

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

August 2009

Prepared for **Ashington**



Major Project Application MP 08_0100
Preferred Project
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
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1 Introduction

This document is the Visual Impact Assessment prepared by Architectus on behalf of Ashington in support of the Preferred Project Report for Major Project Application 08_0100 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 when viewed from the public domain as well as for some private residences. The Visual Impact Assessment that was exhibited with the Environmental Assessment has been amended in response to a request from the Department of Planning dated 12 June 2009. The Department of Planning request that the visual assessment be updated to reflect the Preferred Project and to undertake analysis private properties, where concerns were raised regarding potential view loss and visual impact. The following additional views have been assessed:

Public domain views:

- Cross Street, directly opposite the site;
- Transvaal Avenue, directly opposite the site; and
- Galbraith Walkway, adjacent to the site.

Private views:

- 327A Edgecliff Road, Woollahra; and
- 87 Ocean Street, Double Bay.

The Proponent sought to gain access to additional private properties where concerns were raised about the potential visual impact and view loss as a result of the development. Views were identified in the submission from No High Rise in Double Bay, a local resident's action group. The Residents Action Group This group was approach to facilitate access to these properties, however access could not be provided.

1.1 Background

The Visual Impact Assessment accompanies the Preferred Project Report. The purpose of the Visual Impact Assessment prepared for the Environmental Assessment was to address the requirements in the DGRs 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.

This report should be read in conjunction with the Visual Impact Assessment, provided at Appendix C of the Environmental Assessment.

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 makes 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;
- Development of a contextual model;
- 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.

A contextual model of the Double Bay town centre, Edgecliff and the surrounding area including Darling Point has also been prepared as part of the Preferred Project design development. This contextual model, discussed in **Section 4** of this Visual Impact Assessment, was prepared to evaluate the densities and heights of the surrounding area.

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 50mm 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 preferred project

The proposal which was exhibited with the Environmental Assessment has been amended in response to issues raised in public and government submissions. The proposal includes:

- Demolition of the existing hotel and associated retail arcade at ground level;
- Reconfiguration of the two (2) existing basement car parking levels with provision of 135 car spaces, bicycle parking, storage and building plant;
- Erection of a three (3) to five (5) storey podium, six (6) storey tower to the north east corner, a 14 storey plus plant building to the south west, and an 11 storey plus plant building to the south east corner of the site;
- A luxury five-star boutique hotel, comprising 66 hotel rooms, situated within the five (5) storey podium;
- Forty four (44) residential apartments to be situated in the tower elements of the building, as well as in the podium;
- At ground floor, 1424sqm 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 hotel bar/restaurant situated on level 4; and
- A hotel pool situated on level 4.

The floor space ratio (FSR) of the proposed development is 5.32:1. This is equal to the current FSR of 5.32:1 (Refer to surveyor's advice at **Appendix Q**). This includes 8909m² of residential floor space; 5117m² of hotel floor space and 1424m² of retail floor space (including speciality retail, ground floor restaurant, cafés, delicatessen etc).

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 piazza of 800m². The inclusion of additional open space on the site results 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

The fine-grained piazza space and through site links will make a positive contribution to the Double Bay as a publicly access space.

3.1 Built form

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 three (3) to five (5) storeys in height. Three (3) taller elements of 15 storeys, 12 storeys and 6 storeys are proposed above the podium.

When compared to the exhibited Environmental Assessment scheme, the preferred project results in a reduction in height to the south eastern tower from 14 storeys plus plant, to 11 storeys plus plant, a reduction of 7.9 metres. This building has also been setback from Cross Street to improve its street address and minimise visual intrusion on the surrounding streetscapes. The reduced height of the south eastern tower provides for a difference in scale and relates to the heritage conservation area to the east.

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 in between. The towers are also setback from Cross Street so as to reduce their visual intrusion on the streetscape. When viewed from the north and south, the two towers appear as two, separate, slender building elements of varying height. The quality in design, articulation and varying heights of the buildings will create a visually interesting skyline.

