CITY OF SYDNEY

Planning Proposal – 103-109 George Street, Redfern

Planning Proposal
April 2026

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

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Cover image: https://www.commercialrealestate.com.au/news/redfern-telephone-exchange-inner-sydney-redevelopment-potential-as-telstra-moves-on-1350901/

Executive summary

The City of Sydney (the City) has prepared this planning proposal for 103-109 George Street, Redfern (the site) in response to a request from Colliers Urban Planning (formerly Ethos Urban) on behalf of Telstra Corporation Limited (Telstra) for the City to prepare a planning proposal for the site.

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

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

This planning proposal explains the intent and justification for the proposed amendments to the Sydney Local Environmental Plan 2012 (LEP) as it applies to the site. This planning proposal has been prepared by the City in accordance with clause 3.33 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 and the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure's 'Local Environmental Plan Making Guideline'.

1. Background

1.1 History

Colliers Urban Planning on behalf of Telstra have submitted a request for a planning proposal to remove the heritage listing of the property at 103-109 George Street, Redfern (the subject site).

The NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure, have advised that a planning proposal, was necessary, rather than an expedited minor amendment, given the extent of the required mapping change and the need to publicly exhibit a heritage report confirming the appropriateness of that change.

This report includes a planning proposal to amend Schedule 5 of Sydney Local Environmental Plan 2012 (SLEP 2012) and the accompanying heritage map (HER_016) to remove the heritage listing (Item No. I1318) currently on 103-109 George Street, Redfern.

Currently, both 103-109 George Street and 117A Redfern Street are included as Item No. I1318 in Schedule 5 of SLEP 2012, described as *Redfern Telephone Exchange including interior*.

The subject site is part of a larger site that prior to 1988 comprised the Redfern Post Office and the 3 buildings that comprised the telephone exchange. This entire site was owned by the Commonwealth of Australia.

On 5 August 1988, the site was subdivided into 2 lots by the registration of DP 776807. Lot 1 contained the Redfern Post Office and Lot 2 contained the telephone exchange buildings.

On 24 April 2013, Lot 2 was subdivided again into 2 lots – Lots 201 and 202 DP 1186468, as shown at Attachment C.

Lot 201 DP 1186468 has frontages to George and Turner Streets and contains the 3 storey and 7 storey exchange buildings, retained for telecommunication uses by Telstra. Lot 201 is known as 103-109 George Street, Redfern.

Lot 202 has a frontage to Redfern Street and contains the small historic 2 storey exchange building, which was the original Redfern Telephone Exchange. This site was subsequently disposed by Telstra and is now owned and used by the Aboriginal Medical Service Co-Operative Ltd and known as 117A Redfern Street, Redfern.

A heritage assessment by Design 5 Architects of the combined sites (103-109 George Street and 117A Redfern Street) attached at Appendix B concluded that Item I1318 should be revised to exclude the property at 103-109 George Street, Redfern (Lot 201), as the extant buildings on Lot 201 do not meet the threshold for local listing.

This assessment confirms that the former telephone exchange at 117A Redfern Street, Redfern (Lot 202) continues to meet the threshold for local listing.

1.2 Site identification

This planning proposal relates to the following land and structures:

- 103-109 George Street, Redfern - Lot 201 DP 1186468
- 117A Redfern Street, Redfern - Lot 202 DP 1186468

The

Location of Lot 201, 103-109 George Street, Redfern. *(Source: Six Maps)*

Location of Lot 202 117A Redfern Street, Redfern. *(Source: Six Maps)*

Figure 1. Locations of Lots 201 and 202 DP 1186468. Source: Design 5 Heritage Assessment.

103-109 George Street, Redfern – Redfern Telephone Exchange

The relevant structures, Lot and DP boundaries subject to this planning proposal are detailed in Figures 1, 2 and 3.

The property at 103-109 George Street contains 2 exchange buildings. Facing George Street and adjacent to the former Redfern Post Office is a 7-storey brick and concrete building dating from 1957. This was originally clad in pebblecrete panels, but was reclad in 2021 with fire-safe, compliant, non-combustible mineral-core aluminium panels in a champagne-coloured metallic finish. On the corner of George and Turner Streets is a 3-storey brick and concrete structure with dark brown brick facades and strip windows, built in 1974.

