

Public Exhibition - Planning Proposal - 580 George Street, Sydney - Sydney Local Environmental Plan 2012 and Sydney Development Control Plan 2012 Amendment

File No: X124325

Summary

Central Sydney remains the preferred location for workers, residents and visitors, serving as Australia's leading economic centre. Maintaining Central Sydney's status as a global city with a dynamic economy and high quality of life, form part of the City of Sydney's key strategic actions. The Central Sydney Planning Strategy supports development and new investment by increased capacity in locations that can accommodate additional density. The Strategy protects Central Sydney's heritage and public places, encourages greater use of public transport, and moves towards a more sustainable city.

A planning proposal has been prepared for 580 George Street, Sydney, following a request by the proponent to amend the planning controls for the site. Located on the corner of George and Bathurst Streets it is in the 'midtown' precinct of Central Sydney with excellent connections to public transport including recent capacity increases through light rail and Sydney Metro.

This planning proposal seeks to change the floor space ratio control to facilitate 8,000 square metres of additional employment generating floor space in a new 10 storey office building on the northern portion of the site. The new building will be integrated with the existing 37 storey office tower on the southern portion of the site, as well as the lower ground retail arcade and pedestrian connection to Town Hall railway station, both of which will remain accessible during construction.

A draft site specific development control plan has been prepared to support the planning proposal, detailing the building envelope and providing guidance on the built form, public art, heritage, sustainability and design excellence.

This report recommends approval of the planning proposal for submission to the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure seeking a Gateway Determination, followed by public exhibition and referral to government agencies for comment. It also recommends that the draft site-specific development control plan is endorsed and exhibited concurrently. After this consultation, the planning proposal and any issues raised in submissions will be reported back to Council and the Central Sydney Planning Committee.

Recommendation

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council approve Planning Proposal - 580 George Street, Sydney, as shown at Attachment A to the subject report, to be submitted to the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces with a request for Gateway Determination;
- (B) Council approve Planning Proposal - 580 George Street, Sydney, as shown at Attachment A to the subject report, for public authority consultation and public exhibition in accordance with any conditions imposed under the Gateway Determination;
- (C) Council seek authority from the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces to exercise the delegation of all the functions under section 3.36 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 to make the local environmental plan and to put into effect Planning Proposal - 580 George Street, Sydney;
- (D) Council approve the Draft Sydney Development Control Plan 2012 - 580 George Street, Sydney, as shown at Attachment B to the subject report, for public authority consultation and public exhibition concurrent with the Planning Proposal;
- (E) authority be delegated to the Chief Executive Officer to make any variations to Planning Proposal - 580 George Street, Sydney, to correct any drafting errors or to ensure consistency with the Gateway Determination; and
- (F) authority be delegated to the Chief Executive Officer to make any variations to Draft Sydney Development Control Plan 2012 - 580 George Street, Sydney, to correct any drafting errors or ensure it is consistent with the Planning Proposal following the Gateway Determination.

Attachments

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| Attachment A. | Planning Proposal - 580 George Street, Sydney and Appendices |
| Attachment B. | Draft Sydney Development Control Plan 2012 - 580 George Street, Sydney |

Background

1. In September 2025, a request to prepare a planning proposal was lodged on behalf of the landowner, The GPT Group for 580 George Street, Sydney (the site). The site is shown in Figure 1.



Figure 1: Land affected by this planning proposal

2. The site has an area of 3,567 square metres and has frontages to George Street, Bathurst Street and Wilmot Street, and a shared boundary to 2 properties to the east.
3. Existing development consists of a 37-storey office tower and retail podium with food court, childcare centre and underground connection to Town Hall Station. The building was completed in 1988 and refurbished in 2014 with the addition of the distinct curved awning along George Street.
4. Further details of the site and existing planning controls is found in the planning proposal at Attachment A to this report. Photos of the site and existing development are at Figures 2 and 3.

