

Dixon Street improvement grant

Applicant pack

July 2024

CITY OF SYDNEY 



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

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Introduction

Dixon Street improvement grant program

This funding program supports capital works that improve shop and building frontages on Dixon Street south with matched funding that contributes to:

- the visible renewal of Dixon Street (south) shopfronts and facades, making the street more active and attractive
- the creation of a 'chef's gallery' bringing the theatre of food preparation to Dixon Street
- the distinct character and identity of Dixon Street as the historic heart of Chinatown.

We provide support for 3 types of capital works projects:

1. Street level major works
2. Street level minor works
3. Upper storey works

This document provides supplementary information to support applicants. Please refer to the grant guideline document for the funding available, funding priorities, eligibility criteria, and assessment criteria.

Eligible area

You may be eligible for a grant if your building or shopfront is on Dixon Street between Goulburn Street and Hay Street (the blue area indicated below). Works must be visible from Dixon Street.



Dixon Street improvement grant guideline



Dixon Street improvement applicant pack (this document)

How to apply

Step 1 Design concierge



1a Start the process

First, click the link to [‘Start the process’](#). Applications for grants must be completed online. You’ll need to provide the following information:

- Name
- Company (if relevant)
- Email
- Phone number
- Site address
- Site photos: this could include photos the shopfront or building frontage, internal ground floor photos or plans
- Are you the:
 - business/tenant
 - landowner
 - other applicant.

- What type of grant are you interested in:
 - Type 1 – Street level major works
 - Type 2 – Street level minor works
 - Type 3 – Upper storey works
 - Not sure yet

1b Arrange a meeting

Once you submit your form, we’ll contact with you to arrange a meeting.

The meeting can be in person at Town Hall House or online.

You can request a translator when you arrange the meeting.

You do not need to have a proposal or architect/design team.

If you have an idea of what you would like to propose, please bring any images or information to your meeting with the team.

1c Meet the design concierge team

Meet with the design concierge team to discuss your site and your ideas for improvements.

The design concierge team will provide verbal advice about what type of improvements could be eligible for grant funding. They can also answer your questions about the grant process.

How to apply

Step 1 (continued)

1d Develop your proposal

Decide what improvement works you would like to make and develop the designs.

Review the Design Objectives (page 7) section of this applicant pack and consider planning policy including the DCP (page 12).

If the works are major, you will likely need to engage an architect or design team to help develop your proposal.

If the works you are proposing are very minor (for example, replacing signage or windows), you will need to select the product and materials and finishes and their proposed location for installation.

If you have any questions or would like further advice, you can contact the Haymarket coordinator and the design concierge team on: DixonStreet@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au

1e Submit your design proposal

Once you have developed your proposal for the works, email your designs to the team at DixonStreet@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au. This email should include:

- concept design drawings
- materials and finishes
- product specifications
- food prep drawings (for Type 1 grant only)

1f Design checks

Once you email your documents, the team will carry out eligibility, scope of work and design checks.

If the team require more information, they will write to you.

If your proposal does not pass the checks, the team will provide you with written advice. You can then update your proposal and re-submit (Step 1e).

Once the checks are complete, the team will provide you with a 'design concierge letter' to move to the next stage.

How to apply



Step 2 Grant application

2a Fill in and submit your grant application (at the same time as Step 3a)

Following Step 1 and receipt of your 'design concierge letter', you will need to seek quotes and budget for your works.

You will be sent a link to complete the 'grant application' form online. You will need to provide the following information:

- Applicant details, including an ABN
- Design concierge letter (from Step 1f)
- A description of your proposal
- Written consent from the landowner (if you are not the landowner)
- Your budget for the works
- Upload at least two quotes
- The proposed use and tenant of the building or shop

Step 3 Planning approvals

3a Apply for a DA or CDC (at the same time as Step 2a)

Your proposal may require a development application (DA) consent or a complying development certificate (CDC).

In some cases, development may be exempt and can skip stages 3a and 3b, In these instances, a written self-assessment will be required.

