

Proposed mixed hotel, residential & retail development
33 Cross Street, Double Bay

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Prepared for **Ashington**



Major Project Application MP 08_0100
Visual Impact Assessment

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Cover image: Photomontage view of the proposed development
from the Bay Street and Cross Street intersection

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 This document is for discussion
 purposes only unless signed.

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1 Introduction

This document is the visual impact assessment prepared by Architectus on behalf of Ashington in support of a Major Project Application under Part 3A of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*.

The report provides an assessment of the potential visual impact of the proposed mixed use hotel, residential and retail development at 33 Cross Street, Double Bay. The visual impact assessment has been prepared in response to the Director-General Environmental Assessment Requirements (DGRs).

1.1 Background

The visual impact assessment accompanies the Environmental Assessment and addresses the DGR requiring a view analysis to and from the site from key vantage points. This visual impact assessment includes photomontages and photos of the site and proposed development from the surrounding area, including Sydney Harbour.

Views from the site to surrounding areas are provided in the main Environmental Assessment report prepared by Architectus. This visual impact assessment provides an analysis of the visibility and potential view loss of the proposal from key public vantage points.

1.2 Site and location

The proposed development is located within the Double Bay town centre, approximately 3.5 kilometres east of Central Sydney. The site is located on the northern side of Cross Street. The Double Bay town centre provides a mix of residential, specialist boutique retail and commercial development. **Figure 1** and **Figure 2** below illustrate the site in the context of the surrounding area.

The site is a key site within a town centre. The prominent position of one of Double Bay's primary shopping streets and its consolidated large area make the site a landmark site, and unique to Double Bay. Double Bay is characterised by a fine grained network of streets and laneways and narrow fronted shops.

1.3 Local context

Double Bay is a town centre in the low valley floor between Darling Point to the west and Point Piper to the east. The town centre has a walkable network of streets, laneways and arcades.

Some larger sites exist which have been predominately developed. These include:

- The Cross Street Car Park;
- 45 Cross Street, adjoining the site; and
- The Stamford Cosmopolitan.



Figure 1 Local context of the subject site and Double Bay
Source: UBD Street Directory 2007



Figure 2 Aerial view of the subject site and the surrounding area
Source: Google Earth 2007

2 Methodology

This visual impact assessment has been carried out by:

- Field research;
- Establishment of assessment criteria;
- Analysis of the existing visual environment in terms of immediate, local and regional contexts to select important viewing locations;
- Visual simulations of the proposed development from important vantage points in the public domain within the visual catchment;
- Description of the visual impact of the proposal from selected viewing points in terms of visibility and visual absorption capacity resulting in the visual impact for each view.

This methodology draws on Architectus' experience of preparing the visual impact assessment of the Chatswood Transport Interchange, preparing the Port Botany Expansion EIS, the North Wallarah Peninsula Project LES undertaken with URS, the methodology used for the Sydney Airport Third Runway EIS and various court cases in the Land and Environment Court.

This visual impact assessment considers views from the immediate vicinity (short range – within 200m of the site), local (mid-range – 200-500m from the site) and regional (long range – greater than 500m from the site) views of the proposed mixed use development.

Plans, sections and elevations are typically used to describe the design and the bulk and scale of a development. While these explain the design and shape of a building, it is difficult to interpret the visual impact of the development on surrounding streets and important public spaces using this type of information.

In order to more accurately illustrate the potential visual impacts of the proposed mixed use development, a set of visual stimulations have been prepared. These stimulations include photographs of the existing building in its context and photomontages of the proposed building from key vantage points. This allows for comparison between the existing and proposed developments and allows for a more thorough and comprehensive visual assessment.

The views have been chosen to show a streetscape or panoramic view of the development from designated viewing points at a single moment in time. Some regional and local views are shown as panoramic views. In longer distance views the panoramic views represent the periphery view. The use of a single digital photograph has also been used to ensure accurate comparison as well as ensuring the image does not reflect multiple views and bias the assessment of the visual impact of the proposed development from the key immediate, local and regional vantage points.

Accordingly, views in the immediate vicinity of the site might only show a portion of the development in the streetscape view while wider local and regional views may provide an indication of the overall building form and the impact on views of the Double Bay town centre and skyline in the context of the broader local and regional built form.

The visual stimulations are presented in **Section 6** of this report.

Preparation of the visual stimulations involved the following steps:

- Digital photographs were taken from each of the selected viewing points in the direction of the proposed mixed use development. The photographs were taken using a 55mm lens, that produces an image equivalent to the human eye view to ensure accuracy of the view;
- Relative levels (RLs) were taken from a topographic map to ensure the accurate insertion of the 3D model into the photograph.
- A computer generated 3D model of the proposed development was prepared;
- The 3D model was inserted into the photographs from the key vantage points, illustrating the likely visual impact.

3 Description of the proposal

The proposal seeks approval for a mixed use development integrating a high quality hotel, residential hotel residences and retail uses at ground floor level. The proposal includes:

- Demolition of the existing hotel and associated retail arcade at ground level.
- Retention and reconfiguration of two (2) basement levels.
- Erection of a five (5) storey podium level, part five (5) storey tower to the north east corner of the site and two (2) part 14 storey towers to the south east and south west corners of the site fronting Cross Street.
- A luxury five-star boutique hotel, comprising 66 hotel rooms, situated within the five (5) storey podium elements of the building.
- Thirty-nine (39) residential apartments to be situated in the tower elements of the building.
- At ground floor, 1,167sqm of specialty retail floor space, including a mix of high end retail, food and café/restaurant/bar tenancies.
- Creation of a new, publically accessible piazza with high quality through-site links from Cross Street through to the Georges Centre, Transvaal Avenue and Galbraith Walkway.
- A public and hotel related bar/restaurant situated on level 4.
- A pool situated on level 4 for the use of hotel guests and residents.
- Reconfiguration of the two (2) existing basement car parking levels with provision of 107 car spaces, bicycle parking, storage and building plant.

The floor space ratio (FSR) of the proposed development is 5.36:1. This is equal to the current FSR of 5.36:1 (Refer to surveyor's advice at **Appendix S**). This includes 10,386m² of residential floor space; 5,979m² of hotel floor space and 1,220m² of retail floor space (including speciality retail, ground floor restaurant, cafés, delicatessen etc).

