

3rd December 2004

Re: Glover Park Management Plan

This submission is from the Wellington Architectural Centre, a group which represents both professional and non-professionals interested in architecture and design, and in the promotion of good design in Wellington.

1) Support for the proposal

The Architectural Centre broadly supports the Glover Park Draft Management Plan because we believe that the park would benefit from more active maintenance but we have some significant reservations which are elaborated below.

2) Location

We agree with the plan's description of Glover Park as "located in the heart of the vibrant Cuba Character Area" but in an "out of way" location" (2.4 Park use). Its location between Garrett St (a low pedestrian use street) and Ghuznee St (a high one-way traffic motorway), and its close proximity to Cuba Mall mean that Glover Park is not a preferred access way. While the Architectural Centre applauds the council's intention to forge visual access from Cuba St to Glover Park, we are concerned that a simply visual connection will be insufficient to encourage greater useage of the park. Such a link needs to be more meaningful.

We endorse the suggestion that the council encourage "adjacent properties opening onto the park" (2.4. Park Upgrade/Redevelopment) and support strong incentives to be given to retailers on the west side of Cuba Mall (between Garrett and Ghuznee Sts) to create thoroughfares through their premises directly onto Glover Park, providing visual and physical access between Cuba Mall and Glover Park, thus achieving the stated desire for the park to make connections with commercial ventures without impinging on the physical space of the park. We see such a strategy as more productive than providing for temporary facilities in the park perimeter, or establishing a long term tenant isolated from the commerical activities of Cuba Mall.

We also appreciate the acknowledgement that Glover Park is in an area "in which there are notable gaps in the distribution of city parks" (2.1), and understand this to mean that not only does Glover Park deserve more considered attention, but also that Glover Park must be seen as one of a series of inner-city parks and green spaces which could provide a range of different inner-city park experiences. We strongly encourage the council to secure other open spaces to provide a mix of different open space experiences and other locations (such as the Swan Lane car park), and for park useage to be considered within this network of different physical and social spaces.

3) Current Use

Glover Park is primarily used as a throughway and as a gathering point for homeless people and others described in the draft plan under the rubric of "undesireable and antisocial use" (2.1). As a public park we strongly believe that all of Wellington's citizens should continue to be welcomed in the design and management of the park. Children's play equipment and coffee vendors and cafes are not necessarily the most appropriate tenants for a park which traditionally accommodates a less middle-class clientele. As one previous submission stressed Glover Park should not be "sanitised." The draft Plan must explicitly discuss issues related to how the groups who currently use the park most (i.e. those that have been identified in the draft Plan as those who "exhibit anti-social behaviour at times" (2.4 Park Use)), will be accommodated into this new management plan for Glover Park.

4) Proposed uses



the architectural centre inc.
PO Box 24178 Wellington

The signalling of student accommodation in close proximity to the park on Garrett St suggests a stronger useage of the park. This is in contradiction to the suggestion to locate a children's playground in the park, and we suggest that the park be reconsidered in terms of the student, rather than child, age-group.

5) Design

While the Draft Plan states categorically that "there are no identified heritage items on the site itself" (1.2), Glover Park is one of the few good examples of a 1970s city park design in Wellington. A variety of viewing experiences across and within the park are available, and vertical as well as horizontal space articulation is carefully considered. Built structures and planting (e.g. trees as vertical elements and as canopy) are interdependent elements of the design. While we endorse the intention to provide wider access (esp disabled access) to and through Glover Park, we are conscious that the design of the Park may suffer if a conventional approach to disabled access occurs. There are some areas, for instance, where the removal of gravel would be appropriate to assist access but there are other areas where gravel contributes to the range of surface textures experienced in the park. Likewise the removal of steps needs to be strategically considered in terms of the park aesthetic as well as the provison of access. This, as in other interventions, needs to understand and respect the strength of the current design and structure (planting and concrete and brick structures) of the park.

In summary we support the proposed management plan for Glover Park. We hope that some of the issues raised in our submission can productively inform the revision of the draft management plan.

Yours sincerely,

Christine McCarthy
President
The Architectural Centre