

Adopted Masterplan

Gregson Park



November 2021



Acknowledgment

City of Newcastle acknowledges that we operate on the grounds of the traditional country of the Awabakal and Worimi peoples.

We recognise and respect their cultural heritage, beliefs and continuing relationship with the land, and that they are the proud survivors of more than two hundred years of dispossession.

CN reiterates its commitment to address disadvantages and attain justice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of this community.

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The aim of the Masterplan

Identify the role of Gregson Park in meeting local recreation needs and respecting the heritage significance of the park.

Identify the way in which the Gregson Park can be most effectively utilised to help meet the broader recreation, sporting and community facility needs of the surrounding communities and the wider Newcastle region.

There is opportunity to celebrate the heritage of the park through interpretation of both indigenous and non-indigenous stories.



Introduction

The aim of the Masterplan is to:

- Identify the role of Gregson Park in meeting local recreation needs whilst respecting the heritage significance of the park.
- Identify the way in which the Gregson Park can be most effectively utilised to help meet the broader recreation and community facility needs of the surrounding community and the wider Newcastle region.
- There is opportunity to celebrate the heritage of the park through indigenous and non-indigenous stories.

Background

- Designed in 1884 by Alfred Sharp, the heritage listing describes it as a 'fine example of a major suburban park with many old plantings and a complex overlay of various layers of memorials and features including gates, fountains, community service buildings and fixtures'.
- The Newcastle Local Strategic Planning Statement and Local Housing Strategy identifies Gregson Park to be located within a Stage 1 Urban Renewal Corridor. As such, CN envisions a higher density of residential development for this area which will capitalise on the outlook and proximity to Gregson Park, which will increase use and expectation of the park as an active and passive recreational hub.



Landscape Panoramas



View northwest through the Tudor Street Entry Gates towards the RSL Memorial (centre left), and the playground with Palm trees (centre right), Steel Street is located on the right.



View southeast over the formal flower beds towards RSL Memorial with the Tudor Street Entry Gates and Holy Apostles Greek Orthodox Church (left). The former Bowling Green site is to the right.



View southwest from Lindsay/Steel Street entry towards the amenities building with the playground and Palm trees (centre left). Lindsay Street and the tennis courts are to the right (background).



View east from Samdon Street along the east-west path. The glasshouse and tennis club house (left) the Rose gardens and maintenance building (centre left), amenities Building (centre right) and former Bowling Green to the right.

Consultation Summary

How many people have we made contact with - and how?



21

Internal staff interviews



265+

Community conversations



14

Key stakeholder interviews



2

Student workshops



827

Online survey submissions



828

Interactive map ideas submitted



163

Engaged over 2 x park drop-ins

**Online Map -
top comments pinned**

"An art walk through the trees, some sculptures and better lighting"

"A community garden would be a lovely addition to Gregson Park, and would be used by people of all ages, from the preschool right up to older adults..."

"Maybe a hitting wall (Bat Ball Wall)"

"All the shade trees are important - they cool the area, not like artificial shade structures which date so quickly and are generally very hot underneath in summer"

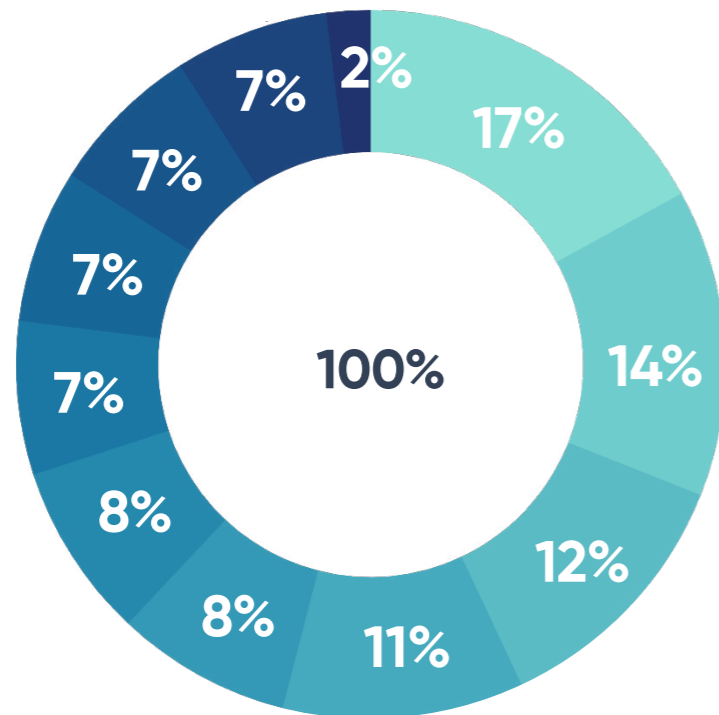
"A small wildflower meadow (or small wildflower gardens) would be lovely... would be great for pollinators and biodiversity..."