The proposal seeks to redistribute the existing amount of floor space with the objective of delivering improved urban design outcomes. The podium level is proposed to be four (4) – five (5) storeys in height. Two (2) taller elements of a maximum of 14 storeys are proposed above the podium. The central part of the site and its links to the surrounding street and lane network will be open to the public. This includes the central publically accessible plaza of 800m². The inclusion of additional open space on the site will result in an increase in height to some parts of the site and a decrease in height to other parts of the site. A plan of the proposed ground floor is shown in **Figure 3**.



Figure 3 Ground floor plan

3.1 Built form

The proposed development incorporates a four (4) to five (5) storey podium and two 14 storey towers to the south eastern and south western corners of the site, fronting Cross Street. The existing building has a maximum height of 28.5 metres with an FSR of 5.36:1. The proposed development will have a maximum height of 52.2 metres and an FSR of 5.36:1, representing a 23.7 metre increase in height of the two tower forms; however the FSR will remain as existing. The five (5) storey element of the podium will be 6.2 metres lower than the existing building height.

Approximately 70% of the area is located within the podium levels of the building. The podium level is well articulated at ground floor and absorbs much of the perceived bulk of the building away from the two tower elements. The tower elements of the building are located in the two southern corners of the site, providing an opening between. When viewed from the north and south, the two towers appear as two, separate, slender building elements. When viewed from the east and west, the tower forms appear as a single tower. The quality in design and articulation of the buildings create a visually pleasing development when viewing the tower from the east and west vantage points.

Refer to the elevation shown in **Figure 4** and the section **Figure 5**, illustrating the building height of the proposed and existing building.

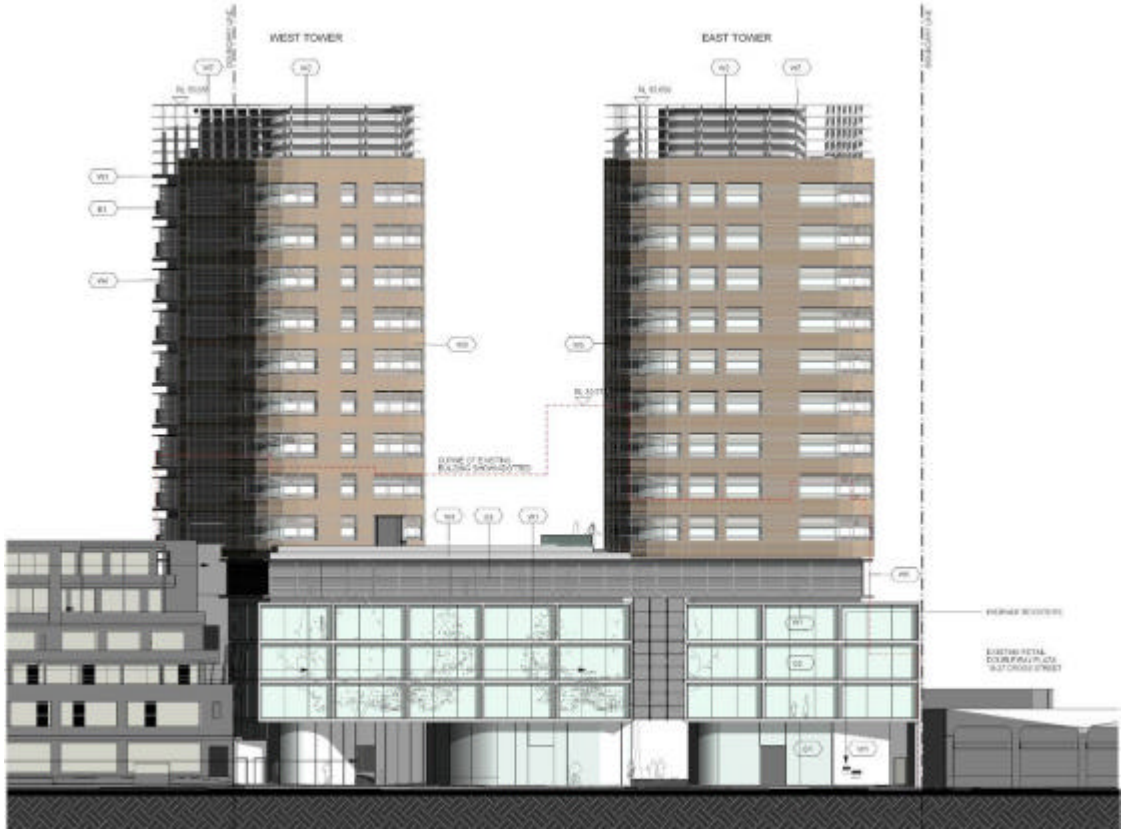


Figure 4 Cross Street elevation
 This figure shows the southern Cross Street elevation of the site, illustrating the two tower forms.



Figure 5 Section
 This section illustrates the height of the proposed development in relation to the existing building height (shown in dashed red line).

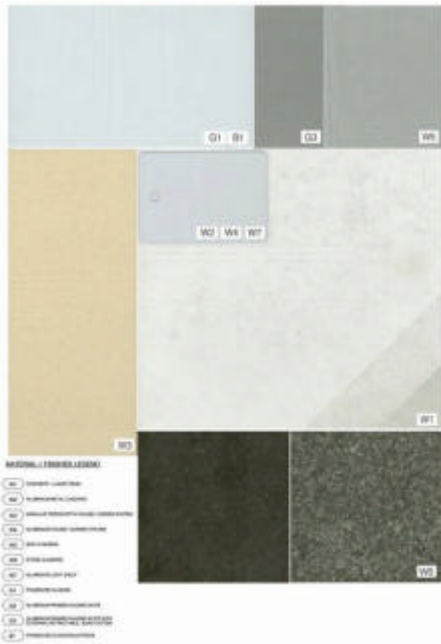


Figure 6 Materials and finishes

3.2 Design, materials and finishes

The proposed development will be of a high quality architectural design incorporating quality materials and finishes. The materials and finishes to be used are illustrated in **Figure 6**. An elevation is shown in **Figure 4**.

The ground floor retail façade will be of frameless curved and straight glass. This will create an inviting transparency between the retail tenancies and the public domain. Concrete with an opaque mineral paint finish will also be used at ground floor. This will provide variation to the ground floor façade.

Much of the podium façade to Cross Street is glazed panels with aluminium framing. This façade to the hotel within the podium levels reduces the intrusive nature of the building to Cross Street through the use of lightweight and transparent materials as opposed to existing uninviting façade. The east, west and southern façades will include large panels of glazing and concrete with the five (5) storey element being defined by zinc cladding and modular aluminium façade screening. The variation in the podium façade defines the separate uses and elements of the development, being the retail, hotel and residential uses.

