

ASHINGTON



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STAKEHOLDER BRIEFING PAPER No 1  
33 CROSS STREET, DOUBLE BAY  
DECEMBER 2008

# STAKEHOLDER BRIEFING PAPER No.1

PREPARED FOR

## 33 CROSS STREET, DOUBLE BAY

PREPARED BY  
URBAN CONCEPTS

FOR  
ASHINGTON

ISSUED  
DECEMBER 2008



**urban**concepts

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this briefing paper is to inform your organisation about the current status of the Ashington project and provide details of the forthcoming community and stakeholder consultation process.

Ashington understands the keen interest of the community in the redevelopment of 33 Cross Street. We are committed to thorough consultation with the community and key stakeholders prior to lodging the final development concept and Environmental Assessment with the NSW Minister for Planning early in 2009.

The information brief presents:

- / The development statistics for the existing hotel building.
- / The key steps in the design process that have now been finalised.
- / A description of the design parameters that have been formulated for the site.
- / The preferred development scenario being pursued for the site.
- / An explanation about merit based environmental and socio economic assessment.
- / An overview of the Part 3A planning process.
- / The forthcoming program of community and stakeholder consultation.

## 2. THE SITE AT A GLANCE

The site is located at 33 Cross Street, Double Bay mid block between Transvaal Avenue and Bay Street. (Refer Figure 1.1). The current buildings on the site comprise of a monolithic podium-style structure of approximately 8 – 9 conventional storeys (28.5m high), which is generally built to the boundaries. On the ground floor there is an internalised shopping arcade which provides 40 metres of retail frontage to Cross Street, and pedestrian connections (when open) to Galbraith Walkway to William Street to the north, the Georges Centre to the west and Transvaal Ave to the east. Originally built in 1990 and opened as the Ritz Carlton Hotel, the building was at this time renowned for being Sydney's premier hotel destination. Currently operating as the Stamford Plaza Hotel, it has 144 hotel rooms/suites and associated function facilities. Having sold the property the Stamford operators will cease their operation of the hotel in the building as of 31 March 2009 and vacate the property. As a result of this, from 31 March 2009 there will not be a hotel operating on the site (Refer Figure 1.2).

The statistics of the existing building are as follows:

- / Site Area: 3,675m<sup>2</sup>
- / Site coverage: >95%
- / Gross Floor Area 19,700m<sup>2</sup>
- / Floor Space Ratio 5.36:1
- / Height above ground level 28.5m
- / On site car parking provision in a basement arrangement for 173 vehicles.

The existing building is problematic and detracts from Double Bay for a number of reasons:

- / Although the design and layout of the hotel is typical of hotels constructed at the time, it does not reflect the requirements of a modern day five-star hotel, because of these design shortcomings and its scale the hotel is no longer profitable in this location and must therefore cease its operation.
- / The building in general is also of poor urban design. It essentially turns its back on the Double Bay Town Centre and, as a large monolithic structure, goes against the fine grain network of the area which provides for more intimate spaces for retail and socializing.
- / The building layout also provides poor quality connections to Cross Street, Transvaal Avenue and Galbraith Walkway. These linkages are important as they form part of the intimate network of laneways that reflect the character of Double Bay. In the current structure however these are all internal connections which are only accessible to the public between 7am and 6pm.
- / The internalised shopping arcade is outdated and out of character for Double Bay. It offers no street presence and does not provide active pedestrian spaces or create a flowing retail experience. These design and connectivity shortcomings are currently contributing to the underperformance of the retailers in the centre.
- / The age of the existing building also means that it performs quite poorly from an environmental sustainability perspective.



FIGURE 1.1 – Location 33 Cross Street, Double Bay



FIGURE 1.2 - The Stamford Plaza Hotel, 33 Cross Street, Double Bay

### 3. OUR VISION

#### A VIBRANT NEW DEVELOPMENT AN EXCLUSIVE CENTRE OF LUXURY

Ashington's vision for 33 Cross Street is to revitalise the Double Bay precinct by repositioning the existing property into a world class, five-star hotel and lifestyle destination – providing the area with a level of retail and residential amenity that reflects its exclusive location.

To contribute to the re-positioning of the Double Bay town centre, and for the re-development to be a success it must differentiate itself from its competitors. Ashington believe this can be achieved by delivering a design and product mix that positions the site as Sydney's pre-eminent, lifestyle, tourism and retail destination.

The unique characteristics of the site present an excellent opportunity to deliver a development that is truly exceptional. A considered design concept that opens up the site to the Double Bay streetscape, complimenting the exclusive local character whilst giving back to the community a vibrant public space to be enjoyed by all.

To achieve this, the existing building would be demolished to make way for a scheme that will lead the market in design quality and environmental sustainability. Driving this vision will be a commitment to;

- ✓ An iconic development incorporating exemplary design that will reinvigorate and brand Double Bay as Sydney's, and Australia's most exclusive dining, shopping and tourist destination.
- ✓ To provide Double Bay with an open, sun drenched piazza that will enhance the local shopping and dining experience, offering fine fashion and vibrant cafes.
- ✓ A built form that will improve sunlight to public spaces throughout the year.
- ✓ Deliver a hotel that will re-position the existing property into Australia's leading luxury boutique hotel, breathing life into this exclusive precinct and re-activating Double Bay as Sydney's most prestigious tourism destination.
- ✓ Creating pedestrian linkages to the laneways and thoroughfares that characterise the Double Bay shopping experience.
- ✓ Deliver a mix of uses that will generate flow on economic benefits to boost existing and surrounding retail businesses.

We believe that Ashington's capital investment of \$114 million in the project combined with the creation of 170 jobs in the retail and tourism sectors will substantially contribute to the future prosperity of Double Bay and the wider community.