"It would be great to see a night market here"

"I love the history of the path, its cannons and monuments. It speaks of a time when parks were such a significant location for the community?"

"Love the paths (need upgrading)... Great for circuit running and for children to ride their bike/scooter"

Online Survey



What do people want to see more of:

- Inclusive play space | 17%
- Sports courts | 14%
- Youth orientated activity | 12%
- Community garden | 11%
- Event space | 8%
- Cafe | 8%
- Accessible toilets | 7%
- Community events | 7%
- Grass areas / Open green space | 7%
- Keep it as it is now | 7%
- Other | 2%

Key Findings

Phase 1 Snapshot Report 2020

Through analysis of the data, several common themes have emerged across the school workshops, stakeholder interviews, in-park drop-in sessions and broader online engagement.



Plantings & aboriginal culture

Retain fig trees and flower beds, add native species and Awabakal cultural interpretation



Community gathering

Upgrade park assets to support events; Pop-up cafe; community edible garden (edible plantings and plots cared for by community organisations)



Heritage

Keep cannons & monuments



Play space

All ages, inclusive, larger footprint



Recreation

Upgrade existing paths for bike/scooter/run; flat and open green grass areas; Add bat ball wall, basketball half court; keep tennis courts, upgrade clubhouse to multipurpose building



Basic amenities

Toilets: upgrade and extend; Shelter & seating: Add more open-sided shelter and seating for larger groups

Guiding Principles For Heritage Items



Reconciliation

- City of Newcastle (CN) recognises that the City occupies an area previously inhabited for thousands of years by indigenous people of Australia.
- CN will in consultation with the Aboriginal community, acknowledge and present indigenous history along with the presentation of European heritage.

Integrity

- The integrity of heritage places can be undermined by inappropriate uses, uncoordinated landscape and visual clutter.

Heritage Places

- Are a valuable resource and must be protected into the future.

Public Access

- Heritage Places are community land or Crown Land in the care of Council.
- These places should not be alienated from public access and use.

Equitable Access

- Heritage places should be equitable.
 - CN will ensure equitable and universal access.
-

