

Item 6.

Public Exhibition - Planning Proposal - 103-109 George Street, Redfern - Sydney Local Environmental Plan 2012 Amendment

File No: X129829

Summary

A planning proposal has been prepared for 103-109 George Street, Redfern, following a request by the proponent to amend the planning controls for the site. The proponent is Colliers Urban Planning (formerly Ethos Urban) on behalf of Telstra Corporation Limited (Telstra) the owner of the subject site.

The proposal seeks to amend Schedule 5 of Sydney Local Environmental Plan 2012 (SLEP 2012) and the accompanying heritage map (HER_016) to remove the heritage listing (Item No. I1318) currently on the subject site. The existing listing has been applied based on a former and larger land parcel that once included both 103-109 George Street and the adjoining property at 117A Redfern Street – the original Redfern Telephone Exchange. The heritage item is currently mapped across both properties.

The buildings at 103-109 George Street are concrete framed telephone exchange buildings; one is 7-storeys constructed in 1957 and the other is 3-storeys and completed c1974. These were built to supplement and later supersede the original 1913 building. A heritage assessment has found that these later buildings do not meet the threshold for heritage listing.

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. 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) the Central Sydney Planning Committee approve Planning Proposal - 103-109 George Street, Redfern, shown at Attachment A to the subject report, for submission to the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure with a request for a gateway determination;
- (B) the Central Sydney Planning Committee approve the Planning Proposal - 103-109 George Street, Redfern as shown at Attachment A for public authority consultation and public exhibition in accordance with any conditions imposed under the gateway determination;
- (C) the Central Sydney Planning Committee note the recommendation to Council's Transport, Heritage and Planning Committee on 20 April 2026 that Council seek authority from the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure 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 - 103-109 George Street, Redfern; and
- (D) authority be delegated to the Chief Executive Officer to make any minor variations to the Planning Proposal - 103-109 George Street, Redfern to correct any drafting errors or to ensure consistency with the gateway determination.

Attachments

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| Attachment A. | Planning Proposal - 103-109 George Street, Redfern - Sydney Local Environmental Plan 2012 Amendment |
| Attachment B. | Design 5 Architects - Redfern Telephone Exchange - 103-109 George Street, Redfern - Modification of Heritage Listing – Item No. 11318 |
| Attachment C. | Brunskill McClenahan and Associates Pty Ltd - Plan of Proposed Subdivision Lot 2 DP 776807 (Approved 24 May 2013) |

Background

1. Colliers Urban Planning on behalf of Telstra have submitted a request for a planning proposal to remove the heritage listing of the property at 103-109 George Street, Redfern (the subject site).
2. The NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure have advised that a planning proposal was necessary rather than an expedited minor amendment, given the extent of the required mapping change and the need to publicly exhibit a heritage report confirming the appropriateness of this proposed change.
3. This report includes a planning proposal to amend Schedule 5 of Sydney Local Environmental Plan 2012 (SLEP 2012) and the accompanying heritage map (HER_016) to remove the heritage listing (Item No. I1318) currently on 103-109 George Street, Redfern.
4. Currently, both 103-109 George Street and 117A Redfern Street are included as Item No. I1318 in Schedule 5 of SLEP 2012, described as *Redfern Telephone Exchange including interior*.



Figure 1: 103 (left) – 109 (right) George Street, Redfern. Source: <https://www.commercialrealestate.com.au/news/redfern-telephone-exchange-inner-sydney-redevelopment-potential-as-telstra-moves-on-1350901/>



Figure 2: 117A Redfern Street, Redfern. Source: <https://www.facebook.com>



Figure 3: Extract from Heritage map in the SLEP 2012 Item No. I1318. The boundary of the heritage item (comprising the two separate properties) is outlined in red. The separate lots are divided by the green line with 117A Redfern Street to the north, and 103-109 George Street to the south.

5. The subject site is part of a larger site that prior to 1988 comprised the Redfern Post Office and the 3 buildings that comprised the telephone exchange. This entire site was owned by the Commonwealth of Australia.
6. On 5 August 1988, the site was subdivided into 2 lots by the registration of DP 776807. Lot 1 contained the Redfern Post Office and Lot 2 contained the telephone exchange buildings.
7. On 24 April 2013, Lot 2 was subdivided again into 2 lots – Lots 201 and 202 DP 1186468, as shown at Attachment C.
8. Lot 201 DP 1186468 has frontages to George and Turner Streets and contains the 3 storey and 7 storey exchange buildings, retained for telecommunication uses by Telstra. Lot 201 is known as 103-109 George Street, Redfern.
9. Lot 202 has a frontage to Redfern Street and contains the small historic 2 storey exchange building, which was the original Redfern Telephone Exchange. This site was subsequently disposed by Telstra and is now owned and used by the Aboriginal Medical Service Co-Operative Ltd and known as 117A Redfern Street, Redfern.
10. A heritage assessment by Design 5 Architects of the combined sites (103-109 George Street and 117A Redfern Street) attached at Attachment B concluded that Item I1318 should be revised to exclude the property at 103 -109 George Street, Redfern (Lot 201), as the extant buildings on Lot 201 do not meet the threshold for local listing.
11. This assessment confirms that the former telephone exchange at 117A Redfern Street, Redfern (Lot 202) continues to meet the threshold for local listing.
12. The City concurs with the conclusions of Design 5 Architects' heritage assessment. The site and building at 103-109 George Street do not meet the threshold for local listing and therefore the existing heritage listing should be removed. These buildings are already listed as detracting buildings within the heritage conservation area, and as such an amendment to their contribution status in Sydney DCP 2012 is not required.

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 1 - Responsible governance and stewardship - revising the existing heritage listing is responsible governance.

Risks

14. Proceeding with changes to Schedule 5 of the SLEP 2012 to revise existing heritage items is within the City's risk appetite. The proposal is within the City's risk appetite. The risk appetite statement says we have minimal appetite for change that detrimentally impacts on the cultural or heritage properties of significant items, structures or buildings. A heritage assessment has been prepared and reviewed by staff which finds that the removal of the listing will not affect significant heritage fabric.

Relevant Legislation

15. Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979
16. Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2021

Public Consultation

17. Should the planning proposal at Attachment A be approved, it will be forwarded to the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure with a request for a gateway determination to allow public exhibition.
18. The public consultation process for the planning proposal will be subject to the conditions of the gateway determination issued by the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure. Exhibition documents will be made available to the public for viewing and comment on the City's Have Your Say website.

GRAHAM JAHN AM

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