FIGURE 3.1 – Artists impression of the proposed piazza



#### 4. THE DESIGN PROCESS TO DATE

- ✓ Ashington began work on the project in late 2007 with the appointment of Architectus, a leading planning, urban design and architectural firm to assess the site and current building and examine its potential for redevelopment and/or reuse.
- ✓ In early 2008 Ashington approached Woollahra Council and presented several options of the proposal with the intention of commencing design review and consultation with them on the project. Based on feedback received from Council Ashington formed a view at this time that Council was unwilling to consider a development on the site that was outside the planning controls, which the existing building already exceeds.
- ✓ In April 2008 Ashington held a Community Information Day to better understand community attitudes regarding the redevelopment of the Stamford Plaza Hotel site. The key areas of interest or concern recorded during these sessions have formed part of the design considerations for the site, wherever possible. It is recognised that no specific proposal was discussed with the community at this time.
- ✓ In August 2008 the NSW Department of Planning confirmed that pursuant to Clause 6 of the State Environmental Planning Policy (Major Projects) 2005 (hereafter referred to as the Major Projects SEPP), that the proposed development constituted a Major Project and in so doing determined that it is of state or regional significance. The basis of the declaration was the tourism benefits generated by the project were deemed to be of regional or state significance. Shortly afterwards the Director-General's Requirements for the project were issued by the Department
- ✓ In September 2008 the NSW Department of Planning acting on behalf of the Minister of Planning established an Urban Design Review Panel to examine the urban design principles and built form concept for the project and evaluate various redevelopment options for the site. These options are discussed in Section 5 of this report.
- ✓ The Panel included an Urban Designer representing the NSW Department of Planning, a senior planner from Woollahra Council, and an external design expert to chair the Panel. The findings of the Urban Design Review Panel included:
  - Preference for opening up the building form to create a public piazza as a destination rather than a thoroughfare.
  - Retail activation of street frontages in preference to internalised shopping arcades.
  - Pedestrian spaces that are vehicle free.
  - That floor space should be accommodated in slender buildings above podiums to facilitate solar access into the town centre and Cross Street and minimise view impact.
  - Podium levels should complement the scale of adjacent development at each site boundary.

This design review process was completed in November 2008 with the recommendations incorporated into the proposed scheme for the site.

Based on the feedback from the Urban Design Review Panel and the Department of Planning, Ashington and Architectus commenced the final phase in design development for the project, with the aim of finalising a design concept that responded effectively to the extensive process undertaken to date. This concept will be the basis for the Environmental Assessment process to now be embarked upon. The preferred concept is discussed in Section 6 of this report.

## 5. DESIGN PARAMETERS AND PLANNING OBJECTIVES

### 5.1 Key Design Principles

The key principles that have been formulated for this re-design of the site are to deliver an exemplary town centre development that will make a positive contribution to Double Bay by:

- ✓ Opening up the site to provide a central piazza with open air entries to enhance the pedestrian experience along Cross Street and through the site;
- ✓ Providing a retail and dining destination space;
- ✓ Providing greater continuity and activation at the street level;
- ✓ Providing greater connectivity through the site;
- ✓ Providing a better arrangement of floor space to reflect the finer grain nature of Double Bay and the more intimate retail, dining and socialising spaces. This is best achieved by opening up the existing enclosed monolithic building;
- ✓ Delivering a development that will have positive economic benefits for the Double Bay commercial and retail area through employment generation and flow-on activity for local businesses;
- ✓ Achieve a high level of design quality and amenity to attract the world's best hoteliers, retailers, tourists and shoppers;
- ✓ Demonstrate leadership in ecologically sustainable development for a mix of uses through energy and water efficiency initiatives that will go beyond minimum BASIX requirements.

An integral component of the proposed design is the inclusion of a luxury boutique hotel into the development. This is an essential part of Ashington's vision for the project and has been supported by Council, the community, the NSW Department of Planning and Tourism NSW. To enable a modern-day five-star hotel to operate effectively from the property, the building needs to be reconstructed, thereby delivering the best possible outcome for the site, and the future hotel operator.

A key requirement in delivering these design objectives is that the quantum of floor space of the existing building be retained in the redevelopment of the site, and that this floor space be re-distributed in a better fashion so the above improvements can be incorporated. Depending upon the outcome of this process, and the decision regarding the ultimate floor area and built form of any redevelopment, the alternate scenario to retain the project's viability is to refurbish the existing building envelope into primarily residential strata apartments. As discussed, the existing building's design and layout inhibits the effective operation of a modern-day five-star hotel and thus in this scenario, there would be no hotel as part of the redevelopment.

### 5.2 Design Option Analysis

Over the past twelve months, Ashington in conjunction with their project architect Architectus, have assessed a wide range of design options for the site. Each option has involved an assessment being made of the environmental impacts and urban design benefits of redistributing the existing quantum of floor space on the site in different forms, and creating through site linkages and areas of public domain of various sizes. In total over 25 options have been investigated.

