



Adelaide Park Lands Preservation Association, Inc.

www.adelaide-parklands.asn.au

secretary@adelaide-parklands.asn.au

c/o BK Partners Pty Ltd

Chartered Accountants

P.O. Box 4053, Norwood South SA 5067

Patron: Rev Dr Lynn Arnold AO

ABN 19 706 384 386

Adelaide Football Club “Unsolicited Proposal” - SUBMISSION

A) About APPA

The Adelaide Park Lands Preservation Association Inc (APPA) was founded in 1987 as a non-profit community based ‘watchdog’ to guard Adelaide’s greatest treasure: the unique public open spaces of its Park Lands, which include the city squares. APPA offers a focal point for South Australians to help in the preservation, restoration and promotion of Colonel Light’s visionary gift. Apart from current campaigns about specific issues or Park Lands sites, APPA has three ongoing activities designed to focus community attention on, and raise awareness of the rarity, beauty and world importance of the Adelaide Park Lands. These regular activities are:

- the biennial Adelaide Park Lands Art Prize;
- the Park Ambassadors Program, with regular guided walks through the Park Lands; and
- provision and maintenance of on-line resources to encourage the community to discover and explore the Park Lands, including:
 - self-guided walking “trail guides”,
 - the Adelaide Park Lands “photo of the day” and “video of the month”

B) Structure of the Council's “consultation”

The Council has published a “feedback form” which invites responses to three specific questions.

The “feedback form” asks the wrong questions. It is fundamentally misleading, insofar as it attempts to legitimise an illegitimate process. The Council's Unsolicited Proposals process may be appropriate for other commercial locations, but is fundamentally at odds with the legislation that applies to the Adelaide Park Lands. In particular the Council's Unsolicited Proposals process attempts to sidestep or ignore the Adelaide Park Lands Management Strategy 2015-25 which is in force pursuant to the *Adelaide Park Lands Act 2005*, and the Council's Community Land Management Plan for Denise Norton Park / Pardipardinyilla (Park 2) which is in force pursuant to Chapter 10 of the *Local Government Act 1999*.

Without prejudice to the foregoing, the remainder of this submission will address the three specific questions posed in the Council's Feedback Form

C) The Council's Questions

1. In your opinion, does the Draft Proposal provided by Adelaide Football Club align with the Guiding Principles?

The so-called “Guiding Principles” endorsed by the Council on 11 June 2019 have no basis in law. The Guiding Principles were devised without the benefit of any community consultation and without reference to the statutory principles of the Adelaide Park Lands Act 2005. They do not supplant the Council's statutory obligations under that Act and envisage a land use that is at least in some tension (we would argue entirely inconsistent) with those statutory principles, and with the Adelaide Park Lands Management Strategy 2015-25 and the Community Land Management Plan for Denise Norton Park / Pardipardinyilla (Park 2).

To the extent that any regard should be had to the so-called Guiding Principles the draft proposal by the Adelaide Football Club (AFC) should be regarded as entirely insufficient to meet any of the Objectives in those 'Guiding Principles', as specified on the next page.

Community Engagement:

The AFC has not proposed any mechanism for community input into the decision-making around the major portion of their proposed building, i.e. its commercial headquarters. It is a nonsense to suggest that community input would or could influence the AFC's intentions for its own commercial business headquarters into the future.

Community Benefit

There is no community benefit from locating a commercial office building that is inaccessible to the public on Park Lands. Additionally, as a commercial organisation, the AFC has no community service obligations and therefore cannot be expected to price access to aquatic facilities at a level that would facilitate access by low-income groups. Similarly, should the City of Adelaide take on the management of a facility built by the AFC any long term financial benefit to the City of Adelaide and its ratepayers would be negated.

Park Lands Setting

The AFC has misleadingly claimed that its proposed building would reduce the built footprint of the current Aquatic Centre on Park Lands. This claim rests upon a false assertion that the grassed areas inside the Aquatic Centre fence are part of the existing "footprint". This point was made by Dr David Ness in a deputation to the City Council on 11 February 2020.

The Community Land Management Plan for this Park does not envisage a commercial office building. Nor does the Adelaide (City) Development Plan. The proposal omits any discussion of the demand for hundreds of new car parking spaces on Park Lands. A proposal for 75 underground car parks would be entirely insufficient for the AFC's own staff, let alone patronage to the Aquatic Centre or the AFC office building.