The tower façades to Cross Street will be of terracotta cladding and screening, providing solid tower forms that appear distinctly separated from the podium level when viewed from Cross Street. The northern façade of the towers is generally aluminium framed glazing with frameless glass balustrades.

Overall, the proposed building design, materials and finishes provide an interesting and well articulated built form. This provides visual interest and reduces the overall perceived bulk and scale of the development, with the tower forms and the podium levels being designed to appear as separate and distinct features of the one development.

4 Existing visual environment

4.1 Existing building

The existing building has a maximum height of 28.5 metres. The building is solid in terms of its design and materials. From Sydney Harbour, the top one (1) to two (2) levels of the existing building are visible, however generally absorbed into the surrounding landscape. From the waters of Double Bay, the existing building becomes more highly visible. As the height is below the ridgeline, it still is somewhat absorbed into the surrounding built form and topography. The building does not contribute to the identification of Double Bay and the town centre.

From most local views, vegetation covers or screens most of the existing building. From some vantage points, the upper levels of the building are visible. From these points, the monolithic nature of the building is uninviting and does not complement the Double Bay town centre as whole.

From viewing points within the Double Bay town centre, the building detracts from the streetscape and is not in character with the fine urban grain of the surrounding streets, laneways and retail areas.

4.2 Land use

The Double Bay town centre is generally located between Cross and Knox Streets and Bay Street and New South Head Road. The town centre contains a mix of retail, commercial and residential development, most of which are generally below six storeys.

The scattered residential towers along the ridgeline, and on the ridgeline itself, provide a strong backdrop for visual absorption to development in the Double Bay town centre.

The town centre itself contains only small pockets of open space. Other larger open space areas are located on the fringe of the town centre and along the foreshore.

4.3 Vegetation

The Double Bay area and surrounds are generally densely vegetated. Much of this dense vegetation, together with the dense built form in the area, results in few places where there is a clear line of site from the surrounding area to the Double Bay town centre and the subject site.

The town centre is also considerably vegetated with a range of both native and exotic species. There are several deciduous trees throughout the town centre which increase winter sunlight and reduce screening of the surrounding built form.

4.4 Landform

The Double Bay town centre is located at the bottom of a natural bowl. The edges of the topographic bowl are formed by the Darling Point ridgeline to the west which rises to approximately RL 40 and the Point Piper ridgeline to the east, which rises to approximately RL 70. There are several medium-rise buildings within the Double Bay town centre. These are generally visible from the foreshore and Sydney Harbour on approach to Double Bay. There are many scattered high-rise developments along

the ridgeline, generally along New South Head Road. These scattered high-rise buildings are located outside of the town centre however, are more visible given their location along the top of the ridgeline.

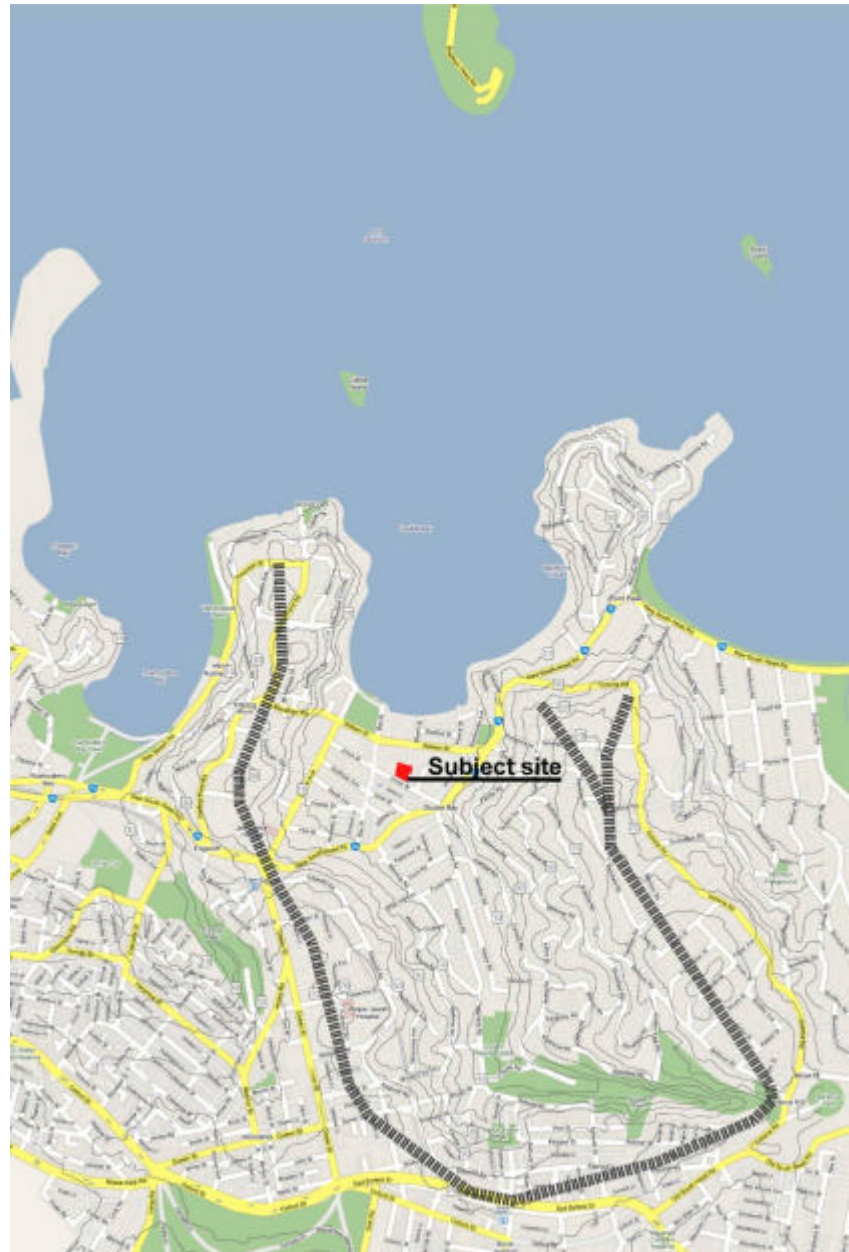


Figure 7 Topographic map of the Double Bay area
 The contours are shown on the topographic map. The thick broken black line represents the ridgeline.