The City concurs with the conclusions of Design 5 Architects heritage assessment that these buildings do not meet the threshold for local listing. These buildings are already listed as detracting buildings within the heritage conservation area, and as such an amendment to their contribution status in Sydney DCP 2012 is not required.

Figure 2. 103 (left) – 109 (right) George Street, Redfern. Source: https://www.commercialrealestate.com.au/news/redfern-telephone-exchange-inner-sydney-redevelopment-potential-as-telstra-moves-on-1350901/

117A Redfern Street, Redfern – Redfern Telephone Exchange

The building at 117A Redfern Street is a two-storey building in the Victorian Italianate style, dating from 1913, built to replace a small exchange in the adjacent post office. It was decommissioned after 1974 when the third exchange building was added to the site. It was subdivided from the rest of the Redfern Exchange site in 2013 and subsequently sold.

The City concurs with the conclusions of Design 5 Architects heritage assessment that this building continues to meet the threshold for local listing and as such the existing heritage listing is proposed to be retained.

Figure 3. 117A Redfern Street, Redfern.
Source: https://www.facebook.com

2. Planning context

Land Zoning

The subject site at 103-109 George Street occupies E1 – Local Centre.

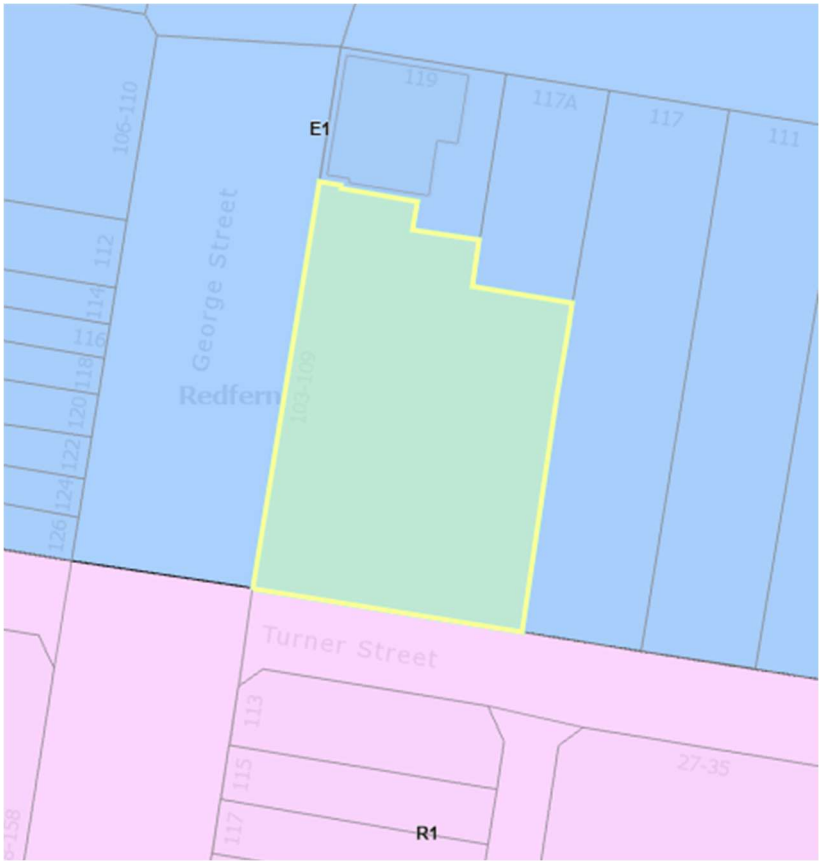

Figure 4. Extract from Zoning map in the SLEP 2012 showing zoning controls for 103-109 George Street and 117A Redfern Street. The property at 103-109 George Street is highlighted.

Heritage context

The properties at 103-109 George Street and 117A Redfern Street are jointly identified as Item No. I1318 is Schedule 5 of the SLEP 2012 as shown outlined in red in Figure 5.

