

**ITEM 6. CITY CENTRE LANEWAYS – ABERCROMBIE LANE, BRIDGE LANE AND TANK STREAM WAY – PROJECT SCOPE****FILE NO: S108985****SUMMARY**

This report describes the concept design for the upgrade of Abercrombie Lane, Bridge Lane and Tank Stream Way, City Centre, proposed as part of the Laneways Revitalisation Strategy. By improving public domain amenity and managing traffic in our laneways, the value of these lanes as a pedestrian way is increased and activation is encouraged.

The concept design for Abercrombie Lane, Bridge Lane and Tank Stream Way supports the City's strategy of reclaiming and revitalising Sydney's hidden laneways. As this laneway precinct is already highly activated with retail and commercial tenancies, the design seeks to deliver pedestrian safety and amenity improvements, while maintaining access for vehicles to service the thriving businesses.

As part of the community consultation process, a mail out to 700 local residents and businesses announcing the consultation period for Abercrombie Lane, Bridge Lane and Tank Stream Way was undertaken in August 2013. In addition, individual meetings were held with 14 of the major building owners and building/tenant representatives, prior to, and during, the development of the concept design.

In total, eight written responses were received. The majority of the submissions indicated support for the laneway upgrades, with several submissions commending the City's broader laneway revitalisation activities. Issues that were raised in the submissions focussed on the impacts associated with the proposed footpath widening in Bridge Lane, adjacent the raised threshold at the intersection with Tank Stream Way, and with the proposed footpath widening within Tank Stream Way. Each of these issues is addressed in this report.

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is resolved that:

- (A) subject to any direction made by the Central Sydney Traffic and Transport Committee in relation to the proposed works, Council approve the amended concept design plan for the Abercrombie Lane, Bridge Lane and Tank Stream Way upgrade works, as shown in Attachment B to the subject report, for progress to detailed design and construction tender; and
- (B) Council note the Financial Implications in Attachment D to the subject report, and that this Attachment remain confidential in accordance with section 10A(2)(c) of the Local Government Act 1993.

**ATTACHMENTS**

**Attachment A:** Concept design exhibition panels for Abercrombie Lane, Bridge Lane and Tank Stream Way

**Attachment B:** Amended design plan for Abercrombie Lane, Bridge Lane and Tank Stream Way

**Attachment C:** Consultation Summary

**Attachment D:** Financial Implications (Confidential)

**(As Attachment D is confidential, it will be circulated separately from the Agenda Paper and to Councillors and relevant senior staff only).**

**BACKGROUND**

1. On 10 March 2008, Council endorsed the Live Laneways - Laneway Revitalisation Strategy to reclaim and revitalise Sydney's laneways through a range of initiatives, including policy reform and development, business support, legislative advocacy, cultural events and communication. The strategy also recommended a capital works improvement program and guiding design principles.
2. A suite of CBD Laneways projects were initially endorsed by Council in 2009 and works are now well underway. The status of laneways projects is as follows:
  - (a) Ash Street – completed 2010;
  - (b) Angel Place – completed 2011;
  - (c) Albion Place – completed 2012;
  - (d) Bulletin Place – under construction;
  - (e) Lees Court – design documentation underway;
  - (f) York Lane – concept design completed. Works to align with Wynyard Walk;
  - (g) Hosking Place – design documentation underway;
  - (h) Wilmot Street – design documentation underway;
  - (i) Central Street – design documentation underway; and
  - (j) Abercrombie Lane, Bridge Lane and Tank Stream Way – concept design and consultation completed.
3. In addition, a series of three laneways within nearby Chinatown were identified for early implementation ahead of the finalisation of the Chinatown Public Domain Strategy. Little Hay Street, Kimber Lane and Factory Street were completed in late 2011.
4. Abercrombie Lane, Bridge Lane and Tank Stream Way form a network of lanes that provide pedestrian access for east / west movements between George and Pitt Streets and north / south movements between Bridge and Bond Streets.
5. Bridge Lane and Tank Stream Way are service lanes for building access, pick-ups and deliveries. They are characterised by narrow asphalt pedestrian footpaths with historic trachyte kerbs. Abercrombie Lane is primarily a pedestrian lane that runs perpendicular to George Street and connects George Street to Pitt Street.
6. The heritage listed lanes sit within an historic City precinct, which includes:
  - (a) Former Burns Philp and Co Building (5-11 Bridge Street);
  - (b) Liner House (13-15 Bridge Street);
  - (c) Metropolitan Hotel and former terrace (244 George Street);
  - (d) Singapore Airline House (69-73 Pitt Street);