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

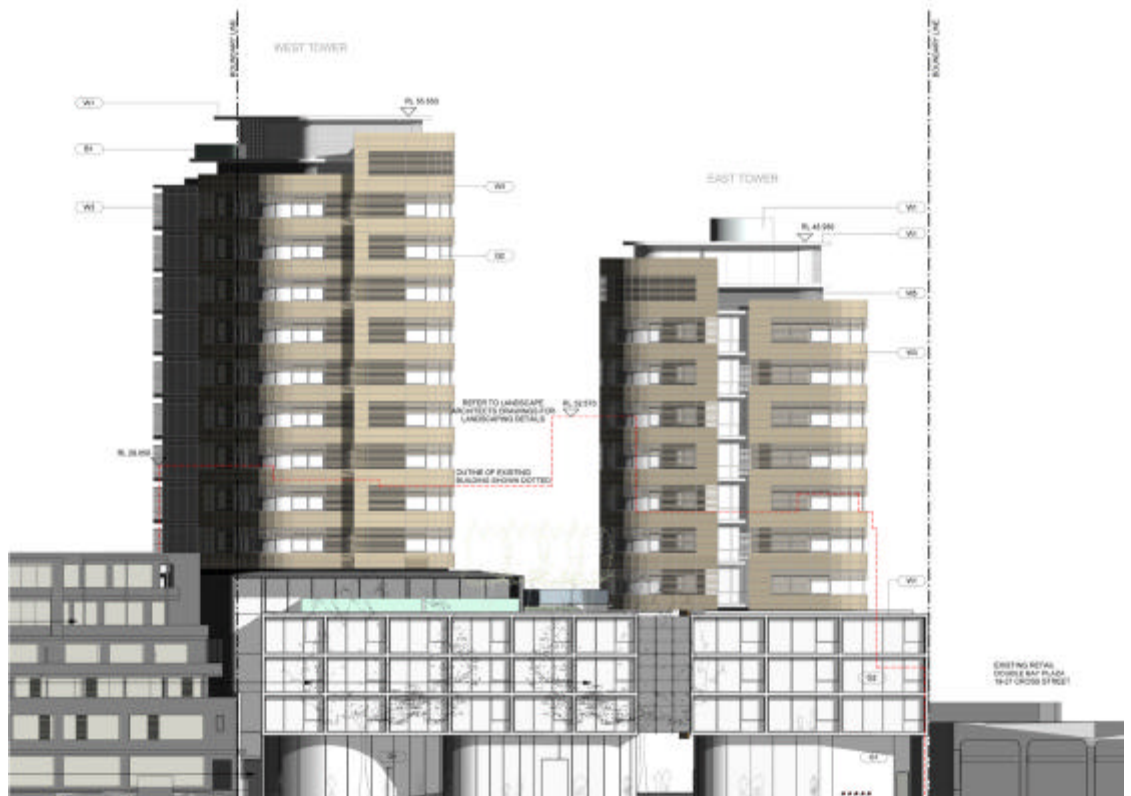


Figure 4 Cross Street elevation

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

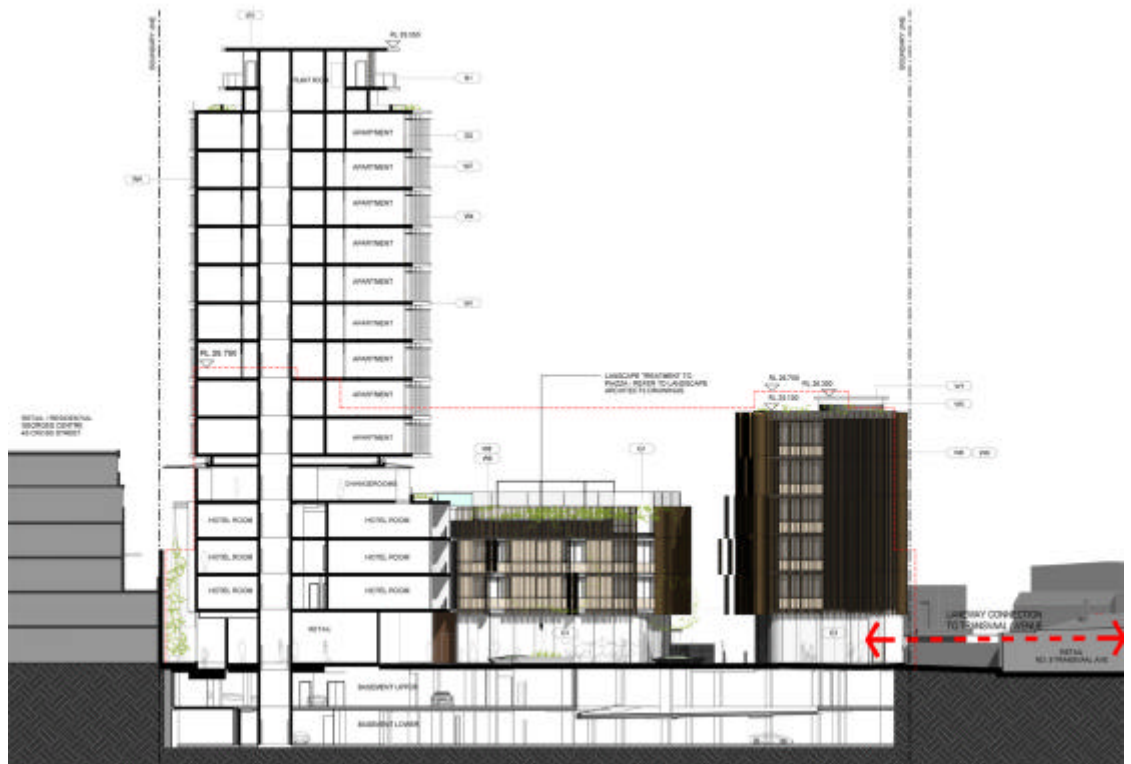


Figure 5 Section

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

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 sections 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 an existing uninviting façade. The north east and northern façades are to be clad in terracotta and timber battens for screening purposes. Operable timber batten screens are also proposed. 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. In the recommendations of specialist engineers Wintech, glazing used throughout the development will have a reflectivity index of less than 20% to minimise glare.

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 from street views surrounding the site, 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 built form

The existing building has a maximum height of 28.5 metres measured from the top of the lift overrun. 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. From the waters of Double Bay, the existing building becomes more highly visible as the viewer approach the foreshore. As the height is below the ridgeline, it still is somewhat absorbed into the surrounding built form and topography.

From most local views, vegetation covers or screens most of the existing building. From some vantage points in the immediate vicinity, the upper levels of the building are visible of Edgecliff and Woollahra. From these points, the monolithic nature of the building does not complement the Double Bay town centre. 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.

The views of the contextual 3D models shown in **Figure 6**, **Figure 7** and **Figure 8** demonstrate the density of built form in the surrounding area, beyond the Double Bay town centre. There are several areas a scattering which have a high concentration of taller buildings in the vicinity of the Double Bay town centre.