4.5 Viewing zones

In order to establish the potential visual impacts of the proposed development, the viewing zones have been separated into three components:

- Regional views – long range (> 500m).
- Local area – mid-range (200m – 500m);
- Immediate vicinity – short range (< 200m)

These viewing zones are illustrated in **Figure 8**.

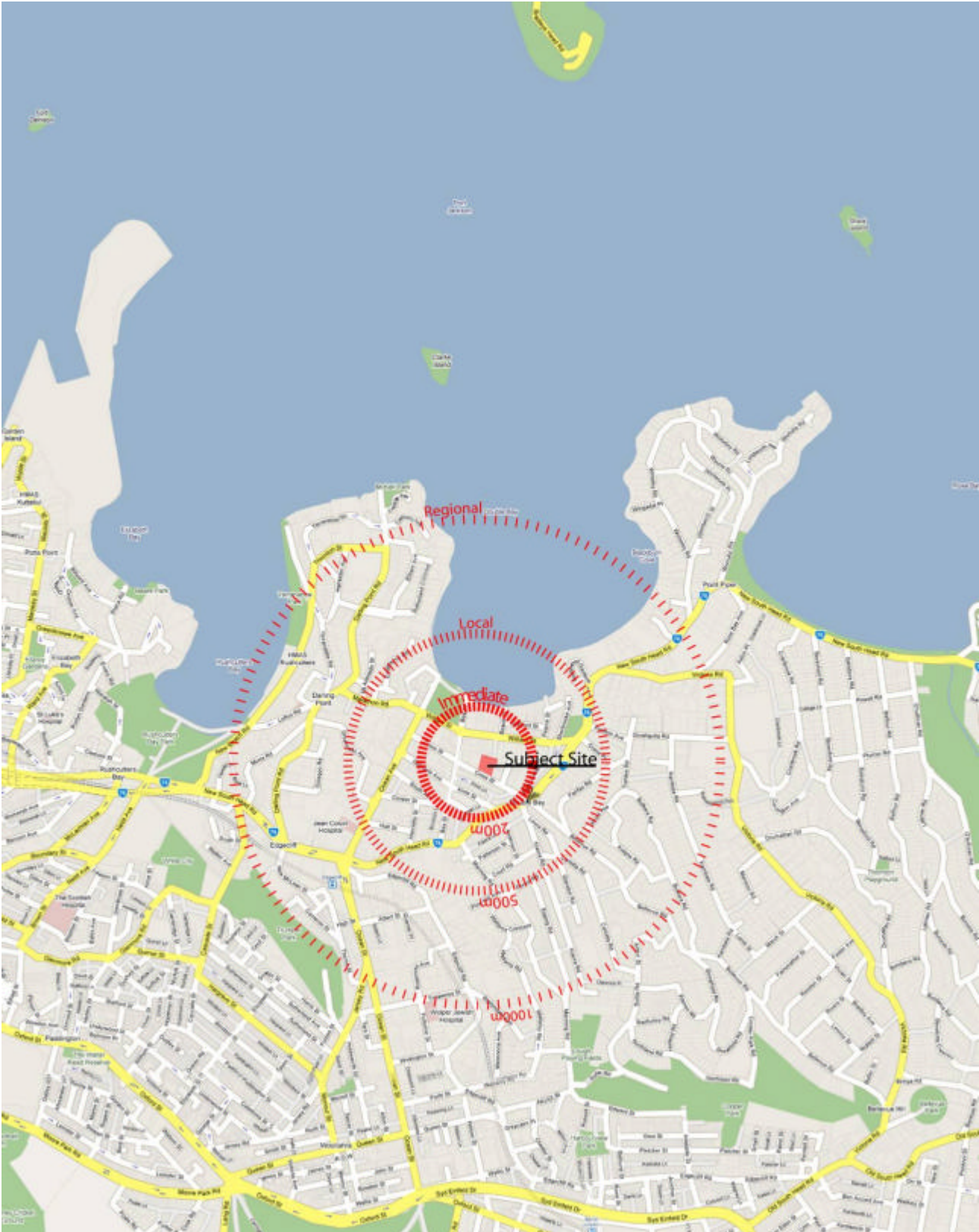


Figure 8 Map of viewing zones

View selection

Within these viewing zones, views were selected which were considered important public spaces and locations. These places are likely to be of value to the local community for the public use for:

- Foreshore recreation;
- Lunchtime use by employees of commercial/retail uses in the town centre;
- Harbour – recreational boating and commuter ferry patrons;
- Retail streetscapes;
- Streets arriving at Double Bay town centre; and
- Historic conservation area – Transvaal Avenue.

Regional views

The regional views comprise those greater than 500 metres from the subject site. The regional views have been selected as representative of views from various points in and around Sydney Harbour, as well as from elevated vantage points in Woollahra, near Bondi Junction. These regional views include:

- View 1 – Bradleys Head, Mosman;
- View 2 – Clarke Island, Sydney Harbour;
- View 3 – Double Bay, Sydney Harbour;
- View 4 – Harkness Street, Woollahra; and
- View 5 – Bathurst Lane off View Street, Woollahra.

Figure 9 below shows the location of these regional views.