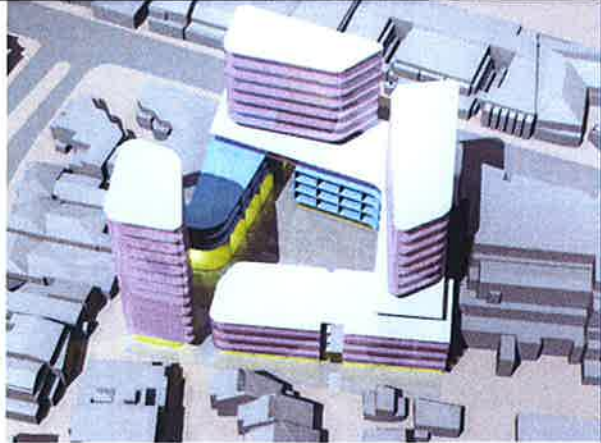
Figure 5.1 depicts the preferred option that originally formed the basis of Ashington's submission to the NSW Department of Planning that sought confirmation as to whether the project constituted a Major Project of Regional and State Significance. **This option is no longer Ashington's preferred development scenario for the site.**


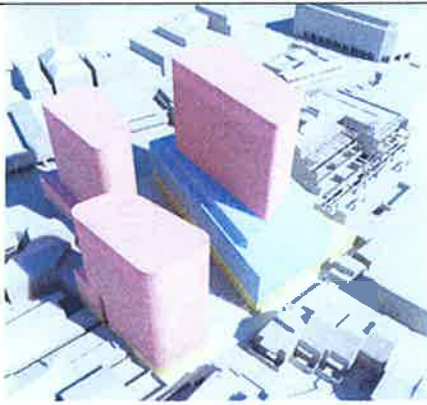
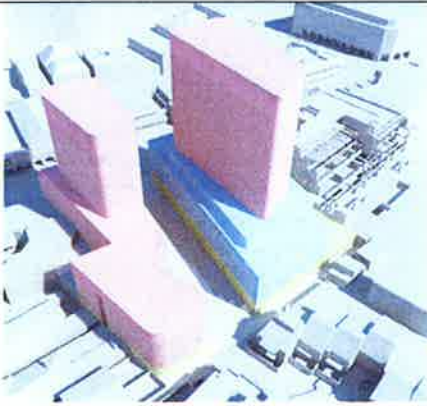
Following the Minister's declaration that the project was a project to which Part 3A of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 applied, the NSW Department of Planning established an Urban Design Review Panel to make recommendations on the form and scale of development as well as general site planning and urban design issues. The Urban Design Review Panel was made up of an independent urban design expert, an urban designer from the Department of Planning and a Senior Urban Design Planner from Woollahra Council.

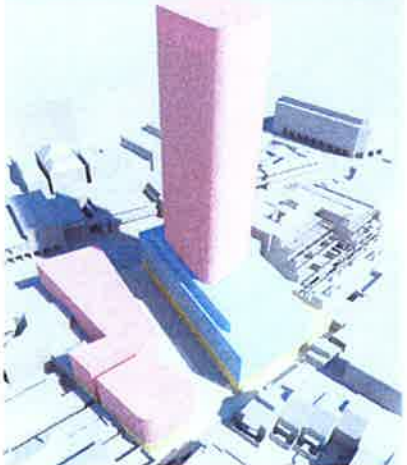
The Panel asked Ashington to investigate additional options having regard to the following issues:

- ✓ Reduction in the size and changes to the configuration of the piazza;
- ✓ Relationship to the adjacent Transvaal Avenue Heritage Conservation Area;
- ✓ Podium height and interface with immediately adjoining properties;
- ✓ Sunlight access and overshadowing of public domain areas within the Double Bay Town Centre.

Figures 5.2 – 5.5 presents the options that were examined by the Urban Design Review Panel during its deliberations.

OPTION	COMMENTARY
 <p data-bbox="240 1328 379 1350">FIGURE 5.1</p>	<p data-bbox="858 853 1361 1137">The option presented in the Clause 6/Preliminary Environmental Assessment, which requested the Minister for Planning's opinion as to whether the project was one to which Part 3A of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 included a podium and 3 taller building elements of 10, 12 and 14 storeys</p>

OPTION	COMMENTARY
 <p data-bbox="240 725 384 757">FIGURE 5.2</p>	<p data-bbox="852 271 1345 367">A 3 storey podium with open air through site links in two directions and a single taller element of 15 storeys.</p>
 <p data-bbox="240 1189 384 1220">FIGURE 5.3</p>	<p data-bbox="852 757 1345 853">A 4 storey podium with a single wide through site link and 3 taller elements of 9, 10 and 12 storeys.</p>
 <p data-bbox="240 1653 384 1682">FIGURE 5.4</p>	<p data-bbox="852 1220 1345 1317">A 4-5 storey podium with a single wide through site link and two taller elements of 11 and 14 storeys.</p>

OPTION	COMMENTARY
 <p data-bbox="244 752 379 772">FIGURE 5.5</p>	<p data-bbox="858 282 1326 365">A 4-5 storey podium with a single wide through site link and a single taller building element of 23 storeys.</p>

Source: Architectus

The findings of the Urban Review Panel, which concluded in November 2008, included:

- ✓ Preference for opening up the building form to create a public piazza as a destination rather than a thoroughfare;
- ✓ Retail activation of street frontages in preference to internalised shopping arcades;
- ✓ Pedestrian spaces that are vehicle free;
- ✓ That floor space should be accommodated in slender buildings above podiums to facilitate solar access into the town centre and Cross Street and minimise view impact;
- ✓ Podium levels should complement the scale of adjacent development at each site boundary.

Following the Urban Design Review Panel process, Ashington has continued to investigate other options to incorporate the findings of the Panel and to achieve the best balance of urban design outcomes for the site. The preferred option currently being advanced by Ashington and the one that will form the basis of the Environmental Assessment to be lodged with the NSW Department of Planning early in 2009 is detailed in Section 6.

### 5.3 Consistency with Woollahra Council Planning Controls

The site is zoned 3(a) Business General under the Woollahra Local Environmental Plan 1995 (hereafter referred to as the WLEP 1995). This zone *“is a broad commercial zone allowing a diversity of commercial and retail uses.”* Mixed use developments including retail, residential and hotels are permissible with consent in the 3(a) zone.

