

Attachment F

Engagement Report - Oxford Street LGBTIQA+ Heritage Items (Stage 1)

Proposal to heritage list 3 buildings on Oxford Street, Darlinghurst



Overview

Background

In 2022 the community told us they wanted to strengthen the identity of Oxford Street by celebrating the past and building upon this legacy for a vibrant and inclusive future. We created the *Oxford Street LGBTIQ+ social and cultural strategy* in response to this and a priority area was to recognise historic LGBTIQ+ places and spaces.

The City of Sydney commissioned TKD Architects to explore sites within the Oxford Street precinct that hold strong links to the LGBTIQ+ history and culture.

Historic research and assessments were carried out and the study recommended 3 buildings on Oxford Street, Darlinghurst for local heritage listing. The sites suggested are:

- 134 Oxford Street, Darlinghurst — the Oxford Hotel
- 124 Oxford Street, Darlinghurst (part of 124-128 Oxford Street) — Palms
- 85-91 Oxford Street, Darlinghurst — Universal

Engagement summary

Between 1-29 August 2025 we asked the community to comment on the proposed heritage listings. Consultation provided the community an opportunity to learn about each site, its significance to the LGBTIQ+ community and give feedback on the proposal.

Documents on exhibition included a planning proposal, heritage report and draft inventory sheet for each building.

The purpose of the exhibition was to notify the community and seek feedback on the proposed listings as well as gauge community sentiment towards the proposal.

This report summarises the feedback received. It also outlines the activities undertaken during the consultation.

Engagement outcomes

What the community told us

We received a total of 10 submissions during the consultation period. Seven submissions were received through the online feedback form and 3 submissions via email.

The Sydney Your Say page was visited 625 times with 104 downloads of the exhibition documents.

Overall sentiment

Of the submissions received, 7 were supportive of the heritage listings. Two submissions expressed concerns and 1 submission opposed the proposal.

Reasons given in support of the proposal were:

- Important to acknowledge history and the role these venues played in the social, cultural and political life of Oxford Street and equality movement.
- Need to recognise the significance of the local LGBTIQ+ scene.
- It is important to preserve the history of Oxford Street particularly as many places have disappeared or been demolished.
- These venues continue to be important places for the LGBTIQ+ community to socialise.
- Need to preserve for future generations.

Concerns raised in the submissions:

- In an area with high housing demand, heritage listing may mean the sites cannot be used for high density housing in the future.
- Heritage listing may prevent the site from being transformed into something greater. Why assume the past will be better than the future?
- Heritage listing may impact the conversion to digital signage atop the Oxford Hotel, which could be used as a tool to promote the LGBTIQ+ community and issues.

One submission opposed the proposal as they did not agree with the expression of sexual diversity.

Submissions table

The below table is a summary of the feedback received.

Summary of submission	Number of submissions	City of Sydney response
Support for the heritage listing of these buildings, included: - It is important to acknowledge history and the role these venues played in the	7	The proposed heritage listings are linked to Priority 1 of the <u>Oxford Street LGBTIQ+ Social and Cultural Place Strategy</u> which

Summary of submission	Number of submissions	City of Sydney response
social, cultural and political life of Oxford Street and equality movement. - Heritage listing recognises the significance and value of the local LGBTIQA+ scene. - The importance of preserving the history of Oxford Street given many places have disappeared or been demolished. - Preservation ensures future generations can connect with the living history of our city and its queer community. - These venues were and still are significant places for the LGBTIQA+ community to socialise in.		focused on recognising historic LGBTIQA+ places and spaces. The proposed heritage listings also relate to some of the other priority areas of the strategy, including reflecting the contemporary LGBTIQA+ community within local businesses and venues, increasing LGBTIQA+ visibility and identity throughout the precinct and ensuring support for the local community.
A concern was raised about the impact of heritage listing on housing availability Heritage listing may mean these buildings cannot be used for high-density housing in the future, therefore exacerbating the housing crisis particularly in an area with very high housing demand.	1	The listing does not remove the opportunity for development consistent with the planning controls. In April 2022, the Council endorsed a planning proposal to amend Sydney LEP 2012 to revitalise Oxford Street. The amended LEP provides for an alternative set of height and floor space ratio controls as an incentive to meet certain strategic land use outcomes. The alternative set of height and floor space ratio controls are to only apply if the proposed building will deliver cultural and creative uses and be used wholly for those identified non-residential uses. The City's intention is to incentivise uses which build on the local centre function of Oxford Street and its potential as a cultural and creative hub and Special Entertainment Precinct. A secondary consideration is to minimise conflicts between nighttime economy uses and other sensitive development including residential uses. The alternative planning controls do not incentivise residential development of any kind in the corridor to minimise conflicts and prioritise local centre and cultural and creative uses.