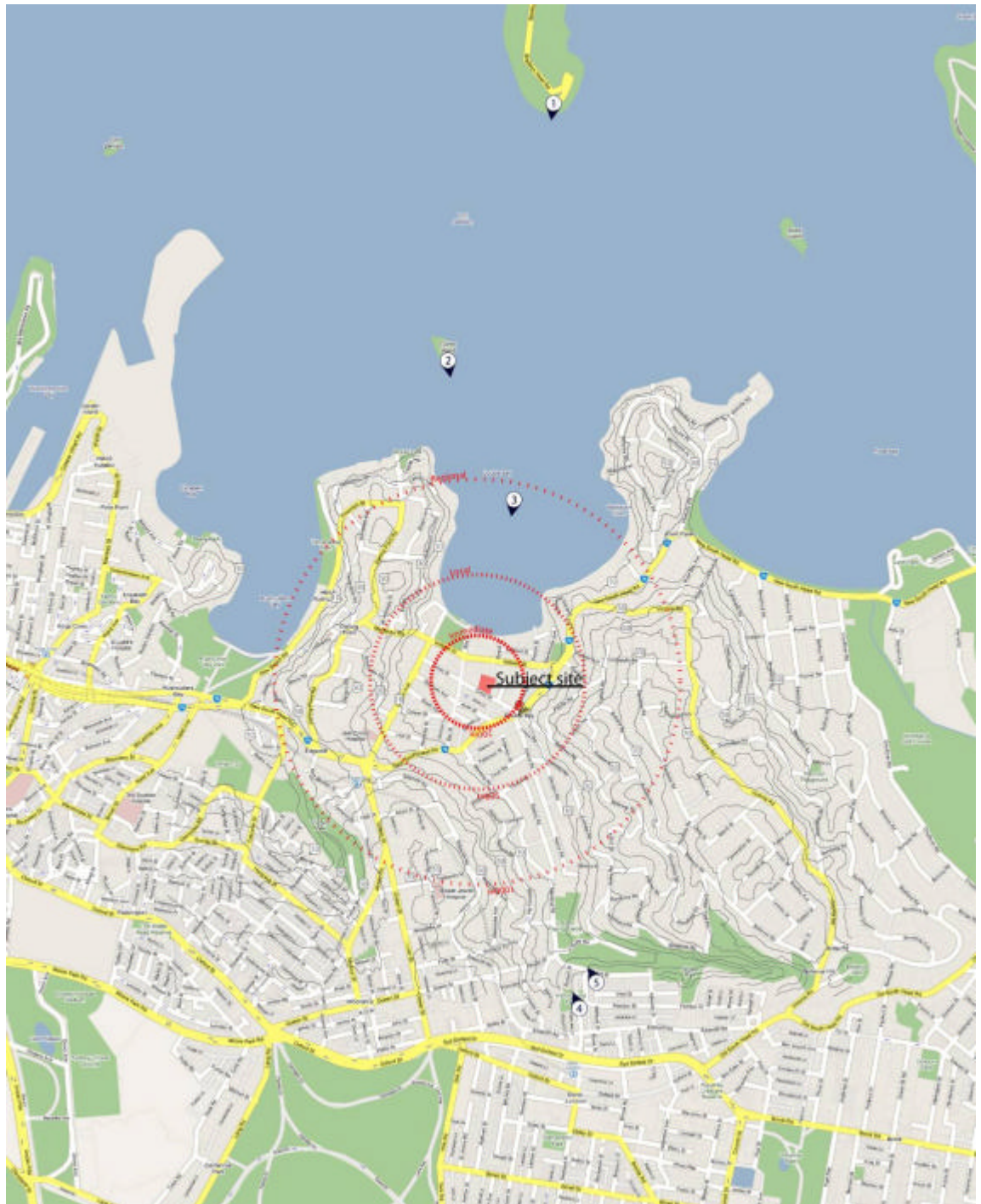


Figure 9 Regional viewing points

The proposed development is unlikely to be visible from other long distance points to the east, south and west given the topography of the surrounding area. The Double Bay town centre is located within a natural landscape bowl. As a result, the town centre is not visible from points beyond the ridgelines that surround it. The high density and site coverage of development in the area also screens the development from regional points within and across the ridgeline. As a result, the development will be most visible from Sydney Harbour. **Figure 7** illustrates the visual catchment (shaded) of the subject site in the context of the natural ridgelines and topography of the surrounding area.

The significance of the chosen vantage points selected is described in the following sections of this report.



Figure 10 View 1 – Bradleys Head, Mosman, single frame view

View 1 – Bradleys Head, Mosman

Bradleys Head is located on the north side of Sydney Harbour, within the Sydney Harbour National Park. Bradleys Head provides views east, south and west, taking in much of Sydney Harbour and the southern foreshore between Central Sydney and Rose Bay, as illustrated in **Figure 10** and **Figure 11**.

This point is surrounded by Sydney Harbour and the Sydney Harbour National Park. The view has been selected as it is directly north of the Double Bay town centre, as well as being a popular viewing location for visitors viewing the Harbour, the city and North Sydney skylines and the Opera House and Harbour Bridge.



Figure 11 View 1 – Bradleys Head, Mosman, panoramic view



Figure 12 View 2 – Clarke Island, Sydney Harbour, single frame view

View 2 – Clarke Island, Sydney Harbour

Clarke Island is located in Sydney Harbour and is one of the six islands that form part of the Sydney Harbour National Park. The Island is located approximately 1.2 kilometres from Double Bay. The Island provides 360 degree views of Sydney Harbour, the city skyline, and the North Shore. Clarke Island also provides direct views of Double Bay, as illustrated in **Figure 12** and **Figure 13**.

The Island is a popular viewing point. Most viewing from this point however would be oriented towards the city skyline, Opera House and Harbour Bridge. The view is considered important given its proximity to Double Bay and the importance of potential visual impact on Sydney Harbour, and its importance as a place of historic importance. The ferry service does not operate to Clarke Island and access is limited to private vessels as well as water taxi. Clarke Island is a popular island location on weekends and public holidays.



Figure 13 View 2 – Clarke Island, Sydney Harbour, panoramic view



Figure 14 View 3 – Double Bay, Sydney Harbour, single frame view

View 3 – Double Bay, Sydney Harbour

This view is taken from the opening of Double Bay, between Darling Point and Point Piper. It is an important view as it provides an oncoming view to Double Bay town centre and will be visible for the recreational boating public and commuter ferry patrons. This view is taken approximately 800 metres from the subject site. The view is illustrated in **Figure 14** and **Figure 15**.

This view does not represent a stationary viewing point. Viewing from the waterways of Double Bay and Sydney Harbour will vary, and the visual impact would increase as vessels approach Double Bay.

The NSW Department of Planning requested in the DGRs that this visual impact assessment include an assessment of views from Sydney Harbour.



Figure 15 View 3 – Double Bay, Sydney Harbour, panoramic view

View 4 – Harkness Street, Woollahra

This view is taken from the end of Harkness Street in Woollahra, located south east of Double Bay. This is a standing view from the end of the street looking north west towards the Double Bay town centre. This viewing point is approximately 1.5 kilometres from the subject site. This view is illustrated in **Figure 16**.

Harkness Street is a local residential street which ends in a cul-de-sac. The topography drops dramatically and as such a district and regional view is available. Views of Darling Point, Sydney Harbour including Clarke Island and beyond to the North Shore are available. This is a significant view due to the elevated location and distant views to Sydney Harbour over Double Bay.



Figure 16 View 4 – Harkness Street, Woollahra

View 5 – Bathurst Lane off View Street, Woollahra

The view from Bathurst Lane, a walkway branching off the western end of View Street provides district and regional views over Double Bay. The end of the laneway provides an opening to a small pedestrian laneway connecting Bathurst Lane and View Street to Edward Street. This viewing point is located approximately 1.3 kilometres from the subject site. The view is illustrated in **Figure 17**.

