



Report to General Manager

Attachments
Nil

SUBJECT: Brett Whiteley Place – Response to Mayoral Minute

AUTHOR: Katerina Papas, Strategic Planner

ENDORSED BY: Joseph Hill, Director City Strategy

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This report responds to Council’s resolution of 24 July 2017, which required that effective and low cost options be investigated to add colour and life to the Brett Whiteley Place upgrade.

In September 2017, a “Living Colour” (live floral displays) program was trialled to add colour and vibrancy to both Brett Whiteley Place and Elizabeth Plaza. The temporary floral displays were well received by the surrounding businesses, office workers and visitors to the area. They were similar to the floral displays the City of Sydney uses throughout its public spaces.

The “Living Colour” program was trialed for 8 weeks in Spring (ending in November 2017) and 8 weeks in Summer (ending in January 2018). Whilst the displays provided an immediate colourful impact, the program represents a considerable recurring cost per season.

It should be noted, that the upgrades to Brett Whiteley Place and Elizabeth Plaza represent the first stage of a wider concept plan approved by Council. Council is currently in negotiation with developments at 1 Denison Street, 100 Mount Street and the Sydney Metro site (Victoria Station site – South) to help deliver further improvements to the public domain in the area and achieve the remaining Council endorsed concept plan.

There are also a number of other significant projects being undertaken to improve and activate the public domain in the CBD. These include the NTH SYD Marketing Strategy and Events Program, the North Sydney Public Art Trail and the North Sydney CBD Public Domain Strategy.

This reports finds that given the level of further investigation and design work occurring in the vicinity of Brett Whiteley Place, that a prudent approach is to await these outcomes prior to any decisions being made on low cost interventions at Brett Whiteley Place and the surrounding area.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

The “Living Colour” pilot program cost \$93,000 for the 16-week trial period.

RECOMMENDATION:

1.THAT given the level of further investigation and design work occurring in the vicinity of Brett Whiteley Place, that Council await these outcomes prior to any decisions being made on low cost interventions at Brett Whiteley Place and the surrounding area.

LINK TO DELIVERY PROGRAM

The relationship with the Delivery Program is as follows:

- | | |
|------------|---|
| Direction: | 1. Our Living Environment |
| Outcome: | 1.5 Public open space, recreation facilities and services that meet community needs |
| Direction: | 2. Our Built Environment |
| Outcome: | 2.1 Infrastructure, assets and facilities that meet community needs
2.3 Vibrant, connected and well maintained streetscapes and villages that build a sense of community |
| Direction: | 3. Our Economic Vitality |
| Outcome: | 3.3 North Sydney is a place that attracts events |
| Direction: | 5. Our Civic Leadership |
| Outcome: | 5.2 Council is financially sustainable
5.3 Council is ethical, open, accountable and transparent in its decision making
5.4 Community is informed and aware |

BACKGROUND

1. Concept Plan

In October 2014, Council engaged Oculus Landscape Architects to develop a concept plan for the upgrade of Brett Whiteley Place. A key component of Council's brief and the eventuating concept plan was that of an expanded plaza and pedestrian realm. The design draws inspiration from the works of Brett Whiteley, using colour and design elements synonymous with his work to order the space (refer to Figure 1).

The concept plan identifies four distinct zones – Brett Whiteley Place, Elizabeth Plaza, an Events Space/ Focal Point, and Denison Street – each welded together by the sinuous flow of seating and stair elements. These elements deal with the challenging topography of the space and help define the zones to allow a variety of more intimate uses within the larger space.



Figure 1: Concept Plan - Brett Whiteley Place

The Brett Whiteley Place upgrade project is being delivered in 3 stages.

Stage 1 included the upgrade of Brett Whiteley Place from the intersection of Denison Street and Mount Street, west towards the Pacific Highway (refer to Figure 2). Stage 1 construction commenced in August 2016 and was completed in June 2017.