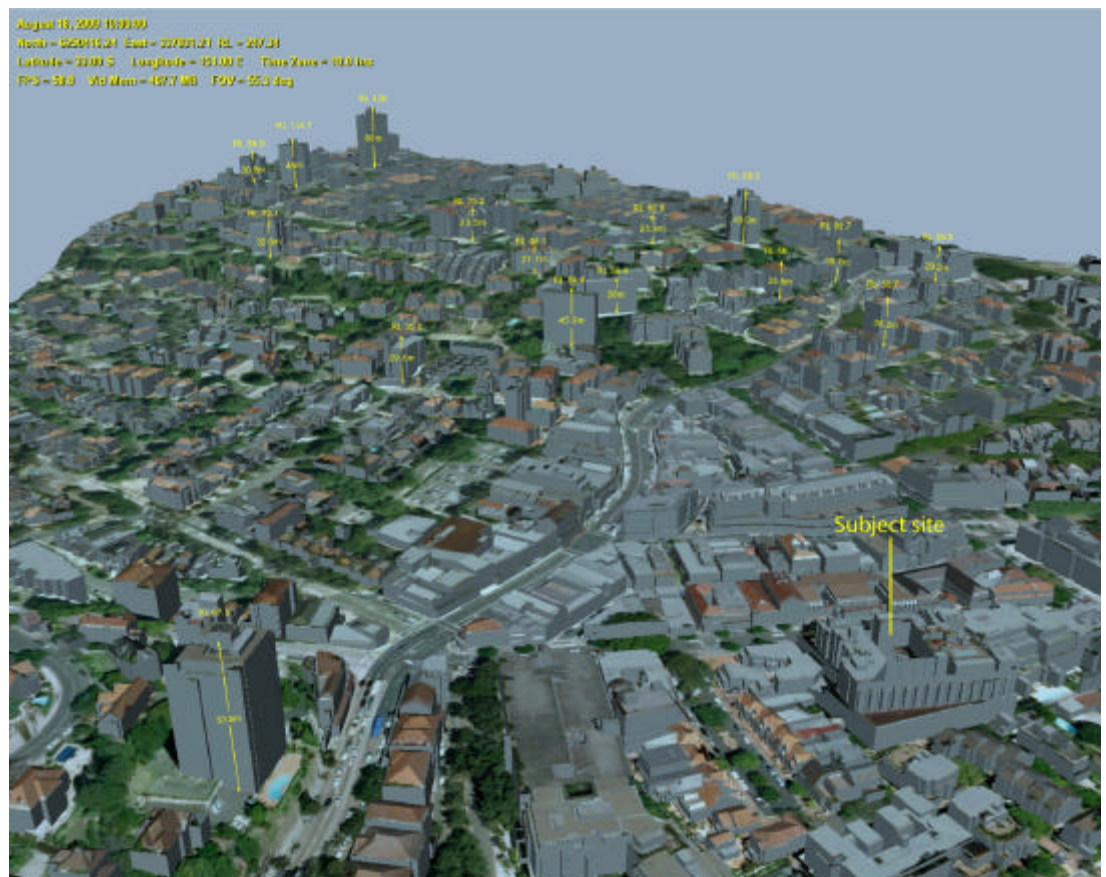


Figure 6 Contextual model looking south west towards Edgecliff
The Edgecliff town centre and New South Head Road to the south west and west of the site contain several high rise developments. Source: Sim Urban.

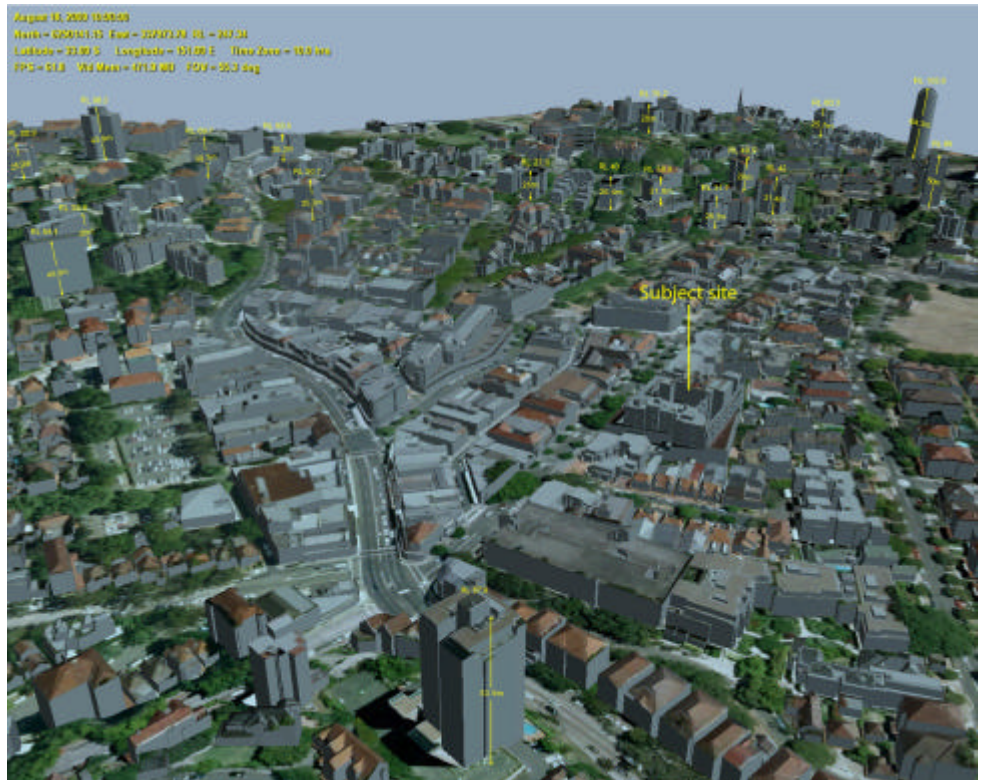


Figure 7 Contextual model looking towards ridgeline south of Darling Point
 The backdrop to the Double Bay town centre looking west contains several high rise developments. Source: Sim Urban

