

Attachment F

Engagement Report - LGBTIQA+ Heritage Listings in the Oxford Street Area

Engagement report – LGBTIQA+ heritage listings in the Oxford Street area



Contents

Overview	3
Background	3
Engagement summary	3
Purpose of engagement	3
Outcomes of engagement	4
Submissions received during March-May 2026 consultation	4
Submissions and engagement activity	4
Key findings	5
Key findings for 273 Crown Street	5
Key findings for 40-42 Flinders Street	5
Key findings for 207 Oxford Street	6
Submissions table	7
Communication and engagement activities	10
Appendices	11
Appendix A – Sydney Your Say webpage	11
Appendix B – Notification letter	14
Appendix C – Sydney Your Say e-news	15
Appendix D – News coverage	16

Overview

Background

Following the Oxford Street LGBTIQ+ social and cultural place strategy (2022), we commissioned TKD Architects to explore sites within the precinct that hold strong links to LGBTIQ+ history and culture. In December 2025 following public exhibition, we endorsed 3 sites for heritage listing.

In March 2026, we proposed an additional 3 sites for heritage listing:

1. 273 Crown Street, Surry Hills – former Ruby Reds

Sydney's first recreational venue dedicated to the lesbian community, owned by prominent entrepreneur Dawn O'Donnell.

2. 40-42 Flinders Street, Darlinghurst – former Taxi Club

Home of the Grosvenor Club, popular with performers from Les Girls because of its 24-hour licence.

3. 207 Oxford Street, Darlinghurst – former The Bookshop

The site of a long-running bookshop devoted to the sale of gay and lesbian books, journals and publications and an important hub for the community.

Engagement summary

This report summarises the consultation that took place between 31 March 2026 and 5 May 2026, about our proposal to heritage list 3 sites of LGBTIQ+ significance in the Oxford Street area. It details the communications and engagement activities that took place, and our key findings.

We created a dedicated Sydney Your Say page to exhibit documents including a planning proposal, heritage reports and draft inventory sheets for each building. A letter was sent to property owners and occupiers, and the nearby community. We advertised via our monthly Sydney Your Say newsletter and also sent targeted emails to property owners and their tenants on 9 April 2026. Online news coverage in [Architecture, Au](#), [City Hub](#) and [QNews](#) also drew interest and attention.

We received a total of 17 submissions (via survey and email) during the public consultation period.

Those supporting the proposal highlighted the importance of these sites to the LGBTIQ+ community. They agreed that listing them is a necessary and overdue act of public recognition. Those opposing the proposal argued that appropriate recognition is through interpretation, not blanket controls, and that posing an additional heritage listing would introduce unnecessary constraints and complexity for the future use and adaptation of the property, without delivering meaningful conservation outcomes.

Purpose of engagement

Communications and engagement activities in this consultation were designed to:

1. Raise awareness about our proposal to heritage list 3 sites of LGBTIQ+ significance in the Oxford Street area.
2. Gather feedback on this proposal.

Outcomes of engagement

The following is a snapshot of the outcomes from our engagement.

Submissions received during March-May 2026 consultation

During this consultation, we received a total of 17 submissions: 5 via online survey and 12 via email.

- 5 submissions supported the listings
- each landowner (3) objected to the listing, but generally supported recognition of each site's LGBTIQ+ cultural history through interpretive measures
- 8 submissions objected the heritage listing of 207 Oxford Street
- one submission was neutral in its sentiment

The Sydney Your Say page was visited 270 times during the consultation period.

Submissions and engagement activity

Quantity	Description of activity
17	Total submissions received
5	Survey submissions
12	Emailed submissions
1	Telephone enquiries
270	Sydney Your Say webpage visits
38	Total document downloads

Key findings

Key findings for 273 Crown Street

6 submissions referenced 273 Crown Street: 4 survey submissions and 2 email submissions. Five were in favour of the proposal and 1 submission did not support the proposal.

Reasons given supporting the proposal:

- Site is important to the LGBTIQ+ community.
- Listing 273 Crown Street is a necessary and overdue act of public recognition.
- Its significance is not merely physical or architectural; it is deeply historical, social and cultural.
- With the right investment and vision, these locations could become significant cultural attractions – places to educate future generations and celebrate LGBTIQ+ history, while also driving economic activity and vibrancy in the area.