If you are not sure what approvals are required, the design concierge team can provide advice.

You will need to make the necessary applications and pay any applicable fees. Standard assessment processes must be followed to receive approvals.

3b Confirm you DA or CDC approval

Once you receive the required approvals or certifications, you will need to confirm this on your 'grant application' form online. You will also be required to provide the following information:

- Has your proposal received DA approval or CDC? Yes or No
- What is your DA / CDC reference number?
- Have your proposals or designs changed since the design checks were completed? Yes or no
- If so, what has changed?

If your designs have changed, the design concierge team may need to review the changes and undertake design checks again (Step 1f).

How to apply

Step 4 Grant assessment

4a Your grant application is assessed

Once you submit your grant application with any required approvals, your grant application will be assessed.

At least three assessors will review your grant application against the funding priorities and assessment criteria and make a recommendation to Council.

4b Recommendation to Council

Only Council has authority to approve the grants and this will require a report to a Council meeting.

You will be provided updates about when your application will be reported to Council. After the Council meeting, you will be notified of the outcome.

Step 5 Payment and construction

If you are successful, you will progress to payment and construction (Step 5).

5a Contract

A contract will be provided for you to sign.

You will also need to provide:

- an invoice
- public liability insurance confirmation of currency
- your bank details

5b Works begin

Once the contract has been signed, the works can commence. Works must start within 12 months of the grant being approved.

50% of the funding will be provided upon commencement of the works.

5c Works complete

Once the works are completed, you will need to contact the Haymarket coordinator on: DixonStreet@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au

You will need to complete an acquittal form providing:

- confirmation that the works have been complete and contractual obligations have been met
- photos
- receipts

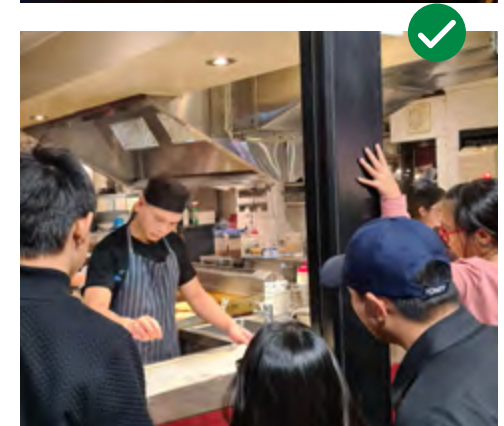
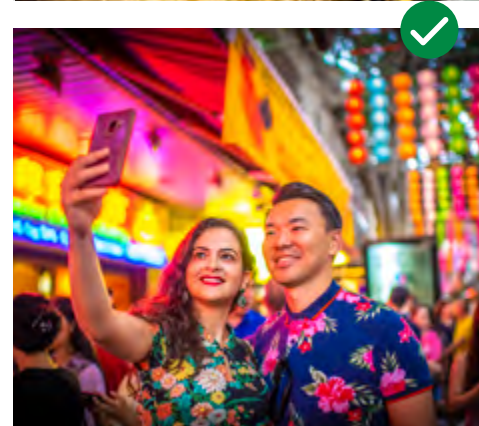
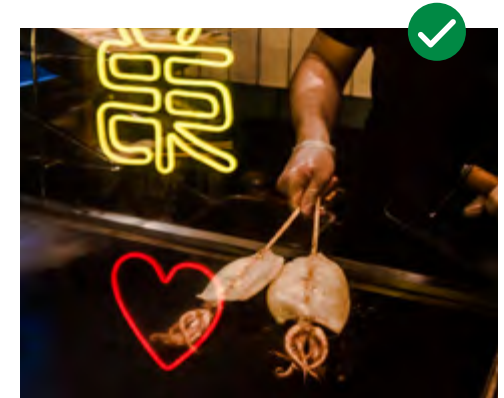
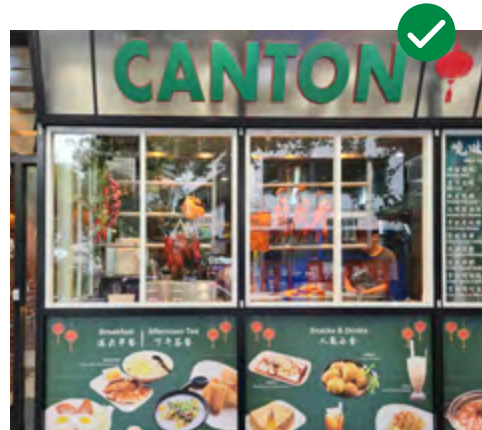
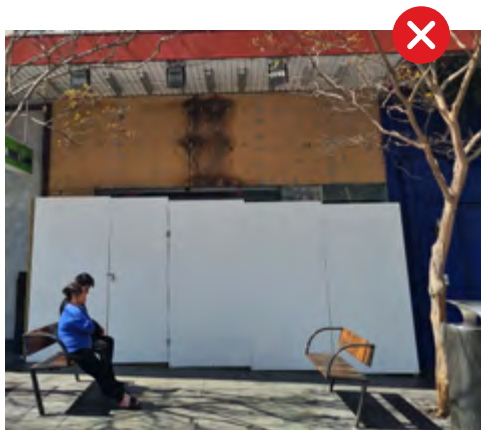
We will carry out a site visit to check that the works completed align with the proposal and drawings.

