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Request for Rezoning Review of Planning Proposal (Charing Square)
203-209 Bronte Road, 223-227 Bronte Road and 94 Carrington Road, Waverley

1.0 Introduction

Rayda Investments Pty Ltd + Barbary Coast Investments Pty Ltd, hereby request a Rezoning Review of the Planning Proposal submitted to Waverley Council on 22 June 2018. The Planning Proposal seeks to amend the Waverley Local Environmental Plan 2012 building height and floor space ratio controls, as they relate to the sites at 203-209 Bronte Road, 223-227 Bronte Road and 94 Carrington Road, Waverley. The planning proposal does not seek to make any amendments to the existing (heritage listed component) Robin Hood Hotel.

The concept plan envisages the urban renewal of the site to transform the western quarter of Charing Cross into a vibrant fine-grained village. The redevelopment will comprise a mix of ground floor retail and commercial uses with shop top housing fronting external roadways and publicly accessible through site link and square. The aim is to create a 'square' that is vibrant, interesting, safe and attractive, making a significant contribution to a more permeable Charing Cross Village. The importance of the character of Charing Cross in terms of the village scale, the 'main street' and local heritage are recognised, retained and are key aspects of the concept plan for the site.

The proposal will provide improved amenity and walkability by a laneway and urban courtyard centred development providing through-connections between Bronte and Carrington Roads. This in turn will link to the broader Charing Cross precinct and will make a significant and positive contribution to the vitality of Charing Cross.

The proposal is accompanied by a Voluntary Planning Agreement (VPA) Letter of Offer that proposes the inclusion of the publicly accessible through site link, planting of street trees to Carrington Road, creation of additional on-street car parking spaces. It is also proposed that the commitment to public art on the site (as set out in the public art strategy submitted with the planning proposal) be incorporated as part of the VPA. The public benefit offer is proposed to be linked to the rezoning of the site, and not deferred to the Development Application stage.

The Rezoning Review Request has been initiated by the proponent as Council has not provided a position of support for the proposal following lodgement in June 2018. A decision from the Council has not yet been made.

Therefore, this request for a Rezoning Review is prepared in accordance with Section 5.1 of 'A guide to preparing local environmental plans' and includes an overview of the site and its context, strategic and site-specific merit of the proposal, a summary of the engagement with Council and other relevant issues.

Whilst a Rezoning Review is being sought, the proponent is committed to continuing to work closely with Council and maintaining ongoing consultation throughout the process.

This letter is accompanied by a copy of the Planning Proposal and supporting documentation as lodged and a completed Rezoning Review Application Form.

2.0 Site Location and Context

The site is located in Charing Cross, within the Waverley Council Local Government Area (LGA) and is located approximately 1km south of Bondi Junction commercial centre, 150m from Queens Park and approximately 6km south east of Sydney CBD (**Figure 1**).

Charing Cross village comprises of Bronte Road as the main street, 'bookended' at the western end by the Carrington and Bronte Roads five ways intersection. Bronte Road functions as a traditional main street serving the Bronte and Waverley neighbourhoods. The village comprises of a fine-grained set of shops fronts and smaller businesses of principally three storey character, with residences located above the shops. Higher order shopping facilities, such as major supermarkets, are located in Bondi Junction.

The site, as part of Charing Cross, is strategically positioned as part of a major corridor from Bondi Junction along Bronte Road through to MacPherson Street. The intersection of Bronte Road, Carrington Road and Victoria Street is considered a gateway between the suburbs of South Waverley and North Randwick. The precinct is serviced regularly by bus services that travel between Bondi Junction, CBD, Coogee and Wolli Creek. Public transport connections to Bondi Junction allows for access to the Sydney train network.

2.1 Surrounding Context

To the north of the site is the Eastern Suburbs Legion Club, a modern (not Victorian) building with three large levels and large telecommunications antennae, making the building considerably higher than adjoining buildings. On the Carrington Road side of the site, north is the existing Robin Hood Hotel, a good example of a two storey, Inter War, Art Deco style hotel.

To the east of the site, across Bronte Road, are generally two storey commercial/residential buildings with continuous awnings. These buildings are occupied by commercial/retail uses at ground floor and commercial/residential uses above.

To the west of the site, across Carrington Road, are two storey residential terraced and semi-detached dwellings. North west of the site, at the corner of Carrington Road and Queens Park Road, are two storey mixed use buildings, similar to Bronte Road, with ground floor retail/commercial and residential above, with the Charing Cross Hotel located on the corner.

South of the site to Bronte Road consists of two storey Victorian mixed use buildings. To the rear, south of the site on Carrington Road, is 2.5 storey brick commercial/industrial warehouse style building occupied by Reece Plumbing supplies.

2.2 The Site

The site includes four parcels of land with a total area of approximately 1,229m². The table below summarises the land subject to this Planning Proposal and the site is illustrated in **Figure 3**.

The site has frontage of 15m to Bronte Road, and 45m to Carrington Road. Directly to the north east of the site is the Eastern Suburbs Legion Club, with the Robin Hood Hotel located to the north of the site. The combination of lots makes the site one of the largest within the Charing Cross precinct, with dual Street frontage to main roads.

Address	Lot and DP
203-209 Bronte Road	Lot A, DP105665 Part Lot 1, DP 59526 (Part lot only - small area in south west corner as shown in Figure 3)
223–227 Bronte Road	Lot A, DP332733
94 Carrington Road	Lot A +B, DP332733

2.3 Heritage Context

Part of the site (eastern side fronting Bronte Road) is located within the Charing Cross Heritage Conservation Area. To the north of the site is heritage item I453 – Robin Hood Hotel. As shown in Figure 2, the proposal extends onto a small section of this lot, so as to align with the existing building on the south western corner of the Robin Hood Hotel (rather than this becoming un-utilised space locked between two buildings).