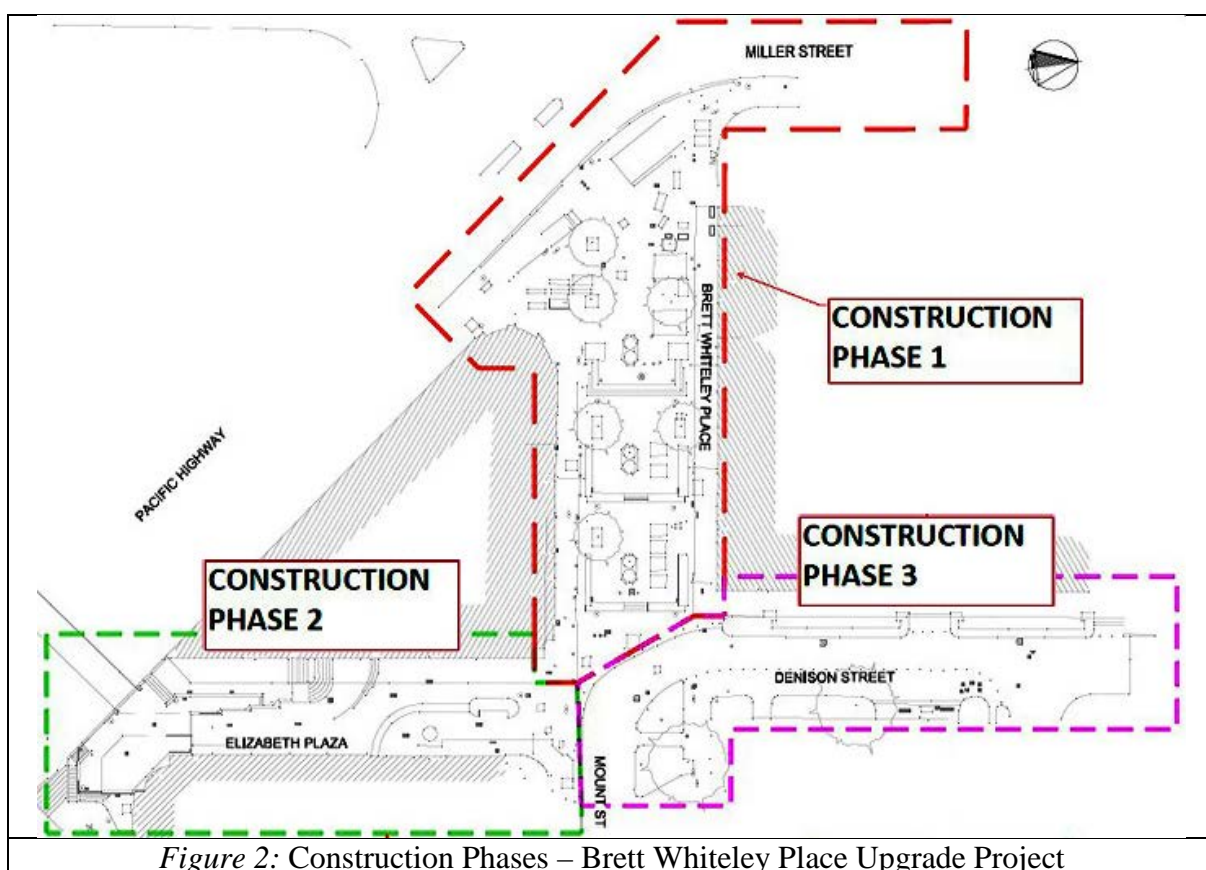
- re-grading Brett Whiteley Place to provide new seating bleachers and improved pedestrian accessibility/ circulation and outdoor dining opportunities;
- refurbishment of the existing Woodward fountains;
- relocating the GPO column (Approved under DA96/15 – NS Public Art Trail);
- new high-quality granite footpath paving;
- new street furniture including bins, bubblers, seats, bollards and bicycle racks in accordance with Councils Public Domain Style Manual;
- new decorative and public lighting;
- installation of a new “Screen” at the western (Pacific Highway) end of Brett Whiteley Place;
- new soft landscaping and tree planting, including tree grates;
- upgrade of the drainage.

To coincide with the rejuvenation of Brett Whiteley Place, the footpaths and bus shelters along Miller Street approximately 25m north of the plaza were also upgraded as part of Stage 1 works.

Stage 2 included the upgrade of Elizabeth Plaza (refer to Figure 2). Stage 2 construction commenced in June 2017 and was completed in September 2017.