- (e) Royal Exchange Assurance Building (75-77 Pitt Street);
  - (f) George Patterson House (252 George Street); and
  - (g) The Tank Stream located approximately on the alignment of Tank Stream Way. A natural resource for the local Gadigal people and pivotal to the colony's initial settlement
7. Bridge Lane is mostly "No Parking" from 6am to 6pm on the northern side, "No Parking" from 7am to 7pm on the southern side and "No Stopping" at other times. Parking is prohibited in Abercrombie Lane.
8. Tank Stream Way is "No Stopping" on the eastern side and provides a loading zone from 7am to 6pm Monday to Friday and 7am to 10am on Saturdays, which then becomes 4P parking from 6pm to 10pm Monday to Friday, 10am to 10pm on Saturdays and 8am to 10pm on Sundays and public holidays.
9. Directly facing onto these three laneways are a variety of commercial and retail uses, including:
- (a) Palmer and Co in Abercrombie Lane;
  - (b) Mr Wong's, The Establishment Hotel (and associated loading dock) and Bridge Lane Garage in Bridge Lane;
  - (c) access driveways for tenancy parking spaces in the Moran Building and 1 Bridge Lane;
  - (d) Marlowe's Café, The Republican Hotel and 20 Bond Street car parking garage in Tank Street Way.
10. Early in the design concept stage, a number of traffic arrangements were investigated and ideas canvassed with adjacent stakeholders for feedback. These included shared zones, timed closures and one way routing as has been explored in other streetscape projects. In light of the initial feedback and subsequent technical reviews, substantive amendment to permissible traffic movements is not proposed for these laneways. The high level of existing commercial activation within these lanes relies on the maintenance of existing service movements. The need to maintain 24 hour access to all tenanted car parks has also been confirmed. In addition, the narrow width of the laneways at times necessitates the reversing of vehicles and this limits the creation of shared zones.
11. The concept design exhibited for public feedback is shown in Attachment A and aims to improve the safety and experience for pedestrians and celebrate the history and cultural significance of the place. The key features of the proposals are:
- (a) the kerbs within Tank Stream Way are relocated to provide a widened stone paved footpath to the western side (between Bridge Lane and Bridge Street) and better pedestrian connection into the precinct from the north. The eastern side will be narrowed to maintain the carriageway for vehicles;
  - (b) Some of the parking/loading area on the western side of Tank Stream Way is converted to a pedestrian area to allow for a gathering space and opportunities for outdoor dining from the existing café;

- (c) twelve metres of loading area will be retained in Tank Stream Way to service local businesses. In addition, extended loading zone times will be sign posted in Bridge Street to better cater for loading and deliveries;
- (d) at either end of Bridge Lane, a paved, raised road platform will calm traffic and assist pedestrian movement across the lane entries;
- (e) in Abercrombie Lane, selected areas will be stone paved to mark entries and gathering zones;
- (f) throughout the three laneways, historical interpretative signage and pavement inlays will be installed to evoke the rich stories of the lanes. This will be developed with the City History Unit during the detailed design stage and subject to further negotiation and consent from adjacent land owners;
- (g) throughout the three laneways, the public domain lights will be upgraded with LED fittings and decorative lighting will highlight the historic archway in Bridge Lane; and
- (h) paved areas will be of high quality and feature smaller units in a more detailed layout in response to the pedestrian scale in the lanes.

#### **Community Consultation to date**

12. Consultation to date has included one-on-one consultation with immediately adjacent property owners and businesses, web updates and public exhibition of the concept plan, which closed on 29 August 2013.
13. As part of the community consultation, 700 letters have been sent to residents and stakeholders adjacent to Abercrombie Lane, Bridge Lane and Tank Stream Way.
14. During the exhibition period, the proposal was displayed at the Customer Service Centre, Town Hall House, Kent Street and four community drop in sessions at Customs House, Circular Quay on 19, 21, 27 and 29 August 2013. The plans were available online at Sydney Your Say website page for Abercrombie Lane, Bridge Lane and Tank Stream Way (<http://sydneyyoursay.com.au/> and <http://sydneyyoursay.com.au/laneways>) where submissions could be made.
15. In addition, one-on-one meetings were arranged with key stakeholders prior to and during the development of the concept design to ascertain current usage and access requirements of owners and tenants of the laneways.
16. Eight written responses were received via email and comments from 14 businesses were obtained during the one-to-one consultation with individual business owners. These submissions, which also requested amendments to the project, have been collated and summarised in Attachment C. The suggestions in the submissions are addressed in Attachment C, and a number will also be considered during the design development and documentation stages of the project as noted.

