

10.8. Arts and Cultural Pop-Up Activation of Berrys Bay Quarantine Depot

AUTHOR	Helen Campbell, Manager Community Development
ENDORSED BY	Marcelo Occhiuzzi, Director Community, Planning and Environment
ATTACHMENTS	Nil
CSP LINK	4. Our Social Vitality 4.1 North Sydney is connected, inclusive, healthy and safe 4.2 A centre for creativity and learning 4.3 North Sydney’s history is preserved and recognised

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to provide a response to Council’s Resolution of 13 March 2023, to investigate temporary activation of the Quarantine Depot cottages at Berrys Bay with a focus on arts and culture.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

- There are presently two unused (circa) 1912 four-bedroom cottages at the Quarantine Depot site. While longer-term uses are foreshadowed, the cottages offer the opportunity for temporary “Pop-Up” community uses which will draw visitors to this prominent foreshore site and activate the space.
- At its meeting of 13 March 2023, Council resolved:
 - 1.THAT Council investigate and prepare a report on Pop Up activation of the Quarantine Depot cottages at Berrys Bay with a focus on arts and culture.*
- This report recommends Council opens an Expression of Interest for local arts and cultural organisations or groups to lease the cottages for a six-month pop-up activation.
- Council should also be aware that given the history and zoning of the site, development consent would be required, even for a temporary use. This process of seeking approval will be pursued concurrently with the Expression of Interest process.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. THAT Council calls for ‘Expressions of Interest’ from organisations or groups to apply to lease Cottage One, Cottage Two, or both for the purpose of arts and cultural “pop-up” activation between February and September 2024.

Background

There are two presently unused four-bedroom (circa 1912) cottages at the Quarantine Depot site in Berry's Bay. Whilst Council is preparing a strategy to guide the medium to long term use of the site, there is an opportunity to reactivate the cottages for "pop-up" community uses which will draw visitors to this prominent foreshore site. This initiative will support and promote artists, artisans, and /or cultural practitioners by offering a platform to showcase their talents and creativity to the North Sydney community and beyond.

Rather than limit the scope of potential uses by being prescriptive and specific, it is recommended that Council call for open expressions of interest from local not-for-profit arts and cultural organisations or groups to lease either or both cottages for a six-month Pop-Up with a view to enliven, enrich and activate the precinct.

Report

This report details the proposed 'Expressions of Interest' (EOI) process and provides a broad outline of the objectives of the process and its intended outcomes.

It is proposed that Council calls for not-for-profit organisations/groups to apply to lease Cottage One, Cottage Two, or both, for the purpose of arts and cultural "pop-up" activation.

Expressions of Interest are proposed to be called between early October to late November 2023 with the successful applicant being requested to pay a peppercorn rent according to means on the proviso they can demonstrate not-for-profit status.

The following would be the basis of an Expression of Interest outlining the objectives of the pop-up initiative, applicant requirements and assessment criteria. A selection panel comprising Council's Executive Leadership Team and the Mayor would assess applications.

The objectives of this pop-up initiative are:

- to preserve the two historic cottages' architectural and cultural heritage while utilising them for contemporary arts and/or cultural purposes;
- foster community involvement and engagement by providing a space for cultural events, workshops, and/or interactive programs or other activities aligned with the overall objectives of the temporary pop-up activation;
- support and promote artisans, and cultural practitioners by offering a platform to showcase their talents and creativity;
- facilitate educational opportunities through art-related classes, seminars, and/or skill development programs; and
- ensure the space is inclusive to all members of the community, regardless of age, background, experience, or ability.

Interested organisations would be invited to submit their expressions of interest for either cottage one or cottage two. Applications would need to include the following information:

1. A brief introduction to the organisation, its mission, and its experience in managing arts and cultural initiatives.
2. A high-level plan for activating the historic cottage as an arts and cultural hub. Description of the key activities, events, and programs envisaged, as well as plans to engage with the local community. This should include operating days/hours.
3. Evidence of the ability to be self-sufficient in the administration of any activities that are run on the site, including promotion, bookings, payments, and facilitation/coordination.
4. A marketing plan that:
 - identifies the target audience(s) for the arts and cultural hub;
 - explains how the arts and cultural space will be promoted to the community, including attraction of diverse audiences and collaborations;
 - outlines the online presence strategy describing how the organisation will engage with the audience and promote events;
 - outlines potential collaboration with community organisations and local businesses to amplify promotional efforts and extend the use's reach; and
 - allocates a budget for marketing and promotional activities.
5. Details of any potential collaborations with artists, local community groups, educational institutions, or other stakeholders.
6. An indicative budget, including estimates for staff, artist fees, materials, furnishing, marketing, and any other relevant expenses and potential income.
7. A proposed timeline for the activation project.
8. Details of previous projects or initiatives that demonstrate the organisation's ability to manage similar arts and cultural activities.

It is anticipated that expressions of interest would be evaluated based on the following criteria:

1. How well the proposal aligns with the objectives of transforming the cottage into an arts and cultural hub to activate, enliven and enrich the precinct on a temporary basis.
2. The feasibility and sustainability of the proposed plan, including the budget, marketing plan and timeline.
3. The potential positive impact the activation will have on the local community and its cultural landscape.
4. The organisation's track record and experience in managing similar projects successfully.

Development Consent Required

The site is zoned *W4 Working Waterfront* under the North Sydney Local Environmental Plan (NSLEP) 2013. The planning controls have a narrow range of permissible uses but include *community facilities* and *information and educational facilities*.

Unfortunately, the temporary use of the cottages cannot be carried out without development consent. A development application for a generic community facility or information and educational type use will need to be lodged and assessed prior to a use being established.

It is estimated that should no significant issues arise, the process of DA preparation and approval should take in the order of 4-5 months. Council can pursue this process concurrently with the Expressions of Interest process outlined above.

Measuring Success of Community Arts and Culture Hub

Area	Metric	Measurement tool	KPI
Ensure the arts and cultural hub is accessible and inclusive to all members of the community.	Number of visitors to the Cottage(s) and quality of feedback.	Lessee supplies monthly visitor tracking data including the postcode of visitors and participants. Lessee tracks and reports on visitor feedback.	Open to the public for at least 15 hours per week.
Providing a space for a wide variety of arts and cultural events.	Number of programs offered per calendar month and quality of feedback.	Lessee reports on calendar of events and attendance data. Lessee tracks and reports on feedback.	Provide baseline data for potential future long term uses including: - number of events/activities per month. - number of local residents involved as participants in activities/programs. - levels of satisfaction experienced by participants in programs/activities.
Financial proof of income and expenditure in relation to providing activities at the Cottage in keeping with not-for-profit requirement (as per Community Centre requirements).	Expenses/cost of providing activities.	Lessee reports on quarterly basis.	Costs and expenses are at break even or near level.

Consultation requirements

Community engagement is not required. Any Development Application prepare and lodged, however, will be the subject of the usual notification protocols.

Financial/Resource Implications

There are no significant financial implications for Council. There will be an increase in variable costs such as electricity, cleaning, and water, but these are expected to be offset to some extent by the community rental for the cottages.

No incremental resource requirements are foreseen for this short-term activation initiative.

Legislation

The Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, 1979, will guide the assessment and determination of a future approved use and its performance.