As part of a recent house-keeping amendment to LEP 2012, Waverley Council is seeking to list 94 Carrington Road as a local heritage item. This has not yet been placed on public exhibition.

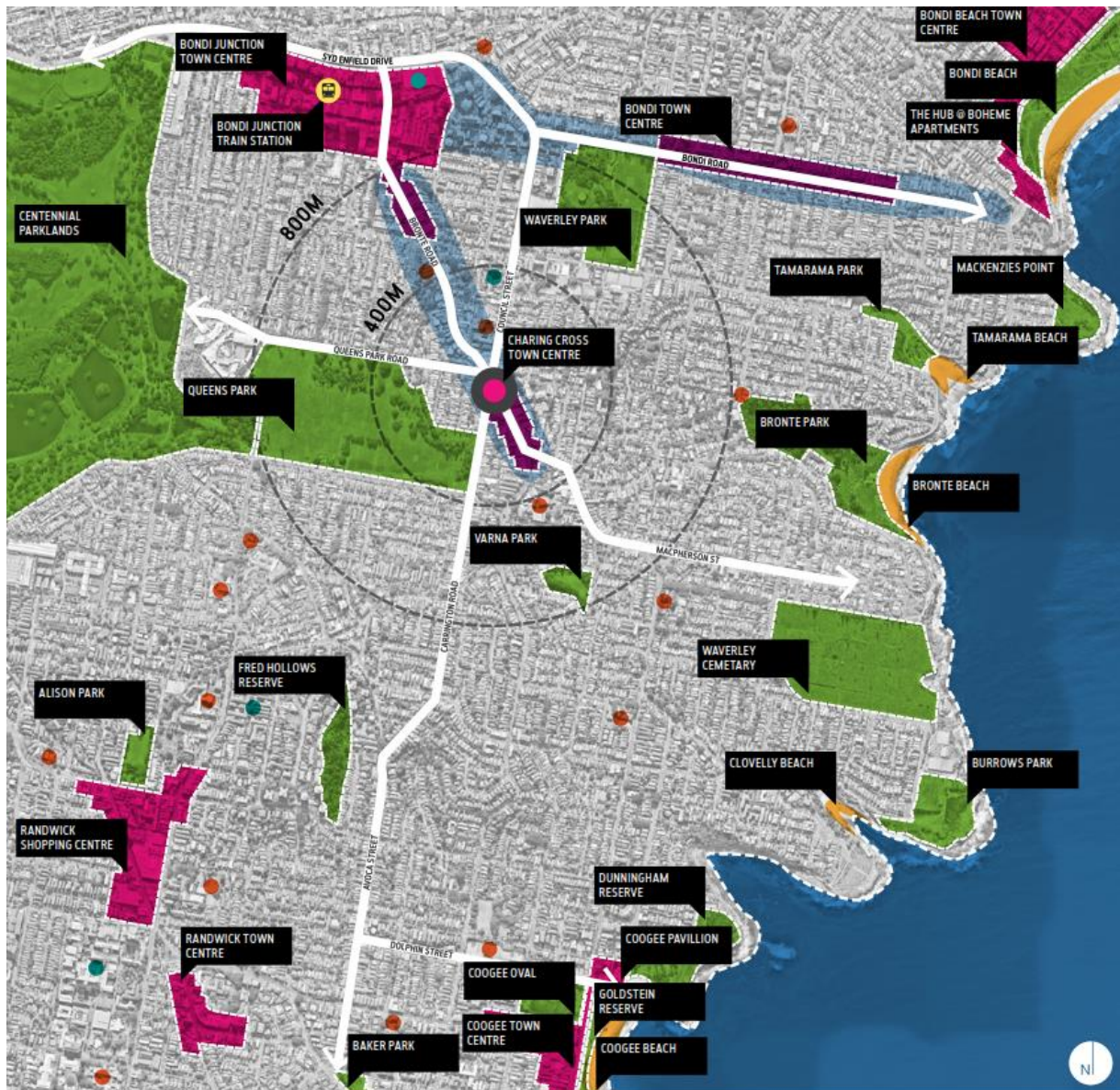


Figure 1 - Context Plan (prepared by Roberts Day)