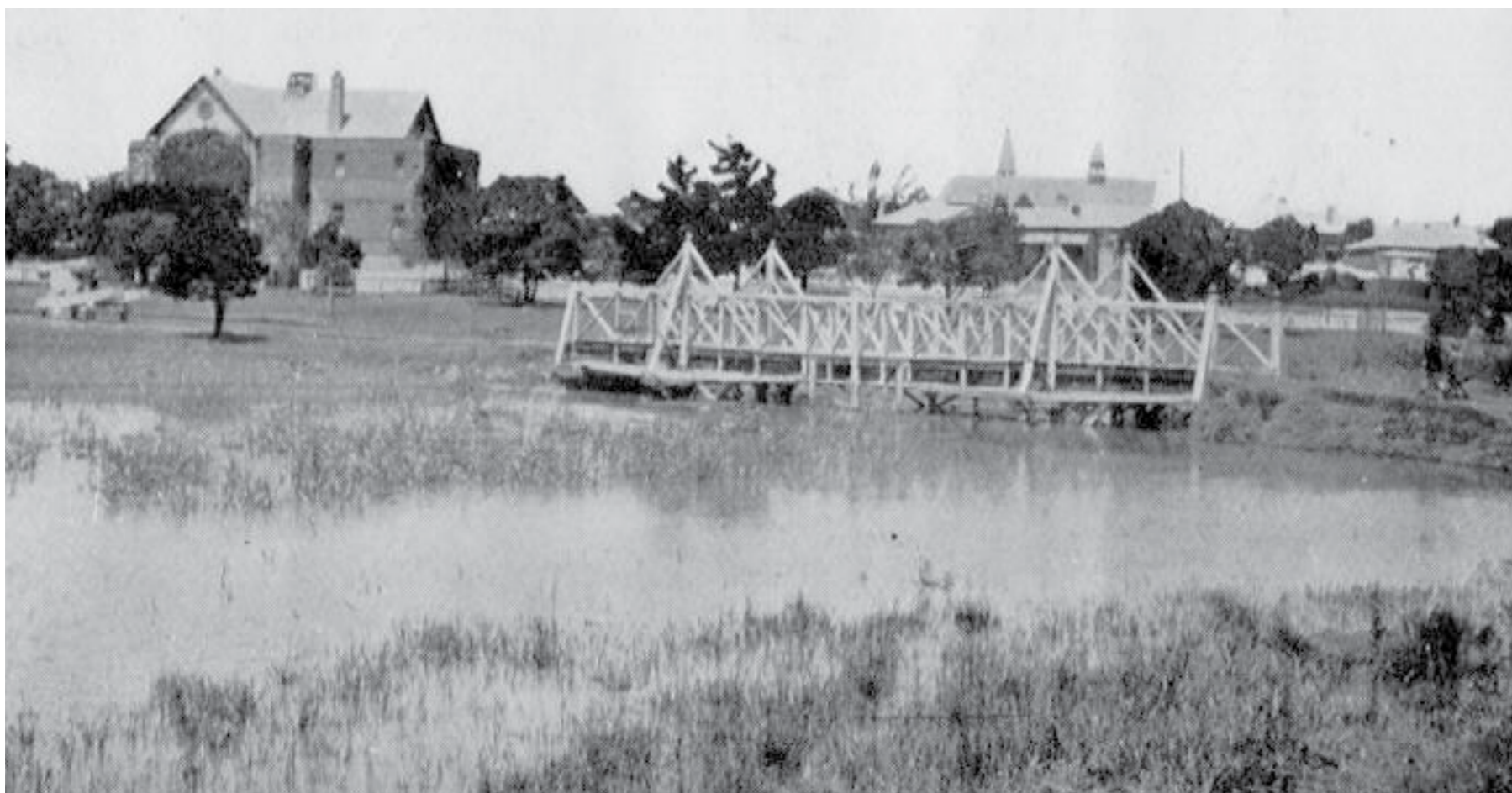


Acknowledgement: Historic images sourced from 'More Hidden Hamilton' by Ruth Cotton, Hunter Press 2016

"Once a water course...

If you or I were to meet Gregson Park for the first time, at this stage of her long life, we'd never guess what she'd once been: a water course, a swamp, a scrubby path of unwanted land. Yet today, beneath her smooth exterior, under the spreading trees, and despite the monuments testifying to civic worth, there is vulnerability."

Source: More Hidden Hamilton, Ruth Cotton 2016 Hunter Press



Opportunities Plan

Buildings & Amenities

4 - Amenities - Upgrade:

Retain in current location and consider internal refurbishment to improve access and safety

Consider inclusion of disabled change room - opportunity to extent foot print into existing unused chess play area

Consider new amenities building on Bowling Green site if play space to be relocated

7 - Maintenance Shed

Consider the need for maintenance staff amenities within the park

If storage is required consider new shed closer to Samdon Street to free up the central areas of the site for public use

Consider the use of the building as a cafe or kiosk

6 - Glass House

Retain part for use of maintenance team and consider to allow for community use for storage for possible community garden

Adaptive reuse can be considered but extensive dilapidation is an issue

Consider removal and possible relocation to Bowling Green site

Shade Structures

Provide more sheltered picnic settings for use for small family celebrations

Consider large central structure to cater for events and market set-up and possible small stage area

Former Bowling Green Site

Consider altering overall shape of site to better integrate into park layout and extending south into turf area

Resolve and consider existing level difference - possibility to integrate informal seating along boundary

Consider variety of possible new site uses:

1. Community Garden

- Consider appropriate extent and accessibility - open for everyone or partially fenced

2. Relocated Play space

- Create a play space with a range of ideas around
- A larger area for play could potentially have a larger and more diverse play experience
- Opportunity to have bike learning circuit nearby

Tree Canopy

Consider removal of selected low retention value trees where beneficial to creation of open areas for informal ball games or extended market areas

Consider planting new native trees in relation to new picnic settings for natural shade and in extended play areas to allow for climbing and informal play

Develop strategy to retain and protect specimen trees through appropriate mulched or planted areas

Consider elevated path structures to protect tree roots while retaining path connections

5 - Tennis Courts & Club House

Consider converting fields to multiple-courts - including Hot-shot tennis to allow for wider and less formal use

Consider refurbishment of Club house or demolition and incorporation of amenities in a combined amenities building at a centralised area of the park with dedicated storage.

