

Lincoln de Haas  
Planning Officer  
Department of Planning and Environment

**Our reference:** R/2023/10

**Your reference:** DA 22/6816

**Subject:** Advice on Development Application - Digital Advertising Sign (Outbound) -  
Cleveland Street, Redfern

Thank you for your correspondence dated 2 May 2023 inviting the City of Sydney Council (the City) to comment on the abovementioned development application.

The application proposes the installation of a new digital advertising sign adjacent to the intersection of Regent Street and Cleveland Street, Redfern, at the south-west corner facing southbound (outbound) traffic. The sign measures 3.172m x 4.708m and is attached to a proposed monopole with a total height of 8.9m when viewed north along Regent Street.

There is also another new digital advertising sign, which is concurrently being assessed, proposed across the intersection at the north-west corner facing northbound (inbound) traffic (DA 22/14811). The sign similarly measures 3.172m x 4.708m and is attached to a proposed 8.65m high steel structure.

The City has reviewed the documentation submitted with the application and **strongly objects** to the proposal on the following grounds:

### **Heritage Impacts**

The proposed sign is located adjacent to Redfern Estate Heritage Conservation Area (HCA) and is in the vicinity of several State and locally listed heritage items. These include State heritage item (SHI No. 01255) known as the Sydney Terminal and Central Railway Stations Group, State heritage item (SHI No. 01881) known as the Cathedral of the Annunciation of Our Lady, and local heritage item (No. 1199) known as the Former Mercantile Bank Chambers.

The City objects to the proposed sign due to its adverse heritage impacts:

- The proposed signage location will be highly visible from the Redfern Estate HCA, as well as the three heritage items listed above. The views towards the proposed location from the HCA and the three heritage items currently includes a landscaped outlook due to the landscaped area in the foreground of the proposed sign and the tree canopies along Regent Street. Those views are adversely impacted by the signage and it does not enhance or improve the heritage setting or views.
- These view impacts are exacerbated with the proposed adjacent inbound sign.
- The proposed sign will be a visually detracting element in the immediate visual catchment and will have no relationship with the surrounding heritage context.
- The proposed illuminated signage is not in keeping with this heritage context.

## **View Impacts**

The City objects to the proposed sign due to its adverse visual impacts. The City also does not consider that an adequate visual analysis has been undertaken for the proposed sign, as well as its cumulative impact with the proposed inbound sign across the intersection.

Section 5.1.8 of the Sydney Development Control Plan 2012 (Sydney DCP 2012) identifies the Central Station clock tower as a key view within, and helps define, Central Sydney. The Sydney DCP 2012 outlines that the clock tower represents a landmark particularly when approaching or departing Central Sydney, and how the clock tower was purposely composed at the alignment of several streets so as to maximise the visibility of the clock face.

The proposed sign may have adverse visual impacts by obstructing views to the clock tower. Further, it may compete with views to the Cathedral to the north of the site. Cumulatively, this sign in addition to the inbound sign proposed across the intersection, will have a detrimental visual impact on these views and its heritage setting.

As such, the proposed signage is not consistent with the objectives of Section 5.1.8 of the Sydney DCP 2012 which seeks to preserve significant views and ensure the silhouette created by existing clock towers and roof features on heritage listed items are clearly visible against the sky.

The submitted Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) and attached Addendum are inadequate in their visual analysis, due to a number of issues including, but not limited to, the following:

- The view analysis prepared in the Addendum showing the cumulative impact of both the signs together, is limited to only two (2) photomontages which is insufficient.
- The view analysis inadequately considers impacts on views of the clock tower when approaching from the south and west.

- Given the significance of this view corridor, further analysis must be undertaken along Regent Street and surrounding streets, with views to the north in particular.
- Council does not accept that the views of these signs are limited to a small visual catchment.
- Council does not accept that both of these signs will not be seen together on Cleveland Street, and views should be prepared from locations along this road.
- The VIA is limited in considering vehicle users only, and not pedestrians.
- Further view analysis is to be undertaken for pedestrians using this intersection as well as the pedestrian routes along these streets.

## Tree Impacts

The proposed location of the signage is adjacent to a garden area with vegetation and trees, which is owned and managed by Council.

The submitted SEE states *"the existing tree branches north and east of the sign will be managed and removed as required. The site will be inspected every six months to determine if any branches need to be pruned to ensure clear visibility of the proposed sign"*.

Pruning of this vegetation on Council-owned land to maintain signage clearances will strictly not be supported. Additionally, pruning by anyone other than Council and/or Council's tree contractors is not permitted.

## Transport and Traffic Impacts

Concern is raised regarding the location of the sign being on the opposite side of the road to the drivers who will be able to see it, resulting in drivers viewing the sign longer than if it was adjacent to them.