The maximum Floor Space Ratio (FSR) for the site, as contained under Clause 11 of the WLEP 1995, is 2.5:1. The existing building has an FSR of 5.36:1, which has been determined by a registered surveyor in accordance with the Woollahra LEP’s (1996) definition of gross floor area.

The maximum permissible height of a building, as defined in the Double Bay Centre Development Control Plan (hereafter referred to as the DCP 2002) is 16.5 metres. The existing building has a height of 28.5 metres which exceeds the maximum height limit.

It is noted that the controls in relation to floor space and height applicable to the subject site were created by Woollahra Council after the construction of the existing building.

As the current building exceeds the existing controls for both the height and floor space, it is very unlikely that there will be any redevelopment of the site that will comply with the current controls. The reason for this is that it will be extremely unviable to redevelop a site to less than half of the existing floor area, in addition, as noted above, the most likely available alternative is to simply convert the existing structure into residential apartments within the current building envelope.

The question of non conformity with local planning controls pertaining to floor space and height has been paramount to the public debate surrounding Ashington's plans and design approach to this site. Given the current non-compliance of the existing building with regard to height and FSR, the approach has been, as is the commonly accepted practice in the property industry, to retain the existing quantum of floor space in the redevelopment, and redistribute it in a way that delivers the economic and public benefits outlined earlier in this paper, whilst making a significant, positive contribution to the site and the Double Bay Town Centre.


In providing such a redistribution of floor space, and allocating such a large proportion of the site to public spaces that are open to the sky, ultimately means that the floor space 'removed' to create this public piazza must be redistributed around the periphery. This translates to additional height. However, as described earlier, and also endorsed by the Urban Design Review Panel established by the NSW Department of Planning, this redistribution of the existing floor space to some elements that are taller, also means that there are significant areas of the site where the height will be substantially lower, with a large area (the piazza space) reduced to ground level. The design provides an overall better outcome for the site and greater benefits to the Double Bay community than the existing building.

Ashington acknowledges that there are members of the community that contend that any new building should comply with the existing planning controls. Accordingly, the proposal is being advanced on the basis of a merit assessment to demonstrate that the positive urban design, environmental and socio economic benefits derived from the proposal justify the non compliance with the existing planning controls and are also far superior to the alternative redevelopment option.

## 6. THE PREFERRED DESIGN CONCEPT

### 6.1 Overview

The architectural plans for the preferred design concept are presently being finalised by Architectus. This will be the concept that will be presented mid January during the community consultation process. The preferred option is illustrated by the mass and scale model presented at Figure 6.1 and the Ground Floor Plan diagram at Figure 6.2.

OPTION	COMMENTARY
	A 3 to 5 storey podium surrounding an open air piazza with site links in five directions and 2 taller elements of 14 storeys from ground level.

FIGURES 6.1 – Mass and Scale Model of the Proposed Design for 33 Cross Street, Double Bay



FIGURE 6.2 - Ground floor plan – concept (Final layout subject to change)

The form of the proposal comprises a podium element ranging in height from three to five storeys surrounding a new piazza and two taller building elements, each fourteen storeys in height above street level and, positioned towards Cross Street.

The preferred development concept will involve the following elements:

- ✓ A luxury 5 star world class boutique hotel with 60-70 rooms and associated facilities.
- ✓ 30-40 apartments of a mix of sizes and bedroom configurations.
- ✓ Premium boutique and specialist retail tenancies at ground level surrounding the open air piazza and include such uses as signature restaurants and cafes, high-end fashion retail, beauty spa etc.
- ✓ A vibrant open air piazza as a focus of the lifestyle destination development, providing for alfresco dining and socializing uses.
- ✓ Public domain areas providing 1,500 square metres of public open space in the form of through site links (to the Georges centre, Transvaal Avenue, Galbraith Walkway) and the central piazza with two gateway connections to Cross Street.
- ✓ Substantial site and public domain landscape works to the through site linkages and the central piazza including feature design elements.
- ✓ Retention of the existing basement car park structure for use by the residents, hotel and public. The basement areas will also house a significant portion of the services plant and environmental initiatives to keep these out of sight and not detract from the amenity or appearance of the building. It is currently proposed approximately 85 car spaces will be provided.

A description of each component of the proposed development is provided below.

### A Luxury Boutique Hotel

The hotel is integral to the development and Ashington's vision is to create Australia's leading boutique hotel as part of the proposed development at Double Bay. Expressions of Interest have been received and negotiations are already underway with four of the world's top hotel groups.

The hotel will accommodate 60-70 hotel suites subject to final design, and will generally occupy the podium levels of the development with the lobby at ground level fronting onto Cross Street. It is envisaged that the hotel lobby will act as the concierge for the whole development. The hotel will also include facilities such as business lounge, bar and pool area. The proposed concept responds to and addresses the current shortfall in the supply of 5 star hotel accommodation which Tourism NSW indicates is essential if Sydney is to grow its tourism and business sectors. Both Council and the community have also indicated support for the inclusion of a hotel as part of the re-development.

There is commentary in the public arena to suggest the proposed 60-70 room hotel represents a reduced tourism usage of the site. The existing hotel at 144 rooms has proven to be unviable and is currently operating significantly below its maximum capacity, as a result of this it will cease operation in March 2009. Investigation undertaken by Ashington and the advice received from hotel operators and industry groups has confirmed that this location is no longer viable for a large format five-star hotel, and that a boutique hotel product of the size proposed is the most appropriate format for this site.

It is not expected that the reduction in the size of the hotel will cause any negative impact to economic activity in Double Bay due to the fact that the existing hotel currently operates significantly below its maximum capacity and the new proposed hotel will be targeted at a market with substantially more spending capacity.



