

Director City Planning Report No. CP70/16



Subject: CBD and South East Light Rail -
proposed modification to permit
tree works

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Introduction

This report provides information on a proposed Modification to the approved CBD and South East Light Rail (CSELR) project, which seeks approval to modify condition B47 to allow for crown and root pruning of two fig trees, located on the corner of Alison and Darley Road Randwick.

This report seeks Council's endorsement to make a submission objecting to the Modification.

Details

The Department of Planning and Environment has notified Council of a proposed Modification to the approved CSELR. Submissions on the Modification must be received by 23 November 2016. Details of the Modification are available at the major projects website:

http://majorprojects.planning.nsw.gov.au/index.pl?action=view_job&job_id=8007

The Modification is requesting amendment of the current project approval to modify condition B47 to allow for pruning of two fig trees shown in the figure below, in order to enable construction of a shared path.

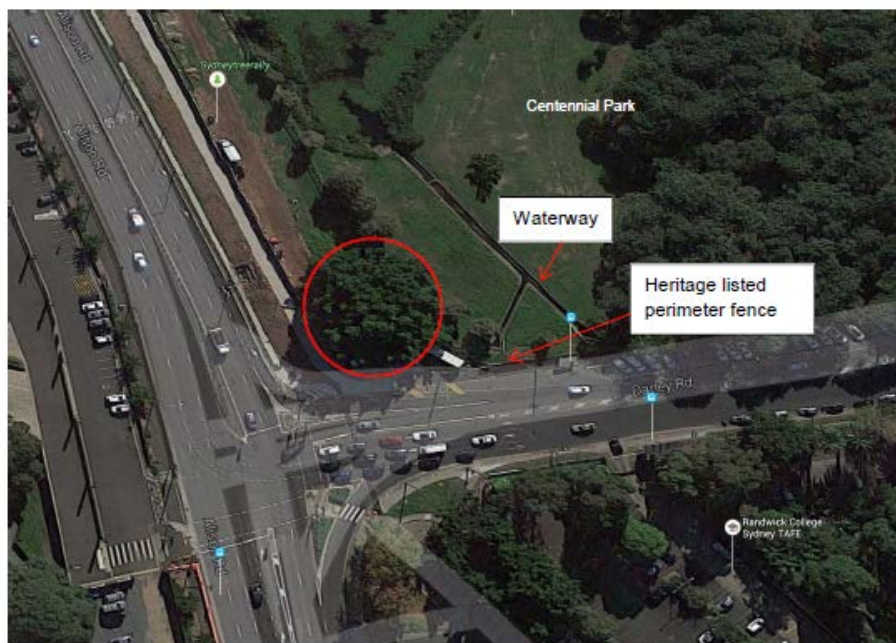


Figure 1 – Location of the two mature trees on the corner of Alison and Darley Road shown in red.

The Modification notes that the proposed tree works would require the removal of less than 10% of the crown from each tree. Minor pruning would be required in future, to maintain the clearance around the overhead wires of the light rail line. It is noted that the 3 metre clearance as stated in the report is incorrect; 2.7 metre clearance has been previously adopted for Alison Road.

Root pruning is also required for the construction of the shared path and potentially the CSELR track slab. The Modification considers that long term impact to the health and vigour of the two mature trees is not anticipated as a result of these pruning works.

Currently Condition B47 of the project approval specifically notes that these trees are not to be impacted by the CSELR.

The Modification seeks to change condition of approval B47, outlined in red text below.

*B47: The Proponent shall, to the greatest extent possible, minimise the removal of vegetation, including at Circular Quay, Moore Park and surrounds, Anzac Parade, Centennial Park and surrounds, Royal Randwick Racecourse (along Alison and Wansey Roads), High Cross Park, Arthur Street, High Street and within the UNSW lands. Where vegetation has been removed, reinstatement and supplement landscaping shall be undertaken in accordance with the Revegetation Compensation Package required by condition B52. The two mature fig trees located on Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust lands at the end of the heritage listed perimeter fence on the corner of Alison Road and Darley Road shall not be impacted by the SSI **unless identified in the Tree Report prepared for B48.***

Condition B48 refers to a Tree Report and the process for assessing the impact of the CSELR on trees:

B48. The Proponent shall commission an independent arborist, approved by the Secretary, to prepare a comprehensive Tree Report for the SSI. The report shall be prepared in consultation with the UDRG and identify the impacts of the SSI on trees and vegetation within and adjacent to the construction zone. The report shall recommend measures to avoid the removal of trees or minimise damage to existing trees and is to ensure the health and stability of those trees to be protected. This includes details of any proposed canopy or root pruning, excavation works, site controls on waste disposal, vehicular access, storage of materials and protection of public utilities. Where it is found that tree removal is necessary, the arborist shall identify whether trees to be removed can be transplanted within the vicinity of their current locations. The locations shall be determined in consultation with the relevant Council and/or the Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust. A copy of the report shall be submitted to the Secretary prior to the commencement of construction. All recommendations of the report shall be implemented by the Proponent, unless otherwise agreed by the Secretary.

The Modification notes that the proposed change to include a reference to the Tree Report required by Condition B48 provides the mechanism for the independent arborist to assess and recommend appropriate management measures for the specific trees referenced in Condition B47 and all recommendations in the Tree Report to be satisfied.

Issues

Council's Tree Management Coordinator has assessed the proposal to remove less than 10% of the crown canopy from each tree and advises that there should be no

adverse impacts that will affect the health and vigour of the trees. It is noted that Council's tree preservation policy for trees in the Randwick LGA allow for 10% of tree canopy to be removed without a Council consent.

Most importantly to the health of the trees is adherence to the appropriate root pruning practices in accordance with the Australian Standards, as stated in the Modification Report. Council advises that prior to any root pruning works, a hand dug trench 1.5m deep by 200mm wide be excavated along the southern side of the structural root zone (Alison Rd side) for an independent arborist to further assess impacts to tree roots.

Council is currently seeking an independent arborist report on this proposed modification.

The extent of tree works would be subject to supervision and advice of the independent arborist, and would be included in the Tree Report referenced in Condition B48. This Condition requires Council to be consulted regarding tree works where relevant, although the trees that are the subject of this Modification are within Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust (CPMPT) land. The Modification notes that CPMPT has preferred alternative options that avoid or reduce the extent of tree impact.

The key concern with this proposed Modification is that it provides insufficient protection of the trees from impact beyond the 10% currently anticipated. The proposed changed wording of the Conditions of Approval does not limit the extent of tree work allowed to the trees, and creates conditions in which additional and potentially substantial tree work, or even removal, could occur without further formal approval requirements.

Financial impact statement

There is no direct financial impact for this matter.

Conclusion

Although advice from Council's arborist notes that crown and root pruning of the two fig trees of up to 10% would not adversely impact the health and vigour of the trees, the proposed Modification does not limit the extent of tree works that may be undertaken, and does not provide sufficient protection to the trees.

Recommendation

It is recommended that

1. Council endorses making a submission to the Department of Planning and Environment objecting to the Proposed Modification, and;
2. Council recommends that the proposed modification be re-evaluated on the basis of a 2.7 metre clearance around the overhead wires for the light rail.

Attachment/s:

Nil