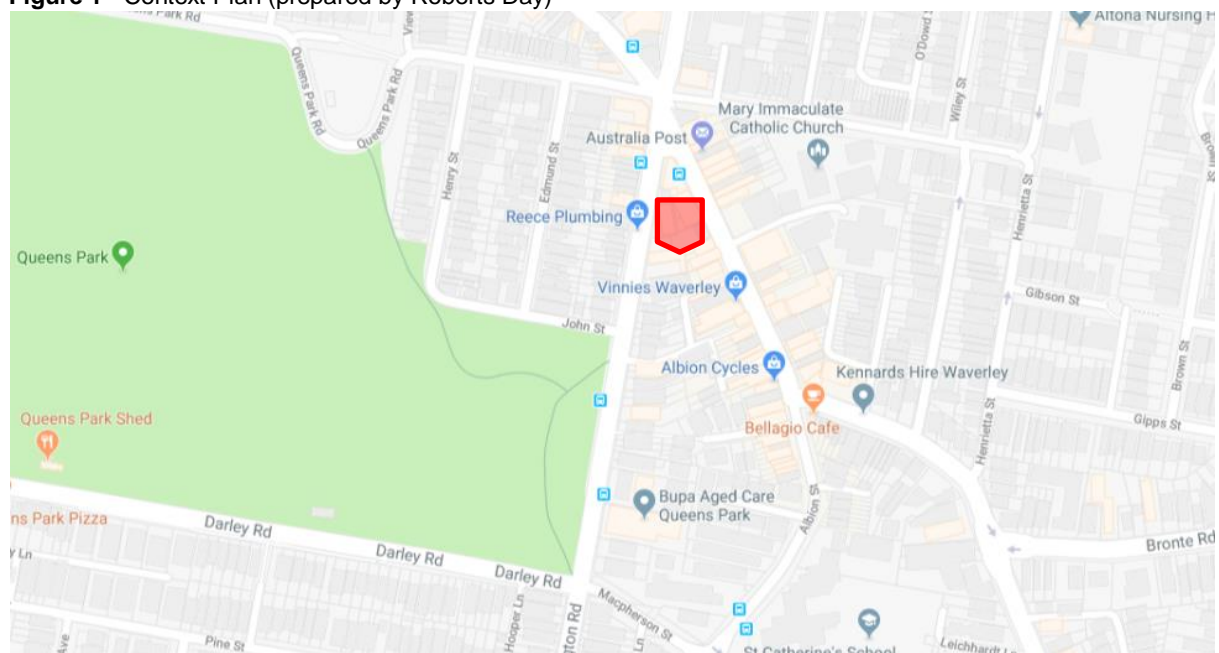


Figure 2 – Location Plan



Figure 3- Aerial Photograph of the site (shown in red)



Figure 4 – Perspective– Site Shown highlighted

3.0 Background and Consultation

3.1 Discussions with Council

The Planning Proposal was lodged in June 2018. Prior to lodgement, the proponent had meetings and discussions with Council on several occasions over a two year period as well as undertaking extensive community and stakeholder engagement sessions in the progression of the design concept. The feedback from these meetings, discussions with stakeholder was incorporated into the scheme.

Following initial review by Council, feedback was provided which subsequently led to revision of the Planning Proposal. These amendments were discussed with Council in December 2018 and again in early March 2019.

The revisions made to the planning proposal in line with Council feedback involved a substantial reduction in the proposed building height, and subsequent reduction to FSR, as well as confirming the retention of the existing heritage façade to Bronte Road and substantially increasing the proportion of non-residential floor space to approximately 1:1. As part of the revisions, a 3D survey was undertaken, as well as additional heritage advice and guidance to the most appropriate built form response to the site and context.

3.2 Local Planning Panel Meeting

As part of the assessment of the Planning Proposal by Council, a meeting has been confirmed with the Waverley Local Planning Panel (WLPP) on 10 April 2019. Given the timing and existing arrangements in place for this meeting, it is appropriate that the WLPP meeting proceeds, with feedback to be provided to Waverley Council in their consideration of the proposal as part of the Rezoning Review process.

3.3 Community Engagement

The importance of early engagement and community involvement has been adopted by the proponents and projects team for the Planning Proposal as noted above. A Communication and Engagement Plan prepared KJA accompanied the Planning Proposal which detailed existing consultation and engagement that took place prior to lodgement, and set out the orderly and open approach to engagement with community, Council and stakeholders.

Prior to lodgement of the proposal in June 2018, briefings were given to the Charing Cross Village Precinct and invited local residents which included a presentation of the components of the planning proposal and indicative architectural scheme. Leaflet invitations were circulated by the Precinct organisers in the week prior to the meeting to invite the public to attend. Approximately 30-40 people attended including two Waverley Councillors. The Precinct includes members of the community and local business owners. Ongoing briefings have also been provided to the Eastern Suburbs Legion Club in regard to the Planning Proposal.

4.0 The Proposal

4.1 Intended Outcome

The intended outcome of the planning proposal is to amend the Waverley Local Environmental Plan 2012 to facilitate urban renewal on the site, allowing a significant increase in the quality and quantum of ground floor activated retail spaces, commercial and residential uses on the site, underpinned by substantial public benefit and creation of publicly accessible open space/through site link.

To achieve the vision for the site and provide an activated retail ground plane with 25% publicly accessible open space, increases to building height and floor space ratio controls within LEP 2012 are required.

4.2 Proposed Amendments to LEP

The Planning Proposal seeks the following amendments to LEP 2012:

- Increase in FSR from 1:1 to 2.65:1 (of which 1:1 is retail/commercial as proposed in the concept plan)
- Increase in building height to a maximum of 18m. The majority of the proposed buildings will be no higher than 15.5m, which will be articulated through a site specific development control plan/masterplan. The maximum 18m control is proposed to account for the fall of the site and lift overrun.
- No change to existing B4 Mixed Use zoning or permissible uses on the site

4.3 Concept Proposal + Built Form

The proposal is supported by an Urban Design Report and Master Plan that centres on a proposed infill redevelopment to act as a catalyst for the renewal of the western quarter of Charing Cross village. At the heart of the proposal is the public benefit created in the form of vibrant laneway, plaza and public art making Charing Cross a better place for people. The Master Plan envisages:

- a publicly accessible courtyard to be known as 'Charing Square' with active retail frontages, together with a new thru-site pedestrian laneway link between Carrington and Bronte Roads.
- 3 new buildings comprising a mix of ground floor retail/commercial uses, along with 29 residential apartments (increase of 12 dwelling under current controls); and
- underground car parking for 35 cars across two basement levels.

Architectural Plans have been prepared by H&E Architects accompanying the Planning Proposal provides representation of how the site could be developed, including the layout of retail, commercial and residential uses.

The scheme proposes the retention of the existing Bronte Road façade in response to its heritage value and acknowledgement of its positive contribution to the streetscape. The following principles were adopted with regard to heritage and character of Charing Cross:

- The importance of preserving the prominence of the Robin Hood Hotel when viewed from the north;
- Retention of the inter-war facade of 223-227 Bronte Road to maintain consistency in the streetscape of Charing Cross/Bronte Road; and
- Creating a fine grain rhythm to Charing Cross by redistributing massing on the site, providing through site links and open space at the ground plane surrounded by vibrant and active retail uses.