## Apartments (Hotel Residences)

The proposal makes provision for 30 to 40 residential apartments of varying sizes and configurations. The Hotel Residences concept that has worked successfully in cities such as New York and London, is a relatively new residential concept to Australia. The Hotel Residences will be privately owned luxury apartments that will enjoy access to the services that the hotel operator provides on an as-needed, user-pays basis. Services such as concierge, housekeeping, room service and valet parking offered by the hotel to guests will also be available to the residents of the apartments. As such, the employment requirement for the hotel to service both hotel guests and the apartment residents will be higher than would be the case for a similar hotel without the residences component. Research indicates that the Hotel Residences concept will be a very attractive and desired housing model for the Eastern Suburbs demographic.

The residences will be located in both the podium and the taller elements of the development where it is envisaged that there will be only one apartment per floor on many levels. The apartments will most likely carry the brand of the hotel operator and will enjoy access to the amenities and services offered by the hotel.

## High End Retail Tenancies

Double Bay has an intricate network of laneways which give the town centre its unique fine grained retail environment. The activation of the ground plane with new high end retail uses will create a hub of passive recreational activities and shopping for public enjoyment. The proposed design provide 225 metres of retail frontage to Cross Street and to the public spaces within the site, which is a 450% increase in retail frontage compared with the existing internalised shopping arcade. A retail strategy is currently being prepared, which will aim to attract high end retail brands not currently represented in the retail mix of Double Bay.

## Piazza and Through Site Linkages

The redevelopment of the site provides an opportunity to create a hub for public passive recreation and a retail precinct with a high level of amenity that will become recognised as a destination in its own right.

The proposal aims to provide high quality open air through site links in five directions, with two connections from Cross Street to the public piazza at the centre of the site. The five separate access points will improve permeability of the development and its surroundings and will improve pedestrian amenity.

At the Cross Street frontage these connections are designed to preserve the integrity of the street wall. This design response was recognised in the Double Bay DCP as a desirable urban design outcome for Cross Street. The width of the connections will be large enough to maintain a visual connection with Cross Street whilst the new piazza will use high quality materials and finishes, colour and landscaping to draw pedestrians into the space.

## On-site Parking

The proposal is to utilise and reconfigure the existing basement car park to create 85 spaces. While this is a reduction in the existing on site car parking provision, opportunities are being considered to enhance retail parking supply within the Double Bay Centre off site. This could include providing valet parking services to Council's carparks as part of the development. The existing driveway arrangement to the basement car park will be maintained. There will be no change to the existing arrangements for 45 Cross Street.

## 6.2 Architectural Style

The architectural style being adopted for this proposal is described by the project architects, Architectus as Modern European incorporating glass, timber, natural stone and copper finishes. Refer Figure 6.3 – 6.5

The hotel and podium levels will be constructed from off-form concrete punctuated by glass balustrades. Timber and copper finishes will be used to add warmth and colour.

The retail tenancies will all be at ground level and will present as frameless glass shop fronts. A generous 4-4.5 metres ground to ceiling height is proposed for these spaces to maximise light and transparency.

The public piazza space will utilise high quality stone finishes. The landscaping plans for this space are presently being designed and will incorporate a water feature.

The glazing of the residential buildings will provide for transparency of structure and will be positioned to appear to 'float' over the podium.



FIGURE 6.3 - 33 Cross Street – Proposed Concept



FIGURE 6.4 – Hotel Lobby – Proposed Concept



FIGURE 6.5 – Public Piazza – Proposed Concept

## 7. ASSESSING THE MERIT OF THE PREFERRED DESIGN

A description of how Ashington will approach the merit based assessment for this project is presented below.

### 7.1 Assessing Environmental Impacts and Benefits

#### Building Height, Form and Massing

Ashington believes that the redistribution of floor space to improve the urban design and amenity of the site is most effectively achieved by increasing building height above the existing height in some areas of the site, whilst reducing the height in other parts. Important issues that will be considered in formulating the Environmental Assessment are, visual impact, view loss, overshadowing of the public areas particularly Cross Street and Transvaal Avenue, the local and regional context of the site and the impact on the heritage significance of the Transvaal Avenue Heritage Conservation Area.

#### Overshadowing and Solar Access

Detailed shadow diagrams for the proposed development will be submitted with the Environmental Assessment to illustrate the full extent of overshadowing impacts of the proposal on surrounding private properties and the public domain. Shadows will be considered for 9am, 12noon and 3pm at midwinter being June 21, December 21 and the equinoxes March 21 and September 21. Maintaining solar access to areas of public domain areas is an important consideration in the planning of new development for town centres particularly during lunchtime hours throughout the year. Key times of the day that will be assessed are between 12pm and 2pm.

Existing and proposed shadow diagrams will be compared. Consideration will also be given to the overshadowing impacts from other sites in the town centre to determine the net effect of additional overshadowing from the proposed development. The shadow diagrams are currently being finalised and will be presented at the consultation sessions in January 2009.

#### Visual Impact

Full visual impact assessments of the proposal are being prepared for the Environmental Assessment. Architectus has considerable experience in preparing visual impact assessments for major development proposals both on behalf of applicants and for Consent Authorities. The methodology draws on Architectus's experience with preparing the visual assessment of the Rose Bay Marina Development on behalf of Woollahra Council.

The visual impact assessment will involve extensive field work, the establishment of assessment criteria, the analysis of the existing visual environment in terms of the immediate and local contexts, visual simulations of the proposal from important vantage points in the public domain within the visual catchment, a description of the visual impact of the proposal from the selected viewing points in terms of visibility, visual absorption capacity and resulting in the visual impact for each view.