Consider offering additional practice walls close to tennis courts.

Consider extension of area to include outdoor fitness

Furniture

Upgrade and consider to replace with one overall range to improve park aesthetic including lighting for amenity and safety

Reconsider locations throughout park to accommodate other park uses

Additional bins including dog waste bag providers

Stormwater Management/Bush Tucker Garden

Consider creating WSUD / wetland areas incorporating passive re-creation on elevated path and platforms or incorporate water / nature play idea

Consider adding retention tanks in suitable locations to increase water holding capacity and use of water for irrigation

Incorporate wet areas into the park through swales and the use of bush tucker plants for wet and dry conditions to enhance biodiversity for fauna and insects

2 - Existing Play Space Site & 3- BBQ Area

Create play experience suitable for all abilities and age groups - include mix of informal play and propriety items / equipment

Retain Palm Grove and incorporate in play area - consider re-instating former water ways for water play

Opportunity to integrate indigenous & European story telling in play themes

Consider extending play area to the north east

Consider re-location of play space to former Bowling Green Site and reconfigure area for more passive recreation and additional picnic settings and BBQ, incorporating existing shelter

Major Entry B

Consider creating a safe pedestrian crossing solution - pedestrian priority area to improve link to new James Street Plaza & Beaumont Street

Consider enhancement of Memorial cannon settings

Path Layout and Wayfinding

Upgrade path surfaces and consider unifying path width based on a hierarchy of main and secondary path - avoid duplication and excessive hardening of the site.

Maintain access and connections through the site

Simplify path network to create more open areas

Dedicate / incorporate area for bike learning to minimise conflict with other park users.

Consider wayfinding signage strategy

Planting Strategy

Flower and Rose garden beds

Retain for aesthetic value but reduce number to enable using more complex patterns in smaller areas

Focus beds on locations where they enhance important elements to improve settings or at entry points to create highlights

Perennial / mixed planting beds

Consider reduction of beds to create more open space and allow for better path connections

Consider introduction of more native species to improve biodiversity and enhance year round interest

Consider including bush-tucker species for educational opportunities



Turf Areas

Retain open turf areas for informal ball games and extended areas for markets as well as informal picnic



Develop maintenance plan to gradually de-compact and re-turf all areas




Vision










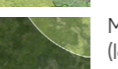

LEGEND

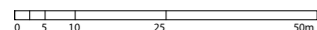
- (A) Enhanced James Street entry and Cannon setting with floral garden beds
- (B) New inclusive play space with nature play, water feature, shade, formal and informal seating and native garden with small yarning circle. 'Maddies bench' to be retained and relocated in play space.
- (C) New swale, footbridges & wetland area for water detention
- (D) Tree protection area - ground cover planting
- (E) Transformed decorative garden beds with mixed rose bed planting
- (F) Central path with enhanced Fountain setting and seating
- (G) Seating steps to raised former Bowling Green area with integrated accessible ramp
- (H) New open shelter & gravel area - picnic, markets, events and community space for multiple uses such as Bocce and Yoga. Provision of picnic settings and BBQs
- (I) Informal Picnic area & passive recreation area, glasshouse removal subject to heritage assessment
- (J) Event and maintenance vehicle access with removable bollards
- (K) Re-aligned path
- (L) Enhanced Tudor Street entry with floral garden beds
- (M) Re-aligned path with seating opportunities
- (N) New tree planting
- (O) Upgraded existing amenities building providing disabled access and facilities
- (P) Potential new Kiosk - Adaptive re-use of maintenance building, subject to relocation of maintenance building
- (Q) New multi-use halfcourt with hit-wall & seating
- (R) Retention of Tennis Clubhouse and tennis courts. Future renewal of Clubhouse and possible multicourt line markings subject to outcomes of City Wide Tennis Strategy.
- (S) Outdoor fitness equipment suitable for all ages, bike racks & seating
- (T) New accessible pathway
- (U) Potential Community Garden with raised beds, subject to agreed community ownership
- (V) New stormwater tank under former Bowling Green
- (W) Opportunity for underground stormwater tank, subject to further investigation
- (X) Widened park entry and path

-  1. Investigate pedestrian crossing improvements to and from the park
-  2. Investigate LED path and play space flood lighting and improvements including feature lighting in accordance with a lighting strategy