Reasons given opposing the proposal:

- Listing the entire building imposes unreasonable regulatory burdens and will discourage operators. Cultural venues require flexibility, speed and low-cost fit out pathways to survive. This will delay openings, increase costs and ultimately lead to closures.
- The Inventory Sheet states the building may be demolished and replaced, provided interpretation is retained. This confirms the physical structure is not essential to significance and heritage value can exist independent of the building.
- Opposition to the listing of the entire building and instead limiting listing to external facade only (if any), with explicit exclusions for internal alterations, fit outs or change of use.

Key findings for 40-42 Flinders Street

6 submissions referenced 40-42 Street: 4 survey submissions and 2 email submissions. Four were in favour of the proposal and 2 submissions were neutral or in objection.

Reasons given supporting the proposal:

- It captures an important and enduring part of Sydney's LGBTIQ+ history and is a place of local heritage significance.
- We are losing so many of our key queer venues. A plea to try to protect our LGBTIQ+ heritage.
- With the right investment and vision, these locations could become significant cultural attractions – places to educate future generations and celebrate LGBTIQ+ history, while also driving economic activity and vibrancy in the area.

Reasons given opposing the proposal:

- Appropriate recognition should be through interpretation, not blanket controls.
- Under the NSW heritage assessment framework, heritage significance must be noticeably embodied in the physical fabric of a place. This building has undergone substantial modification over time, with limited intact original or contributory fabric remaining.
- Disproportionate planning impacts under SLEP 2012.
- This site is located within the Darlinghurst / Oxford Street precinct, an area identified by the City of Sydney as requiring ongoing activation and revitalisation, support for nightlife, cultural venues and diverse operators; and flexibility in tenancy and adaptive reuse. The proposed heritage listing would create barriers to securing and retaining appropriate tenants, discourage all potential operators due to increased approval complexity and cost, and undermine activation outcomes the listing is ostensibly seeking to support.

Key findings for 207 Oxford Street

14 submissions referenced 207 Oxford Street: 6 surveys and 8 emails. The feedback came from local residents, nearby business owners and the property's owner. Of the submissions that referenced this property, 4 were in favour of the proposal, 9 opposed the proposal, and 1 was neutral.

Reasons given supporting the proposal:

- Site is important to the LGBTIQ+ community.
- This is not simply a retail premises. The Bookshop has functioned as a cultural institution, a place of information-sharing, a meeting point and a community anchor.
- Individual listing is particularly important here because broad conservation area controls do not fully capture the specific community meaning of this site.
- Recognising it formally as a heritage item says that the intellectual, social and emotional life of the LGBTIQ+ community is part of Sydney's heritage and deserves to be protected, interpreted and carried forward.

Reasons given opposing the proposal:

- The existing Oxford Street Conservation Area and the building's contributory status adequately protects the significant aspects of the building.
- The historical and social significance of the site – particularly its association with the LGBTIQ+ community – is no longer inherently tied to the physical structure. Given the closure of the bookshop and the building's change in use, this significance would be more effectively preserved and communicated through physical interpretation or digital documentation.
- Imposing an additional heritage listing would introduce unnecessary constraints and complexity for the future use and adaptation of the property, without delivering meaningful conservation outcomes.

