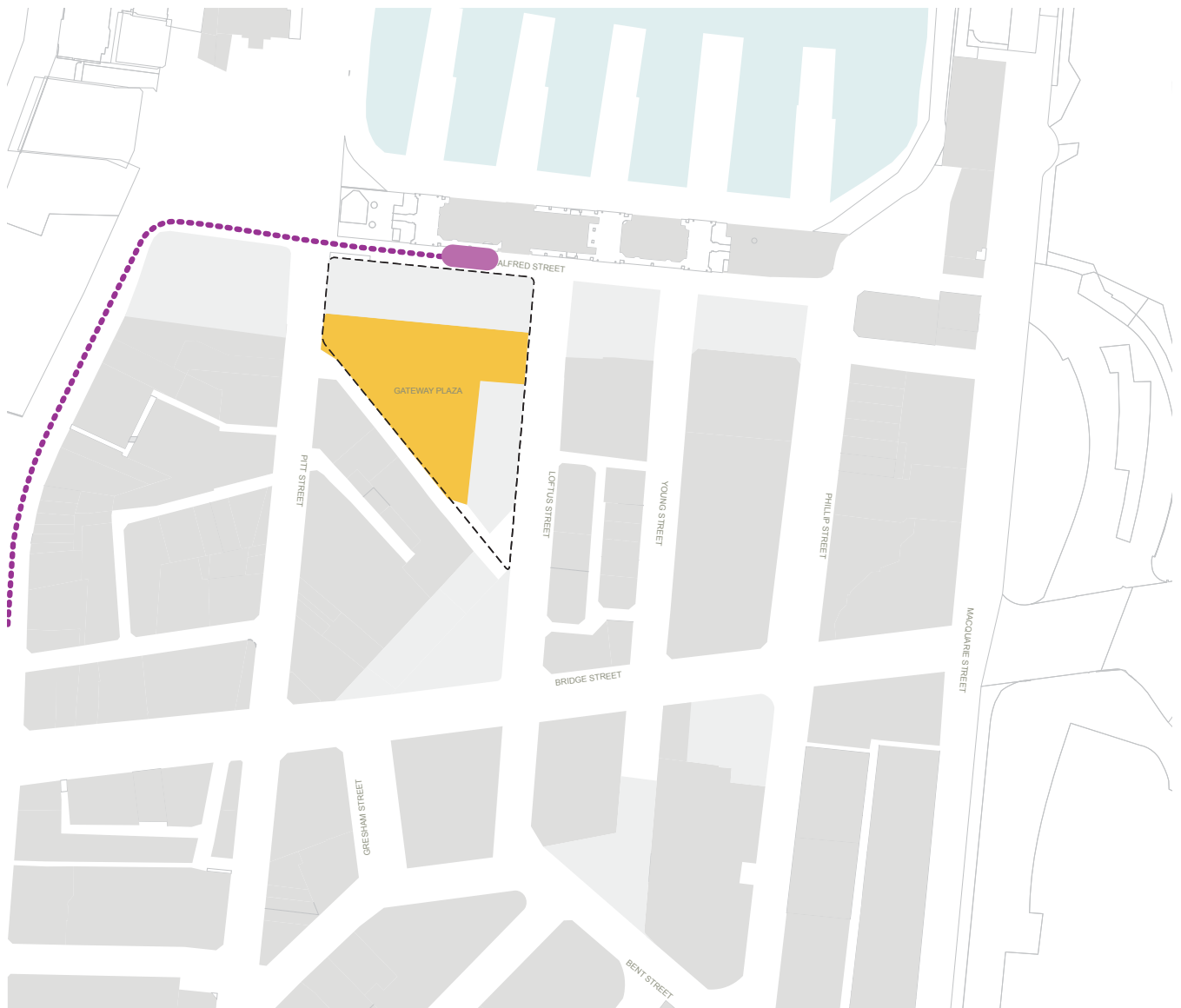


CBD and South East Light Rail EIS

Gateway Plaza Urban Design Response

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1. Introduction

The CBD and South East Light Rail as described in Transport for New South Wales' EIS is a highly positive development proposal. It will expand Sydney's transport network, providing sustainable transport which will in turn support mobility and growth. The CSELR should be a catalyst for urban renewal and, with new development, promote an uplift in the quality of the public domain.

1.1. Purpose of this Report

This report has been compiled on behalf of DEXUS in respect to the recently publicly exhibited proposal for the new CBD and South East Sydney Light Rail project. The report establishes key opportunities in relation to the construction, urban design, stop location and design and standard of the public domain around the Circular Quay Interchange and in particular relation to the Gateway site on Alfred Street, Sydney.

1.2. Scope of this Report

This report provides an overview of the key opportunities in regards to the landscape and urban design of the light rail stops and their environs.

The report has been compiled with a particular focus on the following EIS documents, downloaded from the Resources section of the Sydney Light Rail website (www.sydneylightrail.transport.nsw.gov.au/information/resources?type=).

