

ITEM 6. TAYLOR SQUARE BIKE AND COMMUNITY HUB – 1-5 FLINDERS STREET, DARLINGHURST**FILE NO: S0105047****SUMMARY**

On 7 December 2009, Council resolved to purchase the heritage Federation three storey building at 1-5 Flinders Street, Darlinghurst, for the purpose of creating a first class cycle facility, with ancillary uses integrating with Taylor Square South and the Bourke Street cycleway.

This report details the concept project scope, Expression of Interest (EOI) process and consultation undertaken to date for endorsement by Council.

1-5 Flinders Street is located on Taylor Square South, bounded by Flinders Street, Patterson Lane and Bourke Street. The building is located at the juncture of East Sydney, Darlinghurst and Surry Hills, and on the Bourke Street cycleway.

On 12 November 2012, Council endorsed engagement of a head design consultant to deliver the bike hub project scope, including investigation of a museum and compatible community uses, from concept design through to completion of construction. Council also requested a public EOI process to identify a suitable tenant and to inform concept design work.

The project will engage Bourke Street and Taylor Square by opening the building to improve connections with the public domain. A café will serve directly onto and activate Taylor Square, a key objective of the project.

The concept design proposes an accessible, safe and active bike and community hub. It will preserve and activate the heritage building. The work will provide equitable access, with a clear entry from Taylor Square South and Bourke Street, and low-key flexible spaces to accommodate a range of appropriate bike hub and community uses.

RECOMMENDATION

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council endorse the project scope for the Taylor Square bike and community hub, as described in the subject report, for the purpose of proceeding with the design, documentation and tender for construction of the works;
- (B) Council note the indicative costs and financial implications detailed in confidential Attachment G to the subject report;
- (C) Council grant owner's consent to lodge a development application for the following works as described in the subject report:
 - (i) upgrade of the existing building at 1-5 Flinders Street, Darlinghurst, as a bike and community hub, including remediation of the heritage facade, structural, building services and access works;

- (ii) provide pedestrian and cyclist priority and amenity around the building and increase activation of the ground floor and street level by closing Patterson Lane to vehicular traffic;
- (D) Council note that granting owner's consent does not fetter the City's discretion in relation to the assessment of the development application under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (NSW), or for any related application required under the Local Government Act 1993 (NSW) or any other legislation;
- (E) Council grant consent to commence the process to close Patterson Lane, under section 34 of the Roads Act 1993, to provide increased pedestrian circulation and to activate the laneway;
- (F) Council note that a separate report to Council will be submitted upon completion of the road closure process, recommending approval of the closure of Patterson Lane to vehicles under section 34 of the Roads Act 1993, as detailed in Attachment E to the subject report;
- (G) Council proceed with the public notification of the closure of Patterson Lane to vehicles under Section 35 of the Roads Act 1993; and
- (H) Financial Implications, Attachment G to the subject report, 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.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Resolution of Council – 12 November 2012

Attachment B: Location Plan and Photographs

Attachment C: Concept Plans – Project Scope

Attachment D: Investigations – Taylor Square South Public Domain

Attachment E: Road Closure Sketch

Attachment F: Heritage Order dated 15 September 2009

Attachment G: Financial Implications (Confidential)

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

BACKGROUND

Site

1. 1-5 Flinders Street is located on Taylor Square South, bounded by Flinders Street to the east, Patterson Lane to the south and Bourke Street to the west. The building and Taylor Square are located at the juncture of East Sydney, Darlinghurst and Surry Hills (refer Attachment B).
2. The surrounding area contains a mix of residential and commercial properties, and there are a number of heritage items in close proximity to the site. The subject building is a locally listed heritage item, within a Heritage Conservation Area.
3. The three storey building is a good example of a Federation 'Free Style' bank. It was designed in 1910 as one of 150 branches of the Government Savings Bank. Over the last decade, the building has been predominantly used as a nightclub. The building has been owned and operated by the City since December 2009, and its use was subsequently changed to provide temporary community services, including 'Reverse Garbage' and use of studio space by the University of New South Wales College of Fine Art. The building is currently vacant.
4. The building is in a moderate state of dilapidation and requires remedial work, including work to the façade. Building services require replacement. The current layout does not allow equitable access from the street or through all levels of the building. A significant number of elements are not compliant with current building code requirements and standards. Existing amenities require a complete upgrade.
5. Taylor Square is heavily used by pedestrians and bicycle riders, and is situated at the intersection of three cycle routes. For this reason, Taylor Square has the potential to be a significant and natural orientation point for cyclists in the city.

