

ITEM-4 FIVE DOCK TOWN CENTRE URBAN DESIGN STUDY

Department Planning and Environment

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Following an extensive community engagement process with the Five Dock community, the Five Dock Town Centre Urban Design Study has now been completed.

The Study provides a bold and exciting vision for the long term prosperity of Five Dock and seeks to ensure that the centre continues to provide a strong focus for the community, is a better place to live and work, creates improved opportunities for investment, is easy to get around and provides an enhanced built environment.

Many of the initiatives within the Five Dock Urban Design Study have financial implications for Council, particularly in relation to Council land and for areas of renewal.

It is recommended that the Study be endorsed in principle as the way forward for the Five Dock Town Centre and that it be placed on public exhibition for community comment.

STRATEGIC CONNECTION

This report supports FuturesPlan20 Outcome area:

We will enhance our local shopping centres, community spaces and residential streets and the infrastructure required to service them.

This report also relates to the Canada Bay Local Planning Strategy, the Canada Bay Local Environmental Plan 2013 and the Canada Bay Development Control Plan and the Five Dock Town Centre Strategy 2012.

REPORT

Background

The Five Dock Town Centre Urban Design Study builds on previous work, including the Five Dock Town Centre Strategy 2012, which explored the economic factors that influence the centre and identified actions to enhance its vitality into the future.

One of the key recommendations of the Strategy was to consider the Town Centre from an integrated design perspective (by undertaking the Urban Design Study) to ensure that any potential changes to the existing planning controls, such as building scale, density and height, were carefully considered. The Urban Design Study was also able to identify improvements to the public domain and consider opportunities for future redevelopment within the centre.

The recommendations in the Five Dock Town Centre Strategy and the Urban Design Study complement each other and be delivered concurrently.

The Study

The Five Dock Urban Design Study comprises two parts:

- The **Recommendations Report** contains the overall aspiration and future direction for the centre. Proposed actions are illustrated from broad strategies to more detailed transformation of streets, places and catalyst sites.
- The **Background Report** documents the process and studies undertaken to inform the recommendations. The document outlines the parallel consultation process with key stakeholders and the community, a detailed site analysis, a review of relevant policies and specialist consultant advice.

The study area includes the commercial and retail area of Five Dock along an 800m long section of Great North Road. The centre is bound by Lyons to the north, East and West Street to the west, Fairlight Street and Queens Road to the south and Waterview Street to the east.

Community engagement

A variety of engagement activities were carried out to ensure a broad range of stakeholders and the wider community were provided with the opportunity to contribute to the process. Engagement activities were conducted in two distinct phases and included:

- Postcards distributed widely to local area;
- Letters to property owners;
- Advertising placed in local publications;
- Email newsletters to a mailing list of 450 people;
- Posters in local shop fronts;
- Drop-in sessions in Fred Kelly Place;
- Use of an online Collaborative Map;
- Community and stakeholder workshops; and
- Meetings with key groups such as the Chamber of Commerce.

Initial phase community engagement

The purpose of the initial phase was to increase awareness of the Urban Design Study and gather information about what people liked and didn't like about Five Dock as well as their ideas for potential improvements or changes in the town centre.

The first community participation event was held on Saturday, 1 June from 11:00am to 2:00pm in Fred Kelly Place. Holding the drop-in session in a prominent public area allowed the project team to speak to people who made a special effort to come to the session as well as those who just happened to be in Five Dock on that day. Ideas were collated through face to face discussions, written feedback forms and annotations on the project maps and posters.

Three community and stakeholder workshops were held on 5 and 6 May 2013 in the Bay Room at the Five Dock Library. The sessions were attended by 44 people – a mix of business owners and local residents. The sessions served as a forum for a more in-depth discussion about what people liked and didn't like about the current Five Dock town centre as well as their ideas for the local area.

The on-line Collaborative Map proved to be an excellent tool for engaging people allowing comments to be made 24/7. During the collaborative map consultation period of three weeks (23 May to 14 June 2013) there were 399 visits to the website by 246 unique visitors. Overall, there were 290 comments submitted to the collaborative map website.

Views and comments were sought from members of the Five Dock Chamber of Commerce.