The claim that the proposed new complex of buildings is lower in height than the current Aquatic Centre building also has little relevance to the built form impact on the Park Lands setting. The Aquatic Centre's building height tapers away from its single highest point, whereas the proposed AFC imposes a similar height along the entire length of the building, creating a much greater built form impact.

The AFC undertaking that there would be no permanent liquor licence on the site could be easily circumvented in future, or side-stepped by obtaining temporary or a "Club Liquor Licence" (a new option since November 2019) at any time. Likewise a promise that an oval would not be fenced could easily be altered in future, or through the use of temporary fencing for specific uses. It would be unrealistic to expect that not to occur.

Economic Outcomes

It is fanciful to suggest that new retail and cafe and/or shopping areas at the site would provide any economic support to businesses elsewhere in North Adelaide. If anything, the opposite would be true as proposed AFC initiatives would attract customers away from existing businesses in O'Connell Street, as with the current Adelaide Oval's modus operandi.

Value Proposition

To the extent that a new Aquatic Centre built by the AFC might improve short-term finances for the City of Adelaide, this could occur only by reducing service provision, or increasing the cost for users, or both. This would be inevitable as (unlike local governments) the AFC has no charter or mandate in its constitution to subsidise community public health and recreation facilities.

In the longer-term, the presence of a large administrative building in a Park Lands network with National heritage values would only undermine those heritage values, reducing the potential longer-term benefit to the City from world cultural tourism. In October 2018, the Adelaide Park Lands Authority was advised that a successful bid for World Heritage listing of the Park Lands would lead to a tourism increase to Adelaide of 20 to 30%.

2. The draft proposal submitted by Adelaide Football Club has not been informed by the Draft Needs Analysis findings nor by community feedback. Taking this into consideration, what are your views on the Adelaide Football Club Draft Proposal? Please provide your comments

The AFC proposal is, by its own admission, subject to radical future change pending the results of the Council's Needs Analysis.

Nevertheless, it is obvious that this proposal is self-serving, as is only to be expected from any commercial organisation. It is an attempt to secure priceless public land, within the Adelaide Park Lands, for private commercial benefit.

Such an approach should have been rejected out of hand by the City Council, as custodians of this part of the Park Lands on behalf of the public.

It is a subterfuge to link a commercial land acquisition to the fate of the Aquatic Centre. The Council's decision on future provision of aquatic facilities should be entirely separated from the decision on whether a commercial organisation should be allowed to set up its headquarters on Park Lands.

Other local governments councils around Australia and the world perceive ratepayer support for aquatic centres as part of their core business, and part of a statutory duty to promote public health.

3. Please provide any further feedback regarding the Adelaide Football Club Draft Proposal:

The arguments for building the AFC headquarters are similar to those used by every well-meaning enthusiast and rapacious developer spruiking the "next big idea" on Adelaide's world-unique Park Lands. There is always a 'fig leaf' to hide their rude intent, and cloak their plan with a good cause such as disadvantaged youth or an Aboriginal Academy, or support for AFLW, and/or the need to replace a "tired, run-down" Aquatic Centre.

As the more expansive and evolving concept plans are published, touting the planned aesthetics, the proponents have been juggling the irreconcilable premise that the final plan depends on the result of consultation with the tiny footprint fallacy that a corporate office block will (with some creative accounting) definitely be smaller than whatever is in place, which includes all the current internal footpaths, fenced-off open space, lean-tos, paved areas, storage sheds, and car parking.

Analysing the footprint of a draft concept or the design of the paddling pool is merely a diversionary tactic, to conceal the plan for a corporate office building in a public park.

Any undertakings made by the AFC, in connection with its proposal, are meaningless. The current CEO will not be there forever. The Club's current Chairman has already announced he's retiring this year. New management will have different ideas about any headquarters building that they might inherit on Park Lands and would inevitably negotiate to expand operations into the future.

If an initial building were to be approved, subsequent changes of size, scope and function would be assured. It would be only a matter of time, and constant lobbying of future City Councils, before the AFC would get lease restrictions eased, and something even more inappropriate approved.

The only appropriate course of action is to reject this Unsolicited Proposal, and consider the Aquatic Centre Needs Analysis without being overshadowed by the spectre of a corporate Park Lands takeover.

Shane Sody, President



6 March 2020