The visual assessment will consider views from the immediate vicinity (short range), local (mid range) and regional (long range) views of the proposal. To illustrate the visual impacts of the proposal, a set of 3D photomontages will be prepared. These will be accompanied by existing views from the designated viewing points for comparison with the simulated views of the proposal.

The viewing locations have been chosen to show what the proposal will look like from various key public domain areas, including but not limited to Sydney Harbour, Clark Island (regional views), New South Head Road and Double Bay Wharf (local views) and Cross Street and Guilfoyle Park (immediate views).

The same process will be applied to demonstrate and assess impact from private residential properties.

The results of the view analysis will be presented at the consultation sessions in January 2009.

## Transportation, Traffic, Vehicle Access and Bicycle Parking

Traffic, vehicle access and bicycle parking solutions are currently being considered. Ashington has engaged leading transport and traffic consultants Halcrow MWT. A Traffic and Parking Assessment is currently being prepared to address the specific Director-General's requirements requested by the NSW Department of Planning, the Roads and Traffic Authority and Woollahra Council. The assessment will be presented at the consultation sessions in mid January 2009.

## Environmentally Sustainable Development and Building Sustainability

The redevelopment of this site provides the opportunity to deliver a building that achieves sustainable outcomes in terms of water, energy efficiency and transportation.

Water efficiency initiatives being investigated include rainwater collection for site irrigation, grey water recycling for toilet flushing and laundry use, and water efficient bathroom fittings and fixtures such as shower heads and dual flush toilets.

Energy efficiency initiatives currently being investigated are gas-fired hot water, high energy efficient heating and cooling and energy efficient appliances.

## 7.2 Assessing Socio-Economic Impacts and Benefits

### The Local Economy

With a capital investment of \$114 million, the generation of 170 jobs, and the attraction of tourism, visitors and high quality retailers and hoteliers to the Double Bay area the project will play an important role in achieving state and regional planning objectives by providing an 'exemplary town centre development that will stimulate the revitalisation of the Double Bay Town Centre.'

### Local and Metropolitan Planning Strategies

Ashington believe that our vision compliments the key objectives outlined in the 2008/2011 Woollahra Council Management Plan as follows:

- ✓ Its enhancement of the quality of the built environment in a sustainable manner,
- ✓ By complimenting existing development whilst respecting neighbourhood amenities, and;
- ✓ By significantly enhancing important public spaces through the creation of an open air piazza

It is also our belief that the project is in line with the objectives set out in the NSW Government Metropolitan Strategy for Sydney and the Draft East Subregional Strategy

prepared by the NSW Department of Planning. The proposal promotes tourism and the sustainable economic growth of the Town Centre as well as utilises a strong existing network of infrastructure to support the Government's targets for higher density in city centres whilst limiting this extent to balance the other needs and desires of the project.

## Tourism

The April 2008 edition of *The Australian Hotel Development Register* produced by Jones Lang LaSalle Hotels states that;

*'Hotel development in Australia remains largely unfeasible as hotel values have not kept pace with the growth in construction costs over the last twelve years - the peak of the last development cycle. Thus, the viability for the development and construction of new hotels is extremely limited.'*

In order to build a hotel at 33 Cross Street, and for it to be both viable for the operator and Ashington, a mixed use development that also incorporates retail and residential is the only feasible option. With the Stamford Plaza Hotel closing in March 2009, this mix of uses provides the only alternative for a hotel to re-open on the site.

Tourism NSW has identified that the luxury, five-star market is not being serviced adequately with a chronic lack of supply of hotels in this category to service growing domestic and international demand.

Tourism NSW reports that of all domestic travellers in Australia in 2007, 9.4 million were luxury travellers. NSW received 2.8 million of these luxury visitors, which accounted for 12% of all visitors to the state, and an expenditure of \$2.7 billion. Of all international visitors to Australia, 1.5 million were in the luxury segment, with expenditure totalling \$2.6 billion. Sydney was the main gateway for almost half of these international luxury visitors.

Further research has also shown that interest in visiting Double Bay from both the local and interstate markets has declined between 2004 and 2007 (Sydney Precincts Research 2007, Tourism NSW). A landmark development that provides a unique combination of retail and dining options and a world class hotel will no doubt contribute to reversing this trend.

## 8. THE PART 3A PLANNING PROCESS

### What is a Major Project?

A development is classified as a "Major Project" if it is deemed to provide benefits to the broader regional community, and must be assessed on criteria that goes beyond the local planning controls. Such projects are identified in the Major Projects SEPP under several categories including Specified Sites, Development Type, Retail, Residential or Commercial Projects, Rail and Related Transport Facilities, Marina Projects and Critical Infrastructure Projects.

In the case of 33 Cross Street Double Bay the Minister for Planning has formed the opinion that the proposal falls under Clause 17 of Schedule 1 of the Major Project SEPP as follows:

#### Clause 17 Tourist Convention and Entertainment Facilities

Development for the purpose of tourist related facilities, major convention and exhibition facilities or multi use entertainment facilities that:

- (a) has a capital investment value of more than \$100 million; or
- (b) employs 100 or more people; or
- (c) has a capital investment value of more than \$5 million and is located in an environmentally sensitive area of State Significance.

As the Ashington proposal has a capital investment value of \$114 million, and will generate over 170 jobs in the hotel, residential and retail sectors the proposal falls under the criteria of Clause 17 and consequently was declared a Major Project by the Minister.