Key Themes

The key themes that emerged during the first stage of the engagement for the Five Dock Town Centre are summarised below by:

1. Maintaining the friendly, village feel of Five Dock.
2. Working to Five Dock's strengths.
3. Creating a focus (heart) for the community in the town centre.
4. Improving building design.
5. Addressing the demographic change in the area whilst celebrating its heritage.
6. Improving and maintaining the public domain and streetscape, especially to the north.
7. Addressing traffic – vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists.
8. Providing additional facilities, i.e. toilets, drinking fountains, bins and bus shelters.
9. Providing additional car parking.
10. Improving the night time activity through improved lighting and longer opening hours.

Second phase community engagement

The consultants drew on the ideas from the first round of consultation and along with their technical and professional work created twelve (12) seed ideas. The latter were created to encapsulate the main themes raised throughout the first round of consultation and to generate conversation about what steps might be involved to bring the ideas to life, who would be involved and what may be some of the alternatives. The seed ideas also provided an opportunity to test the community's acceptance of the general direction of the Study.

The second community participation event (drop-in) was held on Saturday, 20 July from 9:30am to 12:00pm in Fred Kelly Place. The purpose of this session was to show people the seed design ideas and get their initial reactions to these. This was achieved via a "dotmocracy" activity where people were given three sticky dots and asked to place them on the three ideas they liked the best. 244 dots were placed on the posters by community members. From this activity, ideas that most people liked were "Encouraging night-time activity and "Expanding Fred Kelly Place", followed by "Green and tree-lined streetscapes".

Three community and stakeholder workshops were held on 20 July and 25 July in the Bay Room at Five Dock Library. The sessions were attended by 64 people, a mix of business owners and local residents. The workshop sessions were well attended and participants appeared to enjoy working through the seed ideas and imagining how these could change the face of Five Dock. All the ideas were generally accepted by the groups. Constructive feedback was also received with regard to how various ideas could be delivered.

The Collaborative Map tool was again used to gather comments from the community and enable people to view the seed ideas. During the collaborative map consultation period of three weeks (22 July to 9 August 2013) there were 292 visits to the website by 200 unique visitors. Close to 100 comments were made using this on-line tool.

A special meeting was also held with the Five Dock Chamber of Commerce to both obtain feedback on the seed ideas and to provide an additional opportunity for input.

The Study was coordinated by Strategic Planning but the Manager Business, Arts and Culture, the Manager of Property and Council's Landscape Architect have been heavily involved in working with the consultants on this project to ensure cross department representation.

Full details of the outcome of the community engagement process undertaken are included in the **Background Report** which is provided under separate cover.

Study recommendations

Following an extensive engagement process, a Recommendation Report has been produced that details the framework for change and implementation steps. The

framework is bold in vision and transformative in nature without losing the village character of Five Dock that the community desires. This vision builds on the improvements implemented by Council over the last few years in collaboration with the Chamber of Commerce and the Five Dock Main Street Committee.

The recommendations of the Study can be summarised into four (4) key themes:

- Public Spaces and Places;
- Movement and Access;
- Urban and Built form; and
- Catalysts and Renewal.

Further details are provided below.

Public Space and Places

- *New Town Square:* Fred Kelly Place, together with a small open space area on the other side of Great North Road in front of Subway and the post office define the existing civic focal point of the town centre. Individually each space is too small to cater for activities that want to occur in a town square, such as events and community gatherings.

It is likely that Five Dock will continue to grow as more dwellings are constructed in and around the Centre. Public space becomes more important as density increases and it is recommended that a new Town Square be created in the heart of Five Dock. Council owned land has been identified as the best location for the new Town Square. This area would provide sufficient area for a range of activities including events as well as public art, seating, tree planting and childrens' play.

- *Fred Kelly Place (northern extension):* The existing Fred Kelly Place could be extended to the north by acquiring a privately owned lot. Ultimately the New Town Square and the enlarged Fred Kelly Place could be connected via a raised pedestrian crossing, creating a strong, distinctive and centrally located heart for the Five Dock Centre. The lot provides an important strategic connection between the new Town Square and a proposed school link (discussed below) and would also increase the size and usability of Fred Kelly Place.
- *Northern Gateway:* Create a northern gateway for the Town Centre by relocating the existing slip lane off Lyons Road and converting the triangular-shaped area into a Gateway Park or Plaza. This would improve the entry and visibility of this prominent intersection as well as improving pedestrian amenity and safety.
- *Green Streetscapes:* Beautify the northern section of Great North Road by planting mature street trees within a potential central median and at prominent street corners.