## Inconsistency with Key Planning Controls

The sign does not comply with various key planning controls, as detailed in the following sections.

### State Environmental Planning Policy (Precincts - Eastern Harbour) 2021

The site is located within the 'Special Purpose Zone - Infrastructure' under the *State Environmental Planning Policy (Precincts - Eastern Harbour) 2021* (Precincts SEPP). The proposed signage does not satisfactorily meet the objectives of the zone, as follows:

- The proposal does not comply with objective (c) in that it does not contribute to the vitality of the public domain.
- The proposal does not achieve design excellence, as required by part (d), and discussed further below. It is noted that the objective's reference to a building applies, given that the definition of a building includes any structure or part of a structure under the *Environmental Planning and*

*Assessment Act 1979 (EP&A Act).*

- The proposal does not enhance but rather diminishes the landscape visual and aesthetic values of the area as required under objective (e), with the requirement of tree pruning to increase visibility of the sign.

The City do not accept that the proposed new digital advertising signage exhibits design excellence as required by Clause 22(2), Appendix 3 of the Precincts SEPP, in that the sign does not achieve a high standard of architectural design, materials and detailing that is appropriate to the location, and the form and external appearance of the sign will not improve the quality and amenity of the public domain.

Redfern-Waterloo Built Environment Plan (Stage One) 2006

The *Redfern-Waterloo Built Environment Plan (Stage One) 2006* (the Plan) applies to the site, however has not been addressed in the submitted SEE. Although the subject site is not a mapped strategic site within the Plan, the City assume it was not included in the mapping as no development was anticipated to occur to this sliver of rail land. Despite this, consideration should be made to the strategy frameworks in the Plan. Strategic site 'E' - Redfern Railway Station is the closest adjacent mapped site. The proposal is not considered to meet the strategy framework for the precinct in the Plan, as it does not:

- Improve the public domain by improving pedestrian amenity.
- Improve streets and open spaces with quality landscaping and signage.
- Does not achieve an appropriate human scale at street level.

State Environmental Planning Policy (Industry and Employment) 2021

Clause 3.6 of the *State Environmental Planning Policy (Industry and Employment) 2021* (Industry and Employment SEPP) outlines that the consent authority cannot grant consent unless it is satisfied that the signage is consistent with the objectives of Chapter 3 under Section 3.1(1)(a) and it is consistent with the assessment criteria in Schedule 5.

The proposed digital advertising sign is not consistent with the objectives of Chapter 3 in that it is not compatible with the desired amenity and visual character of the area as the proposal degrades the amenity and visual character of the area increasing visual pollution, poorly contributing to the public domain interface and reducing the landscape amenity of the site.

The proposal is not consistent with Item 4 (Streetscape, setting or landscape) of the assessment criteria in Schedule 5, as follows:

- The proposal is not considered to be of a scale or form appropriate to its landscape garden setting. The advertising sign proposed directly adjacent the footpath presents overbearing bulk with a non-pedestrian friendly scale at 9m above the footpath.
- The proposal does not reduce visual clutter or propose rationalisation of existing signage. It

introduces further clutter to the intersection with the addition of two large advertising structures which are visible together. In addition, landscape works proposed including pruning of existing trees to increase the visibility of the sign will reduce landscape amenity to the public domain and screening amenity from the rail corridor.

## **Public Benefit**

The Transport Corridor Advertising and Signage Guidelines 2007 (the Guidelines) outlines how advertisements along railway corridors, classified roads and on bridges must meet a public benefit test to ensure that advertising will result in a positive gain or benefit for the community.

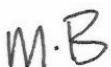
The Guidelines state that Sydney Trains must demonstrate that revenue raised from advertising is directly linked to public benefit.

The Public Benefit Statement submitted with the DA states that the sign will provide a revenue stream to Sydney Trains to support a number of 'improvements and maintenance programs'. It is unclear what these improvements and programs are.

While it is appreciated that the revenue made will be invested back into the public transport network, this is an existing core responsibility of Sydney Trains. There is not a direct public benefit provided by this proposal, as required by the SEPP and the Guidelines.

In summary, the City **strongly objects** to the proposed sign due to the issues raised in this letter. It is considered that the consent authority cannot grant consent to the proposed development when having regard to the matters for consideration in Section 3.11(2) of the Industry and Employment SEPP. The proposed sign is clearly inconsistent with the objectives set out in Section 3.1(1)(a) of the SEPP and performs extremely poorly against the assessment criteria in Schedule 5 of the SEPP. Further, the consent authority must not grant consent to a development if it is not considered to exhibit design excellence as per Clause 22 of Appendix 3 of the Precincts SEPP.

Please contact Mia Music on 02 9246 7283 or by email at [mmusic@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au](mailto:mmusic@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au) if you need to discuss your request.



Marie Burge  
A/Area Planning Manager