It is also in the vicinity of several individually listed items on the SLEP 2012 as follows:

- Redfern Post Office including interior, 119 Redfern Street (I1349)
- St Vincent's Roman Catholic Church group church building, presbytery and school building, including interiors, 111–117 Redfern Street (I1348)

The site is also located within the C56 Redfern Estate Conservation Area.

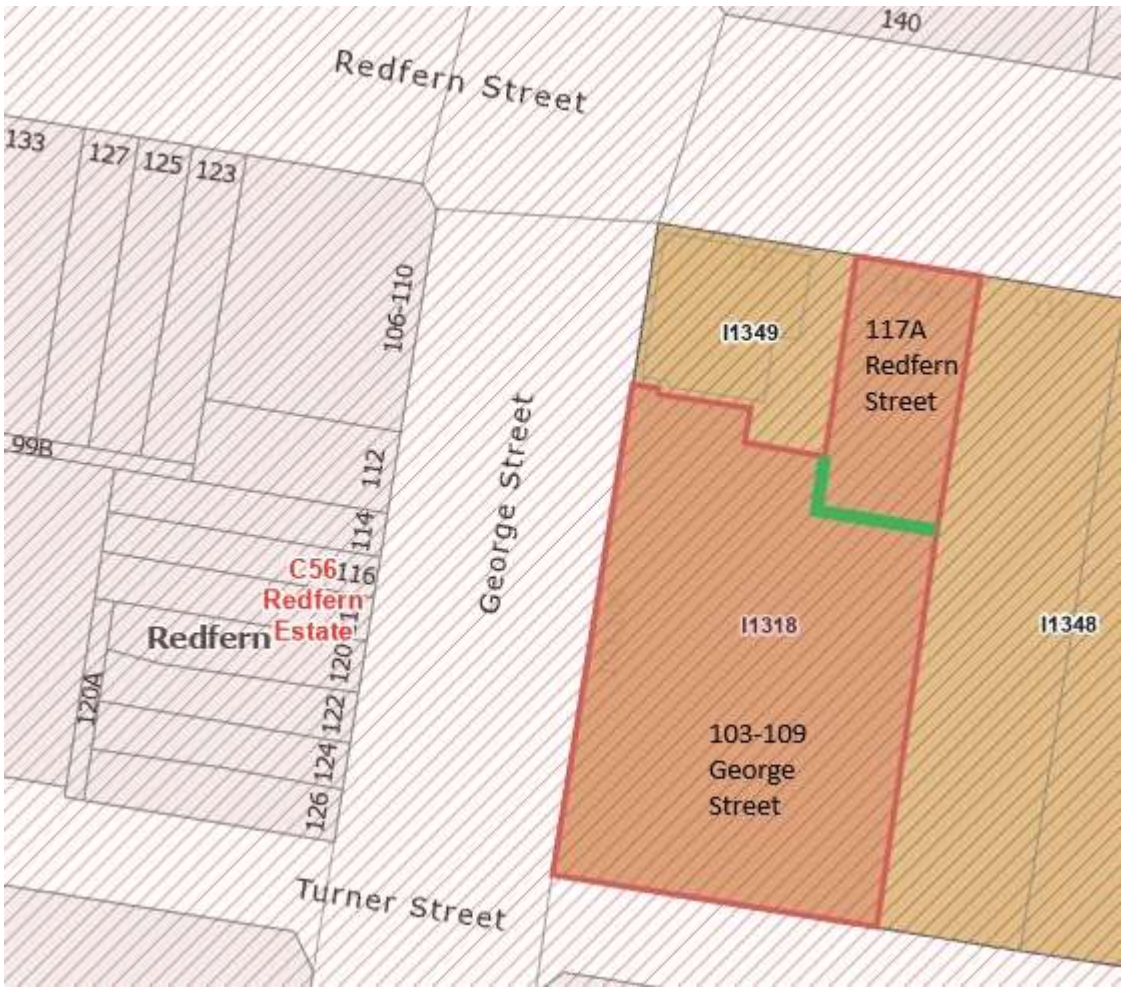

Figure 5. Extract from Heritage map in the SLEP 2012 Item No. I1318. The boundary of the heritage item (comprising the two separate properties) is outlined in red. The separate lots are divided by the green line with 117A Redfern Street to the north, and 103-109 George Street to the south.