Once your acquittal form has been verified, the final 50% payment will be made.

Improving your shopfront

Grow your business with activity

- Bring vacant spaces back into use.
- Contribute to vibrancy of the street.
- Food as theatre - display food preparation and serve from windows.
- Chinese (acknowledging Cantonese origins) alongside a diverse Asian offer.
- Foster small, niche businesses.
- Create daytime and nighttime vibrancy.



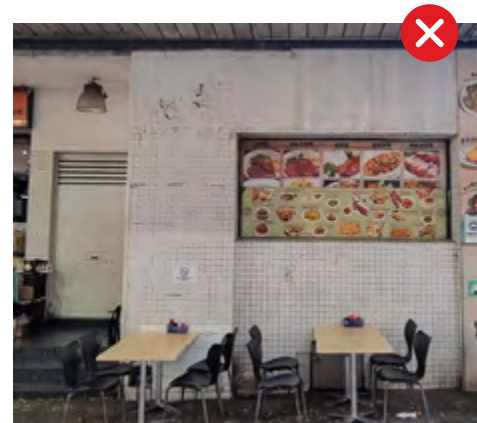
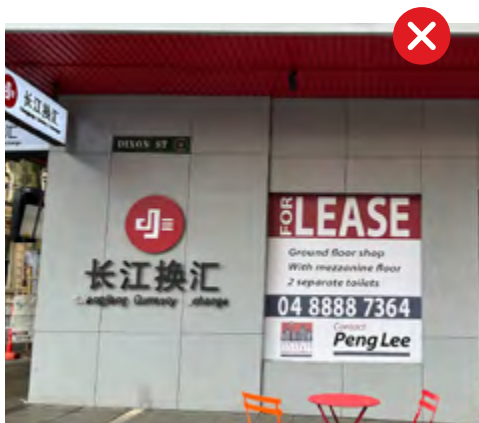
Improving your shopfront

Street character

- Bright, playful designs featuring Asian languages.
- Embed identity through neon, language, and symbols.
- Maintain brick character at street level.
- Respect original building facades, proportions, and architectural details.
- Remove wall signs and cladding to expose wall piers.