The built form relationship of the proposal has been carefully considered in response to the Charing Cross streetscape and Robin Hood Hotel, as well as maintaining solar amenity and access for surrounding dwellings, and the establishment of an optimal place-based outcome.

The amended concept includes one 4 storey and two 5 storey buildings, whilst still maintaining three 'fine-grain' buildings creating the intimately-scaled laneway and plaza. On Bronte Road the five storey building is setback behind the retained facade and on Carrington Road the upper floor is setback.

The fine-grain built form and human scale heights integrate into the local character of Charing Cross, strengthening the identity of the village whilst providing new opportunities for social gathering and activation of the public realm.



Figure 5 – Aerial view of Proposal

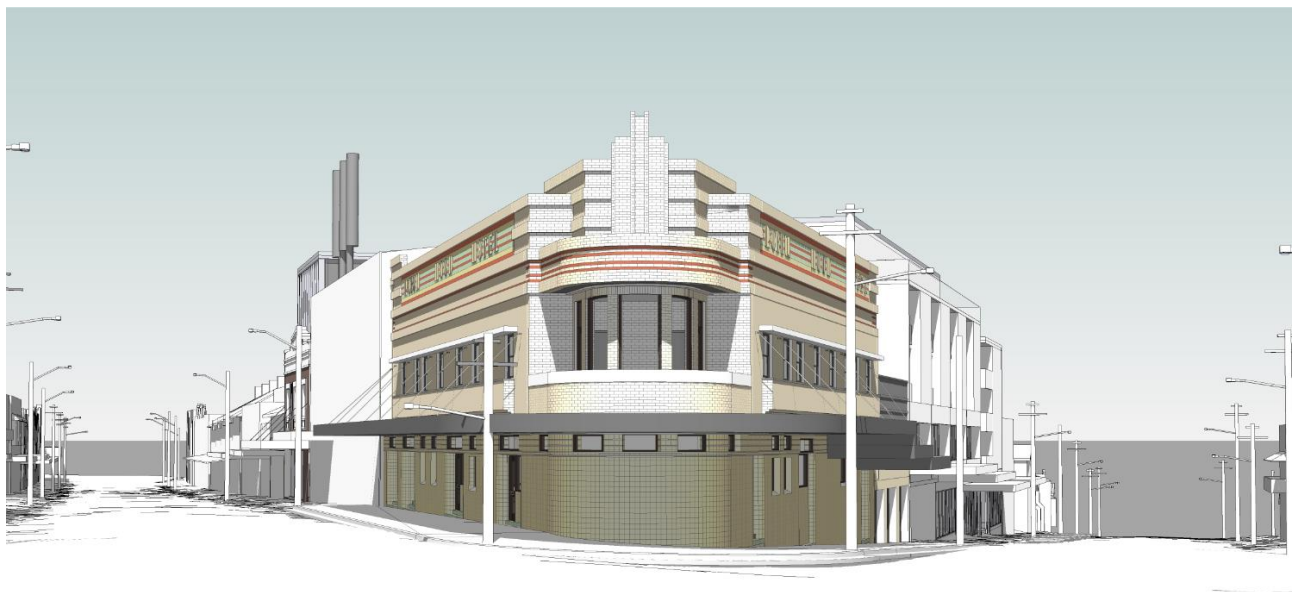


Figure 6 – Perspective from Charing Cross Intersection looking south

5.0 Consideration of Environmental Impacts

The Planning Proposal is accompanied by an indicative architectural scheme prepared by H&E Architects. This scheme was prepared in close collaboration with Roberts Day, Oultram Heritage and GBA Heritage to ensure a contextually responsive and well-designed envelope was established. The envelope and scheme was also designed to ensure the ability for compliance with the relevant Apartment Design Guide and SEPP 65 principles.

A summary of the potential environmental impacts from the proposal, and how these have been mitigated through the envelope design are provided below.

5.1 Heritage

Potential impacts to the streetscape, Robin Hood Hotel and existing buildings on-site have been carefully considered in the proposal. The collaborative approach with the heritage specialists and project architects has ensured the heritage impacts of the proposal are carefully managed. Recommendations from the heritage specialists have been directly incorporated into the proposed scheme, including the retention of the Bronte Road façade and reduction in building height across the site. The impacts of the proposal are summarised below (extracts from heritage reports).

- The proposal is a coherent and well-considered response to the site that can provide a high quality, built outcome. The contribution of the current building to Bronte Road will be maintained in the retention of its facade and awning allowing an easy fit for the development into the local streetscape.
- The scale of the development is not excessive and responds well to the local context and is capable of compliance with the objectives and provisions of the LEP 2012 and DCP 2012.
- The introduction of a new, active laneway into this area of traditional laneways will enhance the Charing Cross Conservation Area and the vicinity in general.
- There will be no adverse impact on the significance of the heritage listed Robin Hood Hotel or any other heritage items in the vicinity.
- Retention of the facade of the Contributory building at 223-227 Bronte Road mitigates the impact of the removal of that building, most of which is structurally unsound and not generally visible from the public realm. Treatment of the retained facade will be subject to further design resolution.
- Significant existing views within and from the Conservation Area will generally be retained. Any impact on views north along Bronte Road to the south facade of the proposed envelope at 223-227 Bronte Road can be mitigated by appropriate design resolution.

The impact assessment remains appropriate despite the draft Planning Proposal (housekeeping amendment to LEP 2012) prepared by Council which seeks to list the subject site fronting Bronte Road.