Review of heritage significance

In late 2024, Colliers Urban Planning on behalf of Telstra commissioned a review of the heritage significance of the subject site from Design 5 Architects. (Refer to Appendix B).

This review inspected all buildings that comprise Item No. I1318 - both 103-109 George Street and 117A Redfern Street, Redfern and recommended that:

> *"the heritage listing **Item no. I1318** be modified to include only **Lot 202, at 117A Redfern Street, Redfern**."*

City staff have reviewed the Design 5 report and agree with this recommendation, noting that the buildings on 103-109 George Street do not meet the threshold for local listing and that the former telephone exchange at 117A Redfern Street, Redfern (Lot 202) continues to meet the threshold for local listing.

3. Objectives & intended outcomes

The objectives of this planning proposal are to recognise that the heritage significance of 103-109 George Street does not meet the threshold for local heritage listing and that only 117A Redfern Street should be included as the Item No. I1318 in Schedule 5 of SLEP 2012.

4. Explanation of provisions

To achieve the proposed outcomes, this planning proposal includes amendments to the SLEP 2012.

4.1 SLEP 2012 Heritage Schedule Amendments

The planning proposal seeks to amend the SLEP 2012, Schedule 5, Part 1 by inserting the following items as shown below in **Table 1**.

Text to be deleted is shown ~~crossed out~~.

Text to insert is shown as **bold underline.**

Table 1: Proposed amendments to Schedule 5, Environmental heritage, Part 1, Heritage items.

Locality	Item Name	Address	Property Description	Significance	Item no.
Redfern	Redfern Telephone Exchange including interior	~~103–109 George Street~~ **117A Redfern Street**	~~Lot 2, DP 776807~~ **Lot 202 DP 1186468**	Local	I1318

The buildings at 103-109 George Street, Redfern are already listed as detracting buildings within the heritage conservation area, and as such an amendment to their contribution status in Sydney DCP 2012 is not required.

5. Justification

Section A – Need for the planning proposal

Q.1 Is the planning proposal a result of any strategic study or report?

Yes.

The planning proposal is a result of a review of the heritage significance of the subject site by Design 5 Architects (attached at Appendix B).

Q2. Is the planning proposal the best means of achieving the objectives or intended outcomes, or is there a better way?

Yes.

Regular reviews of heritage listings are appropriate, particularly after subdivision and sale of parts of a site. This planning proposal is the appropriate way to achieve the intended outcomes.

Section B – Relationship to strategic planning framework

Q3. Is the planning proposal consistent with the objectives and actions contained within the applicable regional or sub-regional strategy?

Yes.

See comments below.

Greater Sydney Region Plan: A Metropolis of Three Cities

The Greater Sydney Region Plan, completed in March 2018, is the Greater Sydney Commission's vision for a Greater Sydney of three cities where most residents live within 30 minutes of their jobs and services. City of Sydney is situated within the Eastern Harbour City.

This planning proposal is consistent with the Plan's high-level directions and objectives and addresses the liveability great places direction objective:

> *Objective 13: Environmental heritage is identified conserved and enhanced*

By reviewing the existing heritage item and recommending an appropriate change on the SLEP 2012, this planning proposal will fulfill this objective.

Eastern City District Plan

The Eastern City District Plan completed by the Greater Sydney Commission in March 2018 is a 20-year plan to manage growth in the context of economic, social and environmental matters. This planning proposal gives effect to the following key planning priority and actions:

> *Liveability Planning Priority E6 – Creating and renewing great places and local centres, and respecting the District's heritage Action 26 - Identify, conserve and enhance environmental heritage by:*
>
> > *(a) engaging with the community early in the planning process to understand heritage values and how they contribute to the significance of the place*
> >
> > *(b) applying adaptive re-use and interpreting heritage to foster distinctive local places*
> >
> > *(c) managing and monitoring the cumulative impact of development on the heritage values and character of places.*

The review of the existing heritage item ensures the retention of physical, social, cultural and historic values that may have significance to the community. The removal of the listing for 103-109 George Street strengthens the existing listing as it applies to 117A Redfern Street. The merit-based heritage provisions that will continue to apply in Council's LEP and DCP provide capacity for Council and any proponent to appropriately consider heritage and other matters when and if development is proposed.