Submissions table

Theme/issue raised	City of Sydney response
Recognition of these sites links to LGBTIQ+ history and community by heritage listing	The City acknowledges the strong connection between the LGBTIQ+ community and the Oxford Street precinct. Subsequently the City developed the Oxford Street LGBTIQ+ Social and Cultural Place Strategy with its priority recognising historic LGBTIQ+ places and spaces, leading to a focused heritage study and the proposed listing of these sites, as well additional interpretation within the public domain (such as rainbow crossings and street signs).
Heritage listing and the ability to accommodate change	The purpose of heritage listing is to formally recognise, protect, and conserve culturally significant places, buildings, or objects for current and future generations. It ensures that their unique values are conserved while managing necessary changes to the place. Depending on the heritage significance of a place, and how this is linked to building fabric and form, various degrees of change are acceptable. Management guidelines in the revised individual inventory sheets give an indication of what elements of the site (such as building fabric or form) are considered significant and need to be addressed as part of any potential development. The proposed listings do not remove the opportunity to sympathetically develop the sites under the existing planning controls and heritage listing itself does not prevent vertical additions, provided proposals respond appropriately to the site's heritage values. In response to submissions, the management recommendations in the heritage in the Heritage Inventory sheets have been updated to make clear the implications of the listing. The recommendations provide guidance on what should be done to conserve the significance of the place when it undergoes major development. Management recommendations vary from site to site. They complement and do not override the planning controls for the site. For example: Former Ruby Reds, 273 Crown Street, Surry Hills: the existing building may be demolished and replaced provided the new building interprets the LGBTIQ+ historic and social significance on site. Former Taxi Club, 40-42 Flinders Street, Darlinghurst: the front facade must be retained and conserved, consistent with the buildings existing contributory status in a conservation area, but the City's heritage exemption process can be used to facilitate internal alterations and fitouts.

Theme/issue raised	City of Sydney response
	Former The Bookshop, 207 Oxford Street, Darlinghurst: the front facade must be retained and conserved, consistent with the buildings existing contributory status in a conservation area, but alterations and additions consistent with the controls for the Oxford Street Creative and Cultural Precinct may occur, including vertical additions.
Concerns about onerous planning controls because of heritage listing	The heritage listing ensures the unique values of a place are conserved while managing necessary changes. Depending on the heritage significance of a place, and how this is linked to building fabric and form, various degrees of change are acceptable. Submissions opposed to listing raise concerns about development potential or making minor works harder. However, the management guidelines in the inventory sheets have clearly identified what characteristics are important to the heritage significance of the place, and appropriate processes for change. For example: Former Ruby Reds, 273 Crown Street, Surry Hills: The site is not within a heritage conservation area. As such it currently has access to a number of exempt and complying development pathways, including internal and external building alterations. While opportunities for complying development will not be available, the heritage works exemption process will be available. In this case it will be very straightforward as no fabric has been identified as having heritage significance. In practice it means that internal and external building alteration works that previously were exempt or required a complying development certificate, could now be dealt with under the heritage works exemption pathway. Former Taxi Club, 40-42 Flinders Street, Darlinghurst: is already a contributory building within a heritage conservation area. As such it has access to a number of exempt and complying development pathways, including internal building alterations. However, being in a conservation area, many external works still require a complying development certificate or even a development application. While some opportunities for complying development will not be available, the heritage works exemption process will be available, and in this case, it will be very straightforward as very limited fabric has been identified as having heritage significance (notably the front facade and the overall form of the building). Former The Bookshop, 207 Oxford Street, Darlinghurst: is already a contributory building within a heritage conservation area. As such it has access to a number of exempt and complying development pathways, including internal building alterations. However, being in a conservation area, many external works still require a complying development certificate or even a development application. While some opportunities for complying development will not be available, the heritage works

Theme/issue raised	City of Sydney response
	exemption process will be available, and in this case, it will be very straightforward as very limited fabric has been identified as having heritage significance (notably the front facade).
Concerns about the assessment of heritage significance, regarding extent of original fabric, intangible values, extent of change undergone and the need to meet all 7 heritage assessment criteria.	Heritage significance does not need to be embedded in fabric, but can be embodied in a place's setting, use, associations, meanings, records, related places, and objects, several of which are relevant here. Places and objects can also be significant for their intangible values (for example, meaning, associations, connections). Places that have undergone significant change can continue to have heritage significance. Places do not need to meet all 7 heritage assessment criteria to meet the threshold for listing as a heritage item.
The City should allocate funds towards the conservation of these site or acquire them.	Allocating public funds or pursuing acquisition is not supported given competing budget priorities and the principle that the primary responsibility for maintenance of privately owned heritage assets rests with the owner. Direct intervention by the City in this instance would set an unsustainable precedent and may not represent an equitable or efficient use of limited public resources.
The proposed listings should not proceed as the businesses referenced no longer exist.	The absence of the original businesses does not diminish the heritage significance of the buildings. Heritage listing recognises the historic and associative values of a place, which can persist regardless of changes in ownership or use over time. Many heritage-listed sites no longer accommodate their original functions yet remain important as physical evidence of past activities and contributions to the area's history.
Some minor errors were identified in the draft inventory sheets.	The City has investigated these issues and revised the inventory sheets where appropriate.
The listings are not in line with the City's strategic vision regarding activation in the Oxford Street precinct.	The listings are in direct response to the City's Oxford Street LGBTIQ+ Social and Cultural Place Strategy which includes an action to investigate heritage listing places within the Oxford Street precinct that have historic and contemporary connections to the LGBTIQ+ community.