*"Tourism precincts in excess of \$100million or with more than 100 employees are automatically referred to the NSW Government for assessment under the Major Projects State Environmental Planning Policy. While the project included residential dwellings, it meets the major projects criteria.*

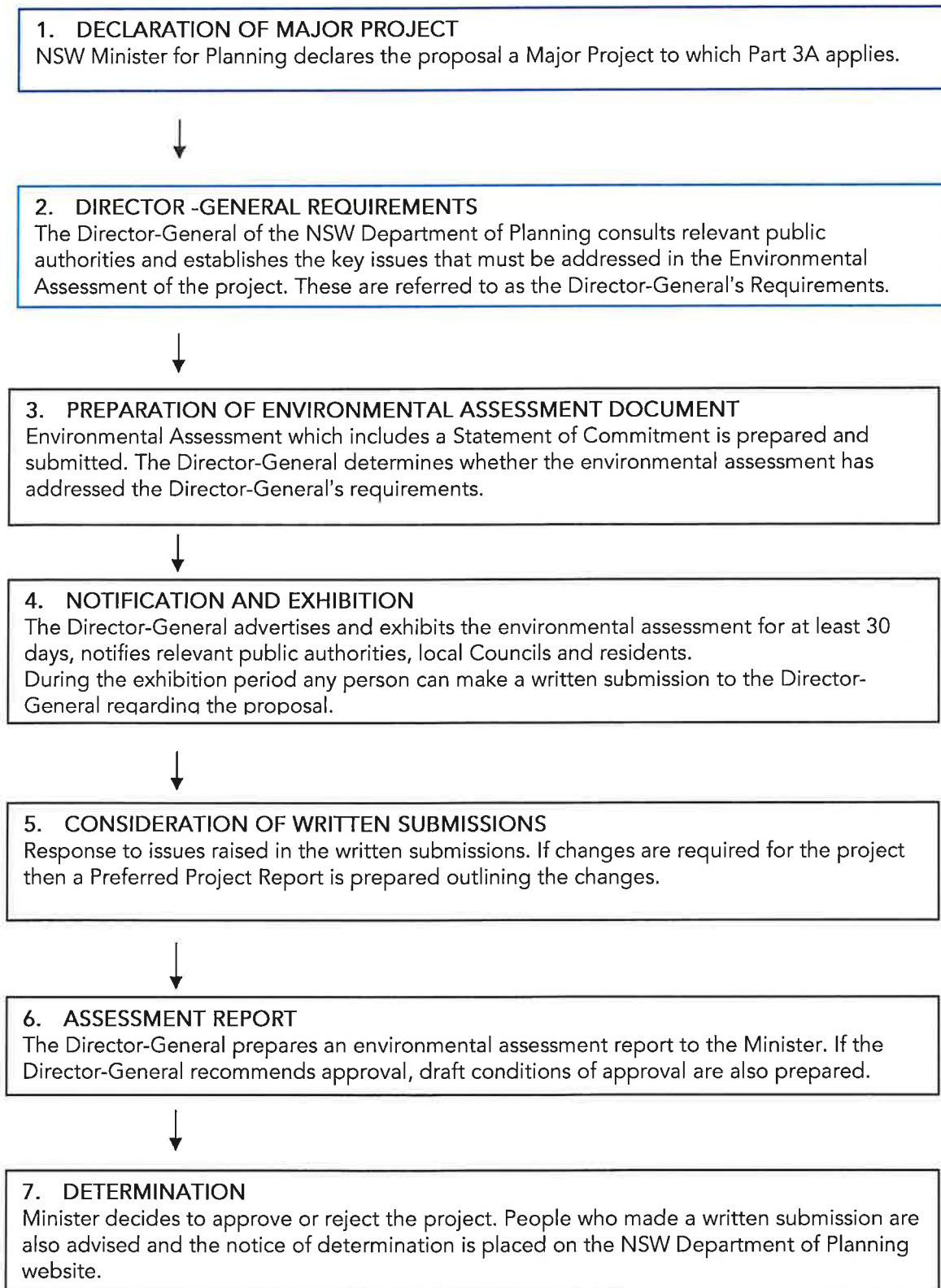
*This threshold is in place to ensure the NSW Government assesses projects which are of regional and State significance.*

*Consequently, the Department of Planning does not believe it made a discretionary decision to "call in" the proposal at the Stamford.*

*After consulting with the Woollahra Council, the department has issued requirements outlining the key issues which need to be addressed by the proponent before any proposal is placed on public exhibition."*

Sam Haddad  
Director-General  
NSW Department of Planning  
Wentworth Courier, December 3, 2008

FIGURE 8.1 - THE MAJOR PROJECT ASSESSMENT PROCESS: OUTLINE ONLY



Indicates that this stage in the planning process has been completed.



## 9. THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

A Communication Plan has been prepared for the project and submitted to the NSW Department of Planning in accordance with the Director-General's Requirements for the Environmental Assessment. This plan establishes the methodology that will be used by Ashington for undertaking community and stakeholder consultation.

The methodology recognises two phases to the Consultation Process:

### Phase 1 PREPARATION OF THE ENVIRONMENT ASSESSMENT

This phase will communicate community information about the Part 3A Process, the reasons for the projects classification as a Major Project, Urban Design Review Panel Findings, provide an explanation of design parameters and the preferred design concept for the site. Feedback obtained through this phase of the project will contribute to the finalisation of the design concept and the public domain plan prior to the lodgement of the Environmental Assessment.

To be undertaken between early December 2008 and the end of January 2009

### Phase 2 POST LODGEMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

This phase will explain the Environmental Assessment documentation and will coincide with the notification and advertisement of the application by the NSW Department of Planning.

To be undertaken between end January and end February 2009

It is recognised that pending development consent being issued for the project that an extensive consultation process would need to be prior to the commencement of the demolition and construction phases. This consultation would involve liaison with the Double Bay retail and business community to minimise disruption to their operations. It would also include substantial consultation with adjoining landowners particularly at the pre demolition phase, incorporating required engineering inspections and dilapidation reports.