Summary of submission	Number of submissions	City of Sydney response
		Residential development is permissible in the land use zones of the precinct without the height and FSR incentives for cultural and creative uses.
A concern was raised about the ‘museumification’ of the city Recognising the significance of the past use of the building is worthy, but it may prevent this site from being transformed into something of equal or greater significance. Why assume the past will be better than the future?	1	Heritage listing does not preclude change and development, pending a consideration of the heritage impact. Guidelines within the Recommended Management section of the heritage inventory sheet provide advice on this issue.
A concern related to the impact heritage listing may have on a planned digital billboard on the roof of 134 Oxford Street, Darlinghurst (Oxford Hotel) Rooftop signs have been on this site since at least the 1940s. A large promotional neon sign was installed over the roof since the 1970s and there has been a sign in this location since, having been updated a number of times as technology has developed. Options are being explored to replace the existing rooftop sign with digital LED signage. There is concern heritage listing may hinder the conversion to and installation of the digital signage.	1	There is a development application currently being assessed by the City for the replacement of the existing static roof advertising sign above the Oxford Hotel with a digital advertising sign and for minor associated works relating to the support structure (D/2025/961). The site is identified as a contributory building within the C17 Oxford Street Conservation Area. The submission has provided a heritage assessment by Urbis that is contrary to the City’s heritage assessment, but despite this, the submission explicitly proposes support for the proposed individual heritage listing on the basis that in principle support is provided for the proposed illuminated signage. The planning proposal was prepared and exhibited prior to lodgement of the DA and is therefore a matter for consideration. The Council is not the consent authority for the DA.
An objection to the proposal did not agree with the expression of sexual diversity	1	The City of Sydney is proud to have a highly diverse community, and we value the strengths, perspectives and experiences of our diverse communities including people young people, older adults, people with disability, people of diverse sexualities and genders, intersex

Summary of submission	Number of submissions	City of Sydney response
		people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, including those from refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds and international students, and believe that this diversity strengthens our city. This is linked to our social sustainability policy and action plan 2018–2028, titled <u>A city for all – towards a socially just and resilient Sydney</u>. The proposed heritage listing is part of our vision to celebrate and promote our diverse communities.

Engagement activities

Activities to support the consultation

Sydney Your Say webpage

A webpage with online feedback form was open for feedback from 1 August to 29 August 2025. The page included key information on what was being proposed and why, the significance of each site to the LGBTIQ+ community, the planning proposal and supporting documents for download.

Notification letter

A notification letter was letterbox dropped to owners and occupiers informing them of the consultation. 260 letters were sent. See appendix A.

Sydney Your Say e-news

The project was included in the August editions of the Sydney Your Say e-newsletter. See appendix B.

- August issue 1 sent on 5 August to 4,981 subscribers.
- August issue 2 sent on 26 August to 4,960 subscribers.

Appendix A – notification letter



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1 August 2025

Our reference: X091578

Proposed heritage listing of 3 buildings on Oxford Street, Darlinghurst

We invite your comments on a proposal to heritage list 3 buildings on Oxford Street.

- **134 Oxford Street, Darlinghurst — Oxford Hotel**
One of Sydney's longest operating LGBTQIA+ venues with historic links to the local rock music scene during the second half of the 1970s.
- **124 Oxford Street, Darlinghurst — Palms**
An important and inclusive social and entertainment space for LGBTQIA+ communities.
- **85-91 Oxford Street, Darlinghurst — Universal**
Playing a key role in the area's social and commercial life and development, with LGBTQIA+ venues operating here almost continuously since the late 1970s.

Why we're doing this

As part of our *Oxford Street LGBTQIA+ social and cultural place strategy*, we commissioned a heritage study investigating sites in the Oxford Street precinct with historic and contemporary connections to local communities. It recommended 3 sites for local heritage listing.

How to give feedback

You can view the planning proposal and supporting documents at sydneyyoursay.com.au

The proposal is open for comment until **5pm on Friday 29 August 2025**.

Feedback can be made online, by email or post to Project Officer, City Engagement, City of Sydney, Town Hall House, Level 7, 456 Kent Street, Sydney NSW 2000.

For more information or any queries contact senior specialist heritage planner Matt Devine at sydneyyoursay@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au or on 02 9265 9333.

Yours sincerely

Ben Pechey
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City Planning | Development | Transport

The City of Sydney acknowledges
the Gadigal of the Eora Nation as the
Traditional Custodians of our local area.

Appendix B – Sydney Your Say e-news item



Image: Katherine Griffiths / City of Sydney

Proposal to heritage list sites on Oxford Street, Darlinghurst

Three buildings with links to the LGBTIQ+ community have been recommended for local heritage listing.

Read about each site and have your say by Friday 29 August.

[Read more](#)