- Table of Contents and Executive Summary
- Volumes 1A and 1B
- Volume 2
 - Technical Paper 1: Traffic Operations
 - Technical Paper 2: CTTMS
- Volume 3
 - Technical Paper 3: Social Impact Assessment
- Volume 4
 - Technical Paper 5: Heritage Impact Assessment
 - Technical Paper 6: Heritage Interpretation Strategy
- Volume 5
 - Technical Paper 9: Tree Assessment
 - Technical Paper 10: Visual and Landscape Assessment
- CBD and South East Light Rail EIS Fact Sheet

2. Construction

During the construction process there will be prolonged landscape and visual impacts. These are primarily a result of the loss of trees, connectivity and the scale of the site works. Circular Quay is a key destination and driver of Sydney's tourism and cultural economy. As such it is critical that the strategy for Circular Quay mitigate any adverse affects on business and tourism, by accommodating continued pedestrian movement, connectivity (visual and physical) to and from Circular Quay Station entries, weather protection (both natural and constructed) and a legible public domain.

2.1. Staging

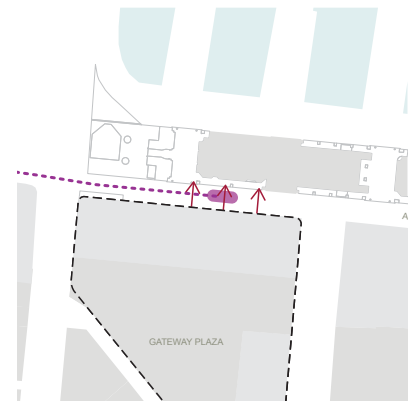
A staged construction approach of the Light Rail infrastructure, stop and delivery of new public domain is suggested to minimise disruption and potential loss of business, lessening the adverse affects of the Light Rail during its five-six year forecasted construction period.

The staged approach will enable revitalised public domain on Alfred Street, Pitt Street and Loftus Street to be released and experienced by everybody prior to the completion of the Light Rail infrastructure. A staged approach should also maintain connectivity between Circular Quay and the street network south of Alfred Street.

2.2. Wayfinding and Activation

Utilising the construction hoardings will provide opportunity to increase wayfinding and activation during construction. The hoarding has the potential to accommodate construction timelines, tourism related displays, wayfinding graphics and public art.

We request more detailed information on the proposed hoarding strategy, including phasing and content. We strongly support a collaborative approach between the City of Sydney, Transport for New South Wales, and adjacent property owners to develop a hoarding strategy which reflects the character of each precinct and offers transport information.



3. Urban Design Strategies

The introduction of the Light Rail, and the development of Circular Quay Railway Station as a new interchange precinct will increase pressure on the performance of Circular Quay to deliver efficient and fully integrated transport. The 'civic' typology proposed for the City Centre Light Rail addresses the dense urban context within which it will pass. As a major tourist destination for Sydney, it will be critical that Circular Quay is developed to accommodate large numbers of public transport users, cyclists and pedestrians.

3.1. Pedestrian Circulation

Alfred Street's pedestrian movement and holding capacity will be reduced due to the introduction of the Light Rail. It is assumed that additional pressure will be placed upon the streets immediately south, such as Reiby Place, Loftus Street and Pitt Street. The completed Light Rail must prioritise pedestrian movement.

Clear north-south movement through Circular Quay must be maintained and improved upon, to provide the critical connections between ferries, heavy rail, light rail and buses, as well as for clear pedestrian movement south into the CBD.

3.2. Alfred Street as Pedestrian Only Zone

The proposal to create Alfred Street as a car free zone, one that allows for a connected pedestrian network from George Street to Loftus Street uninterrupted by vehicular movement is supported.

Alfred Street will ultimately become Circular Quay's 'front door', it is important that the public domain allow for and encourage social activities and gathering. Alfred Street should be presented as a public place, rather than an extension of transport infrastructure. Connections to existing significant public spaces and places, such as the Tank Stream Fountain and Customs House must be maintained through the development of the Light Rail.

3.3. Termination of Pitt and Loftus Streets

The location of the termination of Pitt Street and Loftus Street will be critical in determining the character of public domain throughout Circular Quay. Any terminus of Pitt and Loftus Streets should be configured to minimise or eliminate the encroachment of vehicular traffic on the pedestrian areas of Alfred Street.