### 9.1 The Range of Consultation Initiatives

Phase 1 of the consultation process incorporates a range of initiatives designed to keep residents and integral stakeholders informed about the project, and provide the opportunity to submit feedback to Ashington on the development concept prior to the lodgement of the Environmental Assessment with the NSW Department of Planning

These initiatives include:

**A free call 1800 number and email address** which will enable you to register for consultation events and express your views. This will be serviced Monday through to Friday during business hours 9am-5pm. All calls and comments received will be logged onto a feedback register. The Ashington Double Bay Information Line is 1800 068 018. The email address is [doublebay@urbanconcepts.net.au](mailto:doublebay@urbanconcepts.net.au)

**The Ashington Double Bay Website.** On the website you will find information relating to the Part 3A Planning Process, the development solution for the site, project fact sheets addressing urban design, tourism and economic benefits. Information concerning the consultation process and a feedback form where you can register your comments about the

project. You will also be able to view important documents related to the project including the Environmental Assessment once it has been lodged with the NSW Department of Planning. The project website address is [www.ashingtondoublebay.net.au](http://www.ashingtondoublebay.net.au)

**Regular Media Articles.** Ashington will run regular display advertisements in local media to update you on the project and encourage participation at the Community Forums.

**Community Newsletters.** Ashington will distribute newsletters to local residents at integral stages in the process. The first newsletter was distributed the week commencing 15<sup>th</sup> December 2008. Copies of this newsletter are also enclosed for your information and circulation. The second newsletter will be distributed in mid January 2009.

**Community Forums.** Ashington will hold a series of community forums between Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> January and Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2009. Breakfast, lunchtime and evening forum sessions will be held providing a range of times for the communities convenience. Registration for a Community Forum Session can be done via the registration form on the website [www.ashingtondoublebay.net.au](http://www.ashingtondoublebay.net.au) or by calling the Ashington Double Bay Information line on 1800 068 018. The Community Forums will be held at the Stamford Hotel, Double Bay.

**Stakeholder Briefing Papers.** A project of this scale generates substantial interest from a range of stakeholders. Ashington will provide briefings throughout the course of the Environmental Assessment preparation and exhibition process. Ashington will also prepare at regular intervals in the process, information briefing papers such as this one to facilitate understanding about the project.

## 9.2 The Consultation Program

### Overview

The Consultation Program for this project is detailed in Figure 9.1 below.

**FIGURE 9.1 – CONSULTATION PROGRAM**

<b>PHASE 1 – EARLY DECEMBER 2008 – LATE FEBRUARY 2009</b>	
COMMUNITY INFORMATION ABOUT THE PART 3A PROCESS, NSW DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING URBAN DESIGN REVIEW PANEL OUTCOMES, DESIGN PARAMETERS AND THE PREFERRED DESIGN CONCEPT	
Placement of Media Display Advertisements	Mid December & throughout January
Distribute Community Newsletter 1 Distribute Community Newsletter 2	Mid December Mid January
Stakeholder Information/Direct Liaison/Briefings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Woollahra Council</li> <li>• Chamber of Commerce/Double Bay Partnership</li> <li>• State Government Agencies and Tourism/Heritage Groups</li> <li>• Special Interest and Resident Groups</li> <li>• Adjoining Landowners</li> </ul>	Mid December through to Mid January
Distribute Stakeholder Correspondence/Briefing Papers	Mid December and Mid January
Community Forums	17 <sup>th</sup> – 22 <sup>nd</sup> January
Feedback Questionnaires and Market Research	Mid January – End January
Preparation of Consultation Report on Phase 1 submitted to the NSW Department of Planning as part of the Environmental Assessment Documentation.	End January

PHASE 2 – 2009 AT NOTIFICATION AND EXHIBITION OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT	
Placement of Media Display Advertisement	Early February
Distribute Community Newsletter 3	Early February
Distribute Stakeholder Briefing Paper	Early February
Stakeholder and Community Briefing Sessions as required	Early February
Community Information Drop In Centre	Establishment to coincide with notification and exhibition of the Environmental Assessment ( timing dependent on space availability)

\* *Timings are estimates and contingent upon Urban Design Review Panel program and the timing of lodgement of the Environmental Assessment.*

### Community Forum Sessions

Phase 1 of the program makes provision for a series of Community Forums which are scheduled to occur between 17<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> January, 2009. The program for the forum events is detailed in Figure 9.2 below.

**FIGURE 9.2 COMMUNITY FORUM PROGRAM**

Saturday 17 January	Tuesday 20 January	Wednesday 21 January	Thursday 22 January
9.30am – 11.30am	7.30am - 9.30am	7.30am – 9.30am	7.30am – 9.30am
1.00pm – 3.00pm	12.30pm – 2.30pm	12.30pm – 2.30pm	12.30pm – 2.30pm
4.00pm – 6.00pm	7pm – 9pm	7pm – 9pm	7pm – 9pm

The sessions will be held at the Stamford Hotel. Registration at the Forum events is encouraged to ensure that there is a place available at the event of choice. The Forum events will cater for groups of up to 25 participants will present to smaller groups due to the complexity involved in explaining the development concept in its entirety. It is also felt that smaller groups will provide participants with the opportunity to ask questions directly of the developer and the architect in preference to exhibition displays or large public meetings and can be more effectively documented for reporting to the NSW Department of Planning.

## 10. CONCLUSION

Ashington looks forward to working with the community and integral stakeholders to achieve an exciting and valued development at 33 Cross Street.

We ask that you assess the development in its entirety having regard to its design, economic and planning merits.

If you would like further information about the project or would like to arrange a meeting to discuss any aspect of the development please phone the information line on 1800 068 018.