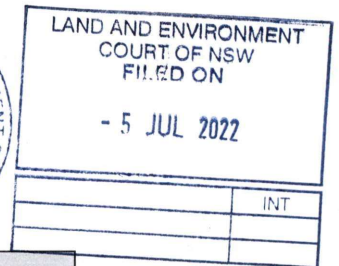
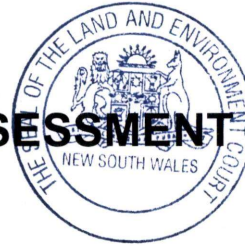


SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT



Boarding House

72 Rooms, 96 Lodgers

71-73 Thomas Street, Parramatta



13 October 2021

Prepared by Chapman Planning



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Preface

Chapman Planning is an independent town planning consultancy based in Ultimo, Sydney. Chapman Planning has been engaged by VOARC to prepare this Social Impact Assessment for the proposed 72 room boarding house at 71-73 Thomas Street, Parramatta.

It is noted that Chapman Planning has prepared the Statement of Environmental Effects for the proposed development being a boarding housing development containing 72 rooms, capable of accommodating a maximum of 96 lodgers.

In preparing this report, Chapman Planning Pty Ltd has used and relied on data, plans and information provided by others as detailed in this document. Unless otherwise stated, the accuracy and completeness of the information provided to Chapman Planning Pty Ltd for purposes of preparing this Social Impact Assessment has not been independently verified.

This assessment has relied on the most recent plans provided by VOARC dated 2 October 2021 and relevant assessment reports and plans prepared by the sub consultants involved in the coordination of this development application.

This Social Impact Assessment has been prepared in accordance with the Social Impact Assessment requirements provided by Parramatta Council and includes the following general scope.

- Site inspection and review of immediate and extended locality.
- Review of proposed development.
- Review of demographic data and cultural trends in the immediate and extended locality.
- Review of existing and proposed social infrastructure in the immediate and extended locality.
- General liaison with relevant staff from Parramatta Council as required.

1.0 Introduction and Description

This Social Impact Assessment has been prepared for VOARC with regard to the proposed boarding house located at 71-73 Thomas Street, Parramatta.

The development proposal is for demolition of the existing dwelling houses and construction of a 3-5 storey boarding house development containing 72 x boarding rooms (including a manager's room), communal rooms and communal open space areas, basement carparking, motorcycle and bicycle parking and landscape works.

The boarding house consists of 48 x single rooms (including a manager's room) and 24 x double rooms (including 4 x accessible rooms) accommodating a maximum of 96 x lodgers. The development application is made under State Environmental Planning Policy (Affordable Rental Housing) 2009.

The subject site is located within close proximity to public transport including being 500m walking distance from a regularly serviced bus stop to Parramatta along Victoria Road, and 600m walking distance of a regularly serviced bus stop along Macarthur Street.

The subject site is located approximately 230m north of the Parramatta River – Baludarri Wetland, 290m west of Western Sydney University Parramatta South Campus, and 1.4km north-east of Parramatta Railway Station and Parramatta CBD.

The location of the subject site, 71-73 Thomas Street, Parramatta and its positioning in the broader context is shown in the figures below.



Source: SIX Maps



Source: SixMaps

1.1 Accommodation

The boarding house has the capacity to accommodate up to 96 lodgers. Each boarding room is sized 14.2m² – 24.8m² designed to accommodate a variety of single and twin lodgers. Each room has been designed with individual kitchen and bathroom. Rooms G10, 118, 218 and 401 have been designed as accessible boarding rooms.

Communal areas are provided within the development including 3 x communal rooms sized 28.2m² – 99.4m², and communal open space areas including ground floor outdoor yard and rooftop terrace areas. Each boarding room has been designed with a private open space – balcony or ground floor terrace directly accessed from the living area of each room.

The proposal includes basement car parking containing 36 x car parking spaces (including 3 x accessible spaces) and 15 x motorcycle spaces. A semi-basement level contains plant and equipment rooms, bulk storage areas, and bicycle parking area containing 24 x bicycle spaces..