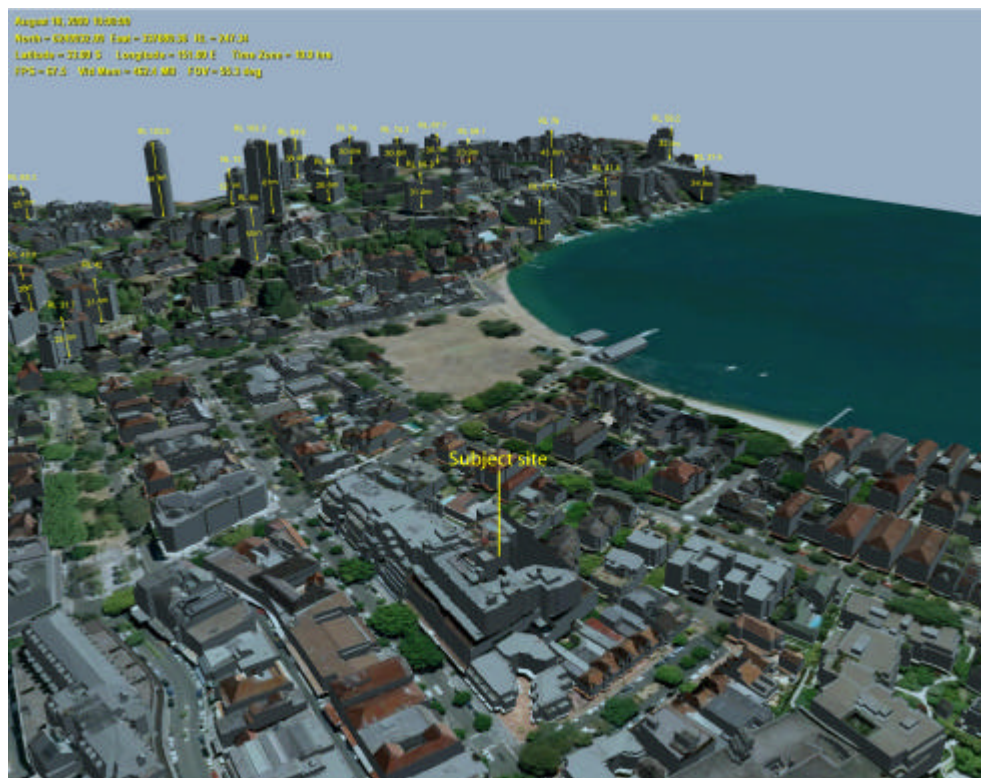


Figure 8 Contextual model looking towards Double Bay
 There is a particularly high concentration of tall buildings located in Darling Point, located on the ridgeline and peninsula west of Double Bay with some taller buildings located on the valley slopes. Source: Sim Urban

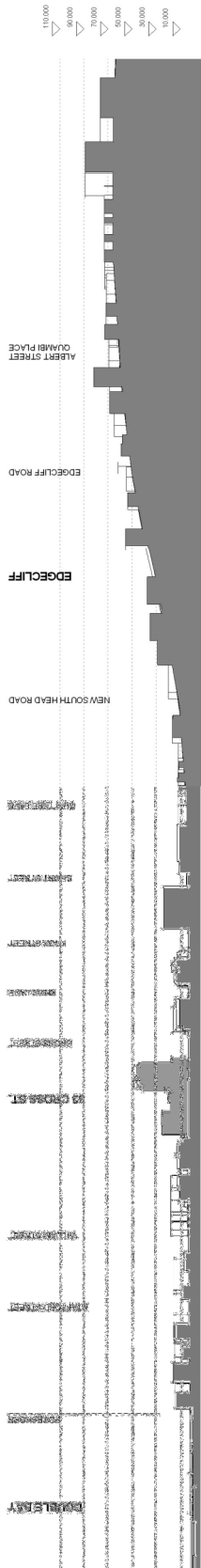


Figure 9 North-South long sectional elevation between Double Bay and the escarpment

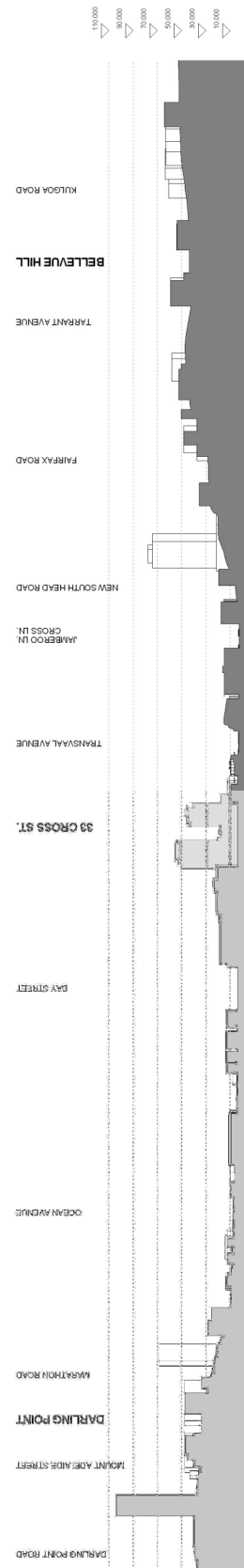


Figure 10 East-West sectional elevation between Darling Point and Point Piper

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 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.