Project Objectives

6. On 23 December 2009, Council endorsed purchase of the building at 1-5 Flinders Street, Darlinghurst, for the purpose of creating a first class cycle facility, with ancillary uses integrating with Taylor Square South and the Bourke Street cycleway.
7. While not part of the project works, opportunities to modify and enhance Taylor Square South were to be identified for future consideration by Council. The relationship of the building and square was to be maximised to support a broader positive transformation of Taylor Square.
8. The objectives of the project are to:
 - (a) activate the building and the public domain;
 - (b) adapt and refurbish the existing building to house a world class bike hub and provide a cultural 'nerve centre' for cycling, with infrastructure to support a range of activities that engage with cycling and community activities;
 - (c) provide a new type of community venue linked to social activity, information, service and retail as an engaging meeting place for the local community, visitors and tourists;

- (d) provide for a range of cycling needs and activities at a single location, including community and bike related events, films and talks, repairs and workshop space, bike retail, bike hire, café, bike route maps and information, flexible studio space for bike industry or community groups, display space; and
- (e) upgrade the building to meet current standards, and improve amenity for pedestrians and cyclists.

Project Scope

9. The building upgrade will preserve and activate this heritage building. The work will provide equitable access, with a clear main on-grade entry from Taylor Square South, and low-key flexible spaces to accommodate a bike and community hub (refer Attachment C).
10. The scope of the project includes:
 - (a) Building – upgrade of existing building, including remediation of the facade, structural, building services and access works;
 - (b) Patterson Lane – minimum scope of works to the lane is to prevent vehicle access to the lane to provide safe access for pedestrians and bicycles;
 - (c) Heritage – integrate heritage conservation with contemporary architecture. Intrusive material will be removed and the existing central structural spine that divides the split levels will be revealed through all levels, becoming a significant feature of the interior. The arches and original fabric of the structural spine will be restored, revealing a row of structural brick columns;
 - (d) Access – improve public access into and throughout the building through rationalisation of planning and levels. New circulation is organised around a central row of columns. New accessible building entries and a new lift provide access to all levels. The entry from the square is emphasised with a new awning and lighting and is regraded internally;
 - (e) Visibility – improved visual permeability into the building and improved presence on the square. The two existing large arched windows are opened up to create new large scale windows within existing apertures in the heritage façade. This provides clear visibility of the café and bike retail/workshop areas from the square and a physical connection by way of coffee window and new entry. The scope includes programmable coloured lighting to highlight elements of the building during events such as Mardi Gras, Pink Ribbon Day, Bike Film Festival and Sydney Rides Festival;
 - (f) Sustainable design – natural light levels will be improved by creation of a multi-level void around the central columns and stair, with new glazing at roof level above. Passive ventilation is also provided through the central void ventilation stack, drawing air from the lower floors up to the roof canopy; and
 - (g) Materials – significant heritage fabric is revealed and restored. New elements and interventions are robust, durable, will have a contemporary identity and create simple, light filled, contemporary spaces.

11. The proposed arrangement of functional spaces is:
 - (a) basement split levels – services, amenities, storage spaces for multiple users including cafe, other tenants and community groups, stair and passenger lift access and bike access;
 - (b) ground floor split levels – main entry and foyer from Taylor Square, café with coffee window onto Taylor Square, access from Bourke Street, amenities, retail area, bike hire, display space, stair and passenger lift access and bike access;
 - (c) first floor level – informal and flexible studio office/ community space, amenities, kitchenette, stair and lift access and bike access;
 - (d) rooftop terrace – trafficable terrace with rooftop garden, kitchenette and amenities, stair and lift access. It is anticipated this could be used for informal meetings and low key activities associated with the bike hub. Solar access and natural ventilation to lower levels are provided through new rooftop fenestration over the central void; and
 - (e) awning and facade – restoration of the original façade finish (face brick ‘blood and bandage’), and reinstatement of awnings on the Flinders Street and Bourke Street sides of the building to provide shelter over entries and pedestrian amenity.

Activation of Taylor Square South and Bourke Street

12. Floor levels on the Bourke Street side are being removed and reinstated at amended levels to maximise access and visibility of the café, increase business frontage onto Taylor Square, increase connection between the building and Taylor Square South and increase activation.
13. The concept design was presented to the Design Advisory Panel on 4 June 2013 and 10 December 2013 and received positive endorsement. Feedback has informed the design and ongoing project development. The Panel considered the re-purposing of the building as a bike hub, with café, repair and retail, to be a commendable approach, a catalyst for reinvigorating Taylor Square.