Communication and engagement activities

Below is a summary of the communication and engagement activities that took place during the consultation period.

Activity	Outcome
Sydney Your Say webpage	• Dedicated Sydney Your Say webpage: https://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/policy-planning-changes/proposed-lgbtq-heritage-listings-oxford-street-area. • Web page received 270 views during the consultation period. • The page included an online survey where people could give feedback, an electronic copy of the planning proposal, the heritage assessment reports, draft inventory sheets for each building and other key information. • Total of 38 document downloads.
Notification letter	• 522 letters were distributed to owners and occupiers on 1 April 2026 within a 25m radius of each building. • Letter distribution included addresses for the properties proposed for heritage listing.
Sydney Your Say e-news	• Consultation included in the Sydney Your Say e-newsletter on 8 April 2025 sent to nearly 3985 subscribers, with 2664 unique opens (67% of subscribers) and 269 click throughs (7% of subscribers).
Stakeholder email	• Key stakeholders were contacted by email on 9 April 2026, including building owners and tenants.
News coverage	• Online publication Architecture, Au featured the consultation in a dedicated online piece on 9 April 2026: https://architectureau.com/articles/three-further-lgbtq-sydney-icons-considered-for-local-heritage-register/. • Online newspaper City Hub referred to the three sites and the public exhibition in a dedicated online piece on 1 April 2026: https://cityhub.com.au/oxford-street-venues-heritage-listing/ • Online community media website QNews gave detailed background to the history of the project and the most recent consultation in a dedicated online piece on 1 April 2026: https://qnews.com.au/former-iconic-oxford-street-lgbtq-venues-proposed-for-heritage-listing/

Appendices

Appendix A – Sydney Your Say webpage

Proposed LGBTIQ+ heritage listings in the Oxford Street area

These 3 buildings tell an important story of LGBTIQ+ presence and pride. Help us recognise their heritage significance.

Darlinghurst

Surry Hills



Under review

Contributions to this consultation are closed for evaluation and review. The project team will report back on key outcomes.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION PERIOD

31 March 2026 to 5 May 2026

Why we're doing this

Following the [Oxford Street LGBTIQ+ social and cultural place strategy](#), we commissioned TKD Architects in 2022 to explore sites within the precinct that hold strong links to LGBTIQ+ history and culture. Previously we proposed 3 buildings for heritage listing.

The study recommended heritage listing 3 more sites:

273 Crown Street, Surry Hills - former Ruby Reds

Sydney's first recreational venue dedicated to the lesbian community owned by prominent entrepreneur Dawn O'Donnell.

40-42 Flinders Street, Darlinghurst - former Taxi Club

Home of the Grosvenor Club, popular with performers from Les Girls because of its 24-hour licence.

207 Oxford Street, Darlinghurst - former The Bookshop

The site of a long-running bookshop devoted to the sale of gay and lesbian books, journals and publications and an important hub for the community.

Matt Devine

SENIOR SPECIALIST PLANNER (HERITAGE)

☎ [02 9265 9333](tel:0292659333)

✉ [sydneyyoursay@cityofsydney...](mailto:sydneyyoursay@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au)

[COPY EMAIL ADDRESS](#)

What we're doing

We propose to amend the [Sydney Local Environmental Plan 2012](#) to list 3 buildings as local heritage items.