This vantage point is frequented by passing pedestrians using the pedestrian pathway between View Street and Edward Street. Due to the dense urban nature of the locality, this view is not visible from View Street. Visual impact of the proposed developments will mainly impact passing pedestrians and motorists glimpsing over towards Darling Point and Sydney Harbour.



Figure 17 View 5 – Bathurst Lane off View Street, Woollahra

Local views

Local views are those within between 200 metres and 500 metres of the subject site. The selected local views include:

- View 6 – Double Bay Wharf;
- View 7 – Steyne Park;
- View 8 – Corner of William Street and New South Head Road, Double Bay;
- View 9 – Bellevue Road, Double Bay; and
- View 10 – Greenoaks Avenue, Darling Point.

The location of these views is show in **Figure 18**.

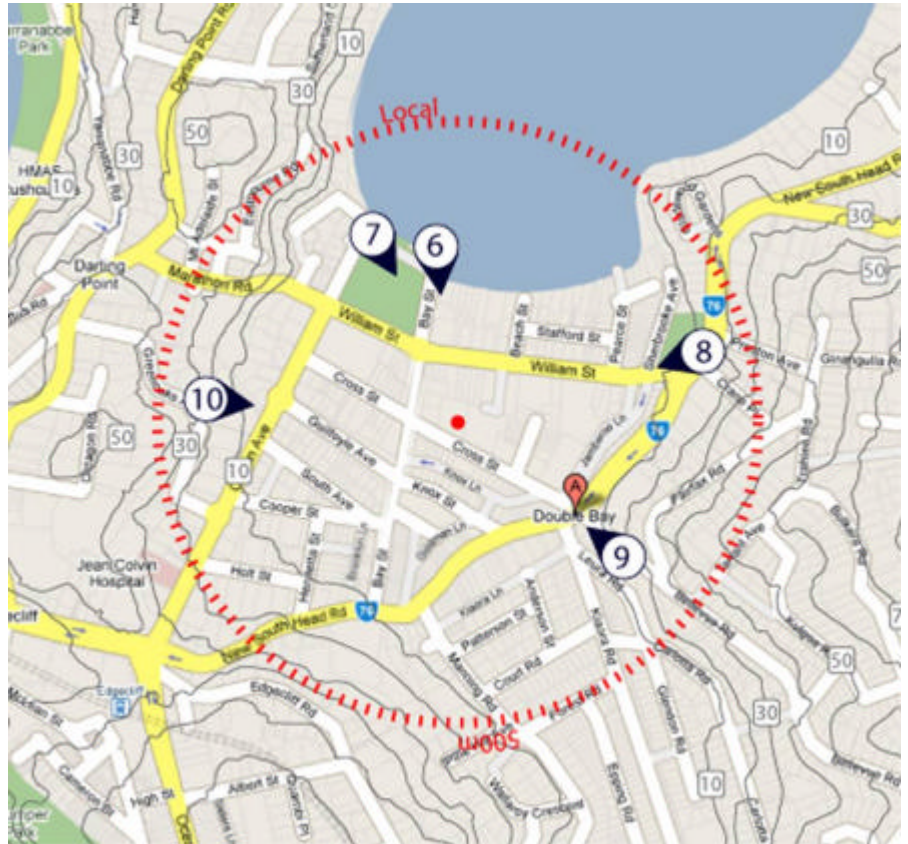


Figure 18 Local viewing points

Local views are those between 200 metres – 500 metres from the subject site.

The local views lie on the edges of the natural bowl within which Double Bay is situated. Therefore, they provide views looking down into the Double Bay town centre (views 9, 10 and 22). Views from the foreshore and public spaces are considered important as they are generally places where people are most likely to view the Double Bay town centre as well as being places of popular public recreation. Other local views are taken on approach to Double Bay.

The significance of the chosen local views is discussed below.



Figure 19 View 6 – Double Bay Wharf, single frame view

View 6 – Double Bay Wharf

This view is taken from the Double Bay Wharf, to the north of the Double Bay town centre. The wharf provides a point of arrival to Double Bay as well as a connection to other destinations along Sydney Harbour for visitors and residents travelling to and from Double Bay by ferry or private recreational vessels. The view is illustrated in **Figure 19** and **Figure 20**.

This view is considered important as it provides an identifying view of the Double Bay town centre. Viewers from this vantage point are likely to be looking towards the Double Bay town centre when at this viewing point, as well as looking towards the Harbour, depending on whether they have just arrive, or are to leave the Double Bay Wharf. Viewers will not have a sense of the town centre location behind foreshore residential properties and foreshore open spaces. A tower (18 storeys) building on the corner of New South Head Road and Bellevue Road is visible above the foreshore vegetation.



Figure 20 View 6 – Double Bay Wharf, panoramic view



Figure 21 View 8 – Steyne Park, single frame view

View 7 – Steyne Park

This view was taken from Steyne Park, located between William Street, Bay Street, Ocean Street and the foreshore of Double Bay. Double Bay Wharf is located close by. The park allows for active and passive recreation. The existing hotel building is visible from this point as are buildings in Bondi Junction. This view is illustrated in **Figure 21** and **Figure 22**.

This view has been selected as the open space provides an opportunity to view the development from the public domain. This space is generally used for recreational use and public gathering. Viewing from this space is most likely to be oriented towards the Harbour, and to a lesser extent, the Double Bay town centre. Generally people watching cricket on the weekend will sit in shaded areas at the park's perimeter underneath the trees.



Figure 22 View 8 – Steyne Park, panoramic view



Figure 23 View 9 – Corner of William Street and New South Head Road, single frame view

View 8 – Corner of William Street and North South Head Road, Double Bay

This view was taken from the corner of William Street and New South Head Road, located north east of the site. The view is visible motorists and pedestrians. This view is illustrated in **Figure 23** and **Figure 24**.

This view has been selected as this point is a key gateway intersection on approach to the Double Bay town centre. This view provides views into the Double Bay town centre however the view is heavily screened by vegetation. Tall residential apartment buildings are visible in the background view.



Figure 24 View 9 – Corner of William Street and New South Head Road, panoramic view



Figure 25 View 8 – Bellevue Road

View 9 – Bellevue Road, Double Bay

This view is taken from Bellevue Road, located south east of the site. The view of the site and Double Bay town centre is visible to both pedestrians and motorists. This view is illustrated in **Figure 25**.