-  New double bin stations including recycling
-  New bike racks
-  New drinking & refill station including dog bowl

-  Existing boundary fence retained & refurbished
-  New boundary fence to play area
-  Existing Hunter Water Cooperation Pipe

-  New seats
-  New table setting
-  Existing tree
-  Elevated board walk
-  Mass planting beds (low shrubs & groundcovers)
-  New tree

SCALE: 1:1250 at A3


Play Space Vision



Shade / Passive Recreation / Native Garden / Education

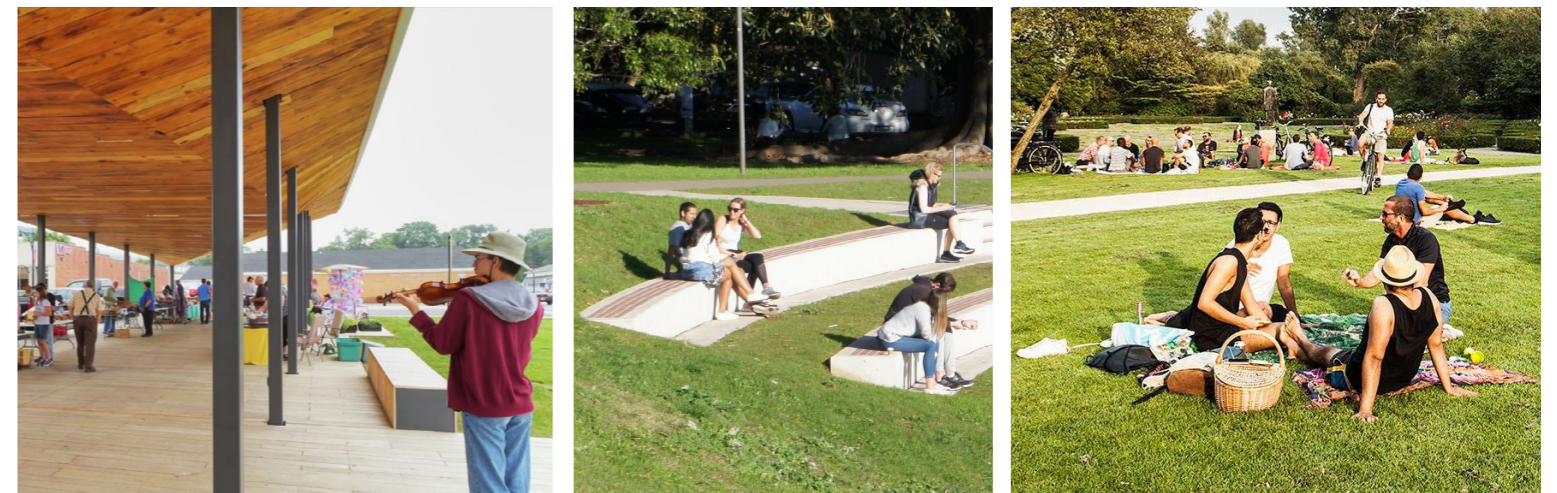
Play Space Character Sketch



View southeast looking at (from left to right);