Access and Movement

- *Pedestrian network:* Several pieces of land between Great North Road and Waterview Street are owned by the City of Canada Bay. Together with the new Town Square, there is an opportunity to redevelop this entire area with a permeable, fine grained network of public lanes and pedestrian links.

This connectivity will make it easier for people to move around the centre and provide greater accessibility to businesses and shops.

- *Five Dock School link:* Over the long term it is possible to create a direct pedestrian connection between Five Dock Primary School and Great North Road, linking the school more closely with the town centre. This would require dedication or acquisition of 2 properties - one in East Street and one in West Street.
- *East west cycle connection:* The existing cycle route along Henry Street and Barnstaple Road is considered a crucial link, connecting the Town Centre, the primary school to the west, Five Dock Park to the east and the wider suburbs. A dedicated two-way cycle lane (which may require narrowing of Henry Street to one-way for vehicles) should be investigated.
- *Consolidated, efficient parking:* Consolidating parking and increasing the overall number of spaces in the centre could be accommodated by developing a multi-level car park on the existing public car park at Kings Road (further discussion below). The building of the new car park would allow for the redevelopment of the existing Waterview car park for commercial and residential uses without the loss of public parking.

Urban and Built Form

- *Quality new development:* The existing development controls that regulate the shape of new buildings in the centre require revision. The existing controls were drafted on the assumption that a majority of floor space would be utilised for commercial purposes. However, for a mixed use development the controls facilitate odd outcomes. Resulting buildings appear “squat” with deep floor plates that can have poor residential amenity and limited access to sunlight and ventilation. A new building envelope is recommended that facilitates better amenity for residents and improved architectural outcomes.

The study recommends that the centre’s height limit is increased to 16 metres (5 storeys), with a 14 metre street wall height and a requirement for 3.6m high ground floors. It is suggested that on larger sites or where amalgamation has occurred, an additional storey should be permitted, allowing 6 storeys.

- *B4 Mixed Use zone:* The study recommends expanding the width of the centre core by creating additional “Mixed Use” areas along West Street south of Henry Street, between Garfield Street and Kings Road and along Waterview Street south of Second Avenue.

This will allow the centre to grow over time and provide additional pedestrian connections.

Catalysts and Renewal

As part of the study, the future development opportunities for a number of Council owned land parcels in the core of the centre were explored. Each site is considered a catalyst for redevelopment and investment, with the aim to strengthen the performance and attractiveness of the entire centre

- The first site involves the Waterview Street car park, private and public landholdings to the south and north. To make the best use of separate council sites a comprehensive redevelopment of the larger block is recommended requiring consolidation with other neighbouring sites if possible.
- The second site is the public car park at Kings Road. The on-grade car park currently has approximately 50 car spaces. A multi-deck car park in this location would significantly increase this capacity to between 160-200 spaces depending on the height and how many other uses are incorporated into the building. The multi-deck car park could be delivered as a split-level built form that responds to the natural topography along Kings Road and reduces visual impact of the car park structure.
- The new Town Square will also function as an important catalyst that has the potential to stimulate activity and investment. The square would also improve connections and access to the possible redevelopment of the Waterview Street car park site.

Economic Analysis

To strengthen the commercial rigour of the Study Hill PDA was engaged to test the financial viability across three sites within the centre. The outcomes of the testing demonstrated that the proposed building envelopes combined with the existing Floor Space Ratio (FSR) will attract investment and redevelopment.

Full details of the recommendations and a copy of the Action Plan are included in the ***Recommendations Report*** which is provided under separate cover.

An analysis of the relationship between FSR, building height and viability has also be undertaken to confirm that the proposed planning controls are appropriate for the Town Centre and will facilitate investment and improved building design.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Many of the initiatives within the Five Dock Urban Design Study have financial implications for Council, particularly in relation to Council land and for areas of renewal.

A principal recommendation of this work is that Council apply a holistic approach to the replanning and redevelopment of Five Dock. This will involve the application of s94 development contributions received in the locality, to the acquisition of land identified in the Study for future community purposes, including land already owned by Council. It will also entail Council supporting the sale of strategic land holdings to facilitate mixed-use development.