5.2 Residential Amenity

The indicative architectural scheme has been prepared with regard to SEPP 65 and the accompanying Apartment Design Guide. In particular, the building envelopes and indicative architectural scheme is able to achieve solar access, natural cross-ventilation, building separation, apartment size and layout requirements.

5.3 Overshadowing

The shadow diagrams provided in the Planning Proposal indicate that the proposed built form will overshadow the roofs and courtyard of the adjacent properties to the south in mid-Winter, due to the orientation of lots and built form. At the Equinox and other times of the year, the buildings to the south will receive direct solar access in the morning and afternoon hours. As noted in the Urban Design Report (Appendix A), the overshadowing is compliant with relevant Apartment Design Guidelines (ADG).

5.4 Traffic and Parking

The proposal will have a significant reduction in the number of vehicle movement to and from the site overall as a result of the removal of the bottleshop. Additionally, the proposal provides the ability for 6 additional on-street, public car parking spaces, to Carrington Road.

6.0 Rezoning Review - Assessment Criteria

This request for a Rezoning Review is prepared in accordance with Section 5.1 of 'A guide to preparing local environmental plans' and consideration of the Planning Circular "independent review of plan making decisions'. The planning Proposal has strategic and site specific merit for the reasons set out in this section.

The Waverley LEP 2012 was gazetted at the end of 2012. The proposal does not seek to amend an LEP less than 5 years old.

Strategic Merit Test

Test: Is the proposal consistent with the relevant district plan, or corridor/precinct plans applying to the site, including any draft regional, district or corridor/precinct plans released for public comment?

A Metropolis of Three Cities - Sydney Region Plan

The Plan sets 10 key directions under the three main headings of 'Liveability', 'Productivity' and 'Sustainability' in order to focus and priorities growth and investment in infrastructure. These are underpinned by a total of 40 objectives.

The proposal is consistent with the ten directions of the Region Plan. The planning proposal will enable and support the renewal of the site for retail, commercial and residential uses, providing both local employment and housing opportunities, as well as vibrant retail and community space on what is currently a dilapidated and underutilised site in heart of Charing Cross. The planning proposal supports the growth of the existing commercial and economic centre of Charing Cross, adopting a place-based approach and providing significant public benefit.

The proposal will provide improved local employment and housing opportunities without an adverse impact on the wider economy of Charing Cross village or higher order centres, particularly Bondi Junction. The proximity of the site to public transport and established services makes it well placed to support the urban renewal and revitalisation of the village. As an established village, Charing Cross is considered to be a suitable location for housing intensification and urban renewal.

Eastern City District Plan

The Eastern City District Plan, prepared by the Greater Sydney Commission in March 2018, provides the framework to manage growth whilst maintaining liveability and productivity across a key area in Sydney.

The site is strategically located to deliver on these priorities by promoting a best practice place making project to improve the quantum and quality of public spaces, increase employment opportunities and housing diversity, fostering healthy, a creative and rich socially connected community through the facilitation of public art, open spaces and interconnection between sites, and creating a distinct 'destination' for pedestrians to use in the local area.

The proposal will allow the actions and objectives listed in the District Plan to be realised, as opposed to the status quo on the site, preventing further economic growth and amenity improvements of Charing Cross. A more detailed assessment of the Proposal's alignment with priorities within the Eastern City District Plan is provided in the table below. Consideration has also been given to 'Better Placed', 'Greener Places' and the Local Character Planning Circular of the DPE in the Planning Proposal.