Historic research and assessments have been carried out to better understand the significance of the properties.

We're looking for your feedback on the listings.

Engagement report – LGBTIQA+ heritage listings in the Oxford Street area



Planning proposal



PDF · 1.79 MB · Last modified 31 March 2026



Heritage assessment report



PDF · 9.49 MB · Last modified 31 March 2026



Heritage assessment – 40-42 Flinders Street



PDF · 6.36 MB · Last modified 31 March 2026



Draft heritage inventory sheet – 40-42 Flinders Street, Darlinghurst – Former Taxi Club



PDF · 1.98 MB · Last modified 31 March 2026



Heritage assessment – 207 Oxford Street – The Bookshop



PDF · 1.98 MB · Last modified 31 March 2026



Draft heritage inventory sheet – 207 Oxford, Darlinghurst – The Bookshop



PDF · 2.08 MB · Last modified 31 March 2026



Heritage assessment – 273 Crown Street



PDF · 5.11 MB · Last modified 31 March 2026



Draft heritage inventory sheet – 273 Crown Street, Surry Hills – Former Ruby Reds



PDF · 1.61 MB · Last modified 31 March 2026

How you can give feedback

Consultation closes at 5pm on Tuesday 5 May 2026.

1 Complete our survey

You'll need to log in with a City of Sydney account to complete the survey. If you don't have an account, it's easy to create one.

2 Email or post your feedback

You can give your feedback by email to sydneyyoursay@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au or post to:

Senior Community Engagement Coordinator, City Engagement
City of Sydney
Level 7, 456 Kent Street
Sydney NSW 2000

Please quote 'Reference: X091578 – Oxford Street, Darlinghurst – proposed LGBTIQ+ heritage listings'

How to have your say

Anyone can give feedback. Your feedback must:

- be in writing and include the development address or application number
- include your contact details (postal or email address) so we can acknowledge receipt
- be submitted during the public consultation period.

We may discuss applications over the phone, but these conversations are not considered feedback.

All feedback we receive will be considered and summarised in reports. We won't consider anonymous feedback.

Your feedback is not confidential and may be accessed under the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (GIPA Act). We may use your name or address when responding to concerns about a planning proposal or development application. In some cases, your feedback may be provided to the NSW Government, which manages its own publication process.

If you submit feedback on behalf of an organisation, the organisation's name will be published in reports unless you request otherwise.

For more details, see our [community engagement strategy and community participation plan](#).

Appendix B – Notification letter



City of Sydney
Gadigal Country
456 Kent Street
Sydney NSW 2000

+61 2 9265 9333
council@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au
GPO Box 1591 Sydney NSW 2001
cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au

31 March 2026

Proposed LGBTIQ+ heritage listings in the Oxford Street area

We invite your comments on a proposal to heritage list 3 buildings in Darlinghurst and Surry Hills.

The proposal follows a heritage study we commissioned as part of our Oxford Street LGBTIQ+ social and cultural place strategy.

It investigated places with historic and contemporary connections to local communities, and recommended 3 sites for listing:

- **273 Crown Street, Surry Hills – former Ruby Reds**
Sydney's first recreational venue dedicated to the lesbian community owned by prominent entrepreneur Dawn O'Donnell.
- **207 Oxford Street, Darlinghurst – former The Bookshop**
The site of a long-running retailer devoted to the sale of LGBTIQ+ books, DVDs, journals and publications, and an important community hub.
- **40-42 Flinders Street, Darlinghurst – former Taxi Club**
Home of the Grosvenor Club, popular with performers from Les Girls because of its 24-hour licence.

How to give feedback

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

The proposal is open for comment until 5pm on Tuesday 5 May.

Feedback can be made online or by post to Senior Community Engagement Coordinator, City Engagement, City of Sydney, GPO Box 1591, Sydney NSW 2001. You can also email sydneyyoursay@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au.

Contact us

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

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ben Pechey".