The proposed multi-deck car park on Kings Road is costed at approximately \$6,000,000. The delivery of this major infrastructure initiative may involve significant costs initially. It is anticipated that the cost of the car park could be offset by income from the redevelopment of the Waterview car park site and future management of the car park itself. This may include user pays parking and leasing arrangements.

High level costing based on the initial concept design drawings estimate that the cost of the remaining works are \$1,697,373. These high level costs will require refinement following the preparation of detailed designs. Further, these calculations do not include the cost of acquiring land for the expansion of Fred Kelly Place, the new Town Square or the new school link. These initiatives require the acquisition of land by Council and would be subject to land valuations and possible future negotiation.

It is proposed that a Financial Strategy be prepared following the exhibition of the Urban Design Study. As a preliminary exercise the following funding arrangements are being investigated to assist with financing the initiatives contained within the Study:

- *Canada Bay Development Contributions Plan*

Five Dock is an important town centre in the City of Canada Bay and there is a strong nexus between development in and around the centre and improvements that would benefit the community at large. Five Dock will experience future growth and new developments will pay development contributions for community infrastructure.

The new Canada Bay Development Contributions Plan includes funding allocated for main street upgrades and other public domain improvements. Various works within the Five Dock Town Centre could therefore be funded directly from this Plan. However, amendments would be required to the new Development Contributions Plan to include land that has been identified for acquisition or dedication.

- *Other arrangements*

The NSW Government is currently providing funding for the implementation of local infrastructure under the Local Infrastructure Renewal Scheme (LIRS). Council may apply for a low interest loan to fund the cost of the new car park on Kings Road. There may also be an opportunity for Council to arrange internal borrowings.

Should Council move forward with the sale of the Waterview Street car park site for the purposes of redevelopment, the ability will exist to leverage off the potential future income from the sale of the land.

Next steps

It is intended that the Five Dock Urban Design Study be placed on public exhibition during December and January to present the recommendations and to enable community feedback. It is proposed that, at a minimum, this involves:

- notification on the City of Canada Bay website;
- targeted letters to the owners and the surrounding community in the vicinity of the centre;
- e-newsletter to all interested persons who contributed to the Study, both through the collaborative map and through community workshops;
- a community meeting with residents and any other interested stakeholders.

As the recommendations involve the potential rezoning and acquisition of private land and have implications for lease holders on Council land it is important that affected property owners are notified expeditiously and the recommendations discussed with them.

A draft Development Control Plan (DCP) has been prepared for discussion purposes at this stage. It is intended that the draft DCP be exhibited with the Urban Design Study on a non statutory basis to provide further guidance on how the Urban Design Study could be implemented. The draft DCP will be of particular interest to property owners as it details how improvements to the built form of the Town Centre could be achieved.

The outcome of the public exhibition of the Urban Design Study will be reported to Council in February 2014. The following documents will also be prepared for Council's consideration at this time:

- a Planning Proposal to amend the Canada Bay Local Environmental Plan (LEP);
- a Development Control Plan;
- a Financial Strategy, including potential amendments to the Canada Bay Development Contributions Plan; and
- a cross departmental Implementation Plan.

Following Council's endorsement of these documents, the implementation of the recommendations in the Urban Design Study can commence.

The Planning Proposal to amend the LEP and associated documentation can then be submitted to the Department of Planning and Infrastructure for a Gateway determination to publicly exhibit the Planning Proposal. The time frame for the public exhibition of a Planning Proposal is set by the Department, although the minimum period is usually 28 days.

RECOMMENDATION

1. THAT Council endorse the Five Dock Town Centre Urban Design Study for public exhibition throughout December 2013 and January 2014.
2. THAT the draft Five Dock Town Centre Development Control be placed on exhibition with the Urban Design Study on a non statutory basis to provide guidance on how the Study recommendations can be implemented.
3. THAT Council notify property owners and lease holders affected by potential rezoning and acquisition and be invited to discuss the proposals for their land.
4. THAT a further report be provided to Council following the exhibition of the Five Dock Town Centre Urban Design Study advising of any submissions received and further action to be taken.

Attachments:

1. Background Report – Five Dock Town Centre Urban Design Study.
2. Recommendations – Five Dock Town Centre Urban Design Study.

Note: Attachments will be circulated separately from the agenda. A copy of all attachments will be available for viewing on Council's website.