Shopfront windows and doors

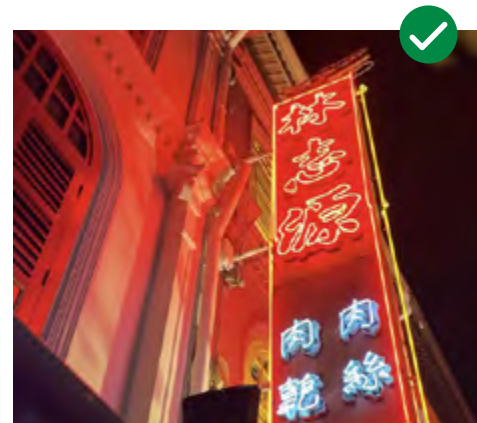
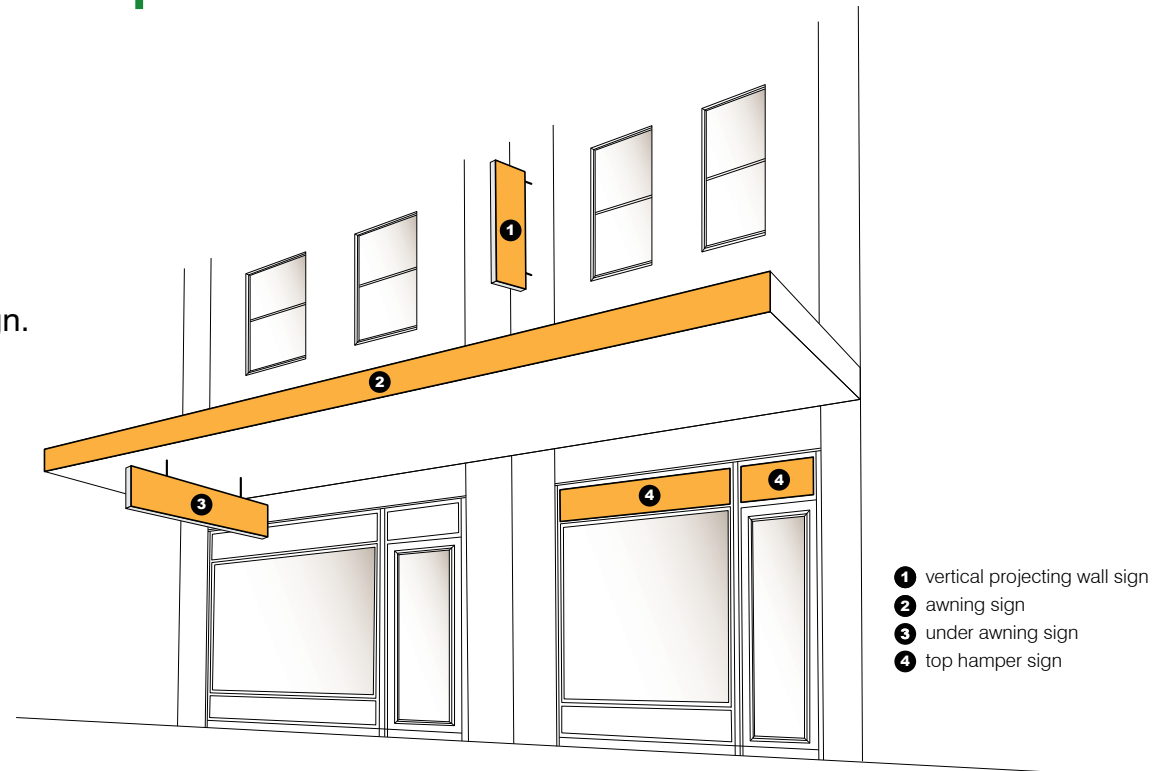
- Create transparent shopfronts with large windows.
- Visible food preparation and internal activity.
- Align street level openings with building structure above.