17. The two main issues raised during the consultation were impacts associated with the proposed footpath widening in Bridge Lane, adjacent the raised threshold at the intersection with Tank Stream Way, and with the proposed footpath widening within Tank Stream Way.

#### **Footpath widening in Tank Stream Way**

18. The proposal to reduce the loading area adjacent 1 Bridge Lane from 25 metres to 13 metres has raised concern for the overall availability of loading spaces to service the adjacent buildings.
19. The current 25 metre length of loading area does not comply with minimum setbacks from the intersection. This will need to be addressed through this project and would result in a 7 metre reduction in any case.
20. The proposed kerb alignment adds another 5 metres of widened footpath to provide a strong activation opportunity directly adjacent the café. This location has good solar access, pedestrian access, and is highly visible from both Bridge Street and Abercrombie Lane. Activation here will serve to signal the wider array of offerings in the laneways.
21. As noted earlier this report, the existing parking restrictions in a large section on both sides of Bridge Lane provides opportunities for stopping and quick pick-ups and drop-offs.
22. A number of loading areas are available in Pitt Street within 70 metres from Bridge Lane, and to provide extra loading spaces the project proposes to:
  - (a) re-allocate 12 metres of unrestricted parking as a loading zone between 12 midnight and 6am for early morning deliveries, Monday to Thursday; and
  - (b) re-allocate 12 metres of 2P ticketed parking spaces as a loading zone between 10am and 3pm on Bridge Street. Long term parking is available at 20 Bond Street with car parking entry via Tank Stream Way.

#### **Footpath widening at the threshold in Bridge Lane**

23. The proposed footpath widening in Bridge Lane and the raised threshold on approach to Tank Stream Way provided an additional traffic calming device and a space to accommodate pedestrians clear of the carriageway as vehicles pass in the lane, and assist pedestrians in accessing the adjacent businesses and building entries (i.e. The Establishment Hotel and Bridge Street Garage). It would require drivers to slow down, be more cautious and courteous to each other and to pedestrians at this junction.
24. Stakeholders raised concern that the resulting narrowed carriageway would be a constraint on the lane and add delay and congestion to the lane. There was also concern it would disrupt the main set down point for hotel guests.
25. The section of Bridge Lane where the widening is proposed is currently marked as a no stopping zone. As such, the proposal for widening the footpath at this location to create a road width of 3.6 metres (currently 4.2m) will not limit existing permissible parking/set down activities.

26. The proposal also retained the capacity for turning vehicles. Larger delivery vehicles that currently access the lane do so in single file, with none being able to pass each other. This practice is generally executed with patience and cooperation from all parties. The proposed reduced width at the threshold would extend this constraint to two smaller vehicles. Should they need to pass, they would only be able to do so west of the footpath widening.
27. In light of the concerns raised, it is proposed to retain existing kerb alignments (and traffic arrangements) as reflected in the amended design plan at Attachment B. Given the design in this location includes a semi-raised paved threshold to calm traffic, pedestrian safety and amenity is still improved.

### **Works on Private Property**

28. The proposed works on private property includes small sections of paving in areas adjacent to the laneways, attachment of historical interpretative signage to the building facades and installation of decorative lighting to highlight historical elements.
29. The sections of paving are minor and the occurrence of these is common throughout the City's streets as a result of historical development and consecutive realignment of buildings along the footpath edge.
30. The proposed works on these areas are limited to surface treatment and do not contain key structural, amenity or service elements.
31. The City will proceed with these works subject to written agreement from the property owners.
32. These works will not create an asset for the City Of Sydney and will be treated as an operational expense.

### **KEY IMPLICATIONS**

#### **Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030**

33. *Sustainable Sydney 2030* is a vision for the sustainable development of the City to 2030 and beyond. It includes 10 strategic directions to guide the future of the City, as well as 10 targets against which to measure progress. This project is aligned with the following strategic directions and objectives:
  - (a) Direction 4 - A City of Pedestrians and Cyclists – outlines actions that will make walking and cycling an easy option for residents and visitors in our City. It recognises the importance of these modes to improve the health and environmental sustainability of our City; and
  - (b) Direction 5 - A Lively and Engaging City Centre – envisages a city where the City Centre is opened and re-connected to the water, where the City Centre is reclaimed from traffic, where there are more, and better quality open spaces for people to linger, and where 'fine grain' character, such as small retail and service spaces, is increased

#### **Organisational Impact**

34. The project will create additional assets that will require ongoing maintenance. These include the new road paving, lighting and interpretative signage.

