

**ITEM 8. BURTON AND PALMER STREETScape UPGRADE,
DARLINGHURST****FILE NO: S124102****SUMMARY**

This report describes the proposed scope of works, concept design and community consultation undertaken for improvements to Burton Street and Palmer Street in Darlinghurst.

Burton Street is a local street that runs from Oxford Square eastward to Darlinghurst Road and on to Paddington. Both the Eternity Playhouse and East Sydney Community and Arts Centre are located at the intersection of Burton and Palmer Streets.

The intersection of Burton and Palmer Streets has a record of traffic safety issues and the need to address these, as well as improving pedestrian safety and amenity, is the basis for this project.

The design proposes a traffic calmed, more pedestrian friendly street with two new pedestrian crossings, widened footpaths, a new forecourt area and new shade trees, planting, improved street lighting and street furniture.

Following public consultation, a number of amendments to the design have been made to address issues raised.

RECOMMENDATION

It is resolved that Council endorse the refined concept design for Burton and Palmer Streetscape Upgrade, Darlinghurst, as described in the subject report and shown at Attachment B to the subject report, for the purpose of proceeding with detail design and seeking any relevant planning approvals, documentation and tender for construction.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Location Plan

Attachment B: Refined Concept Design

Attachment C: Concept Design/Community Exhibition Boards

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. Burton and Palmer Streets are important local roads and pedestrian routes in Darlinghurst. Burton Street is a key east-west route from Oxford Square westward to Darlinghurst Road and on to Paddington.
2. The intersection of Burton and Palmer Streets is currently unsignalised, comprising stop signs for north – south traffic on Palmer Street. Between June 2004 and July 2014, this intersection recorded a total of 17 crashes, including nine injury crashes. The intersection was identified for upgrade as part of the NSW 2012-13 Black Spot program, and a roundabout was proposed.
3. Typically, traffic roundabouts are not easy for pedestrians or cyclists to navigate. This project sought alternative traffic management options designed to reduce the likelihood of future crash incidents achieved with a more sympathetic urban design outcome.
4. A signalised intersection was investigated but was not supported by Roads and Maritime Services as it does not meet the traffic volumes required. The RMS has given overall 'in principle approval' for the intersection upgrade subject to detailed design development.
5. Measures to address the pedestrian safety and amenity in this locality respond to the increase in pedestrian volumes in the area associated with the Eternity Playhouse and expected with the opening of the East Sydney Community and Arts Centre.

EXHIBITED CONCEPT DESIGN

6. A draft concept design was developed (Attachment C) that will improve traffic and pedestrian safety, as well as providing improvements to the public domain, street activation and improved amenity for all pedestrian, cycle and vehicular user groups. The key features of the design shown in the public consultation are described below:
 - (a) new marked raised pedestrian crossings on the western and southern legs of the intersection to slow traffic and improve pedestrian safety;
 - (b) kerb extensions on all four intersection corners to reduce pedestrian crossing distances and improve vehicle sight lines;
 - (c) a widened footpath on the south side of Burton Street in front of the Eternity Playhouse between Langley Street and Palmer Street. This provides an enhanced, north facing public space between the two cultural facilities – Eternity Playhouse and the East Sydney Community and Arts Centre. The footpath widening requires the removal of four metered parking spaces;
 - (d) two trees in poor condition are removed and replaced with six new deciduous trees to provide shade in summer and sun in winter in the new public space;
 - (e) a footpath continuation along Palmer Street at Kells Lane to improve pedestrian safety at that location;
 - (f) seating, bicycle parking and gardens beds within the public space, and a raingarden located at the low point in Burton Street, near Langley Street, to help mitigate localised flooding;

- (g) new high quality brick paving around the intersection and on the southern side of Burton Street between Langley Street and Palmer Street. This will match the paving on the northern side proposed as part of the East Sydney Community and Arts Centre works; and
- (h) new Ausgrid street lighting to ensure a consistent level of lighting and compliance with regulatory standards for lighting levels.

Community Consultation

7. Public exhibition of the concept design plans for the Burton and Palmer Street upgrade was carried over three weeks between 28 September and 18 October 2015.
8. The consultation activities included:
 - (a) a letter sent out to 1,000 local residents and businesses informing them of the project and submission details;
 - (b) a webpage on sydneyoursay.com.au where submissions could be made;
 - (c) the concept design was displayed at the One Stop Shop in Town Hall House; and
 - (d) an on-site meeting with residents of 32a-37 Burton Street.
9. On the Sydneyoursay page, the project was viewed by 99 individual users and the plans were downloaded 55 times.
10. Overall, six submissions were received for the proposal; five from individuals and one from a group representing five residents at 32a, 33, 35 and 37 Burton Street.
11. The following comments were raised during the consultation:
 - (a) three residents supported the idea of creating a new community space;
 - (b) four residents supported the increased planting in the area and, of these, three would like to see trees used that would not block the view of the Eternity Theatre's façade. The residents group were concerned with the choice of trees as they will interfere with overhead cabling;
 - (c) one resident did not like the proposal as they felt it will be under-used due to low pedestrian numbers. The residents group also did not support the proposal for the reasons in (f) below;
 - (d) one resident asked for utilities to be moved underground;
 - (e) one resident requested careful consideration be given to the placement of public benches;
 - (f) the residents group also raised the following issues:
 - (i) removal of parking in front of the properties will severely impact on residents' amenity as it will be difficult to load/unload vehicles and have tradespeople attend their properties. They suggested parking be retained outside their properties and pavements be extended on the other side of the street, and around the corner in Palmer Street;