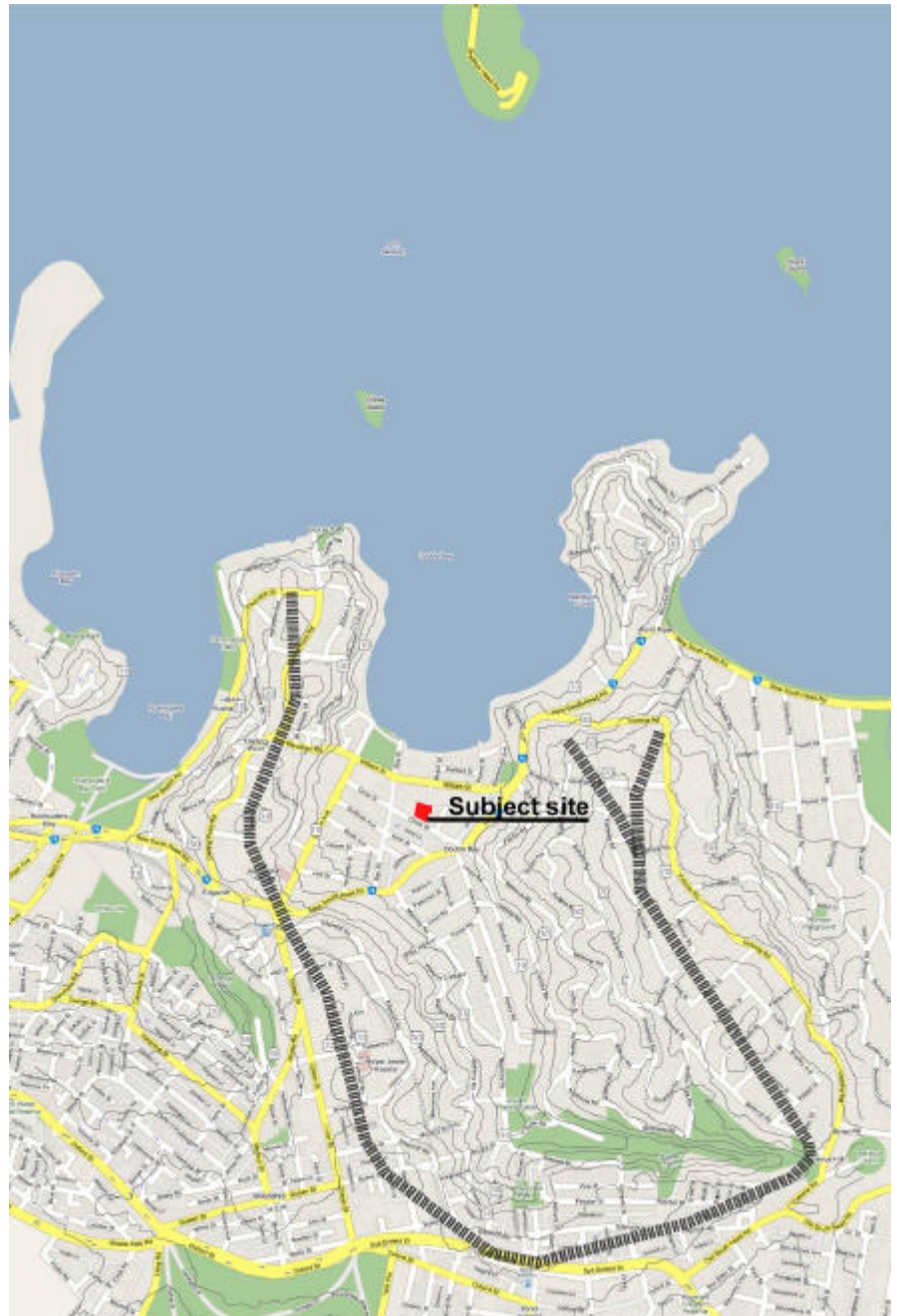


Figure 11 Topographic map of the Double Bay area

The contours are shown on the topographic map. The thick broken black line represents the ridgeline which defines the Double Bay visual catchment.

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 12**.

