

Project Scope - Sydney Park Brick Kilns Heritage Renewal Works

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Summary

This report outlines the proposed scope of works for the Sydney Park Brick Kilns Heritage Renewal Works.

The condition of the kiln and chimney structures is subject to an ongoing maintenance program and the latest condition assessment has identified a schedule of further works that are required to be undertaken.

The objectives of the current project are to deliver the stabilisation and preservation of the Sydney Park Brick Kilns structures, to renew the surrounding landscape of the precinct and to celebrate and interpret the significant industrial and cultural history of the site.

It has been assessed that even after stabilisation, the kilns cannot be occupied. In addition to structural/safety concerns, spaces inside the kilns cannot achieve National Construction Code compliance without significant alterations/additions to the heritage structures.

In December 2021, Tonkin Zulaikha Greer Architects were engaged, by competitive tender, to undertake the design and documentation for the project.

The Concept Designs were presented to the community between 1 July 2022 and 29 July 2022 and exhibited on the City's website. The proposed works were generally supported by the community and the responses highlighted that the precinct is highly utilised by a wide variety of users and is a key piece of open space for residents.

It is recommended that the scope and concept design outlined in this report form the basis of a development application, documentation, and tender for construction work.

Recommendation

It is resolved that Council:

- (A) endorse the works described in the subject report for the purposes of proceeding with design development and lodgement of the development application, documentation and tender for construction works; and
- (B) note the estimated project forecast as outlined in Confidential Attachment C to the subject report.

Attachments

- Attachment A.** Concept Design Summary
- Attachment B.** Engagement Report
- Attachment C.** Financial Implications (Confidential)

Background

1. The Sydney Park Brick Kilns Precinct is situated just south of King Street, Newtown, on the corner of the Princes Highway and Sydney Park Road, St Peters.
2. The precinct contains substantial remains of the brick making industry which once dominated the area. There were previously four separate brick manufacturing facilities operational on different sites within Sydney Park throughout the twentieth century. The structures that remain on this site constitute a striking landmark and a powerful example of this brickmaking history that contributes to the streetscape of the Princes Highway and act as a significant gateway into Sydney Park.
3. The Sydney Park brick kilns and chimneys are locally listed heritage items of cultural and historical importance. The kilns precinct serves as the primary pedestrian entry to Sydney Park, providing access from King Street Newtown and St Peters Station, and is identified as an area of 'Cultural Significance' in the Sydney Park Plan of Management (2014).
4. The brickworks' remains that have been preserved as a feature of Sydney Park were originally built by brick manufacturer Josiah Gentle, who traded under the name Bedford Bricks. After it purchased Bedford Bricks in 1936, the Austral Brick Company further developed the works and continued to operate it until 1973 and, in 1980, the St Peters site was sold to the New South Wales Government. The site was subsequently developed into Sydney Park with ownership transferred to South Sydney Council in 1991, and to the City of Sydney after the two councils merged in 2004.
5. The Sydney Park Brick Kilns are subject to an ongoing maintenance program which, in the past, has included archway repairs, installation of roof membranes (to the Downdraught and Hoffman Patent Kilns), bracing and repointing of brick work and chimney remediation works. In 2020, temporary bracing to the southern face of Down Draught Kiln 1 and installation of temporary palisade fencing around all Down Draught Kilns was completed to ensure public safety and restrict access to the structures.
6. The latest condition assessment has identified a schedule of further works that are required to be undertaken and funds have been allocated to proceed with the renewal of the Brick Kilns Precinct and adjoining landscape areas.

Concept Design

7. A Concept Design Summary for the works has been developed and is provided at Attachment A.
8. The key principles of the Concept Design are:
 - (a) to stabilise and preserve the remaining historic brick kiln structures;
 - (b) develop a legible, accessible and welcoming gateway into Sydney Park;
 - (c) interpret and embed the precinct's rich and unique history into the landscape;
 - (d) provide a variety of engaging park settings with a range of seating and plaza opportunities which encourage social interaction; and

- (e) use simple, robust, high-quality materials which reflect and enhance the precinct's original industrial character.
9. The proposal includes the following works:
- (a) stabilise and preserve the brick kiln structures to ensure their structural integrity;
 - (b) reinstate the roof structures over the kilns to provide protection of the brick structures;
 - (c) renew and upgrade the landscape around the structures through reinstating the original ground plane levels of the site, the addition of a new raised lawn area and plaza spaces for small outdoor gatherings;
 - (d) signage and interpretation of the site's heritage through new paved outlines of kilns, rail tracks and brick pits that once existed in the park;
 - (e) upgrade the electrical services to the precinct;
 - (f) upgrade the park lighting and feature lighting of the Kiln and Chimney Structures; and
 - (g) upgrade the precinct stormwater and drainage.
10. The proposed Concept Design was presented to the Design Advisory Panel on 16 June 2022. The following comments were noted in the minutes of the Design Advisory Panel meeting:
- (a) Works are required to permanently stabilise most of the kiln structures. Water ingress has proved to be a significant destabilisation issue.
 - (b) The Panel noted that even after stabilisation, the kilns cannot be occupied. In addition to structural/safety concerns, spaces inside the kilns cannot achieve National Construction Code compliance without significant alterations/additions to the heritage structures.
 - (c) The Panel commended the architects' "beautiful, sensitive, and well thought through scheme".
11. The following tree management and planting are proposed as part of the park works:
- (a) The City's consultant arborist has recommended that some trees in the precinct that are performing poorly or impacting the stability of the heritage structures will need to be replaced. Further assessment will be carried out before consulting with the community on any planned replacements during design development.

