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# Rushcutters Bay: Heritage report concerns community over skate park development

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*Yarranabbe Park, the site of a proposed skatepark. Photo: Woollahra Municipal Council.*

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Eastern Suburbs locals are fearful Woollahra Council’s heritage report for Rushcutters Bay Park will greenlight a contentious skate park development.

The Darling Point Society (DPS) says the report includes a Heritage Impact Statement to challenge the park’s heritage listing. President of DPS Charlotte Feldman learned of the matter from a source with knowledge of the amendment.

“It hasn’t been made public,” Feldman told *City Hub*.

“We really have to look and sniff and everything, there’s nothing public and they’re keeping it that way on purpose.”

In response to community backlash, Heritage NSW enacted a State Heritage Order for the park last year to protect the greenery from development.

Feldman is concerned the \$1.1 million skate park initially proposed for Rushcutters Bay Park will now be approved despite public concern.

“We had the Rushcutters Bay Park state heritage listed [last year],” Feldman said.

“In order to still go on and build the concrete structure in a heritage area, you have to chisel your way through the heritage act. You have to chisel your way through a Heritage Impact Statement which Council is having done by independent sources.”



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Feldman says the primary community concerns are how the development will impact residents who use the park.

“We’re not against skateboard parks, we just don’t want them plonked there right by the harbour. It’s not correct. We need space, we need greenery.

“The kids need some sort of recreation, there’s no problem with that. But we don’t want to lose our beautiful park ... people like to go out for picnics and relax away from all these high rises,” Feldman said.

President of the Potts Point and Kings Cross Heritage and Residents Society Andrew Woodhouse said information regarding the heritage report has not been made available to residents.

“The heritage office will probably be receiving the report, but no one knows what’s in it. It hasn’t been written yet ... it’s still being considered,” Woodhouse told *City Hub*.

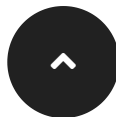
If the skate park proposal goes ahead despite the park’s heritage listing, Woodhouse says it will have profound community implications.

“The proposal does not have community support, is against the public interest and will trash the heritage values of the park and its wonderful harbourside green open spaces,” Woodhouse says.

### Council support

Woollahra Councillor Anthony Marano says the skate park proposal was a unanimous decision made by all 15 councillors.

“Community members are very opposed to the park because they think it’s going to bring drug dealers and graffiti artists to the park. It’s a bit of a campaign of fear and untruths,” Councillor Marano told *City Hub*.



Heritage NSW will need to approve the skate park development before construction.

“[The heritage listing] just makes it more complicated, there’s more red tape to go through and that’s what we’re doing presently. We’ve got to do a plan of management and a Heritage Impact Statement,” Councillor Marano said.

Woollahra Council believes a skate park at Rushcutters Bay Park will benefit local kids and teenagers.

“People say there’s nowhere for kids to ride on skateboards or on their razor scooters apart from on the road. What we want to build is a series of small ramps that aren’t very high for kids ranging in ages 4 to 14 years old ... it’s going to take up less than 2% of the park,” Councillor Marano says.

“It’s a bit of a tragedy that these people are using heritage as a weapon to stop a small facility for local children ... the police think it’s a great idea to get kids off the streets and yet we’re being held ransom by a small group of people that are quite selfish in my opinion.”

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