

Contract Variation – Head Contractor Stonework for the Sydney Town Hall Façade Conservation Project

File No: X034234.011

Summary

The Sydney Town Hall Façade Conservation Stage 3 works represent the final stage of a broader Sydney Town Hall external conservation project. Previously delivered conservation works for Sydney Town Hall include the Clock Tower (Stage 1) in 2012 to 2014 and works to the east and north façades and a portion of the south façade (Stage 2) in 2013 to 2015.

Works for Stage 3 are focused on stonework masonry repairs to the southern, western and clerestory façades, repair work to the roofs and external stairs, as well as refurbishment of the clerestory stained glass to the Centennial Hall.

HBS Group Pty Ltd (HBS) were originally engaged as the Head Contractor for the works to the stone and roof areas in February 2020. HBS have been delivering works on site for the last two years, with the stonework to the south and west façades now complete. Works are now taking place on the roof areas, such as turrets and domes.

During construction, additions in scope have been identified, particularly in the heritage fabric of the roof elements such as domes and turrets. The extent of deterioration and required repairs was only able to be confirmed during the construction phase via inspection from scaffolding. The cost to complete these additional works exceeds the available contract contingency previously approved by Council.

These repair works are required to be undertaken from scaffolding. This scaffolding is currently in place and therefore it is considered expedient to undertake these works now while access is possible. If these repair works were to be undertaken at a later date additional costs and scaffolding would be required.

This report recommends that the contract contingency for the Sydney Town Hall Façade Conservation Stage 3 works be increased to cover this additional works, noting that there is no need to vary the project budget.

Recommendation

It is resolved that Council:

- (A) approve an increased contingency value for the existing Head Contractor contract for the Sydney Town Hall Façade Conservation Stage 3 works to cover additional services as described in Confidential Attachment B to the subject report; and
- (B) note the financial implications detailed in Confidential Attachment B to the subject report.

Attachments

Attachment A. Photos of Sydney Town Hall Roof Elements

Attachment B. Financial Implications (Confidential)

Background

1. Construction of the Sydney Town Hall commenced in 1868 and it is one of the finest examples of High Victorian Second Empire architecture in the country. The elaborately decorated exterior (and interior) is significant and includes the first known use of Australian flora and fauna in an architectural setting.
2. The Sydney Town Hall Façade Conservation Stage 3 works represent the final stage of a broader external conservation project. Previously delivered conservation works include the Clock Tower (Stage 1) in 2012-2014, and sandstone masonry work to the east and north facades and a portion of the south façade, and east façade lighting replacement (George Street facing) (Stage 2) in 2013-2015. Past and future works are being undertaken in accordance with the building's Conservation Management Plan.
3. The works for Stage 3 are focused on the southern, western and clerestory facades, roofs, northern stairs, the vestibule dome and the clerestory stained glass in Centennial Hall. The planned conservation works include sandstone masonry, roof works and stained glass window refurbishment. Refurbishment of the stained glass is the subject of a separate contract, due to the specialist nature of the works involved.
4. In February 2020, Council endorsed a tender for HBS for the sandstone and roof conservation works. Site works have been ongoing since May 2020, with sandstone repair works to the western and southern facades complete and work progressing on the roof.
5. During construction, investigations revealed that the extent of deterioration to the turrets and dome areas was more significant than originally anticipated. It is noted that most of these current façade elements are approximately 140 years old. Many variations are a result of latent conditions where the extent of façade deterioration and repair scope was only able to be confirmed during the construction phase from up close inspection via scaffolding. Photos of roof elements are provided at Attachment A for reference.
6. Items requiring repair include treatment of metal structural members within the domes and guttering flashing works to reduce future water ingress and further corrosion. Repair works are required to be undertaken using scaffolding which is currently in place, therefore access is currently possible, noting it would be less cost effective to undertake these repair at a later date.
7. The cost to complete these additional works exceeds the available contract contingency previously approved by Council.

Key Implications

Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision

8. 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 - Sydney Town Hall is the city's most popular central meeting place and the stage for many of Sydney's public civic events.
 - (b) Direction 8 - A thriving cultural and creative life - Sydney Town Hall is the largest and most ornate late 19th century civic building in Australia. This project seeks to preserve a building of exceptional heritage significance so that it may be enjoyed for future generations to come.

Financial Implications

9. There are sufficient funds allocated for this project within the current year's capital works budget and future year's estimates. Refer to Confidential Attachment B for further details.

Relevant Legislation

10. The original tender was conducted in accordance with the Local Government Act 1993 and the then Local Government (General) Regulation 2005.
11. 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.
12. Attachment B contains confidential commercial information of the contractor and contingencies which, if disclosed, would:
 - (a) confer a commercial advantage on a person with whom the Council is conducting (or proposes to conduct) business; and
 - (b) prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied it.
13. Discussion of the matter in an open meeting would, on balance, be contrary to the public interest because it would compromise the City's ability to negotiate fairly and commercially to achieve the best outcome for its ratepayers.

Critical Dates / Time Frames

14. Works commenced on site in May 2020 and are expected to be complete by the end of 2022.

Options

15. Sydney Town Hall is a nationally significant heritage building and should be preserved for future generations. These façade works represent the final stage of a broader external conservation project and, as such, the option of deferring or cancelling the remaining works is not considered prudent, particularly with a contractor currently on site.
16. To deliver the refurbishment works to the domes requires access via scaffolding, which is currently in place. Therefore, it is more expedient to deliver these works now with access in place.

Public Consultation

17. Consultation with both internal and external stakeholders has been ongoing throughout the project, in particular Sydney Town Hall Venue Management, Security and Ventia.

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