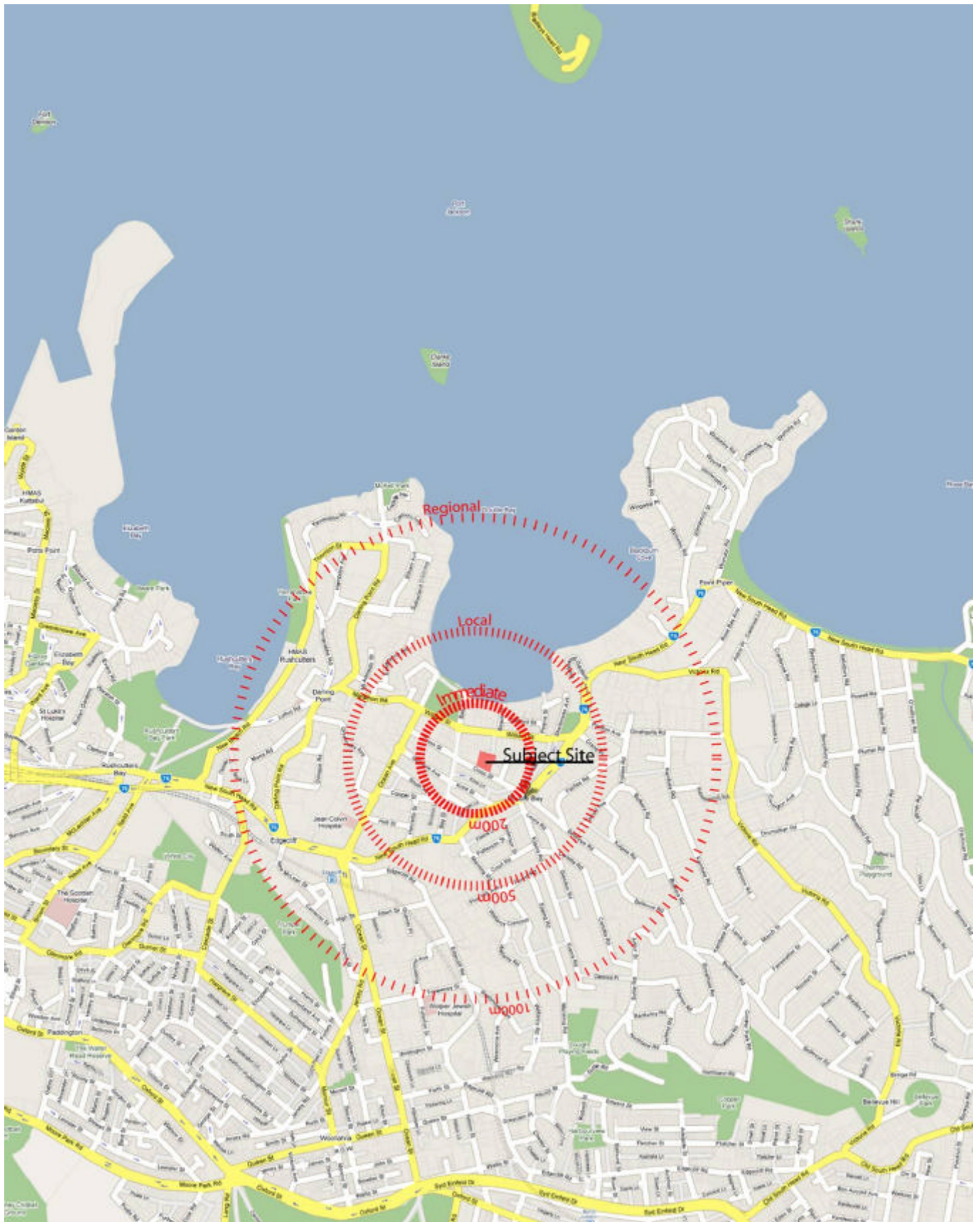


Figure 12 Map of viewing zones

4.5.1 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.

4.5.2 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:

Public views

- 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.

Private views

- View 6 – 327A Edgecliff Road, Woollahra.

Figure 13 below shows the location of these regional views.

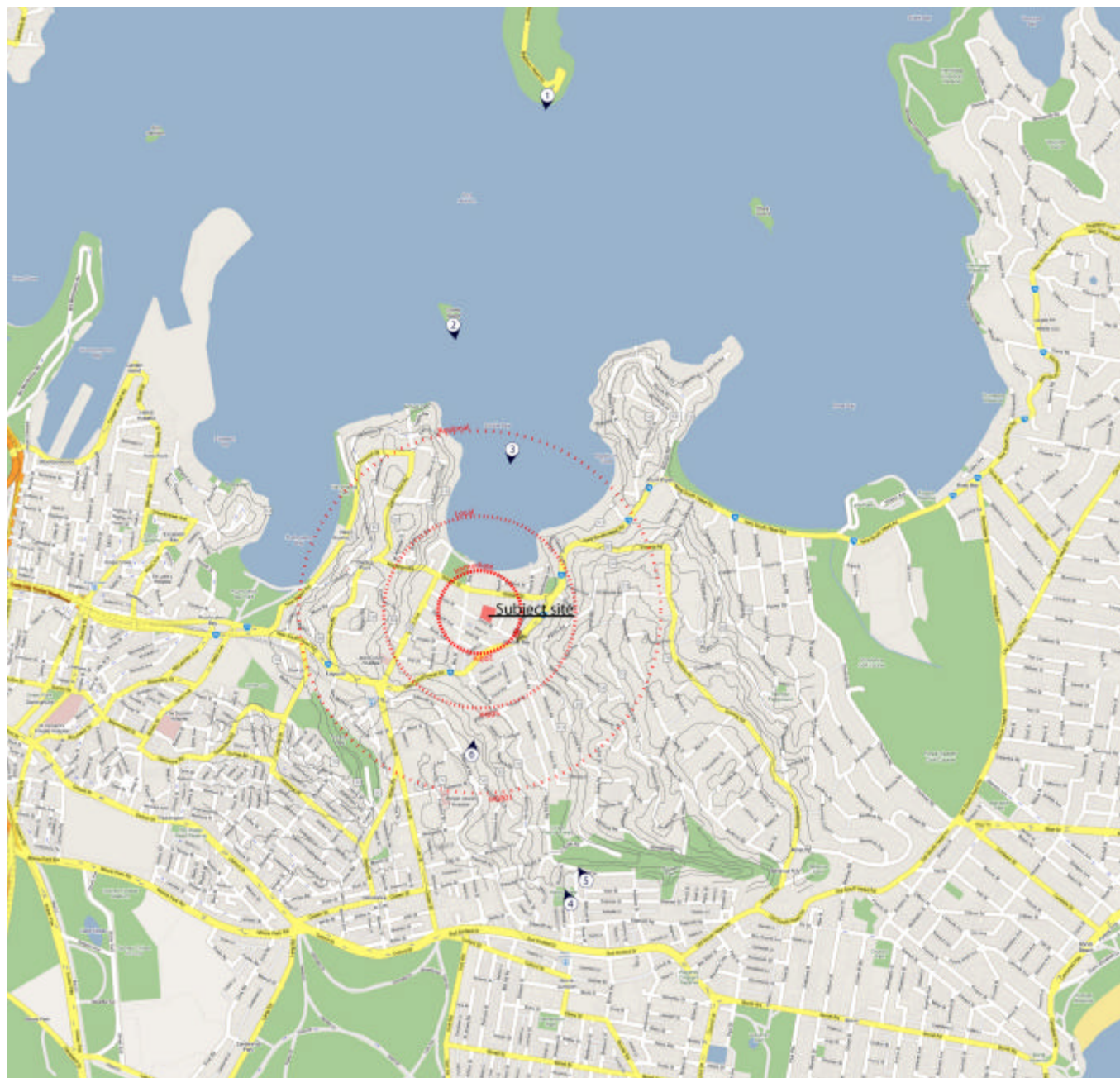


Figure 13 Regional viewing points

The proposed development is unlikely to be visible from other long distance points to the east 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 to the north and from some areas along the escarpment to the south.

The site is visible from some elevated locations however these are generally from private properties. Given the density of development on the escarpments that surrounds Double Bay and vegetation cover, views from the public domain areas to the site are limited. **Figure 11** 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.