- (ii) the extended landscaping will make it difficult for residents to maintain the external façade of their buildings. It will also encourage people to congregate directly in front of their properties. This is of great concern given the proximity to the nearby Oxford Street precinct. They suggested the landscaping be relocated; and
 - (iii) the installation of bench seating will encourage people to loiter in front of their properties at all hours. Once again, the proximity to Oxford Street is a concern. They suggested the seating be removed from the front of their residences.
12. City staff met with the resident of 37 Burton Street to discuss possible adjustments to the design to address the concerns above. Subsequent correspondence from the residents advised the design response had addressed their main concerns.

REFINED CONCEPT DESIGN

13. In response to feedback received during consultation, a refined concept design has been prepared, which captures the following modifications to the proposal exhibited:
- (a) modify the existing kerb alignment in front of 33-37 Burton Street to meet RMS 10 metre “No Stopping” zone compliance requirements and provide 6.6 metres of parking space (suitable for a car or a delivery truck) outside the property;
 - (b) remove the benches from in front of the residencies and locate one bench in Palmer Street to locate theatre goers and general public use towards the intersection;
 - (c) reduce the landscaping in front of the residences and install small raingardens and two street trees within the no-stopping area of the parking lane at the eastern corner of Burton and Langley Street; and
 - (d) remove one parking space and extend the length of pavement widening on the north side of Burton Street by five metres.
14. The refined concept design reduces the overall loss of parking to four spaces on Burton Street, and retains parking in front of residences.
15. The adjusted footpath widening retains an enhanced, north facing public space outside Eternity Playhouse. In addition, there will be a similar widening along the frontage of the East Sydney Community and Arts Centre. This symmetry between the two cultural facilities will create a pedestrian friendly and traffic calmed precinct.
16. A review of alternative seating designs, appropriate for this location, will be undertaken in the next phase of design.
17. As in the exhibited concept design, and retained in the refined concept design, all new tree planting is located to take advantage of the widened footpath and is clear of existing overhead powerlines. This will maximise the opportunity to establish a good green canopy and improved street amenity. Review of tree species will be undertaken in the next phase of design and, if feasible, the existing Robinia tree outside 35 Burton Street will be retained in the short term while new trees establish.

KEY IMPLICATIONS

Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030

18. *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 report is aligned with the following strategic directions and objectives:
- (a) Direction 4 - A City for Walking and Cycling – the project will improve pedestrian amenity and safety.

Risks

19. The East Sydney Community and Arts Centre and Albert Sloss Reserve are being renewed and will be completed in mid-2016. Construction will be carefully staged between the two projects to minimise disruptions to the community.

Social / Cultural / Community

20. The proposal will improve the amenity of the public domain for pedestrians and cyclists by creating a vibrant and welcoming precinct with clear connections to surrounding streets and places. It will contribute to an enhanced East Sydney “creative hub”.

Environmental

21. The project integrates sustainability initiatives including:
- (a) removal of impermeable paving and addition of garden beds and deciduous shade trees on deep soil;
 - (b) the installation of a new raingarden will help mitigate localised flooding issues; and
 - (c) increased planted areas.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

22. An estimate of cost has been prepared based on the concept design. There is sufficient funding in the 2015/2016 capital works budget and future years forward estimates to complete the design and construction for the project (refer confidential Attachment D).
23. The removal of four metered parking spaces in Burton Street will result in an estimated annual income loss of \$40,000.
24. As part of this project, the upgrade of non-Council owned assets, including Ausgrid street lighting, is proposed to be carried out. This will need to be recognised as expenditure within the operating budget for the relevant year.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION

25. The proposed scope of works has been reviewed by a statutory planner against the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* and the relevant environmental planning instruments and it has been determined that, on the basis of the current concept plan, a development application is not required. The City will assess the proposed works under Part 5 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*, including preparing a Review of Environmental Factors to consider the impact of the proposal and determine appropriate mitigations.
26. Procurement of consultants and contractors for this project will be in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1993*.
27. Attachment D contains confidential information that would, if disclosed, confer a commercial advantage on a person with whom the Council is conducting (or proposes to conduct) business. Discussion of the matter in an open meeting would, on balance, be contrary to the public interest because it would compromise Council's ability to negotiate fairly and commercially to achieve the best outcome for its ratepayers.

CRITICAL DATES / TIME FRAMES

28. The program for the project is:

Design development, Planning approvals, construction documentation	December 2015 – May 2016;
Tender	May – July 2016; and
Construction Period (20 weeks)	August – December 2016

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

29. Consultation on the proposal has been undertaken with the public as well as authority stakeholders.
30. Further updates on the project, including construction notification, will be provided through the following channels:
 - (a) updates on the sydneyyoursay.com.au and City of Sydney webpages;
 - (b) notifications sent to local residents, business owners and people who have made submissions on the concept design; and
 - (c) during construction, on-site updates will be displayed.

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