Eastern City District Plan – Priorities	
Priority	Discussion
Priority E1	Planning for a City Supported by Infrastructure
<i>Objective 4 – Infrastructure Use is optimised</i>	The proposal maximises the utility of existing infrastructure and transport investment within the Local Centre of Charing Cross and on established local bus routes.
Priority E3	Providing Services and Social Infrastructure to meet people changing needs
<i>Objective 6 – Services and Infrastructure to meet communities changing needs</i>	<p>The proposal will provide new areas of activated ground floor retail, commercial space and publicly accessible Charing Square as a focal point of Charing Cross. The design supports a fine grain urban form and land use mix providing a greater diversity of uses and improving liveability for existing and future residents.</p> <p>The proposal also provides opportunity for diversity of housing within a walkable neighbourhood and services, creating additional opportunities for older people to continue living in their communities, where being close to family, friends and established health and support networks will improve people's wellbeing.</p>
Priority E4	Fostering healthy, creative, culturally rich and socially connected communities
<i>Objective 7 - Communities are healthy, resilient and socially connected</i>	At the heart of the proposal is the publicly accessible through site link and Charing Square, surrounded by ground floor retail and public art. The creation of this new gathering space will support social connections with the centre, strengthen the diversity of the neighbourhood and promote a healthy, creative, culturally rich community of Charing Cross.
<i>Objective 9 – Greater Sydney celebrated the arts and supports creative industrial and innovation</i>	The proposal includes a Public Art Strategy for the site, which sets the principles and strategy for integrated public art on the site, in the context of Waverley Council's existing public art policy. The commitment to the provision of public art is proposed to be incorporated as part of the Voluntary Planning Agreement linked to the planning proposal.
Priority E5	Providing Housing supply, choice and affordability with access to jobs, services and public transport
<i>Objective 11 – Housing is more diverse and affordable</i>	The proposal provides opportunities for a contribution to a more diverse housing stock within the local centre with high level of amenity, close to transport, passive and active open spaces space, services, and jobs. The proposal will provide added choice and affordability options that meet a growing, ageing and culturally diverse population.
Priority E6	Creating and renewing great places and local centres, and respecting the District's heritage
<i>Objectives 12 - creating great places that bring people together</i>	<p>The creation of a fine grain urban form whereby places are walkable, of human scale, and offer a mix of land uses including social infrastructure and local services at the heart of communities is identified as a crucial element in the creation of great places.</p> <p>The site provides the opportunity to demonstrate, through a design led approach, the integration of public open spaces, in the form of laneways and urban courtyards, with the heritage fabric, in a way which develops a fine grain urban form, promotes pedestrian permeability through the precinct, and encourages community interaction through a range of retail and residential uses.</p>
<i>Objective 13 Environmental heritage is identified, conserved and enhanced.</i>	<p>The proposal includes the retention of the existing Bronte Road façade in response to its heritage value and acknowledgement of its positive contribution to the streetscape.</p> <p>Additionally, the proposal is consistent with the existing character description and desired future character of Charing Cross as set out in the Development Control Plan (See Site Specific Merit Tests below).</p>
Priority E11	Growing investment, business opportunities and jobs in strategic centre
<i>Objective 22 - Investment and business activity in centres</i>	The proposal creates additional opportunities to attract high quality retail and commercial tenants within the centre. The scheme includes all uses at ground level being activated to the public domain, and when combined with upper level commercial space achieves a non- residential FSR on the site of 1:1. These uses will also allow for a suitable contribution to the night time economy of Charing Cross which is currently limited to a small number of restaurant and the two established pubs.
Priority E17	Increasing urban tree canopy cover and delivering Green Grid Connections
<i>Objective 30 Urban tree canopy cover is increased.</i>	The proposal incorporates the opportunity to remove the large existing vehicles crossing associated with the drive-through bottle shop on Carrington Road, as well as the opportunity to provide 6 additional on-street planting (As shown in the Architectural Plans provided with the Proposal). These components of the application are in line with the aspiration of the Councils previously released Public Domain Improvement Plan within Charing Cross and will expanding urban tree canopy on the public realm.
Priority E18	Delivering high quality open space
<i>Objective 31 Public open space is accessible, protected and enhanced</i>	<p>The proposal seeks to provide 25% of the site as accessible ground level open space in the form of laneways and Charing Square courtyard. The size, orientation and dimensions of this space will support activation and a lively retail and night time economy.</p> <p>The proposal provide multi-purpose and accessible open space to a variety of users, an important place for locals and visitors to relax, meet and socialise, adding value to the character of the local area.</p>

Test: Consistent with a relevant local council strategy that has been endorsed by the Department.

Waverley Council Local Strategic Planning Statement

Waverley Council have identified the preparation of the required Strategic Planning Statement preparation, but have not yet provided any information or details for public comment. There has been no endorsement of the plan by the Department of Planning and Environment (DPE). As a first stage in the process, Council has acknowledged the community consultation and feedback obtained for the Waverley Community Strategic Plan 2018-2029 will be used as the base for commencement.

Waverley Community Strategic Plan 2018 – 2029

The Waverley Community Strategic Plan 2018-2029 reflects the Waverley community's long-term priorities and aspirations for the future. The community Strategic Plan was adopted on 19 June 2018. The community vision is a succinct statement that captures community's aspirations for the future of Waverley and is the foundation of the plan.

This vision is for a *"A welcoming and cohesive community that celebrates and enhances our spectacular coastline, vibrant places, and rich cultural heritage"*. The Planning Proposal and concept scheme seeks to realise this vision of celebrating and enhancing the vibrancy of Charing Cross Village whilst retaining and enhancing the cultural heritage values of the site and surrounds. A demonstration of the proposal's consistency with the relevant themes of the Community Strategic Plan are provided below.

Waverley Council Community Strategic Plan 2018-2029		
Themes		Comments
Arts and Culture		
1.2	Preserve and interpret the unique cultural heritage of Waverley	The proposal enhances the fine grain qualities of Charing Cross (as outline in the existing Character Statement within the DCP) and retains the cohesive streetscape and heritage façade to Bronte Road
3.2	Expand the networks of parks and Open Spaces	The proposal offers durable, multi-purpose and accessible open space to a variety of users. It will be an important place for locals people to relax, meet and socialise, adding value to the character of the local area
Recreation and Open Space		
3.1	Improve health and quality of life through a range of recreational opportunities and quality open spaces	The proposal provides a new place for people to enjoy as a passive and publicly accessible open space and connections.
3.2	Expand the network of parks and open spaces, sporting and recreational facilities	Provides a contribution to the mosaic of spaces within Charing Cross, realising opportunities that would not otherwise be available without urban renewal and redevelopment of the site
Local Economy		
4.2	Ensure Bondi Junction and Waverley's villages continue to have a diverse range of businesses, local jobs and services	The proposed mix and arrangement of land uses and built form respectively will promote a range of business, local jobs and services, ensuring diversity in the offering and market
Planning and Development		
5.1	Facilitate and deliver well-designed, accessible and sustainable buildings and public places that improve liveability of existing neighbourhoods	The proposal supports these themes, improving liveability and maintaining the strong cultural and heritage values of Charing Cross. The proposal provides a coherent and well-considered response to the site that can provide a high quality, built outcome.
5.2	Value and embrace Waverley's Heritage items and places	
Transport, Pedestrians and Parking		
6.2	Build and maintain streetscapes that have a welcoming sense of place	The retention and conservation of the existing Bronte Road façade maintains the consistency and character of Charing Cross, adding to the sense of place
6.3.	Create safe streets and footpaths with fair access to parking	The proposal increases permeability through Charing Cross, surrounded by active and passive surveillance throughout all hours of the day, improve safety for pedestrians. The removal of large vehicle crossing to Carrington Road also allows for the creation of 6 additional public on-street visitor parking within Charing Cross

Waverley Economic Development Strategy – 2015-2020

This Strategy details how Council will support the area's economy over the next five years to 2020. This will be delivered in partnership with other tiers of government and industry groups, with a focus on a range of initiatives that involve:

- destination marketing
- place management
- improving competitiveness
- improved partnerships
- business support
- reducing red tape

One of the key strategic directions outlined in the Strategy that is applicable to Charing Cross includes having 'established commercial centres with local business "villages" with strong growth potential.' This will be achieved on the site through promoting diverse retail and commercial uses and enhancing a sense of place and cultural character.

