratinga Creek pathway add an interesting dimension to the walk. To strengthen the connection between the two recreation areas, the signs could be developed further and continued along the creek through Keith Stephenson Park and beyond to the end of the trail.

• Autumn Walk

Proposed plantings have acknowledged and built on Mount Barker's reputation for autumn colour. A series of small signs could enhance that reputation with a walk along Adelaide Road and into the northern end of park developed and directed by way of these signs. Small, simple but colourful signs are envisaged describing the various tree species.

• Heritage

Mount Barker's heritage could be better identified and celebrated. Many towns have heritage walks where institute buildings, old butchers shops and mills feature strongly. A few opportunities have been identified in this area that could present a richer and more personal perspective which could be linked to other similar opportunities around the town

1. The old gum tree above the skate park. It must have preceded settlement while the bits of metal, fencing etc still stuck in the bark tell of the evolving history of this area
2. Keith Stephenson - by all accounts a regular farmer in the district, but the gift of this land by his widow to the community makes this a relevant venue for discussing through personal anecdotes this life on the land. Best situated at the KSP carpark area, apparently the site of 'Brookbank', the family home.
3. Auchendarroch - continuation of the footpath along the side of this property invites the possibility of telling some of its history here to the passer by.

Such signs can depend entirely on the graphics for information but they are much richer when design construction and artistic presentation are combined.

IMAGES

Page 1

Bus shelter - Greg Healey and George Popperwell
Train Shelter - Hallett Cove
Melbourne Tram Shelters

Railings at Berri SA - Jam Factory Metal workshop
Fence at Swallowcliffe Schools - Martin Corbin
Fence on Goodwood Road - Alchemy

Page 2

Mount Gambier sculptures - Max Lyle
Brambuk - Grampians National Park - artist unknown
Sydney Botanic Gardens - Bronwyn Oliver

Mosaic work - City Sites Project, Adelaide

Page 3

Adelaide Zoo Seal - Silvio Apponyi
Mawson Lakes - Craige Andrae and Hossein Valamanesh
Carrick Hill Elephant - Jeff Thompson
Carrick Hill - 'Earth Speaks' - Lyn Moore
"Bracken Knot", Forest of Dean, UK - Stuart Frost
'Forest nymph' - Patricia Leighton
Lawbridge Gate - Andy Goldsworthy

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Civic Park, Modbury - Family BBQ area
City Square, Melbourne - Bruce Armstrong
Tusmore Park Playground, Adelaide - Gray Hawk, Hemisphere design
Port Augusta Magistrate's court - Dennis Harrison, Viesturs Cielens design, Cath Cantlon artist
Forestville Reserve, Goodwood - Taylor Cullity Lethlean
Colin Theile Park, Eudunda - Jim Dunstan
Balmain Road, Balmain, Sydney
Tolmer Park, Bordertown - Martin Corbin and Shane Redden
Picnic Table - Hew Chee Fong

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Wall in Halifax St, Adelaide - Jam Factory Metal Workshop
Wall at the Shrine of Remembrance, Melbourne.