Ben Pechey
Executive Manager, Strategic Planning and Urban Design
City Planning | Development | Transport

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

Appendix C – Sydney Your Say e-news

Have your say from local projects to planning for the future of Sydney



City of Sydney <mail@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au>
To ○ Sydney Your Say

↩ Reply

↩ Reply All

➡ Forward

⋮

Wed 8/04/2026 11:00 AM

Retention Policy 7 Year retention policy (7 years)

Expires 8/04/2033

If there are problems with how this message is displayed, click here to view it in a web browser.



Image: TDK Architects

Have your say on heritage listings 3 buildings in Surry Hills and Darlinghurst

We propose to heritage list 273 Crown Street, Surry Hills, 40-42 Flinders Street, Darlinghurst and 207 Oxford Street, Darlinghurst.

These properties tell an important story of LGBTIQ+ presence and pride. Help us recognise their significance.

Provide feedback on this application by Tuesday 5 May.

[Read more](#)

Appendix D – News coverage

Architecture, Au®



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← BACK TO INDUSTRY NEWS

Three further LGBTIQ+ Sydney icons considered for local heritage register

Following the City of Sydney's heritage-listing of three buildings of LGBTIQ+ significance last year, the council is proposing to list a further three historic inner-city sites.



The City of Sydney has announced their proposal to list the former Ruby Reds building at 273 Crown Street, Surry Hills (pictured), the Former Taxi Club at 40-42 Flinders Street, Darlinghurst, and 207 Oxford Street, Darlinghurst, the previous site of The Bookshop, on the local heritage register.

Image: Courtesy of City of Sydney



by Lucia Amies
9 Apr 2026



The City of Sydney has announced their proposal to list three places of LGBTIQ+ significance on the local heritage register. The proposal is part of the council's strategy to maintain the unique built fabric of Oxford Street and its surrounds in Paddington, with the council having already heritage-listed several sites within the inner-city precinct.

In early 2025, the City of Sydney [put forward a proposal](#) to heritage-list the Oxford Hotel at 134 Oxford Street, the Palms at 124 Oxford Street and the Universal nightclub at 85-91 Oxford Street, with the proposal ultimately successful. The places were identified in a study conducted by local practice Tanner Kibble Denton (TKD) Architects.

The same study recommended heritage-listing three more sites: the former Ruby Reds building at 273 Crown Street, Surry Hills; the Former Taxi Club at 40-42 Flinders Street, Darlinghurst; and 207 Oxford Street, Darlinghurst, the previous site of The Bookshop.

Most read



Mixed-use, 'anti-mall' vision for Brisbane's James Street approved



Kerstin Thompson Architects and Nelson and Koo unveil design for 3.6-hectare Adelaide complex



2026 Victorian Architecture Awards shortlist

Latest on site



Architecture Australia May 2026 preview



by Lucia Amies
9 Apr 2026



The former Taxi Club was established in 1956 as a recreational facility named the Grosvenor Club, initially popular with taxi drivers and later with performers from Les Girls at Kings Cross. Image: Courtesy of City of Sydney

According to the City of Sydney, the former Ruby Reds building was significant as Sydney's first recreational venue dedicated to the lesbian community, and was owned by prominent entrepreneur Dawn O'Donnell. Architect Percy Gordon, who later directed Morrow, De Putron and Gordon, and Morrow and Gordon, designed the building's alterations in the 1920s interwar period.

Across Flinders Street in Darlinghurst, the former Taxi Club was established in 1956 as a recreational facility named the Grosvenor Club, and was initially popular with taxi drivers and later with performers from Les Girls at Kings Cross.

At 207 Oxford Street, around the corner, a long-running store known as The Bookshop was devoted to the sale of queer books, journals and publications, as well as community events, and occupied part of a group of four Federation-era buildings supposedly designed by architect John Burcham Clamp.

If the proposal is successful, the Sydney Local Environment Plan 2012 will be amended with the three local heritage items.

The community are invited to have their say on the proposal on the City of Sydney's [website](#) by 5 May.