Waverley Council - Future Village Centres Strategy (not yet prepared by Council)

Waverley Council has identified that in preparation of the Local Strategic Planning Statement, a focus will be on village centres, with a proposed review of 20 local and neighbourhood village centres identified.

Council has identified that the strategy will look at numerous aspects that contribute to the distinctive character of each centre including jobs and services, sustainability, heritage, amenity and character, public transport, parking and congestion, and other place-specific issues.

This strategy document has not yet been prepared, released for community comment or endorsed by the DPE.

Summary

In the preparation of the Planning Proposal, a place based approach has been taken in accordance with the established priorities of the District Plan, Government Architects policy guidelines and vision of Waverley Council's Community Plan. The proposal has also been prepared to align with existing character and built form description of the Centre and desired future character objectives of Charing Cross (see assessment of these in the site specific merit section of this letter below).

Test: Responding to a change in circumstances, such as the investment in new infrastructure or changing demographic trends that have not been recognised by existing planning controls

Charing Cross presents as a typical innercity strip centre focussed on Bronte Road and extending from Victoria Street in the north-west to around the intersection of Bronte and Albion Street in the south-east.

An Economic Feasibility Report prepared by Leyshon Consulting accompanies the Planning Proposal. As part of this report consideration is given to the existing economic profile and uses within the current centre and likely trajectory based on similar centres in Sydney. This is relevant when considering the circumstances and the response of existing planning controls.

Over the past decade (which also aligns broadly with Council's previous updates to planning controls in 2006 and 2012) an increase in the number of businesses retailing home decoration/renovation products has occurred in Charing Cross. These uses generally serve subregional or regional markets rather than attracting customers solely from the immediately surrounding residential area. As a result, the character of the centre is changing. According to Leyshon Consulting, the potential trajectory could continue to lead to a 'crowding out' of more traditional convenience retail uses.

Since 2006 there has been no effective change to the planning controls that recognises or responds to the changes occurring within the centre, or incentivises the creation of public benefit in the centre. The current retail offer and shop vacancies also suggests the overall main street traders are under performing.

The proposal will introduce a vibrant and active retail and commercial development, with associated residential and is expected to stimulate economic activity across broader Charing Cross. Crucially, the proposal is consistent with the Desired Future Character Objectives of Charing Cross, as demonstrated below.

Site Specific Merit Test

Test: The natural environment (including known significant environmental values, resources or hazards)?

The site is currently developed within the urban setting of Charing Cross, with no on-site vegetation or specific environmental value. Other than the heritage aspects of the site, there are no environmentally significantly land, or land with biodiversity value that will be affected by the planning proposal.

Whilst the existing building to Bronte Road are severely dilapidated and unoccupied, there are no hazards or environmental constraints that would preclude the planning proposal and redevelopment of the site.

Test: The existing uses, approved uses and likely future uses of land in the vicinity of the land subject to a proposal?

The Proposal provides a considerable increase the quantum and quality of ground floor retail, in a fine grain, accessible and functional location which will positively contribute to Charing Cross. Importantly, these additional opportunities and public benefits cannot be realised without renewal and redevelopment of the site, and associated amendments to planning controls.

The proposed built form and future uses are consistent with the existing character and built form description of the Centre as adopted by Council at Section E3 of Waverley DCP 2012. More importantly, the proposal will support the Desired Future Character Objectives of Charing Cross.

The existing character and built form description states that Bronte Road currently serves as a "high street" character, supporting the local commercial strip as well a major public transport route to and from the City. It notes that the centre continues to fulfil a valuable social role and meeting place for local residents and for the children attending and travelling to the surrounding schools. However, there has been no significant investment has been made by Council or private land owners in Charing Cross for communal space in the past decade.

Notably, the DCP states that *"At present the public domain is not particularly well defined, blurring into the adjacent residential areas, particularly at the northern and southern ends of the high street"*. The proposal seeks to provide additional publicly accessible open space and strengthen the fine grain characteristics of the centre.

The purpose of the controls included in the Development Control Plan is clearly established at Section E3 (page 326) to, *"strike a balance between upgrading and improving the public and private domain in village centres, while maintaining their character and affordability"*. This Rezoning Review demonstrates that whilst changes to planning controls are proposed, the character objectives are maintained and the existing buildings will be significantly improved from the current dilapidated condition. Furthermore, it is noted that the Desired Future Character Objectives and Existing Character and Built Form description have remained the same from the 2016 DCP to 2019.