The view has been selected as it provides direct views into Double Bay town centre. Bellevue Road is a major access road between Woollahra and Double Bay. Street trees screen views to Double Bay until this location close to the intersection with New South Head Road.

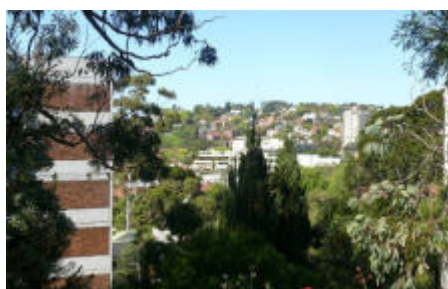


Figure 26 View 9 – Greenoaks Avenue

View 10 – Greenoaks Avenue, Darling Point

This view is taken from Greenoaks Avenue, located west of the site. The view from this point is visible to both pedestrians and motorists. The viewing point is located on the ridgeline and looks down into the Double Bay town centre. This view is illustrated in **Figure 26**.

This view has been selected as the viewing point is located above the Double Bay Town Centre and provides direct views into the Double Bay Town Centre, located within the valley. The view is somewhat obstructed by vegetation and existing buildings. Greenoaks Avenue has a pedestrian pathway with stairs which align with the view of the site and the Double Bay town centre. Views from Darling Point are generally looking east and north east to the Harbour. The ridgeline in the distance is Bellevue Hill and Woollahra. The view would predominately be seen by pedestrians with glimpses to motorists also provided.

Views in the immediate vicinity

The views in the immediate vicinity of the subject site are those within the Double Bay town centre. This area is generally dense with one to five storey buildings, and has high site coverage. Open space in the immediate vicinity of the site includes a small pocket park at the corner of Bay Street and Guilfoyle Avenue, Steyne Park and surrounding foreshore open space and the adjacent heritage conservation area. These views include:

- View 11 – Corner of Cross Street and Transvaal Avenue;
- View 12 – Transvaal Avenue;
- View 13 – Galbraith Walkway at William Street;
- View 14 – Corner of Cross Street and Bay Street; and
- View 15 – Guilfoyle Park.

Figure 27 shows the location of the selected views in the immediate vicinity (within 200 metres of the subject site).

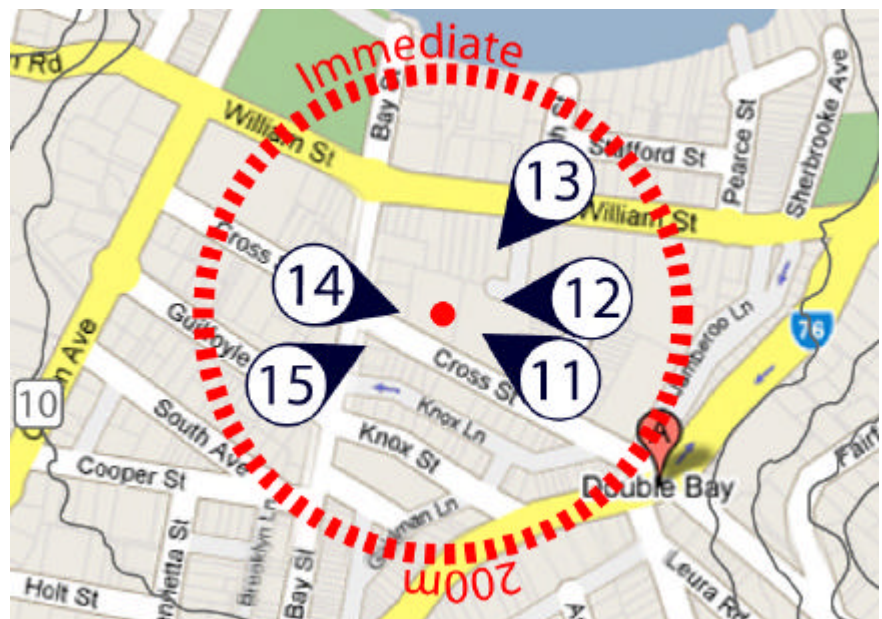


Figure 27 Views in the immediate vicinity (>200m)

The area is generally low lying with gentle slopes upwards from the site to New South Head Road and Ocean Street, forming the edge of the town centre.

These views have been selected as they represent key points within the Double Bay town centre that have high levels of pedestrian traffic or are a gathering point within the town centre and therefore, will potentially be impacted by the proposed development.

The visual impact of the proposed development on the immediate vicinity is discussed below.



Figure 28 View 12 – Corner of Cross Street and Transvaal Avenue
The existing building presents a blank, poorly articulated wall to the corner of Cross Street and Transvaal Avenue.

View 11 – Corner of Cross Street and Transvaal Avenue

This intersection of Cross Street and Transvaal Street is located immediately east of the site frontage to Cross Street. As a low-rise building is immediately adjacent to the east of the subject site, this viewing point provides significant views of the subject site. Under the Double Bay Town Centre DCP, this adjoining site could be developed up to four to five storeys in height. This view is illustrated in **Figure 28**.

Cross Street forms one of the main streets within the Double Bay town centre. Accordingly, the intersection has both moderate-high pedestrian and vehicular traffic and is a key location into the main shopping streets of Cross Street and Transvaal Avenue. The impact of this view will be to both motorists and pedestrians.



Figure 29 View 13 – Transvaal Avenue

View 12 – Transvaal Avenue

Transvaal Avenue is a no-through-road off Cross Street, east of the subject site. This view is taken from the end of Transvaal Avenue looking south west at the site. The subject site is dominant in its visual impact from this view as development surrounding the site to the east is generally low-rise. This view is illustrated in **Figure 29**. The Transvaal Avenue streetscape has significance as a single storey historic residential street of Queen Anne style buildings. Council has recognised the significance by listing the streetscape as a Heritage Conservation Area under the Woollahra Local Environmental Plan.