Q4. Is the planning proposal consistent with council's local strategy or other local strategic plan?

Yes.

Sustainable Sydney 2030 – 2050 Community Strategic Plan

The City of Sydney's Sustainable Sydney 2030 Strategic Plan is the vision for the sustainable development of the City to 2050 and beyond. It includes 10 strategic directions to guide the future of the City, as well as 10 targets against which to measure progress. This planning proposal is consistent with the key directions of Sustainable Sydney 2030 – 2050, particularly Direction 4 'Design excellence and sustainable development.'

Local strategic planning statement

The City Plan 2036 Local Strategic Planning Statement was completed in March 2020. This statement is the 20-year vision for land use planning in the city.

The review of the existing heritage item ensures the retention of physical, social, cultural and historic values that may have significance to the community.

Q5. Is the planning proposal consistent with applicable State Environmental Planning Policies (SEPPs)?

This planning proposal is consistent with applicable State Environmental Planning Policies (SEPPs) as summarised in Table 2 and detailed in the following section. In this table, consistent means that the planning proposal does not contradict of hinder the application of the relevant state environmental planning policy.

Table 2: Consistency with State Environmental Planning Policies.

State Environmental Planning Policy	Comment
SEPP (Biodiversity and Conservation) 2021	Consistent - amendments in this planning proposal will continue to support the biodiversity and conservation in the local government area
SEPP (Building Sustainability Index: BASIX) 2004	Consistent - no amendments in this proposal will hinder the application of this SEPP.
SEPP (Exempt and Complying Development Codes) 2008	Consistent - no amendments in this proposal will hinder the application of this SEPP.
SEPP (Housing) 2021	Consistent - no amendments in this proposal will hinder the application of this SEPP.
SEPP (Industry and Employment) 2021	Consistent - no amendments in this proposal will hinder the application of this SEPP.
SEPP (Planning Systems) 2021	Consistent - no amendments in this proposal will hinder the application of this SEPP.

SEPP (Precincts–Central River City) 2021	Consistent - no amendments in this proposal will hinder the application of this SEPP.
SEPP (Precincts–Eastern Harbour City) 2021	Consistent - no amendments in this proposal will hinder the application of this SEPP.
SEPP (Precincts–Regional) 2021	Consistent - no amendments in this proposal will hinder the application of this SEPP.
SEPP (Precincts–Western Parkland City) 2021	Consistent - no amendments in this proposal will hinder the application of this SEPP.
SEPP (Primary Production) 2021	Consistent - no amendments in this proposal will hinder the application of this SEPP.
SEPP (Resilience and Hazards) 2021	Consistent - no amendments in this proposal will hinder the application of this SEPP.
SEPP (Resources and Energy) 2021	Consistent - no amendments in this proposal will hinder the application of this SEPP.
SEPP No 65 - Design Quality of Residential Flat Development	Consistent - no amendments in this proposal will hinder the application of this SEPP.
SEPP (Transport and Infrastructure) 2021	Consistent - no amendments in this proposal will hinder the application of this SEPP.
SEPP (Housing) Amendment (Transport Oriented Development) 2024	Consistent - no amendments in this proposal will hinder the application of this SEPP.

Q6. Is the planning proposal consistent with applicable ministerial directions?

This planning proposal is consistent with all Ministerial Directions issued under section 9.1 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*, as summarised in Table 3.

Table 3: Consistency of the planning proposal with ministerial directions**.**

Ministerial Direction	Comment
Focus area 1: Planning Systems	
1.1 Implementation of Regional Plans	Consistent. No amendments in this proposal will hinder the implementation of Regional Plans
1.2 Development of Aboriginal Land Council land	Not applicable
1.3 Approval and Referral Requirements	Consistent. No amendment includes concurrence, consultation or referral provisions or identify any designated development.
1.4 Site Specific Provisions	Consistent – see discussion below.

