

Item 6.

Project Scope - Pymont Community Centre Upgrade

File No: X026784

Summary

Pymont is one of the earliest and most successful examples of urban renewal in Australia, transforming from an industrial area with a residential population of 300 to a densely populated residential and commercial area with 14,500 residents.

The Pymont Community Centre plays a key role in promoting wellbeing, physical and social activities for the village and contributing to the diverse, harmonious community in Pymont and Ultimo.

On 9 September 2019, Council resolved that a project scope, concept design and budget for a modest renovation and re-organisation, and small expansion of the Pymont Community Centre be prepared and reported to Council for consideration.

This report details further investigation and consultation with key stakeholders and outlines the recommended project scope for an upgrade of the Pymont Community Centre.

It is recommended that the project scope will form the basis for detailed concept design, development application, documentation and tender for construction works.

Recommendation

It is resolved that Council:

- (A) endorse the project scope for the upgrade of the Pymont Community Centre as described in the subject report; and
- (B) note the financial implications detailed in Confidential Attachment B to the subject report.

Attachments

Attachment A. Summary of Recommended Project Scope

Attachment B. Financial Implications (Confidential)

Background

1. The Pymont Community Centre is located on the site of the former Pymont Public School on the corner of John and Mount Streets, Pymont. The former school building, grounds and fences are listed heritage items.
2. The site was purchased by the City in the early 1990s and major refurbishment works were completed. These works included the construction of a two storey extension to Mount Street and the conservation and adaptive re-use of the former school buildings and grounds for childcare and community use.
3. The ground floor of the former school building and grounds is an independently operated childcare service which is leased to SDN. The Pymont Community Centre is housed in the Mount Street extension and upper levels of the former school buildings and grounds.
4. The Pymont Community Centre was opened in 1993 and there is strong demand for the existing facilities and programs at the centre. Services at the centre include a library link, children's program (Outside School Hours Care - after school and vacation care - service operated by the City), a gym (separate weights and cardio rooms) and two spaces for hire including the ground floor Community Hall and a Community Room on level one.

Need for Additional Community Facilities

5. Representatives of the Friends of Pymont Community Centre and Pymont Action have contacted the City - most recently in April 2019 - to raise concerns that they are running out of space at the centre and require another room to accommodate increasing community demand for services.
6. On 9 September 2019, Council resolved that the Chief Executive Officer be requested to prepare a project scope, concept design and budget for a modest renovation and re-organisation and small expansion of the current facility, meeting the needs expressed by the community, and report this to Council for consideration.
7. The specific requests of the community groups included:
 - (a) Building an additional room (an extension of the current 90's addition into the courtyard) to accommodate gym activity and equipment, which would free up the current gym room (50sqm) as a music room, and a smaller gym room (30sqm) as a meeting room.
 - (b) Installing an additional toilet upstairs.
 - (c) Installing a cupboard system to store equipment that would allow the out of school hours care space to be used for other purposes when not being used for after school care.

Investigation Work

8. A detailed review of planning controls and existing building conditions was completed. This review identified a number of issues to be considered in the development of a preliminary concept design options and a recommended project scope.
9. Issues identified for further review include:
 - (a) Heritage - The school building, grounds and fences are listed heritage items, this includes the sandstone retaining walls and fences in the upper courtyard area - former school grounds. The listing notes that any additions and alterations are required to be confined to areas of little significance and should not be visibly prominent. The proposal to extend the existing 90's addition into the courtyard is, therefore, not supported.
 - (b) Accessibility - The centre operates over two levels and there is no internal accessible path of travel within the building, and entry to both the ground floor and level one are via external ramps which require upgrades to comply with current standards.
 - (c) Programming - The current spaces are generally well utilised. There are opportunities to review programming and increase utilisation of existing spaces. City staff work closely with the community to respond to needs and ensure access to space.
 - (d) Existing Community Rooms - Existing storage spaces are under-utilised. There are opportunities to review and consolidate storage spaces to increase available community space;
 - (e) Existing Gym Rooms - The current gym is accommodated in two small spaces which are cramped and not well suited to use as a gym. It is recommended to provide an expanded / consolidated room to be used as the gym.
 - (f) Toilets - There are limited toilet facilities available for public use on the ground floor and there are currently no public toilets on level one.
 - (g) Sustainability - Annual energy consumption at the centre is slightly higher than other centres. Opportunities to improve the performance of the centre should be considered in any future upgrade works.

Recommended Project Scope

10. The project scope has been developed in response to a review of requests from representatives of the Friends of Pymont Community Centre and Pymont Action, and the issues identified in preliminary investigation works.
11. The recommended scope includes:
 - (a) Access Upgrade:
 - (i) Installation of an internal lift to provide accessible entry from Mount Street to all building levels.
 - (ii) Upgrade of the Mount Street entry courtyard.

- (b) Gym Upgrade:
 - (i) Extension and upgrade of the current weights area to create a single open plan gym space for weights and cardio.
- (c) New Community Rooms:
 - (i) Convert the existing gym cardio room to Community Room 2 - 30sqm.
 - (ii) Convert existing OSHC Homework Space to 'shared' Community Room - available for community use when not in use by OSHC - 30sqm.
- (d) Level One Public Toilets:
 - (i) Upgrade existing bathrooms to provide public access to toilets on level one.

Key Implications

Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030

- 12. 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 6 - Vibrant Local Communities and Economies - the project will support increased community participation and provide improved access for the community in the Pyrmont area.

Organisational Impact

- 13. The centre will continue to be operated by the City of Sydney, under the Community Centre's operating model. This project does not include any proposal to increase staffing.

Social / Cultural / Community

- 14. The proposed upgrade of the Pyrmont Community Centre will support increased community participation and provide improved access for all members of the community.

Environmental

- 15. The upgrade works will be designed and constructed to operate to meet the targets in the City's Environmental Management Plan.

Budget Implications

- 16. The project budget is presented in Confidential Attachment B.
- 17. There are sufficient funds allocated within the draft 2020/21 capital works budget and future year's capital works budget which is the subject of a separate report to Council.

Relevant Legislation

18. Local Government Act 1993 - Section 10A provides that a council may close to the public so much of its meeting as comprises the discussion of information that would, if disclosed, confer a commercial advantage on a person with whom the council is conducting (or proposes to conduct) business.
19. Attachment B to the subject report contains confidential commercial information which, if disclosed, would confer a commercial advantage on a person with whom Council is conducting (or proposes to conduct) business.
20. 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

21. Target dates for project delivery are:

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|-------------------------------|------------|
| Scope Approved | Mid 2020 |
| Lodge Development Application | Early 2021 |
| Commence Construction | Early 2022 |

Public Consultation

22. The recommended scope of works was presented to key community stakeholders on 15 May 2020. The purpose of the presentation was to update the community prior to submitting this report.
23. Following the consultation, concerns have been raised by the Friends of Pymont Community Centre and Pymont Action that the proposed plan does not meet their requirements. The proposed plan is considered the best response to stated community needs within the site, taking into account project constraints.
24. Further consultation with a wider range of key user groups, including residents of social housing in the area, will be undertaken during this process.
25. The detailed refurbishment plans will be included as part of the Development Application notification process and statutory consultation will be undertaken as part of this process.

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