Transvaal Street has low-moderate vehicular traffic and moderate pedestrian traffic to the boutique stores located along the street. The key visual impact on this viewing point would be to pedestrians and motorists on Transvaal Avenue. The existing Stamford Plaza building is located in the back drop to the heritage streetscape

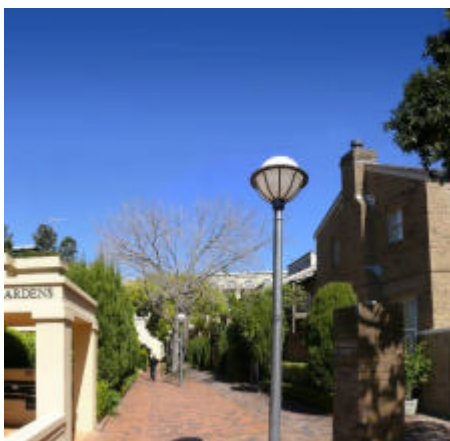


Figure 30 View 14 – Galbraith Walkway at William Street

View 13 – Galbraith Walkway at William Street

The Galbraith Walkway is a pedestrian only thoroughfare off the north side of William Street connecting to the southern boundary of the subject site. The Galbraith Walkway is part located on land owned by the proponent at 35-39 William Street and part owned by Woollahra Municipal Council. This view is taken from the northern end of the Galbraith Walkway, at William Street. The subject site forms the end of the Walkway, however existing trees somewhat impedes the views of development on the site. This view is illustrated in **Figure 30**.

As the walkway is a pedestrian only thoroughfare, the pedestrian view will be most impacted. Development may also to a limited extent impact on motorists view from William Street as they travel past the walkway.



Figure 31 View 15 – Corner of Cross Street and Bay Street

View 14 – Corner of Cross Street and Bay Street

The intersection of Cross Street and Bay Street is located west of the site's frontage to Cross Street. The subject site is not visually prominent from this viewing point given the significant size and number of trees in the streetscape in front of the subject site along Cross Street and the height of development adjacent to the subject site. This view is illustrated in **Figure 31**.

Both Cross Street and Bay Street are key streets within the Double Bay town centre. This intersection has both a moderate-high level of vehicular and pedestrian traffic. Accordingly, visual impacts of the proposed development will be to both to motorist and pedestrian views from this viewing point.

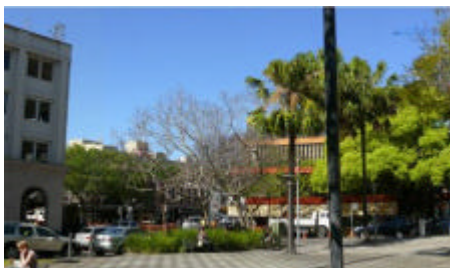


Figure 32 View 16 – Guilfoyle Park

View 15 – Guilfoyle Park

Guilfoyle Park is a small pocket park located within the Double Bay town centre at the intersection of Guilfoyle Street and Bay Street. This park is frequented by pedestrians and provides space and facilities to serve as passive open space. The park is located south west of the subject site. The view is illustrated in **Figure 32**.

Bay Street is one of the main streets within the Double Bay town centre. Guilfoyle Park is a small pocket park within the town centre. The park is frequented by some local workers and shoppers at various times of the day. The park is particularly used by employees during lunch time hours. The park is a long linear space between Bay Street and Ocean Street. The park widens at Bay Street with a space for seating. The key impact of the development from this viewing point would be to pedestrians and users of the park.

5 Assessment criteria

Our approach to rating the visual impact of the proposed mixed use development was based on the following two factors:

- Visibility; and
- Visual absorption capacity of the landscape/built environment.

The application of these two factors is described below.

5.1 Visibility

Visibility is a measure of the extent to which particular activities/components of a proposal may be visible from surrounding areas, the relative number of viewers, the period of view, viewing distance and context of view. Rationale for this aspect of visual assessment is that if a development is not visible, the impact is nil. If the number of people who would potentially see the development is low, then the visual impact would be lower than if a large number of people had the same view. If the viewer experiences the view for a long period of time then the visual impact is greater than if the viewer only has a glimpse of the development.

For the purposes of this study, categories of visibility have been defined as:

- High (H) – where a large number of people would see the proposed buildings at close distances over a long period of time;
- Moderate (M) – where a moderate number of people would see the proposed buildings at medium distance over a moderate period of time; or a large number of people would see it over a short period of time; or a small number of people would see it over a long period of time; and
- Low (L) – where the proposal was essential not visible or of negligible visibility.

The procedure for assessing visibility involved:

- Determination of various categories and situations from which components of the proposed development could potentially be visible (e.g. person in the public domain, motorist, resident); and
- Field inspection to determine the extent of visibility.

For the purpose of this study the quantitative criteria outlined in **Table 1** have been determined and used in the visibility assessment.

Table 1 Visibility assessment criteria

Criteria	Definition
Relative number of viewers	
High	> 1,000 people per day
Moderate	100-1,000 people per day
Low	< 100 people per day
Period of view	
Long term (high)	> 120 minutes
Moderate term (moderate)	1-120 minutes
Short term (low)	< 1 minute

5.2 Visual absorption capacity

‘Visual absorption capacity’ is an estimation of the capacity of the landscape and built environment to absorb development without creating significant visual change resulting in a reduction in scenic or visual quality. This is usually dependent of vegetation cover, landform and existing built form and this is influenced by the level of visual contrast between the proposed development and the existing elements within the landscape.

Town centres such as Double Bay have a high number of mid-rise buildings of one (1) to five (5) storeys and high site coverage. Double Bay, similar to other town centres located on Sydney’s foreshores, is located below several ridgelines. Several scattered high rise buildings are located above the ridgeline. This gives centres such as Double Bay a high visual absorption capacity due to the limited availability of uninterrupted views and the visual impact of existing structures. The scattered taller building close to the east, south and west ridges provide a backdrop of tall scattered buildings when the subject site is viewed from Sydney Harbour. The high density of vegetation in the surrounding area, particularly lining streets that arrive at Double Bay from Bellevue Hill and Darling Point, also generally screen the Double Bay town centre from many local vantage points.

The degree of contrast between the various elements of the development and the existing landscape setting in which they are located results from the scale, shape, colour, texture and reflectivity of the development. For the purpose of this study, the quantitative criteria outlined in **Table 2**, has been determined and used in the assessment of visual absorption capacity.

Table 2 Visual absorption capacity criteria

Criteria	Definition
High	Existing landscape and built environment able to absorb development. Low degree of visual contrast will result.
Moderate	Existing landscape able to absorb some development. Some visual contrast will result.
Low	Existing landscape unable to absorb development. High degree of visual contrast will result.

5.3 Visual impact rating

Table 3 provides a matrix that compares the visibility rating with the visual absorption capacity rating to determine the overall visual impact rating.

Table 3 Visual impact rating matrix

The overall visual impact rating was determined by comparing the visibility rating and visual absorption capacity rating.

	Visibility	Low	Medium	High
Visual absorption capacity		Visual impact rating		
High		Low	Low	Moderate
Medium		Low	Moderate	High
Low		Moderate	High	High