Related topics

HERITAGE

SYDNEY



Bookshop Darlinghurst Among Oxford Street Venues Proposed For Heritage Listing

EASTERN SUBURBS

NEWS

Patrick Lenton

APRIL 1, 2026

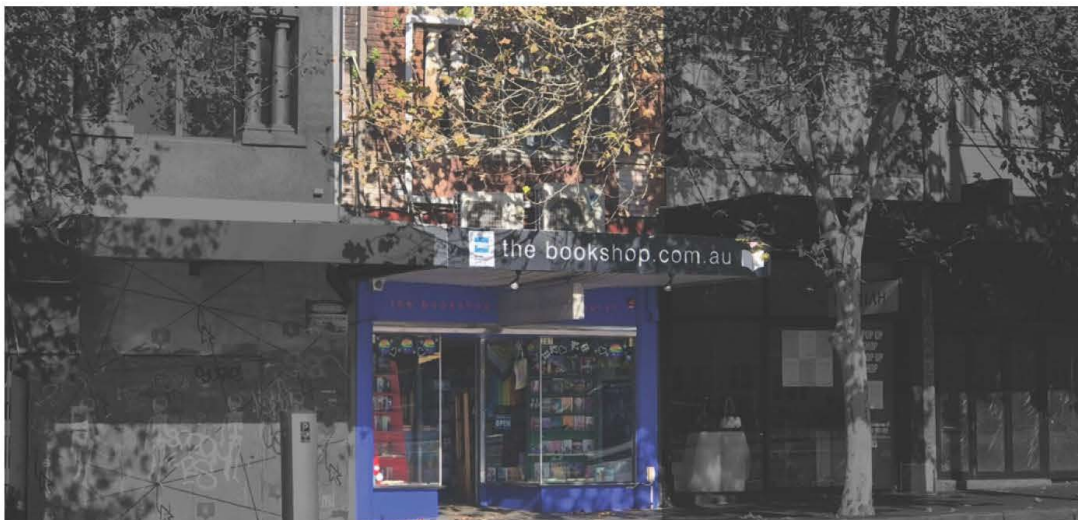


Image: The Bookshop Darlinghurst. Credit City Of Sydney

Sydney's queer cultural heart could soon see more of its past formally protected, as the [City of Sydney announces](#) new plans to heritage list a wave of historically significant LGBTQIA+ sites across the Oxford Street precinct.

The proposal expands beyond currently operating venues, turning attention to former community spaces including Ruby Reds, the Taxi Club and The Bookshop Darlinghurst – venues rich in LGBTQIA+ history. This builds on earlier plans to heritage list venues like the Oxford Hotel, Palms and Universal nightclub.

Ruby Reds, located on Crown Street, is widely regarded as Sydney's first dedicated lesbian bar, opening in 1979 under venue pioneer and colourful character Dawn

22/05/2026, 10:49

LGBTQIA+ Oxford Street Venues Proposed For Heritage Listing

O'Donnell. It was considered an institution, and "the most popular bar" on Oxford Street in the 70s.

Nearby, the former Taxi Club on Flinders Street traces its origins back to the 1950s, when it operated as a club for taxi drivers before evolving into a late-night haven for drag performers and LGBTQIA+ patrons. With its 24-hour licence and connections to performers from Les Girls, the venue became known as a haven for trans people in Sydney.

On Oxford Street itself, the only recently shuttered Bookshop Darlinghurst is also nominated. Established in the 1980s, it provided access to gay and lesbian literature, magazines and media at a time when representation was limited.

The push to heritage list these sites comes from the City of Sydney's broader Oxford Street LGBTQIA+ Social and Cultural Place Strategy, developed following years of community consultation and planning reforms. The strategy prioritises recognising historic queer spaces, increasing visibility and ensuring the precinct remains a thriving hub for LGBTQIA+ life.

Th City of Sydney say they are committed to building on Oxford Street's reputation as an iconic LGBTQIA+ precinct and a centre of buzzing activity both day and night, with space for thriving businesses, creatives and culture. The heritage proposal is one way of safeguarding that legacy, particularly as rising rents, redevelopment and shifting nightlife patterns continue to reshape the strip.

The plan is still open for public input. The proposed listings will go through a formal exhibition process, allowing community members to review the recommendations and make submissions before any final decision is made.