Ministerial Direction	Comment
1.4A Exclusion of Development Standards from Variation	Consistent. This planning proposal does not propose to exclude a development standard from variation under clause 4.6
Focus area 1: Planning Systems – Place-based	
1.6 Parramatta Road Corridor Urban Transformation Strategy	Not applicable
1.7 Implementation of North West Priority Growth Area Land Use and Infrastructure Implementation Plan	Not applicable
1.8 Implementation of Greater Parramatta Priority Growth Area Interim Land Use and Infrastructure Implementation Plan	Not applicable
1.9 Implementation of Wilton Priority Growth Area Interim Land Use and Infrastructure Implementation Plan	Not applicable
1.10 Implementation of Glenfield to Macarthur Urban Renewal Corridor	Not applicable
1.11 Implementation of the Western Sydney Aerotropolis Plan	Not applicable
1.12 Implementation of Bayside West Precincts 2036 Plan	Not applicable
1.13 Implementation of Planning Principles for the Cooks Cove Precinct	Not applicable
1.14 Implementation of St Leonards and Crows Nest 2036 Plan	Not applicable
1.15 Implementation of Greater Macarthur 2040	Not applicable
1.16 Implementation of the Pyrmont Peninsula Place Strategy	Not applicable
1.17 North West Rail Link Corridor Strategy	Not applicable
Focus area 2: Design and Place	No directions in place
Focus area 3: Biodiversity and Conservation	
3.1 Conservation Zones	Consistent. Amendments in this planning proposal will continue to support the protection and

Ministerial Direction	Comment
	conservation of environmentally sensitive areas in the local government area
3.2 Heritage Conservation	Consistent. Amendments in this planning proposal will continue to conserve the significant fabric at 117A George Street, Redfern.
3.3 Sydney Drinking Water Catchments	Not applicable
3.4 Application of C2 and C3 Zones and Environmental Overlays in Far North Coast LEPs	Not applicable
3.5 Recreation Vehicle Areas	Not applicable
Focus area 4: Resilience and Hazards	
4.1 Flooding	Consistent. No amendments in this proposal will hinder the implementation of this local planning direction
4.2 Coastal Management	Consistent. No amendments in this proposal will hinder the implementation of this local planning direction
4.3 Planning for Bushfire Protection	Consistent. No amendments in this proposal will hinder the implementation of this local planning direction
4.4 Remediation of Contaminated Land	Consistent. No amendments in this proposal will hinder the implementation of this local planning direction
4.5 Acid Sulfate Soils	Consistent. Amendments in this planning proposal are proposed for land classified as Class 5 and will not hinder the implementation of this local planning direction
4.6 Mine Subsidence and Unstable Land	Not applicable
Focus area 5: Transport and Infrastructure	
5.1 Integrating Land Use and Transport	Consistent. No amendments in this proposal will hinder the implementation of this local planning direction
5.2 Reserving Land for Public Purposes	Consistent. No amendments in this proposal will hinder the implementation of this local planning direction
5.3 Development Near Regulated Airports and Defence Airfields	Not applicable

Ministerial Direction	Comment
5.4 Shooting Ranges	Not applicable
Focus area 6: Housing	
6.1 Residential Zones	Consistent. This planning proposal supports and aligns with this local planning direction, particularly objectives (a) and (b).
6.2 Caravan Parks and Manufactured Home Estates	Not applicable
Focus area 7: Industry and Employment	
7.1 Business and Industrial Zones	Consistent. No amendments in this proposal will hinder the implementation of this local planning direction
7.2 Reduction in non-hosted short-term rental accommodation period	Not applicable
7.3 Commercial and Retail Development along the Pacific Highway, North Coast	Not applicable
Focus area 8: Resources and Energy	
8.1 Mining, Petroleum Production and Extractive Industries	Not applicable
Focus area 9: Primary Production	
9.1 Rural Zones	Not applicable
9.2 Rural Lands	Not applicable
9.3 Oyster Aquaculture	Not applicable
9.4 Farmland of State and Regional Significance on the NSW Far North Coast	Not applicable

Section C – Environmental, social and economic impact

Q7. Is there any likelihood that critical habitat or threatened species, populations or ecological communities, or their habitats, will be adversely affected as a result of the proposal?

No.

The planning proposal will not adversely affect any critical habitat or threatened species, populations or ecological communities or their habitats.

Q8. Are there any other likely environmental effects as a result of the planning proposal and how are they proposed to be managed?

No.