**Risks**

35. Risks associated with the proposal have been considered throughout the concept design and consultation phase. These include safety (in particular road safety for pedestrians), environmental and economic impact, and community concerns.
36. Due to the heritage and archaeological importance of the area and the Tank Stream in particular, a proactive approach will be taken to mitigate potential time and cost impacts that could arise from the discovery of Aboriginal or European archaeology during construction, including:
  - (a) works in Tank Stream Way will be detailed to minimise the depth of the ground works;
  - (b) pre-approvals of contingency plans from relevant authorities if finds are revealed during construction; and
  - (c) localised works requiring deeper excavation to be undertaken early to clarify the archaeological resource and limit impact on subsequent main works.

**Social / Cultural / Community**

37. The upgrade works in Abercrombie Lane, Bridge Lane and Tank Stream Way aims to improve the safety and experience of pedestrians, and recognise the diverse history and cultural significance of this place, while maintaining the existing access to service local businesses within the precinct

**Environmental**

38. The project will incorporate best practice environmentally sustainable initiatives to support Sustainable Sydney 2030, including material selection and energy minimisation.
39. The proposed works require assessment and approval under Part 5 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (the Act). A Review of Environmental Factors will be carried out to ensure that all environmental impacts have been identified, assessed and, where appropriate, action is identified to manage impacts. The review will identify the likely impacts, note steps to be taken to manage them and assess whether residual impacts of the work are likely to be significant.
40. For works requiring approval under Part 4 of the Act, a development application will be submitted to the City of Sydney and where attachment to buildings (lighting and signage) is required, owner's consent will be sought.
41. Following Council endorsement of the concept and prior to seeking technical approvals from the Local Pedestrian Cycling and Traffic Calming Committee, the proposal will be submitted to the Central Sydney Traffic and Transport Committee for approval.
42. Approvals for works within the curtilage of the Tank Stream will be required from the asset owner (Sydney Water) as well as the Heritage Division.



**Economic**

43. The program of works responds to the desires of the business community and will help to build this centre as an attractive destination.
44. Existing traffic movement and building access are maintained. The existing loading area will be retained in its currently location, however the length will be reduced from 25 metres to 13 metres. A number of changes on Bridge Street to offset this are proposed. As a consequence of the proposed changes, parking meter revenue will reduce by \$22,500 per annum.

**BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

45. Funds are allocated for this project within the current capital works budget and future years forward estimates. A Quantity Surveyor has prepared an estimate based on the concept design.
46. The current estimate indicates a shortfall in funding for the full scope of work as outlined in confidential Attachment D.
47. Due to the minor nature of the shortfall, no additional funding is requested at this stage, although additional funding may be required after the construction tender stage.
48. In addition, the following components of the project scope will be identified for itemised costing within the tender to provide some flexibility to adjust the contract value should this be required:
  - (a) Tank Stream Way – replace existing Trachyte kerbs with Austral Verde Granite when relocated;
  - (b) Bridge Lane – remove in-situ concrete edge detail between existing kerb and new asphalt wearing course;
  - (c) Abercrombie Lane – reduce the extent of stone paving; and
  - (d) Interpretive Signage – delete enamel interpretative wall panels.

**RELEVANT LEGISLATION**

49. Attachment D is to remain confidential in accordance with section 10A(2)(c) of the Local Government Act 1993, as it contains information that would, if disclosed, confer a commercial advantage on a person with whom Council is conducting (or proposes to conduct) business.
50. Roads Act 1993 and City of Sydney Act 1988 for road related approvals.
51. Local Government Act 1993 for construction procurement.
52. Council and Roads and Maritime Services guidelines for streetscape design.
53. Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (Part 4 and Part 5).
54. Heritage Act 1977.

**CRITICAL DATES / TIME FRAMES**

55. The proposed program for the project is:

Design development and documentation	August to October 2013
Tender phase	November 2013 to February 2014
Commence Construction	March 2014
Construction period	24 weeks

**PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

56. The Community Consultation Summary Report is provided at Attachment C. It includes a summary of issues and suggestions raised by the community and responses from the City.

57. The following engagement will take place to ensure the community is kept up to date with further developments regarding the design and construction of the Abercrombie Lane, Bridge Lane and Tank Stream Way project:

- (a) CBD Laneways Revitalisation Website updated;
- (b) project update letters and emails to local residents and interested community members prior to construction;
- (c) door-knocking nearby properties; and
- (d) during construction, the selected contractor will be required to provide a dedicated Community Liaison Officer on site to assist all stakeholders with day to day operational construction related issues.

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