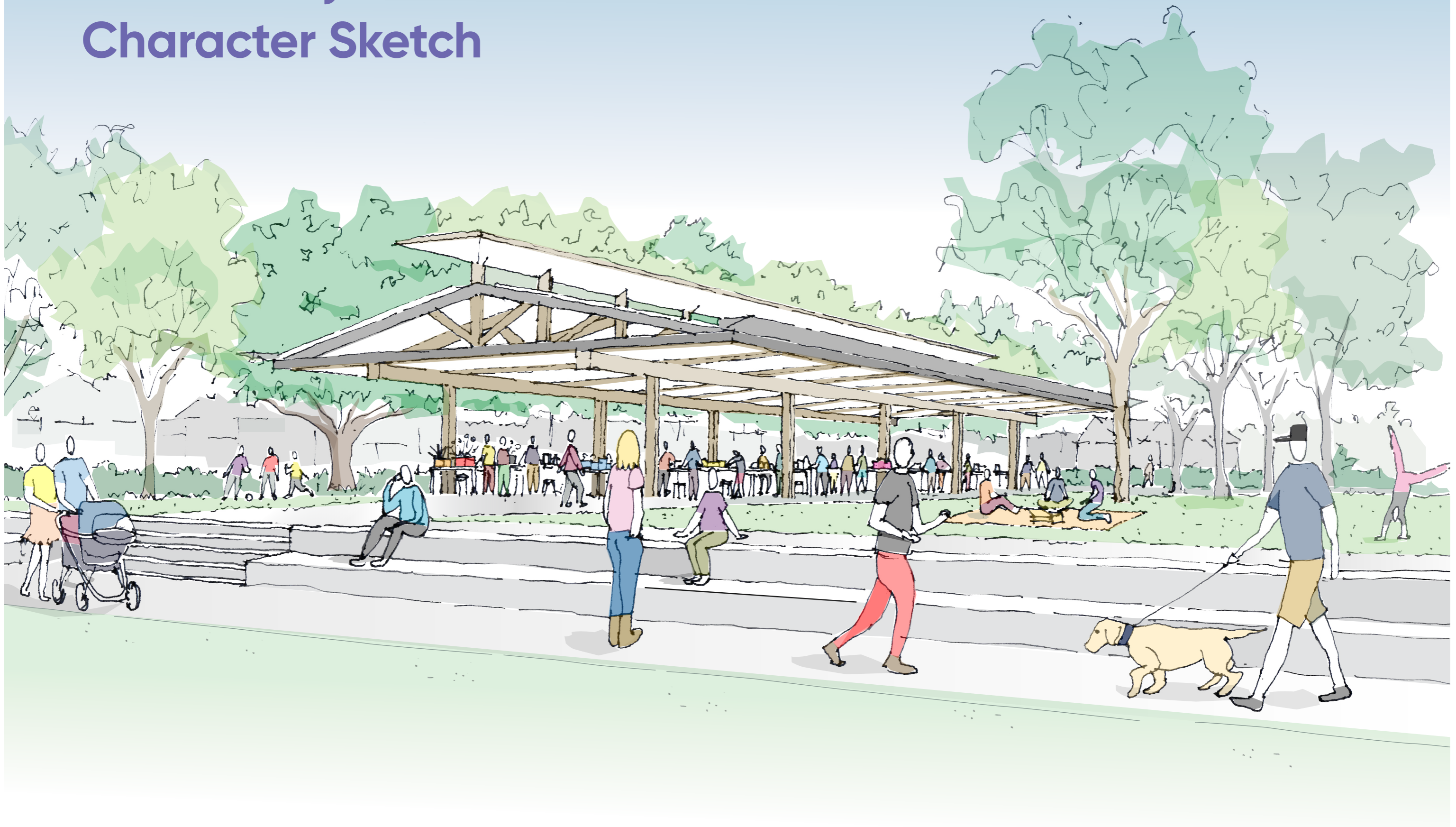
Swale and native planting area, expanded district level playground with shade and feature tree planting, upgraded and expanded amenities building and upgraded, accessible path