2.0 Policy Context

State Environmental Planning Policy (Affordable Rental Housing) 2009 was introduced to increase the supply and diversity of affordable rental and social housing throughout NSW.

The Affordable Housing SEPP fact sheet, published by the NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure, provides the following key pieces of information regarding affordable housing and the demonstrated need for affordable housing.

Why do we need affordable housing?

Throughout NSW there is a strong need for a range of affordable housing options amongst the community. This is reflected in figures which show that in February 2010 there were over 47,000 people in NSW on waiting lists for suitable housing accommodation. It is essential that government at all levels, private industry and the non-government sector work in partnership towards finding innovative ways to provide more affordable housing.

What is affordable rental housing?

Affordable rental housing is housing for very low, low and moderate income earning households. These are currently households with an annual income of up to about \$80,000. This includes people who have no place to live, people on low and moderate incomes and key workers who need to live close to their employment.

The specified aims of the Affordable Housing SEPP are listed as:

The aims of this Policy are as follows:

- (a) to provide a consistent planning regime for the provision of affordable rental housing,*
- (b) to facilitate the effective delivery of new affordable rental housing by providing incentives by way of expanded zoning permissibility, floor space ratio bonuses and non-discretionary development standards,*
- (c) to facilitate the retention and mitigate the loss of existing affordable rental housing,*
- (d) to employ a balanced approach between obligations for retaining and mitigating the loss of existing affordable rental housing, and incentives for the development of new affordable rental housing,*
- (e) to facilitate an expanded role for not-for-profit-providers of affordable rental housing,*
- (f) to support local business centres by providing affordable rental housing for workers close to places of work,*
- (g) to facilitate the development of housing for the homeless and other disadvantaged people who may require support services, including group homes and supportive accommodation.*

The proposed boarding house meets the provision of the SEPP through the construction of a boarding house containing 72 x boarding rooms to accommodate a maximum of 96 lodgers in an area located close to Western Sydney University, Parramatta CBD, public transport and public amenities.

The 2016 census data on the ABS website includes the following median weekly household incomes:

- Parramatta (State Suburb): \$1739 per week.
- Parramatta (LGA): \$1,520 per week

The Rental and Sales Report – June 2021 quarter states that the median weekly rent in Parramatta LGA is \$410 per week for a 1 bedroom unit and \$450

per week for a 2 bedroom unit. The boarding rooms will be let below the median weekly rent confirming the proposed boarding rooms constitute affordable rental housing being rented at less than 30% of the median household income.

3.0 Relevant Strategies and Policies

The following section of this Social Impact Assessment provides a brief review of the relevant strategic documents to determine how the proposal relates to the future direction of City of Parramatta LGA. The following strategic documents have been reviewed:

- A Metropolis of Three Cities
- Local Strategic Planning Statement – City Plan 2036
- Local Housing Strategy 2020

3.1 A Metropolis of Three Cities

The new strategic plan “A Metropolis of Three Cities” is a new Greater Sydney Regional Plan developed by the Greater Sydney Commission to rebalance greater Sydney into three primary centres with jobs, services, and public places evenly located throughout the greater metropolitan area.

The regional plan includes 10 key directions including “Housing the city” with potential indicators and objectives as below.

**Housing the city**
Giving people housing choices

Potential indicators*: Increased housing completions (by type), Number of councils that implement Affordable Rental Housing Target Schemes

Objective 10: Greater housing supply

Objective 11: Housing is more diverse and affordable

The proposed boarding house is consistent with this direction being affordable housing within close proximity to transport and employment opportunities. The boarding house adds to housing availability and increases housing choice within the locality to add to the range of tenure types and improve availability of housing for lower income earners, and those requiring more flexible forms of accommodation.

3.2 Local Strategic Planning Statement City Plan 2036

The Parramatta City Plan 2036 is the long term vision for the Parramatta Local Government Area. The 2036 plan identifies a number of local priorities, directions and actions which are achieved by the proposed boarding house development.

Specifically, the proposed boarding house is consistent with the 'liveability planning priorities' through contributing to the variety of affordable accommodation within a suitable area in proximity to transport, education, and employment opportunities.