Taylor Square South Public Domain Investigation

14. Preliminary site investigations identified opportunities for future improvements to Taylor Square South. Key findings include that the raised planter bed, known as ‘Gilligan’s Island’, and the existing fountain are not helpful in providing a successful public domain space and could be considered for removal in the context of a future public domain upgrade (refer Attachment D).
15. The Taylor Square South investigations were undertaken to inform the building design. They are not part of the project works and are for consideration by Council for future capital works programs.
16. The investigation work was presented to the Design Advisory Panel in July 2013, who supported the proposals for future consideration by Council.

Closure of Patterson Lane

17. A Traffic Impact Assessment has been completed to provide analysis of local traffic conditions and assess possible impacts of the closure of Patterson Lane to vehicular traffic. Key findings include that the surrounding roads can cater for the existing traffic, and closure of the lane will have a negligible impact, on the basis of very low traffic volumes in the lane and alternative routes in the existing street network. Two one-hour parking spaces would need to be removed. These will be relocated to Bourke Street, resulting in zero net parking loss.
18. There is no impact on service vehicle access, as the lane is not wide enough for service vehicles to access. The laneway closure will be carried out subject to Roads and Maritime Services approvals and detailed consultation.

RELATED WORK AND ADJACENT PROJECTS**Expression of Interest for Tenancy at the Bike Hub**

19. On 12 November 2012, Council requested an EOI process be undertaken to find a suitable operator for the bike and community hub.
20. A public EOI process was completed in early 2013. This drew a high response, indicating strong market interest.
21. On 16 September 2013, Council endorsed a preferred tenant and delegated authority to the Chief Executive Officer to negotiate details of the tenancy.
22. Detailed design of functional areas is being refined with tenant input during design development stage and prior to submission of a development application.

GLBTI Public Art

23. On 16 July 2013, the City hosted the 'GLBTI Rainbow Rights in the Spotlight Forum' to discuss a symbol celebrating the GLBTI community on Oxford Street. Further to suggestions from the community, ideas for a GLBTI related public domain work were considered.
24. On 24 February 2014, Council resolved to:
 - (A) endorse the installation of a permanent iconic artwork at Taylor Square to mark the 40th anniversary of Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras in 2018 and achieve the aspirations of the gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex communities for this artwork;
 - (B) request the Chief Executive Officer to undertake the work required to achieve this objective, including providing for the necessary funding in the draft 2014-2017 Corporate Plan and forward estimates and consulting further with GLBTI communities; and
 - (C) endorse the immediate installation in Taylor Square of a rainbow flag to acknowledge and celebrate the GLBTI community in the five-year interim period while a permanent artwork is being developed.

Reko Rennie Temporary Facade Artwork

25. In September 2012, '*always was, always will be..*' by Reko Rennie was installed on the building at 1-5 Flinders Street as part of the City's 2012 *Streetware* Art Program and Art and About program. The work was initially installed as a temporary work to last six months, until March 2013. A Section 96 Application to retain the artwork until September 2014 was approved on 4 February 2013. It is expected that much of the work will be damaged or removed by the facade remediation works.
26. It is proposed to leave the artwork intact until construction works are proposed to commence, and remove it as part of the building works. It is proposed to incorporate the neon text '*always was, always will be...*' into the project.
27. New artworks are proposed to be incorporated into the project. Patterson Lane and the central void are being investigated as artwork opportunities.

Heritage Order

28. On 15 September 2009, the City of Sydney issued a works order requiring that the unapproved grey paint to the façade be replaced with a new schedule of finishes that is sympathetic to the streetscape and adjoining properties (refer Attachment F).

KEY IMPLICATIONS

Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030

29. *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 1 - A Globally Competitive and Innovative City – the bike and community hub is an innovative approach to providing a new type of facility to meet changing environmental and social needs for the community. It provides a facility in keeping with Sydney's position as a leader in the development of a safe and connected bicycle network with fine-grain, localised cycling-related activities and facilities.
 - (b) Direction 4 - A City for Walking and Cycling – this project promotes cycling and contributes to cycling amenity, culture and awareness. It also considers the public domain and pedestrian paths and public shelter within Taylor Square South, an important public square, and Patterson Lane.
 - (c) Direction 6 - Vibrant Local Communities and Economies – this project will contribute to the diversity of existing activities and community hubs, to enrich and enhance Taylor Square and the surrounding areas.
 - (d) Direction 7 - A Cultural and Creative City – the project incorporates space to accommodate displays or exhibitions. The studio space may be occupied by a variety of tenants contributing to cultural and creative activity in the area, including bespoke bike builders and designers, community groups, start-ups and advocacy groups.