Stage 2 works included:

- re-grading Elizabeth Plaza to provide new seating opportunities, improved pedestrian accessibility/ circulation and address current drainage issues;
- new high-quality granite footpath paving;
- new brass handrails and bike racks;
- new glazed infill panels to existing balustrades;
- installation of coloured in situ concrete planter walls on structure;
- new public lighting and electrical works;
- new street furniture comprising timber, steel and brass seats; in accordance with Councils Public Domain Style Manual.



Stage 3 is currently on hold pending the completion of developments at 1 Denison Street and 100 Mount Street and potential laneway upgrades associated with those developments.

Stage 3 upgrades intend to expand the plaza north along Denison Street (refer to Figure 3), and link with public domain upgrades proposed under existing development approvals for 1 Denison Street and 100 Mount Street, North Sydney. The implementation of Stage 3 will enable the full size of the “Events Space” to be realised as it is currently constrained by the development at 100 Mount Street.

1.3 Council Resolution

At its meeting on 24 July 2017, Council resolved:

- 1. THAT the Strategic Planning Department appoint design consultants to provide options for effective and low cost ways to bring colour and life to Brett Whiteley Place.*
- 2. THAT options for adding colour be reported back to Council for consideration.*
- 3. THAT Council investigate ways to increase the performance space in Brett Whiteley Place.*

This report provides an overview of planned and proposed responses to this matter.

CONSULTATION REQUIREMENTS

Community engagement is not required.

SUSTAINABILITY STATEMENT

The sustainability implications were considered and reported on during the initiation phase of this project.

DETAIL

2.1 Resolutions 1 and 2 – Adding Colour

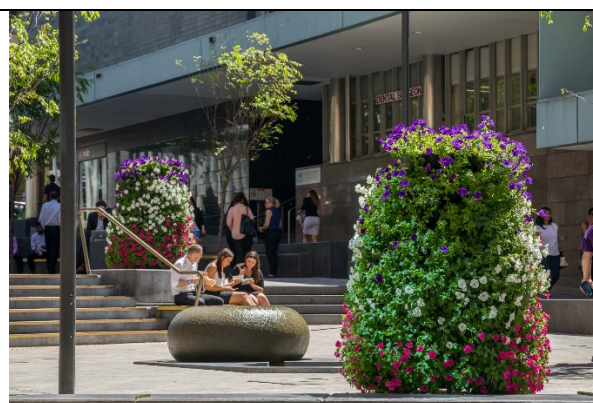
Following the completion of Stage 1 and 2 of the Brett Whiteley upgrade in June 2017, a “Living Colour” (live floral displays) program was trialled to add colour and vibrancy to both Brett Whiteley Place and Elizabeth Plaza. These temporary floral displays were well received by the surrounding businesses, office workers and visitors to the area. They are similar to the floral displays the City of Sydney uses throughout its public spaces in the City.

The “Living Colour” displays were trialled for 8 weeks in Spring (ending in November 2017) and 8 weeks in Summer (ending January 2018). A total of 11 temporary floral towers and 8 mini green walls were strategically placed throughout the plaza to provide an instant colourful impact. (Refer to Figures 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 of this report).

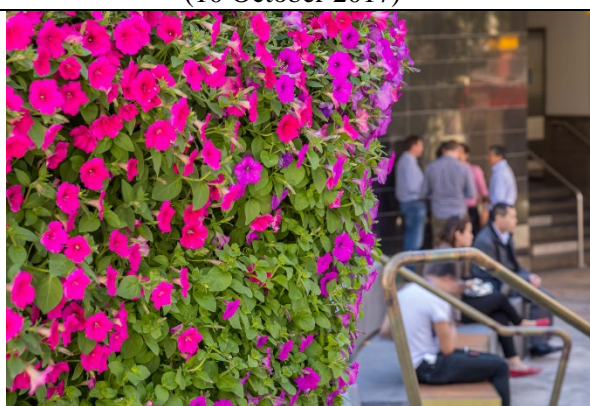
It should be noted, that the “Living Colour” displays was a pilot program. Council spent a total \$93,000 on floral installations over the 16 week trial period. Whilst providing an immediate colourful impact, the floral displays represent a recurring cost of \$46,500 per 8 week season. This cost includes the growing of seasonal plants, full installation and removal of plant stands, full plant maintenance regime, public liability insurance and full plant replacement costs by the specialist “Living Colour” contractor for the duration of the display.



