

Soil investigations and site closures at F.S. Garside Park and adjoining reserve.

Frequently Asked Questions.

Why was an environmental investigation required?

Historic records suggested that F.S. Garside Park may have operated as a landfill site (rubbish tip). It is understood that in the early 1930's it was converted for use as a park by placing a deep compacted soil layer over the landfill and planting a grass layer over the capped landfill site. Records show the area became known as 'Macarthur Park' in the early 1930's.

We now know that some materials in early twentieth century tip sites can pose a risk to health and safety if disturbed.

In May 2019, to help inform the development of the draft North Granville Community Facilities Masterplan, the City of Parramatta appointed a licensed specialist contractor to undertake environmental investigations in sections of F.S. Garside Park, the dog park and the natural reserve adjacent to Duck Creek.

Initial environmental investigations are now complete. However, further investigations will be required to inform the development of concept plans for park upgrades and inform further works including remediation.

What did the initial environmental investigation find?

Environmental investigations undertaken in May 2019 confirmed that F.S. Garside was once a landfill site. The investigations identified broken ceramics, bricks and construction materials (including products containing lead, possibly from lead-based paints, and fibro products containing asbestos), glass bottles, and ash. These materials are consistent with items that would normally be found at rubbish tips operating from the 1920's. Other finds, including the presence of copper and zinc in the soils, are also consistent with materials widely used in homes in the early twentieth century.

Many of these items can breakdown into materials, which we now know can pose a risk to human health if they become airborne and are inhaled, ingested (eaten) or come into frequent contact with skin (such as regular handling of soil with bare hands).

Test results indicated that some sections of the park contain materials (currently buried beneath the soil) that may pose a risk to public health and safety if disturbed.

As a precautionary measure, these areas were fenced and will remain closed to the public until remediation works and construction are completed. Asbestos air quality monitoring results before, during and after the testing were within normal levels. Initial investigations are now complete. Further environmental investigations, are planned to inform the park concept design.

Why are some sections of F.S. Garside Park closed?

The test results collected in May 2019 indicated that some sections of the park contained materials (currently buried beneath the soil) that may pose a risk to public health and safety if disturbed. As a precautionary measure, these areas were fenced and will remain closed to the public until remediation works and construction are completed.

Environmental reports will inform the methods used to remediate the site and help determine safe work practices required to deliver the North Granville Community Facilities Master Plan.

Am I at risk?

No.

Contaminants like asbestos only pose a risk to human health if fibres become airborne, and inhaled. Other contaminants present at this site, like hydrocarbons often found in ash resulting from burned organic materials like wood etc., only pose a risk if they come into contact with skin, or are ingested (eaten).

Areas where contaminated materials were present beneath the soil were closed as a precautionary measure.

These areas were fenced to limit soil disturbance, prevent public access and possible physical contact with any potential contaminants that pose a contact risk.

Asbestos air quality monitoring results before, during and after the testing were within normal levels.

Are further environmental investigations planned?

Yes.

Further testing, including groundwater and gas monitoring, were completed within closed areas of the park in October 2019. Further geotechnical investigations are planned in 2020 to inform the concept design for the park.

Why is groundwater and gas monitoring required?

In order to determine how to safely carry out further work at F.S. Garside, the City of Parramatta commissioned qualified environmental consultants to install gas and groundwater monitoring wells within the park. In October 2019, eight small wells for the monitoring of ground gases, and one tower well for groundwater monitoring were installed.

While on site, consultants also took additional targeted soil samples to provide further understanding of the conditions at the site. All works were carried out in areas of the park already closed to the public. All work conducted adhered to SafeWork NSW health and safety standards for ground disturbing work on a site where contamination may exist. Environmental results from these samples will inform the methods used to remediate the site and determine whether groundwater and ventilation treatments are required. Air quality monitoring was undertaken during installation. All results were within normal limits. Results from the monitoring show that surface gas levels are within normal limits. Groundwater investigations did not identify any groundwater contamination sourced from the site.

What happens next?

Council has an obligation to remediate F.S. Garside Park regardless of any work to deliver a masterplan.

A relevant Remediation Action Plan (RAP) will be required to limit public exposure to potential contaminants before any construction can progress. Developing a RAP that complements Stage 1 of the North Granville Community Facilities Masterplan will ensure that remediation is based on the future needs of the park.

Further site investigations will be required to develop the RAP and inform designs for the park. Flood modelling and community consultation for each component of the masterplan will be required to inform detailed designs.

How is Council conducting maintenance in the closed sections of F.S. Garside Park?

City of Parramatta has engaged a specialist contractor certified to safely work on landfill sites to allow for the ongoing maintenance of F.S. Garside until the anticipated North Granville Community Facilities Masterplan work begins.

All works including grass mowing, will be carried out to comply with appropriate work, health and safety standards. Contractors will wear appropriate personal protection equipment and will take necessary precautions to ensure public safety while undertaking these activities on site.

Where is the nearest playground?

The City of Parramatta Council has reopened playgrounds from Friday 15 May 2020. Council officers will first inspect all outdoor equipment to ensure play spaces are safe to use. People who use playgrounds must adhere to social distancing requirements outlined by the NSW Government.

For more information about Council's response to COVID-19, please visit <https://www.cityofparramatta.nsw.gov.au/council/covid-19-how-council-is-responding>
To find a nearby playground, visit <https://www.cityofparramatta.nsw.gov.au/recreation-environment/our-parks/playgrounds>

Where can I exercise my dog?

Alternative leash-free areas are available at Deakin Park (Deakin Street, Auburn), Burlington Park (Burlington Street, Northmead), Cowells Lane Reserve (Cowells Lane, Ermington) or Don Moore Reserve (Tiernan Avenue, North Rocks). A full list of off-leash areas in the Parramatta Local Government Area is available [here](#).

City of Parramatta advises that all residents follow the Federal and NSW Government's latest information in relation to maintaining physical distancing and other measures to help protect our community and minimise the spread of COVID-19.

For more information on how Council are responding to COVID-19 including support for business and residents, please visit [cityofparramatta.nsw.gov.au](https://www.cityofparramatta.nsw.gov.au)

Who can I contact for more information?

For further information, please email placeservices@cityofparramatta.nsw.gov.au or phone 1300 617 058.

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