Heritage Impact

12. A Conservation Management Plan (CMP) for Sydney Park Brick Kilns Precinct has been prepared by Tropman and Tropman Architects. The proposed works are consistent with the recommendations of the Conservation Management Plan.

Key Implications

Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision

13. Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision renews the communities' vision for the sustainable development of the city to 2050. 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 3 - Public places for all. This project will provide an improved open space through the landscape renewal component of the works. The space will meet the needs of a wide variety of user groups and provides a hub for gathering, socialising and recreation activities. It will also provide an improved connection and transition from Newtown and St Peters station through to the rest of Sydney Park.

Organisational Impact

14. The precinct will continue to be maintained by the City of Sydney. This project does not include any proposal to increase staffing.

Risks

15. Structural and geotechnical risks are the subject of investigation by the project consultancy team who are developing strategies to ensure the design provides a suitable long term structural solution for the kilns.
16. Site contamination. Due to the site's industrial history and use as a landfill, there is known to be contamination across the site. The Environmental Consultant and the Sydney Park Site Auditor have been engaged to understand and implement strategies for the management of risks associated with contamination within the brick kilns precinct

Social / Cultural / Community

17. The proposed stabilisation and renewal of the Sydney Park Brick Kilns will provide improved access for all members of the community within and through the precinct and also provide a renewed landscape that can better cater for small outdoor gatherings.
18. The heritage preservation and interpretation of the former brickworks site contributes to the cultural richness of Sydney Park and helps to highlight the important role brickmaking played in the history of the region.

Environmental

19. The project will include enhancement of planting within the precinct consistent with the Urban Ecology Strategic Action Plan.
20. All lighting within the precinct will be provided by efficient LED.
21. The project will use locally sourced and low embodied materials where possible.

Financial Implications

22. This project has an endorsed budget in the current year capital program and future year forward estimates. Current cost estimates have been prepared by a quantity surveyor and financial implications are detailed in Confidential Attachment C.

Relevant Legislation

23. Local Government Act 1993 - Section 10A provides that a Council may close to the public so much of its meeting as comprises information that would, if disclosed, confer a commercial advantage on a person with whom the Council is conducting (or proposes to conduct) business.
24. Attachment C 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.
25. 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 outcomes for its rate payers.
26. Contaminated Land Management Act 1997.
27. Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979.
28. Disability Discrimination Act 1992.

Critical Dates / Time Frames

29. The anticipated project time frames are:

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| (a) Detailed Design Development | Mid to late 2022 |
| (b) Development Application Submission | Late 2022 |
| (c) Tender and Contract Award | Late 2023 |
| (d) Commence Construction | Mid 2024 |

Options

30. The structural and spatial constraints limit opportunities for any type of long-term use of the kiln structures. It has been assessed that even after stabilisation, the kilns cannot be occupied. In addition to structural/safety concerns, spaces inside the kilns cannot achieve National Construction Code compliance without significant alterations/additions to the heritage structures.
31. Project does not proceed - this option is not recommended as the heritage structures are deteriorating and without the proposed stabilisation and restoration works, the structures could deteriorate beyond repair. In this scenario, a significant piece of the City's industrial history could be lost.

32. Stabilisation and renewal works to be undertaken in accordance with the recommendation in this subject report. This option is recommended.

Public Consultation

33. Two periods of community consultation have been undertaken to date. The first period of early engagement consultation was on exhibition from 14 March 2022 to 8 April 2022. The second period of concept design community consultation was on exhibition from 1 July 2022 to 29 July 2022. For a detailed description of the consultation processes, feedback and findings, refer to Attachment B.
34. The public consultation included a Sydney Your Say webpage, an online survey, an interactive map, a notification letter to surrounding properties, and an email notification to key stakeholders. Online briefing sessions were held Wednesday 23 March 2022 and Wednesday 13 July 2022. Pop-up information stalls were held in the park Saturday 26 March 2022 and Saturday 16 July 2022
35. A total of 108 submissions were received during the early engagement consultation phase. 107 people filled out the online survey and one email submission was received. The Sydney Your Say page had 534 unique visits, approximately 50 people attended the pop-up information stall and three people attended the online briefing session.
36. A total of 34 submissions were received during the concept design community consultation phase. 25 people left 38 pieces of feedback on the interactive map and nine email submissions were received. The Sydney Your Say page had 1,617 unique visits, approximately 250 people attended the pop-up information stall and three people attended the online briefing session.
37. Further public consultation will occur as part of the detailed tree replacement strategy during the Design Development phase. The tree strategy for the precinct is being developed in consultation with the City's Urban Forest Management Team to achieve required canopy coverage targets.
38. Detailed plans will be included as part of the Development Application notification and statutory consultation will be undertaken as part of this process.

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