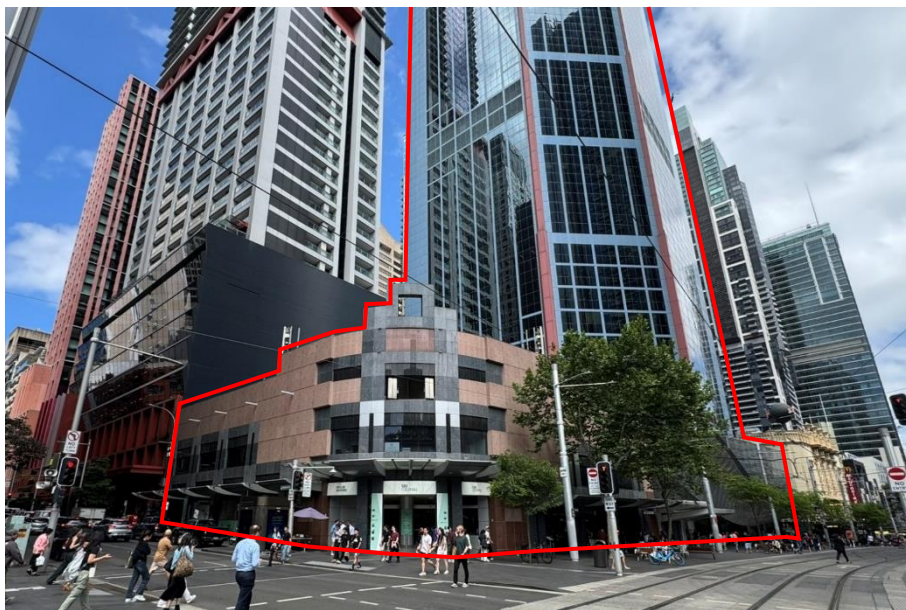


Figure 2: Looking south-east from George Street towards the subject site (in red)

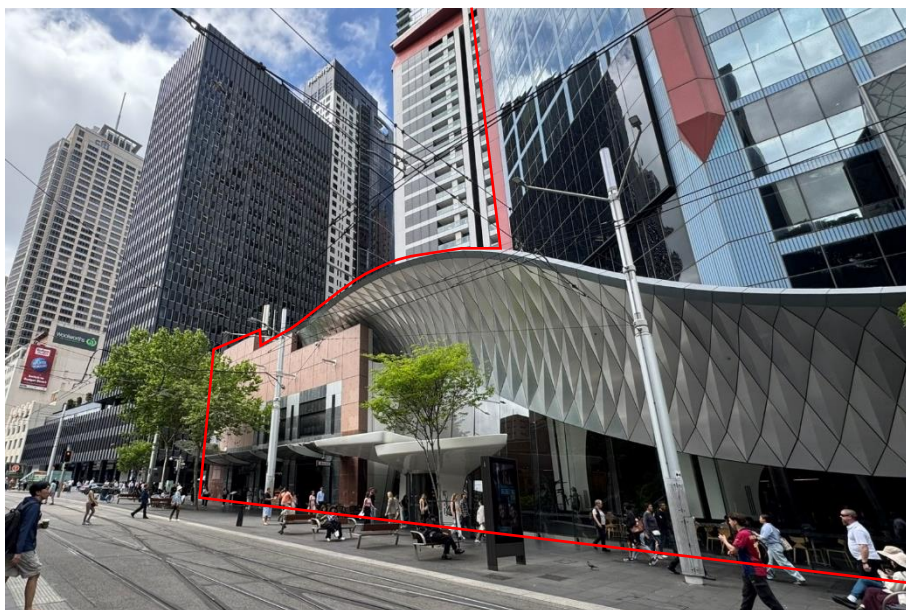


Figure 3: Looking north-east towards the subject site (in red) from George Street

The proponent has requested a change to the floor space ratio control to facilitate construction of a new 10-storey building on site

5. The proponent requested a planning proposal to facilitate the redevelopment as follows:
 - (a) a new 10-storey office building to a maximum height of RL 62.22 metres (approximately 38 metres above street level)

- (b) deliver approximately 8,000 square metres of new premium-grade office space, to a maximum floor space ratio of 15.1:1
 - (c) ensure the resulting building remains consistent with the assessment and would not be used for the purposes of residential accommodation or serviced apartments and
 - (d) ensure the new building includes end of journey facilities
6. Photomontages of the indicative scheme are provided at Figures 4 and 5.



Figure 4: Photomontage of the concept development facilitated by this planning proposal