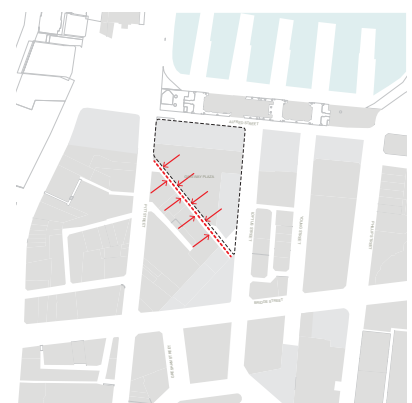
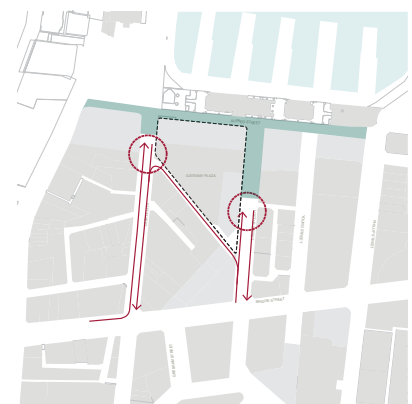
We request that additional traffic investigation be undertaken with the adjacent stakeholders and property owners with a focus on creating a pedestrian only public domain from George Street to Loftus Street along Alfred.

The reconfiguration of vehicular movement along Pitt Street, Reiby Place and Loftus Street would allow for the termination of Pitt and Loftus Streets whilst maintaining a clear and logical vehicular movement. Timed vehicular access would maintain critical service and loading access to the buildings north of Bridge Street.

It is important that any terminus of Pitt and Loftus Street occur before the shoreline of the buildings along the southern edge of Alfred Street is reached, so that any encroachment into the pedestrianised zone of Alfred Street is eliminated.

3.4. Reiby Place

Reiby Place is a City of Sydney owned lane way which has the potential to become an activated share way, similar to that of Angel Place (located between George and Pitt Streets). The one-way vehicular loop would allow for an effective shared pedestrianised lane way, with redevelopment in the area potentially providing a fine grain of retail and active frontages, public art, pop-up stalls and installations. This would transform Reiby Place from a service lane into an inhabitable and integrated city space.



4. Stop Design and Infrastructure

The Circular Quay precinct and its surrounds are among Sydney's most iconic and most visited locations, with _____ visitors arriving at the site every day*. The precinct is also rich in heritage buildings and iconic Australian architecture. Any intervention to the site would need to be in keeping with the high standard of civic space that exists within and around the precinct.

The Circular Quay Light Rail Interchange is located within the Circular Quay Special Character Area (as per the Sydney DCP, CoS, 2012), which states that "new development associated with the Circular Quay transport interchange should be consistent with and enhance the public domain; maintain and enhance views to the water, the Harbour Bridge and the Opera House from the Quay, and from the water to Quay and City beyond."

4.1. Stop Location

The stop location is situated on Alfred Street, between Loftus and Pitt Streets. This is an area of high pedestrian movement, and the existing infrastructure facilitates the interchange between trains, ferries, buses and taxis. The transition from the Light Rail to other forms of transport needs to be efficient and highly accessible, and should not impede established connections.

4.2. Stop Architecture

The Light Rail EIS identifies a number of precincts through which the Light Rail route will pass. The distinctive character of Circular Quay, with its harbour setting, significant heritage buildings (including Customs House and the AMP Tower) should be exhibited and enhanced through an iconic stop canopy and architecture.

The stop architecture should work at a height which is compatible to the surrounding architecture and awning datums to minimise the visual impact of the canopy, minimise disruption to existing key site lines and to complement the precinct as a major destination.

We support the provision of a catenary free zone in Circular Quay. It is a considered approach which is important to the success of the Light Rail's capacity to create well defined, high quality public domain spaces for the City.

Whilst the LRVs are temporary, the required overhead wires and their poles will be fixed elements in the streetscape, creating visual congestion and reducing the quality of the public domain. The required over head wires should be integrated with other infrastructure to minimise vertical elements and lessen the visual impact of the Light Rail and its infrastructure.



5. Public Domain

5.1. Materials

The removal of the London Plane Trees will have a substantial impact on the nature of the Alfred Street Plaza. Presently the Plane Trees provide the only natural cover within the precinct, with shop awnings providing weather protection.

5.2. Vegetation

The removal of the London Plane Trees will have a substantial impact on the nature of the Alfred Street Plaza. Presently the Plane Trees provide the only natural cover within the precinct, with shop awnings providing weather protection.

A staged construction strategy would enable early replacement of some of the Plane Trees. TfNSW has committed to planting eight trees for every one lost within the local area, but it is critical for Circular Quay that the replacement trees benefit the immediate precinct.

Due to the lack of vegetation within the Alfred Street Plaza, mature trees in 1000L pot sizes should be used to replace any removed trees. This will provide an immediate landscape and some weather protection (particularly in Summer).

The species selection has been guided by the City of Sydney's Street Tree Management Plan, however proposes the replacement of the Plane Trees with Japanese Zelkova. This is in conflict with the landscape strategy's principles, which "promotes the use of native tree species".

We request further development of the landscape strategy to work with landscape architects, stakeholders and the City of Sydney to review the appropriateness of the species for this significant, historically important precinct. We support the use of native species to assist in creating a natural canopy to the pedestrianised Alfred Street Plaza.

5.2. Social Infrastructure

- We support the use of the City of Sydney's standard range of street furniture, developed by Tzannes and Associates.