Improving your shopfront

Signage and lighting

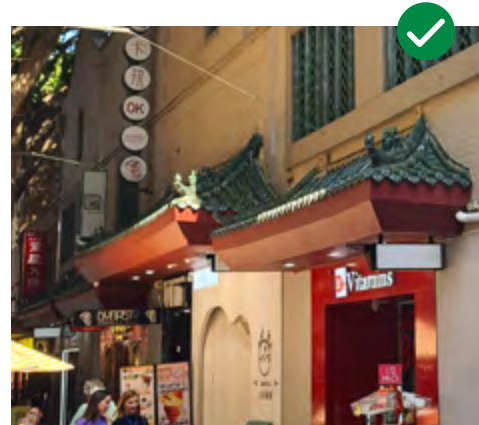
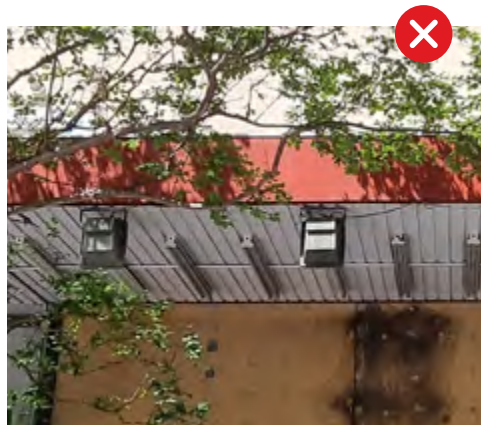
- Focus on neon-like LED over illuminated box lighting.
- Coordinate all business identification signage graphic design.
- Respond to building facade proportions.
- Prominence given to Asian languages.
- Vivid, playful and quirky designs.
- Easy to read font sizes.



Improving your shopfront

Awnings

- Restore green tiled awnings.
- Integrate lighting into the structure of the awning, rather than having lights attached.
- Awning designs are to complement the building.
- Prioritise space around Chinatown Ceremonial Gates.
- Ensure structural integrity of awnings.



Outdoor dining

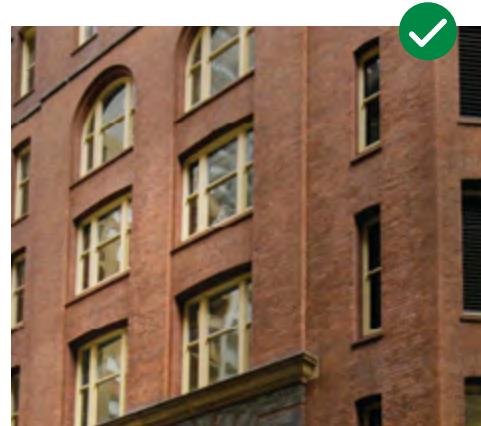
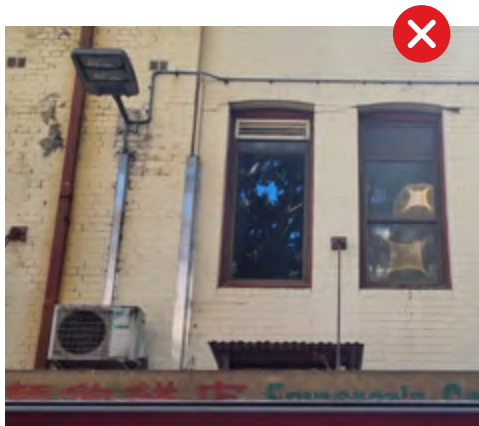
- Alignment in visual language between outdoor seating furniture and the shopfront.
- Ensure that high quality materials are specified for outdoor dining furniture (avoid low-quality plastic).
- Moveable outdoor dining furniture is to be used
- Avoid umbrellas and catenary lighting.



Improving your shopfront

Restore and repair

- Conceal or integrate downpipes and gutters.
- Remove graffiti.
- Restore brickwork, flashings and downpipes, where possible.
- Avoid rendering brickwork.
- Reduce the visual impact of objects attached to facades.
- Locate external condenser units behind parapets.