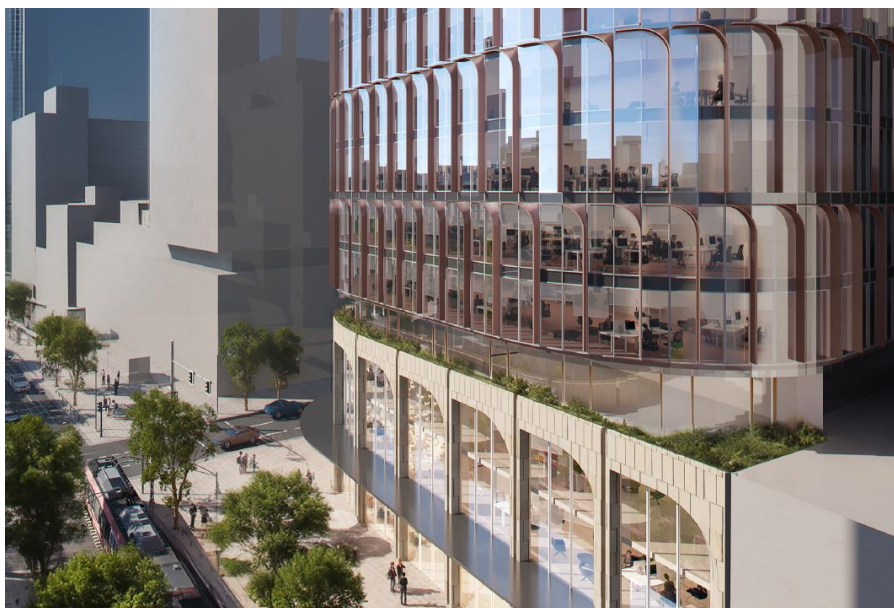


Figure 5: Photomontage of the planning proposal concept development

The City has prepared a planning proposal to increase the floor space ratio control for a commercial office development

7. The planning proposal details the proposed amendments to the Sydney Local Environmental Plan 2012 (Sydney LEP 2012) by inserting new site-specific provisions to incentivise commercial floor space: The provisions are to:
 - (a) increase the maximum floor space ratio control to 15.1:1 inclusive of design excellence and end of journey floor space
 - (b) ensure the resulting building includes end of journey facilities and
 - (c) ensure the building is not used for the purposes of residential accommodation or serviced apartments and does not include any additional car parking spaces
8. Further explanation of the provisions can be found in Section 4 of the Planning Proposal at Attachment A.

Changes to the Development Control Plan will ensure the delivery of a high-quality built form that respects adjacent heritage buildings

9. A draft site-specific Development Control Plan (draft DCP) is at Attachment B and provides further guidance for development facilitated by this planning proposal. The draft DCP provisions include:
 - (a) building envelope dimensions, including maximum height, as shown at Figure 6
 - (b) built form requirements, including facade articulation and horizontal recess zones and integration of the existing curved feature awning and
 - (c) additional provisions addressing heritage, sustainability, public art and design excellence

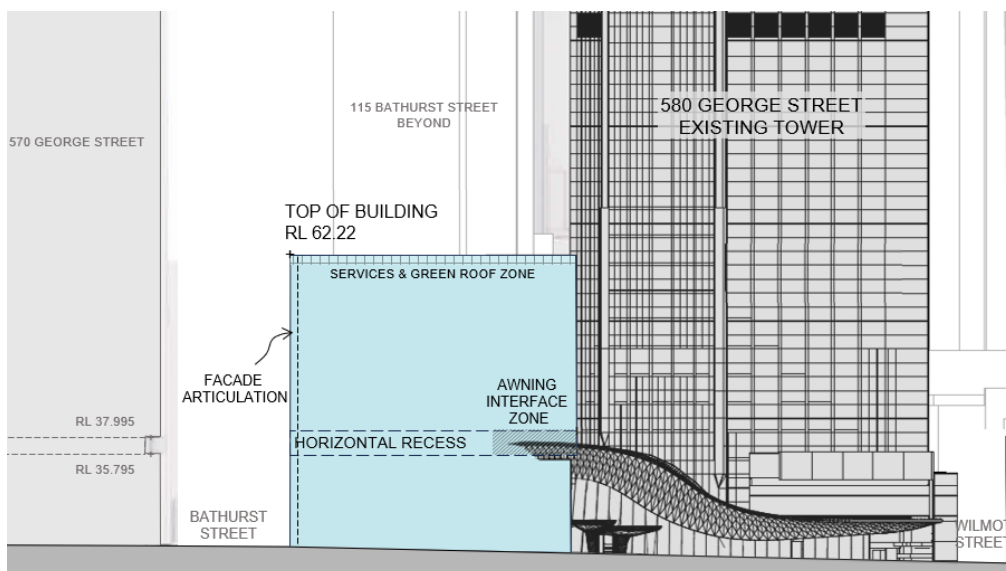


Figure 6: George Street envelope elevation of the proposed new office building, shown in blue

The proposal demonstrates strategic and site-specific merit**The proposal is well located and provides a good contextual fit and has site-specific merit**