Charing Cross - Desired Future Character Objectives	
Objective	Response
(a) To limit the scale of redevelopment and infill development at the street edge to match the height of the existing heritage parapet façades and roof lines, with setbacks to further levels where appropriate.	Consistent The built form response preserves the existing building façade and parapet height to Bronte Road, with upper levels setback from the street frontage, consistent with the other provisions of the DCP
(b) To ensure that the design of infill development remains consistent with the regular division of frontages, where regular divisions occur.	Consistent The configuration of the site is such that the division of frontages is retained to Bronte Road, with the existing heritage façade to be retained and restored. The Carrington Road façade provides a contextual response to surrounding development
(c) To ensure an integrated approach and consistent treatment to the conservation of terrace groups of buildings of historic character.	Consistent As noted above, the proposal retained the existing heritage façade and massing to the parapet of heritage facade
(d) To minimise 'visual clutter' through control of peripheral building elements.	Consistent The proposal provides a consistent built form, adopting datum lines of the existing façade and setting back upper levels
(e) To encourage the conservation of historic architectural details and reconstruction of missing or degraded elements.	Consistent The proposal seeks to retain and restore the existing façade to Bronte Road, ensuring consistency to the streetscape and character area of Charing Cross
(f) To maintain the continuity of awnings where present.	Consistent The proposal will incorporate continuous awnings to both Bronte Road and Carrington Road
(g) To maintain Bronte Road as the primary streetscape in the centre with lanes and side passages as secondary frontages.	Consistent The proposal retains the prominence of Bronte Road as the primary streetscape. By retaining and restoring the existing façade, the streetscape and associated character is strengthened

Unique Nature of the Site in the Context of Charing Cross

The site is unique with regard to its gateway location, geometry and size within Charing Cross, dual street frontage and adjacency to the Robin Hood Hotel, as the cornerstone of the Charing Cross intersection. The Concept proposal offers a unique opportunity to provide accessible pedestrian connection and increased ground floor retail activation unlikely any other site within Charing Cross. For these reasons, the Planning Proposal does not set a broader precedent for other sites in Charing Cross.

Test: The services and infrastructure that are or will be available to meet the demands arising from the proposal and any proposed financial arrangements for infrastructure provision?

The site is well located to existing infrastructure and is accompanied by a public benefit offer (see **Section 7**).

Due to the proximity of the site to public transport connections and the limited car parking provided on site, the proposal will not have adverse impact on the local road network. On the contrary, as outlined in the Planning Proposal, the removal of the existing bottleshop will have a net reduction in traffic generation and vehicle movement during peak hour periods, as well as existing busy periods such as Saturday afternoons.

The removal of the existing bottleshop and redevelopment of the site also opens up the opportunity for providing another 6 on-street, publicly accessible, car parking spaces. These would be in the control of Council with regard to time limits, use for loading/services, or paid parking.

7.0 Other Considerations

7.1 Public Benefit Offer

The Planning Proposal will deliver a significant public benefit through the delivery of high quality residential, retail and commercial spaces with access to public transport, services, and employment, health, education, entertainment and recreation facilities. The proposal will provide a direct and distinct benefit to the public by providing a publicly accessible through site link and square (Charing Square). Details of the public benefit offer to be included in a VPA linked to the Planning Proposal is provided below:

- Construction of a publicly accessible through site link and public square (Charing Square) between Bronte Road
- Street tree planting along Carrington Road, in line with the Public Domain Improvement Plan previously endorsed by Council
- Creation of additional on-street parking to Carrington Road
- Monetary contribution to the installation of public art within the proposal in accordance with the public art strategy provided with the Planning Proposal.

The details and concept images of the through site link and Charing Square are provided in the Urban Design Report prepared by Roberts Day. As set out in the draft Public Art Strategy, opportunities for public art are also provided within Charing Square and the link, which is suggested to be included in the public benefit offer.

The proposed Development and VPA works will bring significant public benefit to through the delivery of high quality public domain adjacent new retail and commercial spaces with immediate access to public transport, services, and employment, health, education, entertainment and recreation facilities. Given the unique setting of the site, and dual street frontage within Charing Cross (unlike any other site), the proposal will provide a direct and distinct benefit to the public.

8.0 Conclusion

This letter has been prepared in support of a Rezoning Review request to DPE in relation to the Proponent initiated Planning Proposal at 203-209 Bronte Road, 223-227 Bronte Road and 94 Carrington Road, Waverley.

Charing Cross is identified as a village centre within Waverley LGA containing a mixture of retail and commercial premises, including restaurants, cafes and pubs. However, the centre has a lack of structure and definition and the planning proposal offers the opportunity to renew the western quarter of the village.

The planning proposal recognises the potential of contributing to the wider revitalisation of Charing Cross. As such, the planning proposal has taken a village-wide approach to reflect the strategic merit of the urban renewal of the site. The planning proposal offers a site responsive planning solution allowing the site to be redeveloped in a manner sympathetic to the character and amenity of the village.

Due to the specific and unique characteristics of the site, the proposed height and floor space amendments will not set an undesirable precedent. Rather, the proposed amendments will positively contribute to the success of Charing Cross by creating a new destination for local and visitors alike, in turn strengthening the local economy. The creation of publicly accessible through site links in Charing Square will enhance the identity of the area whilst adding fine grain elements, consistent with the character of Charing Cross.

The planning proposal will facilitate a well-considered and strategic outcome for a site that is most appropriately used for a mix of commercial and residential uses, with particular consideration to the heritage character of the site and streetscape of Bronte Road. It is a planning proposal that will provide high quality and well-designed residential, retail and commercial uses within an area of Charing Cross that is underutilised, strengthening the local economy.

The Proposal is a catalyst to realising the desired character and ongoing role of the Charing Cross by significantly enhancing amenity, and bringing significant public benefits, without any significant adverse impacts.

The Proponent has worked collaboratively with community and Council Officers in developing this Planning Proposal, which is evidenced by the various meetings and two redesigns of the earlier concept schemes for the site. The current Planning Proposal was therefore prepared in light of the earlier advice from Officers. The proponent is committed to continuing to engage with Council through this process.

For the reasons outlined in this letter and accompanying documentation, we submit that the Planning Proposal has considerable strategic and site-specific merit, and thus warrants support from the Panel to proceed to Gateway determination.

Yours sincerely,



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