- (e) Direction 9 - Sustainable Development, Renewal and Design – this project will meet the environmental targets listed in the City’s Environmental Management Plan and the City’s Sustainable Sydney 2030 vision.

Organisational Impact

- 30. The bike and community hub will be run by an external operator.

Social / Cultural / Community

- 31. The proposed bike and community hub will positively influence the social balance within this area and contribute to the culturally-led recovery of Oxford Street. Taylor Square South will have an improved purpose and function.
- 32. The design allows a reinvigoration of the heritage building and adds to the character of the area. The layout and reconfigured entry and levels increase street activation and community access. The provision of more obvious entries into the building will increase visibility of the hub and activities and provide a welcoming presence.
- 33. The upgrade will provide equitable access throughout the building, including a new on-grade main entry from Taylor Square, and new on-grade entries from Bourke Street and Patterson Lane. An accessible lift will travel to all levels from the main ground floor area, and amenities will provide accessible and ambulant facilities.

Environmental

- 34. The project will incorporate best practice principles of environmental sustainability and ensure significantly reduced demand for natural resources in design, management and operation. Management and operation of the building will encourage end users to consider alternatives to car transport, including walking, public transport and bicycles.
- 35. Environmental features include:
 - (a) re-use of existing heritage building fabric;
 - (b) rainwater harvesting and re-use and water efficiency;
 - (c) passive ventilation and thermal mass to minimise mechanical interventions;
 - (d) natural daylight and energy efficient lighting and services;
 - (e) photovoltaics and solar hot water system;
 - (f) green roof; and
 - (g) use of locally-sourced, sustainable materials, where possible.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

- 36. The current cost estimates and financial implications are presented in confidential Attachment G.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION

37. The proposed use is consistent with the current zoning.
38. Attachment G 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.
39. Section 116 of the Roads Act 1993.
40. Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979.
41. Local Government Act 1993 for construction procurement.

CRITICAL DATES / TIME FRAMES

42. Current program dates are:
 - (a) Lodge Development Application April 2014;
 - (b) Tender September 2014;
 - (c) Commence Construction February 2015; and
 - (d) Complete Construction April 2016.

OPTIONS

43. An alternative option was explored, which did not incorporate lowering of the floor level on Bourke Street side or the creation of new openings in the façade on the Bourke Street and Taylor Square South sides. This option is not recommended as it does not allow full activation of the building and public domain.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

44. The following public consultation has been carried out:
 - (a) April 2012 – the City hosted a workshop discussion about the proposal for a bike hub with local cycling industry members and advocacy groups;
 - (b) March 2013 – a public EOI for tenancy of the bike hub and community spaces ran from 11 March to 10 May 2013; and
 - (c) August 2013 – door-knocking of local businesses by the City Engagement team.
45. Key outcomes of the public consultation are detailed below:
 - (a) the workshop discussion informed development of the user brief and project. Support was received for the project. Feedback was integrated into the scope of work for the EOI and building refurbishment. Key messages include the requirement for an integration of functional uses, supplemented by events and programming with a clear focus on activation through user participation and content. Concern was noted about competing with existing bike shops, and the need was noted to provide a different type of facility;

- (b) all parties that had previously made representations of interest in the building were notified of the EOI. In addition to marketing carried out by the independent leasing agent running the process, the opportunity was promoted on the City's website, on Facebook and was the subject of a comprehensive press release. A strong response was received, with a preferred applicant selected by Council on 16 September 2013; and
 - (c) local businesses have been door-knocked on the use of Patterson Lane and the proposal to activate the building. Concerns about the use and cleanliness of the lane were raised. The potential for pedestrianisation and outdoor seating received some support. Some businesses raised concerns about removing vehicle access. Comprehensive consultation of the closure will take place under section 116 of the Roads Act at a later date.
46. The application for road closure will be notified pursuant to section 35 of the Roads Act 1993.
47. Statutory notification periods and exhibition will be undertaken as part of the development application process.
48. The following engagement will take place prior to the development application being lodged, to ensure the community is informed about the next phase of the project:
- (a) City of Sydney and Sydney Your Say website updates;
 - (b) project update letter addressed to the community; and
 - (c) door-knocking of nearby residences.

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