10. The site is located in a tower cluster where additional density may be accommodated for productive and employment generating floor space. The proposed amended controls support new office space, consistent with the City's strategies for a mixed-use Central Sydney, as a destination for business, investment and talent.
11. The proposal is well positioned for efficient use of recent capacity upgrades to active and public transport, including Sydney Metro, light rail and the pedestrianised George Street. New employment opportunities facilitated by this proposal will support more homes in locations close to public transport in Greater Sydney.
12. The proposed scheme has been developed with environmental impacts identified and addressed during the assessment. The City's Design Advisory Panel noted the site's prominent location, proximity to heritage buildings and tower backdrop. They recommended design solutions consider the site's location, and that a competitive design process comprising a selection of experienced architects is essential in ensuring a high quality outcome. The planning envelope is responsive to its context, protects the amenity of adjoining residential apartments and maintain good pedestrian wind and daylight conditions. Key considerations are discussed below.

Floor space ratio

13. The proposed maximum floor space ratio control of 15.1:1, provides an additional 8,000 square metres for a new 10 storey office building. The planning envelope is capable of accommodating the proposed additional floor space and meet the City's efficiency and architectural articulation requirements.
14. The floor space ratio is specific to the building detailed in this planning proposal and draft DCP and as such future development is not eligible for any other types of additional floor space available elsewhere in the LEP.
15. The site-specific floor space ratio will be expressed as a maximum control, inclusive of end of journey floor space, accommodation floor space and design excellence. There is no change to the application of the City's heritage floor space scheme, which will remain applicable in accordance with the LEP's existing provisions.
16. To be eligible for the proposed controls, future development is to be for non-residential uses only, include an end of journey facility and have no additional car parking spaces.

Building height

17. This planning proposal does not seek to change the building height control. At RL 62.22 metres, the planning envelope is approximately 38 metres above the existing ground level of George and Bathurst Street ground level. It is beneath the 55 metre height control for the north-west corner for the site and the 235 metre height control applicable for the rest of the site.
18. This planning proposal facilitates a new modern workplace building that complements the surrounding scale and provides a transition between adjacent towers and prominent heritage buildings nearby and as such is considered acceptable. The planning envelope and maximum building height is clearly defined in the draft DCP.

Protection of residential amenity

19. An overshadowing and view loss analysis was undertaken for the apartments that overlook the site in the adjoining Greenland Building on Bathurst Street. At RL 62.22 metres the new building is below the west facing apartments, which will ensure the existing solar access is maintained and no adverse impacts to views from the west facing windows, as shown in Figure 7.
20. The planning envelope and site-specific provisions will ensure that the new building, including balustrade, lift overrun and plant equipment cannot exceed RL 62.22 metres to protect views over the new building from the adjoining apartments.



Figure 7: View impact analysis from the apartment on level 9 of the Greenland Building

Heritage

21. The site is close to a number of heritage items, including State heritage listed Sydney Town Hall and St Andrew's Cathedral, and the former Bank of NSW and former Sydney County Council buildings on the opposite corners of the George and Bathurst Street intersection. The planning envelope does not impact or obstruct public views to these heritage items. The exhibition of revised planning envelopes does not approve the detail architecture of the concept reference scheme.
22. The planning envelope responds to its surrounding context, which comprises a mix of contemporary high-rise buildings and lower-scale heritage buildings. A recessed 'waist' zone, with a 2 metre setback and external terrace, will form a horizontal break in the building's facade and provides a visual and spatial distinction between the lower podium and upper floors.
23. The recess zone will help the new building relate to adjacent heritage building by drawing on the heritage datums set by the former Bank of NSW building and podium recess of the former Sydney County Council building. The use of materials, including sandstone in the new building's lower podium will reference nearby State heritage buildings. Future development will be subject to a site-specific DCP, design competition and heritage advice to inform the detailed design and respond its heritage and urban context.

Awning

24. The site's George Street frontage features a distinctive curved awning feature installed as part retail, lobby and facade upgrade works in 2014. The awning, shown in Figure 4, is integrated into the office tower's form and extends over the lobby to the office tower, terminating above the retail podium.
25. The planning proposal requires integration of the awning feature with the new building. The horizontal recess above the lower podium serves as the location for the interface between the curved awning and the new building. The 2 metre setback in this zone provides for its integration into the design of the new building. Draft DCP provisions recommend holistic consideration of the awning, helping it serve as an element to connect the two buildings on the site.