Public views

View 1 – Bradleys Head, Mosman



Figure 14 View 1 – Bradleys Head, Mosman, single frame view

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 14** and **Figure 15**.

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 15 View 1 – Bradleys Head, Mosman, panoramic view

View 2 – Clarke Island, Sydney Harbour



Figure 16 View 2 – Clarke Island, Sydney Harbour, single frame view

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 16** and **Figure 17**.

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 17 View 2 – Clarke Island, Sydney Harbour, panoramic view



Figure 18 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 18** and **Figure 19**.

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 19 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 20**.

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 20 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 21**.

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 21 View 5 – Bathurst Lane off View Street, Woollahra

Private view

View 6 – 327A Edgecliff Road



Figure 22 View 6 – 327A Edgecliff Road

The view from Edgecliff Road was identified in the community consultation for the project. This view is from a private residence located on the escarpment to the south west of the subject site. The view is from the first floor balconies/roof terrace of the residence accessed off a bedroom. The view is at an elevated location above the Double Bay town centre with primary views towards Sydney Harbour and the North Shore. Residential apartment buildings on Darling Point and Point Piper are visible as well as a tower building in the foreground, which fronts New South Head Road. The view is illustrated in Error! Reference source not found. and **Figure 23**.



Figure 23 View 6 – 327A Edgecliff Road

4.5.3 Local views

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

Public views

- View 7 – Double Bay Wharf;
- View 8 – Steyne Park;
- View 9 – Corner of William Street and New South Head Road, Double Bay;
- View 10 – Bellevue Road, Double Bay; and
- View 11 – Greenoaks Avenue, Darling Point.

Private view

- View 12 – 87 Ocean Street, Double Bay.

The location of these views is show in **Figure 24**.

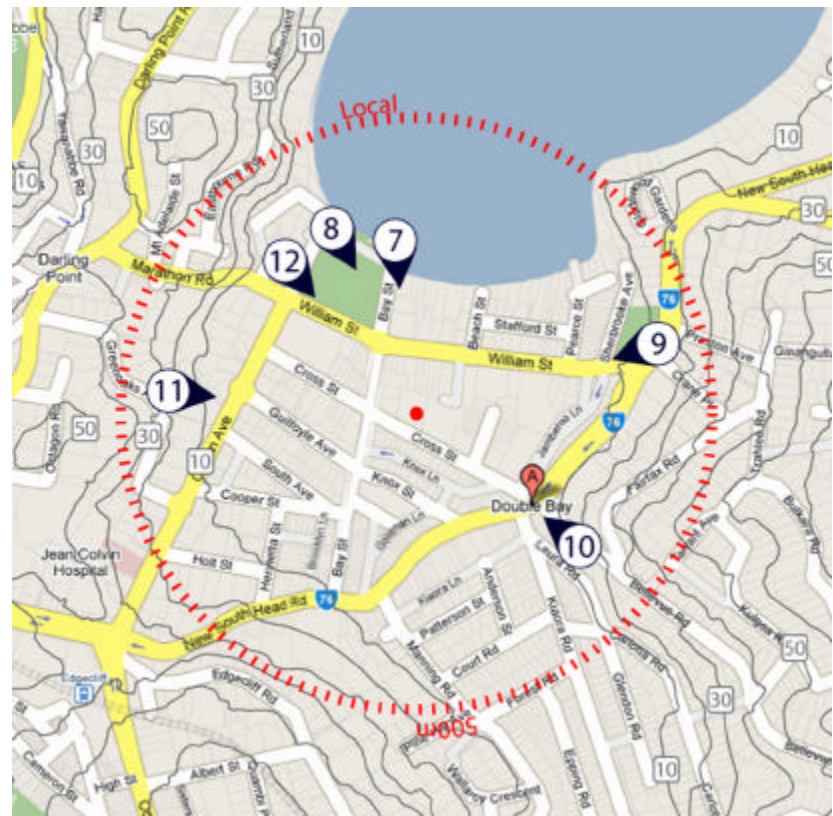


Figure 24 Local viewing points

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, 11). 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 25 View 7 – Double Bay Wharf, single frame view

Public views

View 7 – 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 25** and **Figure 26**.

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 26 View 7 – Double Bay Wharf, panoramic view



Figure 27 View 8 – Steyne Park, single frame view

View 8 – 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 27** and **Figure 28**.

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 28 View 8 – Steyne Park, panoramic view



Figure 29 View 9 – Corner of William Street and New South Head Road, single frame view

View 9 – 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 29** and **Figure 30**.

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



Figure 31 View 10 – Bellevue Road

View 10 – 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 31**.

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.

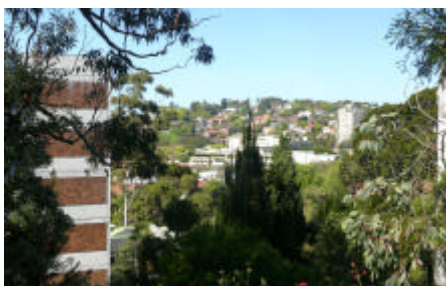


Figure 32 View 11 – Greenoaks Avenue

View 11 – 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 32**.

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.



Figure 33 View front of 87 Ocean Avenue

Private view

View 12 – 87 Ocean Avenue

This view is taken from the footpath opposite the residential property at 87 Ocean Avenue, Double Bay. A submission was received from the occupants of this property during exhibition which raised concern with the potential visual impact and the development. This property is located west of Steyne Park and looks south east towards to proposed development. This view has been included to assess the impact of the proposed development on private properties with direct views to the Double Bay town centre. The properties along Ocean Avenue look over Steyne Park into the town centre. This view is illustrated in **Figure 33**.