Upper storey facades

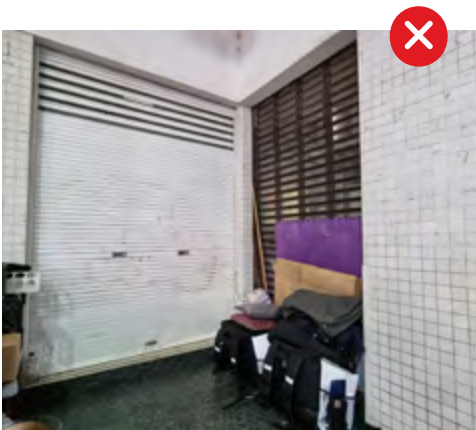
- Retain proportions, rhythm and architectural elements.
- Restore historic painted wall signs.
- Avoid panelling and cladding.
- Avoid large blank white/grey walls that have a dull appearance.
- Replace graffiti or large blank walls with public art murals that tell the story of the place.
- Embrace a warm colour scheme, in particular red and gold colours:



Improving your shopfront

Security and safety

- Ensure premises are secure, while adding visual interest to the street when shops are closed.
- Avoid blank roller shutters which appear defensive to the street when closed.
- Provide a welcoming and safe environment for residents and visitors, day and night.



Design references

The design concierge team will support you in considering the relevant policy and guidance.

Sydney DCP 2012

cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/development-control-plans

- 2.1.3 Haymarket/Chinatown Special Character Area
- 3.2 Defining the Public Domain
 - 3.2.3 Active frontages
 - 3.2.4 Footpath awnings
 - 3.2.7 Reflectivity
 - 3.2.8 External lighting
- 3.5 Urban Ecology
- 3.7.1 Site specific flood study
- 3.6.5 Materials and building components
- 3.9 Heritage
- 3.10.1 Warehouses and industrial buildings older than 50 years
- 3.10.4 Significant Shopfronts
- 3.10.5 Public and community buildings older than 50 years

- 3.14 Waste
- 3.15 Late Night Trading + schedule 3
- 3.16 Signage
 - All signage proposals are to be assessed against the Objectives and Sections 3.16.1, 3.16.2 and 3.16.3.
 - Signage within a signage precinct, as shown on the Signage precincts map, is to be assessed against Section 3.16.12.
 - Signage on a heritage item or within a heritage conservation area is to be assessed against 3.16.11.
 - 3.16.12.9 Chinatown signage precinct
 - 3.16.4 illuminated signage
 - 3.16.5 Building Identification sign
 - 3.16.6 Business identification signs
 - 3.16.7 Advertising structures and third party advertisements
 - 3.16.9 Light projection signage
- 5.1.3 Heritage items, warehouses and special character areas

Policies and guidelines

- Outdoor dining policy: cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/policies/outdoor-dining-policy
- Outdoor dining guidelines: cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/council-governance-administration/outdoor-dining-guidelines
- Development applications: cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/development-applications

Frequently asked questions

Can I apply for the grant if my shopfront is outside of the area?

If your building or shopfront are outside of the area (see page 3), you are not eligible. If the works are not visible from Dixon Street, they are not eligible. If you are not eligible, you cannot apply for the grant.

What if some of the works I am proposing are eligible and some are not?

You can progress the grant-funded works as part of a wider proposal. However, you can only apply for grant funding for the parts of your proposal which are eligible and meet the funding priorities.

Can I apply for multiple grants under this program?

Funding limits are applied per shopfront (for Types 1 and 2) and per property (for Type 3). Each shopfront and upper storey façade will only be eligible to receive one grant.

In the case that an applicant owns or operates multiple shopfronts or properties within the eligible area, the applicant can apply for multiple grants. You will need to fill in the grant application form for each grant.

Will I need planning approvals?

Applicants should be aware that the proposal may need to go through a development application (DA) or complying development certification (CDC) process.

The applicant will need to make the necessary applications and pay any applicable fees.

You can visit the City's website for more information about development applications:

cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/development-applications/how-to-prepare-your-development-application

The design concierge team can provide advice about what approvals might be required for your proposal.

Who can I speak to if I have a question?

If you have any questions or would like advice about your application, you can contact the Haymarket coordinator by email:

DixonStreet@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au

Or by phone: +612 9288 5945

The Haymarket coordinator will be your main contact throughout the process.