*Figure 3: Brett Whiteley Place, looking east
(10 October 2017)*



*Figure 4: Brett Whiteley Place, Floral towers
(10 October 2017)*



*Figure 5: Brett Whiteley Place, Mini green wall
(October 2017)*



*Figure 6: Brett Whiteley Place, looking west
(October 2017)*

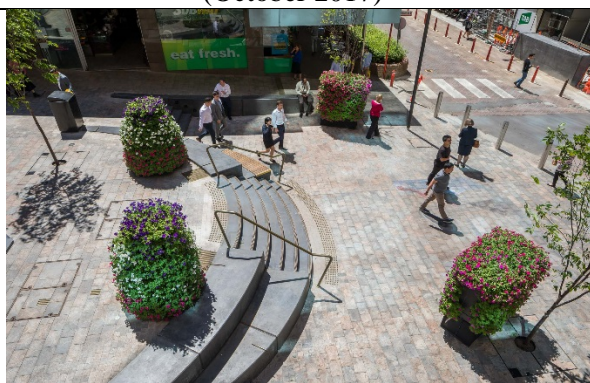
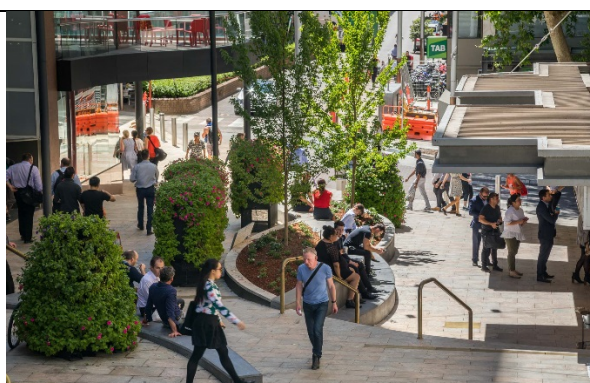


Figure 7: Brett Whiteley Place (October 2017)



*Figure 8: Brett Whiteley Place, corner Mount
Street and Denison Street (October 2017)*



*Figure 9: Elizabeth Plaza, looking north
(October 2017)*



*Figure 10: Elizabeth Plaza, looking south-east
(October 2017)*

2.1.2 Other Considerations

As outlined in section 1.2 of this report, Stage 1 works included new soft landscaping and tree planting at Brett Whiteley Place. A total of 11 advanced Japanese Elms were planted throughout the plaza and as well as new planter beds. The Japanese Elms are hardy, deciduous trees with a wide canopy spread that provides shade in the summer and colour in autumn when its foliage turns lemon-yellow to bright red. It should be noted that Stage 1 works were completed in mid-winter when the trees had no leaves. The trees will contribute towards a more colourful open space as they reach maturity and have begun to display more foliage.

Decorative lighting has been installed throughout Brett Whiteley Place and Elizabeth Plaza to highlight the seating, steps, handrails, fountains and the sculpture of an illuminated sailing ship, currently mounted on the Plaza's lift tower. This sculpture will have its lights restored with LEDs which will contribute to vibrancy of the plaza.

Stage 3 works will include the construction of planter walls on Denison Street between Mount Street and Spring Street. This is intended to provide additional colour and soft landscaping to the Plaza.

2.1.3 Other Projects

There are a number of other significant projects being undertaken to improve and activate the public domain in the CBD. These include the NTH SYD Marketing Strategy and Events Program, the North Sydney Public Art Trail and the North Sydney CBD Public Domain Strategy.

In February 2018, Council engaged Aspect Studios to undertake Stage 1 of the Public Domain Strategy for the North Sydney CBD. Stage 1 will examine North Sydney's potential to transform into a globally oriented CBD through the staged delivery of public domain projects that 'Attract, Connect, Diversity and Satisfy.'

This will be an ideas-based exercise that will deliver:

- an understanding of the community's needs, ideas and aspirations for the centre;
- an understanding of the issues facing North Sydney's public domain;
- recommendations to better align the existing policy framework that applies to the centre; and
- a public domain masterplan for the CBD;
- Proposal for short-medium term projects that address known issues and mitigate the impacts of construction activity of the next 5+ years; and
- Proposal for longer term, place-specific projects and visionary, high-intervention opportunities

2.2 Resolution 3 – Increasing Performance Space

The upgrades to Brett Whiteley Place and Elizabeth Plaza represent the first stages of a wider concept plan approved by Council. The concept plan envisaged an expanded public plaza and pedestrian realm consisting of four distinct zones - Brett Whiteley Place, Elizabeth Plaza, Events Space/ Focal Point and Denison Street (refer to Figure 11).