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 13 – Corner of Cross Street and Transvaal Avenue;
- View 14 – Transvaal Avenue;
- View 15 – Galbraith Walkway at William Street;
- View 16 – Corner of Cross Street and Bay Street;
- View 17 – Guilfoyle Park;
- View 18 – Cross Street; and
- View 19 – Galbraith Walkway.

The view from Cross Street (View 18, directly opposite the site) and Galbraith Walkway (View 19) are additional views requested by the Department of Planning for the Preferred Project Report. One other view requested by the Department of Planning was from Transvaal Avenue directly opposite the site (Refer to View 14b).

Figure 34 shows the location of the selected views in the immediate vicinity (within 200 metres of the subject site).

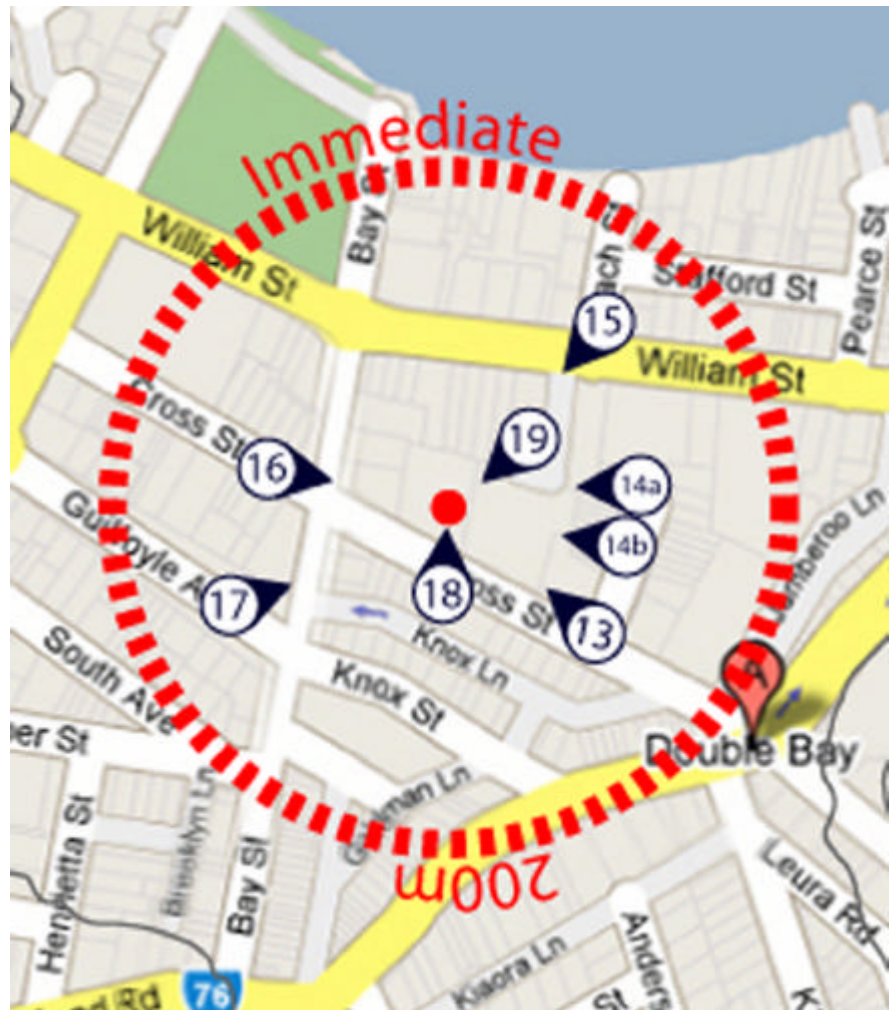


Figure 34 Views in the immediate vicinity (>200m)

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. Views 14b, 18 and 19 have been specifically requested by the NSW Department of Planning in the letter requesting additional information dated 12 June 2009.

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



Figure 35 View 13 – 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 13 – 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 35**.

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 36 View 14a – Transvaal Avenue

View 14 – Transvaal Avenue

Transvaal Avenue is a no-through-road off Cross Street, east of the subject site.

View 14a 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 36**. 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.



Figure 37 View 14b – Transvaal Avenue

View 14b is also taken from Transvaal Avenue, however is taken further south along Transvaal Avenue looking west, directly at the site. This view was requested by the Department of Planning in requesting additional information in a letter dated 12 June 2009. This view is illustrated in **Figure 37**.

Transvaal Street has low-moderate vehicular traffic and moderate pedestrian traffic to the boutique shops located along the street. The 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 38 View 15 – Galbraith Walkway at William Street

View 15 – 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 38**.

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 39 View 16 – Corner of Cross Street and Bay Street

View 16 – 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 39**.

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 40 View 17 – Guilfoyle Park

View 17 – 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 40**.

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.



Figure 41 View 18 – Cross Street, opposite the site

View 18 – Cross Street, opposite the site

This view has been selected as it was requested by the Department of Planning following a review of public and government submissions and assessment of the Environmental Assessment.

Cross Street is one of the key streets within the Double Bay town centre. The southern façade particularly consists of retail and café street frontage. The key impact of this view would be to pedestrians looking directly at the building from across Cross Street.

It is noted that the proposed development can not be viewed in its entirety when looking directly at the building from the south. Accordingly, this view is taken slightly south east of the subject site.

The view is illustrated in **Figure 41**.



Figure 42 View 19 – Galbraith Walkway, adjacent to the site

View 19 – Galbraith Walkway, adjacent to the site

This view was also request by the Department of Planning. It is located further south midway along Galbraith Walkway compared to View 15 discussed above. As aforementioned, Galbraith Walkway is a pedestrian thoroughfare linking William Street to the site and through the site to Cross Street beyond. This view is illustrated in **Figure 42**.

As with View 15, the development will impact on views for pedestrians walking through to access properties off Galbraith Walkway and people walking through the site to the town centre.

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 essentially 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