Town Hall station connection

26. A retail arcade and through-site link runs through the lower-ground floor of the site, forming an accessible pedestrian connection from Town Hall train station to George Street and the surrounding area. This planning proposal excludes the pedestrian connection and lower ground floor retail spaces, which will be retained following the redevelopment of the site, with public access maintained during construction works to the new building.
27. The pedestrian experience will be enhanced by this planning proposal. The Bathurst Street entrance will be reinstated and will provide access to pedestrians of all levels of mobility to the lower-ground Town Hall station level.

Commercial car parking

28. The existing car parking on site includes 137 parking spaces, including a commercial carpark in the basement, accessed from Wilmot Street. To support the new building additional structural columns will penetrate into the basement, across the 3 basement levels, it is anticipated there will be a reduction of 31 car parking spaces.
29. This planning proposal does not propose any changes to the parking arrangements on site, however site-specific LEP provisions are proposed to ensure future development will not result in additional car parking spaces on the subject site.

Key Implications

Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision

30. 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 planning proposal is aligned with the following strategic directions and objectives:
 - (a) Direction 2 - A leading environmental performer - this planning proposal enables future development that aligns with the City's Net Zero requirements.
 - (b) Direction 3 - Public places for all - future development includes improved retail activation, contributing towards pedestrianised George Street role as Central Sydney's civic spine.

- (c) Direction 4 - Design excellence and sustainable development - the new building shall be guided by a competitive design process to achieve design excellence and will ensure the City's sustainability requirements are met.
- (d) Direction 5 - A city for walking, cycling and public transport - the site is well positioned to capitalise from nearby transport and retaining the existing connection to Town Hall station, supporting pedestrian permeability of the CBD.
- (e) Direction 8 - A thriving cultural life - public art delivered with the new building will provide creative and cultural experiences and opportunities for engagement with the public.
- (f) Direction 9 - A transformed and innovative economy - this planning proposal helps support employment growth in Central Sydney, helping to maintain its position as a destination for business, investment and talent.

City Plan 2036 - Local Strategic Planning Statement

31. The City of Sydney's local strategic planning statement sets the vision, priorities and planning context, outlining how the City will plan for change and actions needed to achieve the vision. This planning proposal gives effect to the following priorities:
- (a) Infrastructure – this planning proposal facilitates additional employment floor space in a strategically appropriate location, benefitting from direct access to several public and active transport options, supporting efficient use of this existing infrastructure.
 - (b) Liveability – future development will positively contribute towards improved street life through new ground floor uses and fine-grain retail, encouraging a lively streetscape and activity.
 - (c) Productivity – this proposal supports additional growth in Central Sydney by delivering new office space and capacity for economic and employment growth.
 - (d) Sustainability – the new building facilitated by this planning proposal will be required to meet ambitious sustainability benchmarks, delivering more ecologically sustainable buildings.

Risks

32. City staff have undertaken a thorough assessment of the planning proposal and found that it demonstrates strategic and site-specific merit in accordance with NSW Government guidelines. The planning proposal is consistent with City policies and strategies including City Plan 2036, Central Sydney Planning Strategy, Business Development Strategy and Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision. Progressing the planning proposal is within the City's risk tolerance and appetite.
33. The planning proposal has demonstrated that development can be capable of complying with relevant environmental and planning laws, regulations and industry standards and is within the City's minimal appetite for non-compliance with environmental laws, regulations and industry standards.

34. Should Council and the Central Sydney Planning Committee endorse the planning proposal, it will progress to the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure for Gateway Determination. Proceeding with the planning proposal will meet the City's minimal appetite for disruption to our regulatory functions as decisions will be within the timeframes set in the NSW Government's Statement of Expectations Order 2024

Relevant Legislation

35. Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979.

Critical Date / Time Frames

36. Should Council and the Central Sydney Planning Committee endorse the planning proposal for public exhibition, it will be forwarded to the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure for Gateway Determination in accordance with section 3.34 of the Act. The Gateway Determination will provide the date for the completion of the Local Environmental Plan amendment. Following public exhibition, the outcomes will be reported back to Council and the Central Sydney Planning Committee.

Public Consultation

37. The public exhibition process for this planning proposal will be determined by the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure. It is planned for the public exhibition of the planning proposal and draft Development Control Plan to run concurrently. The consultation will be in accordance with:
- (a) the Gateway Determination issued by the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure under section 3.34 of the Act
 - (b) the Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2021
 - (c) the City of Sydney's Community Engagement Strategy and Participation Plan
38. It is likely that the public exhibition period for the planning proposal would be a minimum of 20 working days.
39. The planning proposal and draft Development Control Plan will be publicly exhibited on the City of Sydney website.
40. The public consultation outcomes will be reported back for consideration by Council and the Central Sydney Planning Committee.

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