This four-zone structure is planned to be delivered in 3 stages, to allow for the prioritisation of works to existing public spaces (Brett Whiteley Place and Elizabeth Plaza), with works requiring major interventions such as road closures and traffic re-routing, to occur once those issues are resolved.

Council is currently in negotiation with developments at 1 Denison Street, 100 Mount Street and the Sydney Metro to achieve the remaining concept plan, which includes:

- the closure of the eastern end of Mount Street from Brett Whiteley Place to the existing driveway at 83 Mount Street to expand the opportunities for events;
- the closure of the southern end of Denison Street between Spring and Mount Streets to facilitate the further pedestrianisation of the laneways precinct; and
- general upgrade of all utility services in the area to service more public events in Brett Whiteley Place.

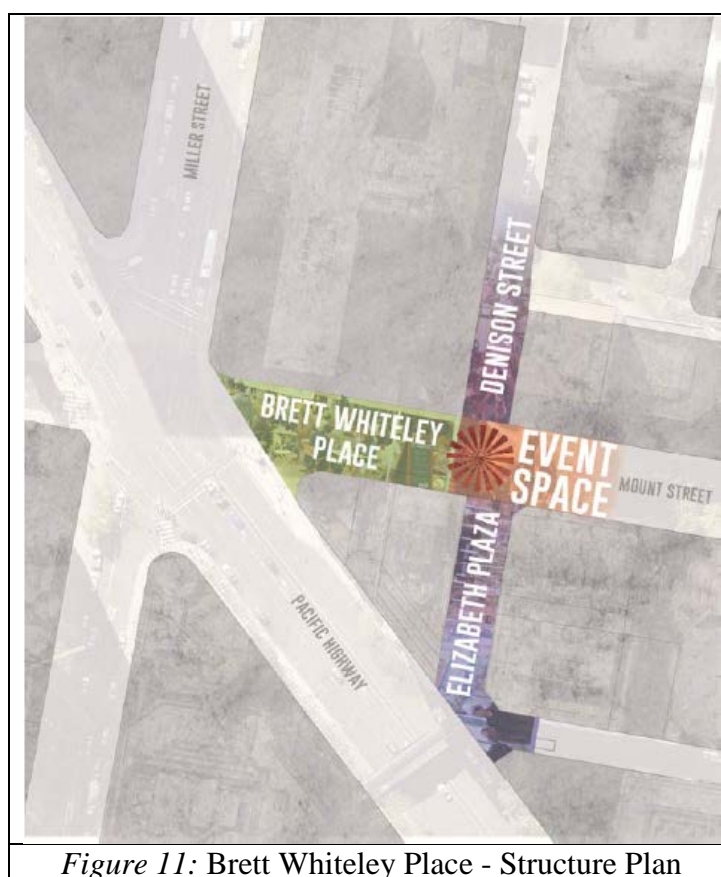


Figure 11: Brett Whiteley Place - Structure Plan

The implementation of the fourth zone (Stage 3) will enable the full size of the “Events Space” to be realised as it is currently constrained by the development at 100 Mount Street. It is envisaged that the Events Space/ Focal Point will be relatively open and uncluttered to allow for pedestrian movement and expanded events, as well as informal gatherings in an area that received good winter solar access. It is also envisaged that the expanded plaza along the southern portion of Denison Street will enjoy significant sunlight access, which could be taken advantage of for outdoor dining and informal seating spaces.

These works will be the subject of a separate report to Council.

CONCLUSION

Following the completion of Stage 1 and 2 of the Brett Whiteley upgrade in June 2017, a “Living Colour” (live floral displays) program was trialled to add colour and vibrancy to both Brett Whiteley Place and Elizabeth Plaza. This pilot program was trialled for 8 weeks in Spring (ending in November 2017) and 8 weeks in Summer (ending in January 2018). Whilst the floral displays provided an immediate colourful impact, the program represents a recurring cost of \$46,500 per 8 week season.

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