Former Bowling Green Community Hub Vision



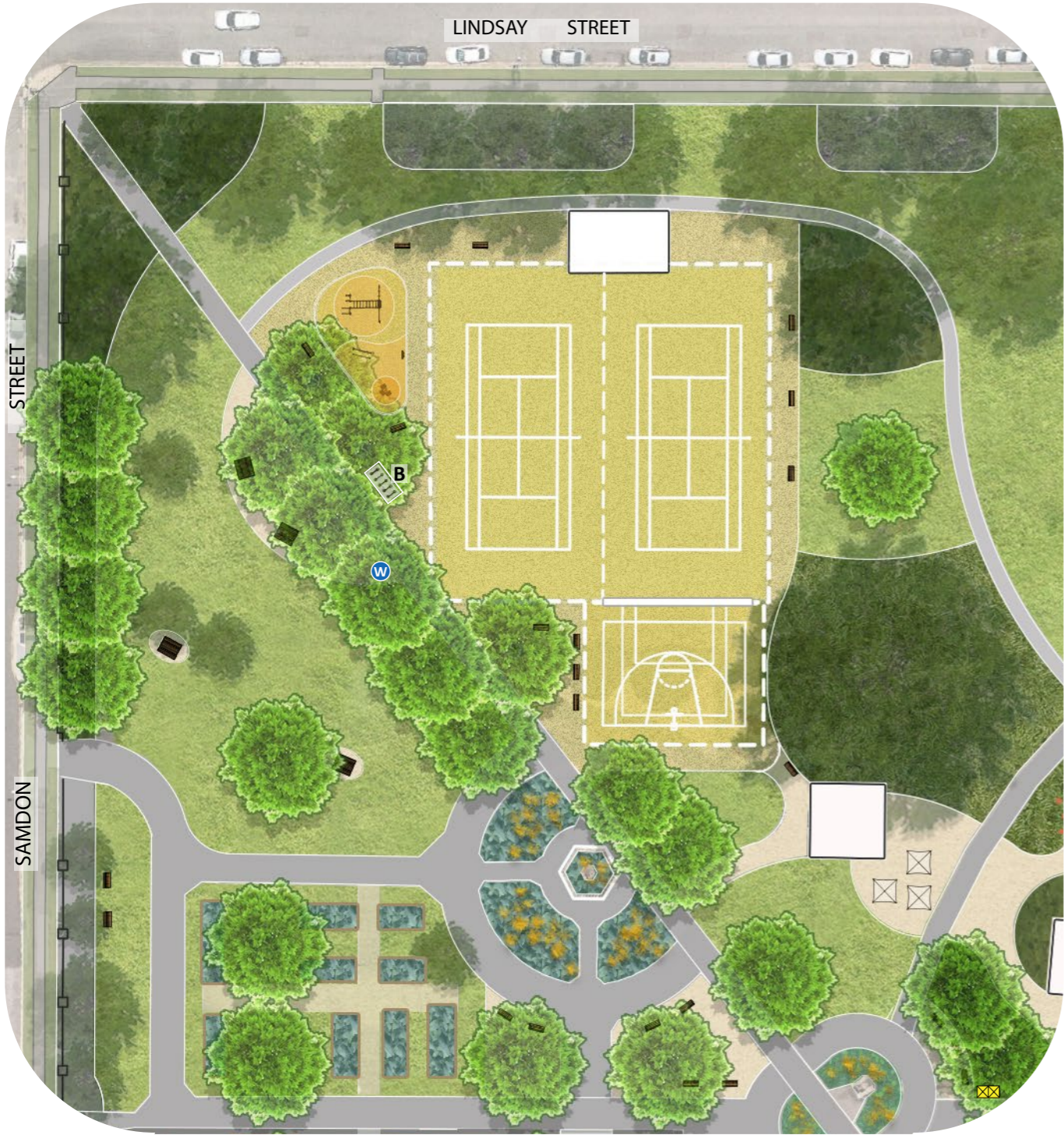
Shade / Passive Recreation / Events / Community Gardening

Community Shelter Character Sketch



View southwest looking at (from left to right);
Access and seating steps to Former bowling green with shade structure, market space and feature tree planting in informal picnic lawn

Multi Activity Hub Vision



Informal & Casual Exercise / Adaptive Re-use Kiosk

Multi Activity Hub Character Sketch



View southeast looking at (from left to right);

New hit-wall and multi-sports court area, repurposed maintenance building with seating area, main northwest - southeast path, rose garden with mixed planting, former bowling green with shade structure and seating in background

Masterplan – Short Term



LEGEND

- (A) Enhanced James Street entry and Cannon setting with floral garden beds
- (B) New inclusive play space with nature play, water feature, shade and formal and informal seating and native garden with small yarning circle 'Maddies bench' to be retained and relocated in play space.
- (C) New swale, footbridges & wetland area for water detention
- (E) Transformed decorative garden beds with mixed rose bed planting
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- (H) New open shelter & gravel area - picnic, markets, events and community space for multiple uses such as Bocce and Yoga. Provision of picnic settings and BBQs
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- (M) Re-aligned path with seating opportunities
- (N) New tree planting
- (O) Upgraded existing amenities building providing disabled access and facilities
- (Q) New multi-use halfcourt with hit-wall & seating
- (X) Widened park entry and path

-  New tree
-  Extent of long term works - **excluded**

Masterplan – Long Term



LEGEND

- (D)** Tree protection area - groundcover planting
- (N)** New tree planting
- (P)** Potential new Kiosk - Adaptive re-use of maintenance building, subject to relocation of maintenance building
- (R)** Retention of Tennis Clubhouse and tennis courts. Future renewal of Clubhouse and possible multicourt line markings subject to outcomes of City Wide Tennis Strategy
- (T)** New accessible pathway
- (U)** Potential Community Garden with raised beds, subject to agreed community ownership
- (V)** New stormwater tank under former Bowling Green

-  New tree
-  Extent of Long term works

Gregson Park Masterplan



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