You May Also Like



<https://cityhub.com.au/oxford-street-venues-heritage-listing/>

2/6

22/05/2026, 10:48

Former iconic Oxford Street LGBTQ+ venues proposed for heritage listing



NSW

Former iconic Oxford Street LGBTQ+ venues proposed for heritage listing

By Dean Arcuri / 1 April 2026



Source: wikicommons

Share this post



The City of Sydney have proposed former sites of LGBTIQ+ pride and presence, Ruby Reds, Taxi Club and The Bookshop, for heritage listing.

<https://qnews.com.au/former-iconic-oxford-street-lgbtq-venues-proposed-for-heritage-listing/>

1/14

Engagement report – LGBTIQ+ heritage listings in the Oxford Street area

22/05/2026, 10:48

Former iconic Oxford Street LGBTQ+ venues proposed for heritage listing

Oxford Street, affectionally known as the 'gay golden mile', has a long history for Sydney's LGBTIQ+ community and counter-culture movements.

In 2022, the City of Sydney updated the planning controls for Oxford Street to unlock more development potential.

It was a way of encouraging investment in the area as a cultural and creative precinct and maintaining the unique heritage fabric of the street.

The update contained short-term actions to enhance the street during Sydney WorldPride and long-term actions for the precinct.

"We heard that people value the strong connection between Oxford Street and LGBTIQ+ communities and want to see its social and cultural heritage recognised and maintained," the City of Sydney website said.

The strategy outlines 5 priority areas:

- Recognising historic LGBTIQ+ places and spaces,
- Reflecting the contemporary LGBTIQ+ community within local businesses and venues,
- Increasing LGBTIQ+ cultural and social spaces,
- Increasing LGBTIQ+ visibility and identity throughout the precinct,
- Ensuring the local community is safe and supported.

22/05/2026, 10:48

Former iconic Oxford Street LGBTQ+ venues proposed for heritage listing



Image: Oxford Street / Wikimedia Commons

Oxford Street was once a vibrant community hub of LGBTIQ+ interaction and engagement.

As times have changed and the redevelopment of Oxford Street has begun, this has seen a shift.

But as the home of the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Parade, QTopia Sydney and more, it still calls the community from around the country and world to visit.

And the City of Sydney is committed to building on Oxford Street's LGBTIQ+ reputation and culture.

Three former LGBTIQ+ sites recommended for heritage listing

In 2022, TKD Architects were commissioned to explore sites within the precinct that hold strong links to LGBTIQ+ history and culture.

The City of Sydney proposed three buildings for heritage listing: The Oxford Hotel, Universal and Palms.

Engagement report – LGBTIQ+ heritage listings in the Oxford Street area

22/05/2026, 10:48

Former iconic Oxford Street LGBTQ+ venues proposed for heritage listing

Now the study has recommended heritage listing for three former sites where the LGBTIQ+ community have gathered.

One site is the former site of Ruby Reds at 273 Crown Street in Surry Hills.

This was Sydney's first recreational venue dedicated to the lesbian community, owned by prominent entrepreneur Dawn O'Donnell.

40–42 Flinders Street in Darlinghurst is the former Taxi Club, home of the Grosvenor Club.

The Taxi Club was popular with performers from Les Girls because of its 24-hour licence, and closed in 2012.

And 207 Oxford Street, Darlinghurst, is the former The Bookshop, **which closed last year.**

The long-running bookshop was devoted to selling gay and lesbian publications and was an important hub for connection beyond the bars.

The City of Sydney has proposed amending the Sydney Local Environmental Plan to list the buildings as local heritage items.

Historic research and assessments have been carried out so that they can better understand the significance of the properties.

22/05/2026, 10:48

Former iconic Oxford Street LGBTQ+ venues proposed for heritage listing



Source: cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au

Now they want your feedback

You can give feedback by completing the City of Sydney's survey.

You'll need to log in with a City of Sydney account to complete the survey.

Don't worry, if you don't have an account, it's easy to create one.

Or you can email your feedback to sydneyyoursay@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au or via post to:

Senior Community Engagement Coordinator, City Engagement
City of Sydney
Level 7, 456 Kent Street
Sydney NSW 2000

Consultation is now open and closes at 5 pm on Tuesday, 5 May 2026.

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