It is unlikely that the proposed amendments to Schedule 5, Part 1 of SLEP 2012 will result in development creating any environmental effects that cannot be readily controlled.

Q9. How has the planning proposal adequately addressed any social and economic effects?

The review of the existing heritage item ensures the retention of physical, social, cultural and historic values that may have significance to the community. No changes to current zoning controls are proposed. The merit-based heritage provisions provide capacity for Council and any proponent to consider these matters when development is proposed.

Section D – State and Commonwealth interests

Q10. Is there adequate public infrastructure for the planning proposal?

Yes.

The SLEP 2012 amendment will not generate demand for infrastructure.

Q11. What are the views of State and Commonwealth public authorities consulted in the gateway determination?

If required by the Gateway Determination, the Heritage Council of NSW will be consulted during the public exhibition period. The review of this heritage item is consistent with Heritage Council of NSW standards.

6. Mapping

The Heritage Map tile HER_016 will be updated to reflect the revised heritage item as shown in Figure 6 below. The area marked blue is proposed to be removed from Item No. I1318

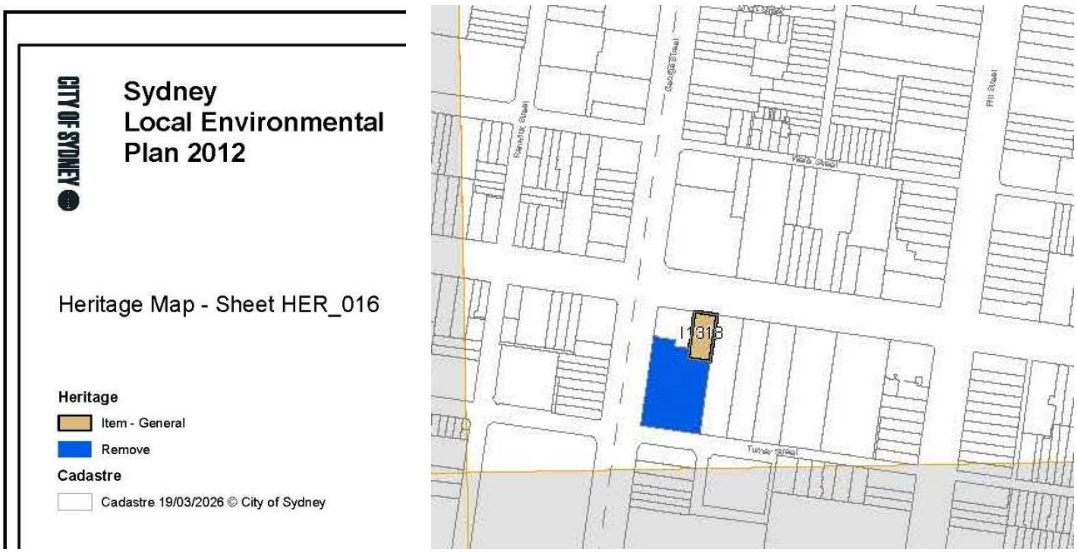

Figure 6: Detail from SLEP Heritage Map – Sheet HER_016 showing proposed removal of part of Item No. I1318.

7. Community consultation

5.1 Public Exhibition

This planning proposal shall be exhibited in accordance with the requirements of gateway determination once issued by the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure.

The public exhibition of the documents will be on the City of Sydney website and carried out in accordance with the City's Community Participation Plan.

Consultation with the necessary NSW agencies, authorities and other relevant organisations will be undertaken as required by the conditions contained within the Gateway Determination.

8. Project timeline

The anticipated timeline for the completion of the planning proposal is as follows:

Stage	Timeframe
Gateway request	April 2026
Public exhibition & government agency consultation	June 2026
Consideration of submissions	September 2026
Post exhibition consideration of proposal	October 2026
Draft and finalise LEP	December 2026

Appendices

Appendix B **Design 5 Architects, Redfern Telephone Exchange, 103 – 109 George Street, Redfern, Modification of Heritage Listing – Item No. I1318**

Appendix C **Brunskill McClenahan & Associates Pty Ltd, Plan of Proposed Subdivision Lot 2 DP 776807 (Approved 24 May 2013)**