Liveability Planning Priorities

7. Provide for a diversity of housing types and sizes to meet community needs into the future
8. Incentivise affordable rental housing delivery and provide for permanent affordable housing
9. Enhance Parramatta's heritage and cultural assets to maintain our authentic identity and deliver infrastructure to meet community needs
10. Improve active walking and cycling infrastructure and access to public and shared transport

The proposal will contribute to a diversity of housing types within the locality, providing single and double boarding rooms, as well as accessible rooms within close proximity to Western Sydney University – Parramatta Campus. The site is within close proximity to public open space, the Parramatta CBD, and commercial services.

3.3 Local Housing Strategy 2020

The Parramatta Local Housing Strategy 2020 has been prepared to inform the preparation of the Local Strategic Planning Statement and includes recommendations to encourage appropriate levels of housing growth in areas supported by infrastructure.

The housing strategy identifies the following evidence to inform housing growth in the LGA:

- *The City of Parramatta has been one of the highest growth locations in NSW in recent years and is set to continue this trend, particularly with the increasing economic opportunity further agglomerating in the Parramatta CBD and key employment precincts such as the Westmead Innovation District.*
- *There will be significant demand for key worker housing in the Parramatta LGA.*
- *There is a need to offer both affordability and specific Affordable Housing in the LGA.*
- *The demands on housing are changing with a need to provide more one bedroom housing options, continue to deliver two bedroom housing as well as increase the provision of three bedroom housing options in residential flat buildings suitable for families.*

- *There is evidence for the delivery of greater levels of housing diversity in the middle range such as townhouses and terraces. However, the level of housing delivery of medium to high density living is significant in the LGA, placing significant pressure on Council delivery resources and funding. It has been confirmed that the growth precincts offer the best opportunities to deliver housing aligned with key infrastructure, especially public transport. It is also important that future growth opportunities in future transport corridors (Epping to Parramatta and Norwest to Parramatta) are not undermined by further fragmentation of land resources until the planning of this infrastructure is undertaken.*
- *Every service age group is set to grow, placing considerable pressure on a full range of social infrastructure. At this stage, it is imperative that the City of Parramatta manages resources to efficiently deliver infrastructure in the growth precincts already in progress or planned, as well as managing the existing urban areas.*

The proposed development will contribute to affordable rental housing in the LGA including single and double lodger rooms, that will cater to students, key workers and other young professionals in the locality as identified by the housing strategy.

4.0 Community Profile

The following provides a brief summary of the demographic and households characteristics of the Parramatta (LGA) sourced from the Australian Bureau of Statistics 2016 Census.

Population:

- In the 2016 Census, there were 226,149 people in Parramatta (C) (Local Government Areas). Of these 50.0% were male and 50.0% were female. Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people made up 0.7% of the population
- The median age of people in Parramatta (C) (Local Government Areas) was 34 years. Children aged 0 - 14 years made up 18.4% of the population and people aged 65 years and over made up 12.2% of the population.
- Of people in Parramatta (C) (Local Government Areas) aged 15 years and over, 55.4% were married and 9.0% were either divorced or separated.
- In Parramatta (C) (Local Government Areas), of people aged 15 years and over, 53.7% of people were in a registered marriage and 5.9% were in a de facto marriage.

Educational Background:

- In Parramatta (C) (Local Government Areas), 31.3% of people were attending an educational institution. Of these, 23.9% were in primary school, 17.7% in secondary school and 27.9% in a tertiary or technical institution.

Cultural Diversity:

- In Parramatta (C) (Local Government Areas), 44.7% of people were born in Australia. The most common countries of birth were India 10.6%, China (excludes SARs and Taiwan) 10.3%, Korea, Republic of (South) 3.9%, Hong Kong (SAR of China) 2.2% and Philippines 1.6%.
- The most common responses for religion in Parramatta (C) (Local Government Areas) were No Religion, so described 24.5%, Catholic 20.8%, Hinduism 11.3%, Not stated 9.4% and Anglican 8.3%. In Parramatta (C) (Local Government Areas), Christianity was the largest religious group reported overall (49.0%) (this figure excludes not stated responses).

Socio-economic Status:

- There were 114,603 people who reported being in the labour force in the week before Census night in Parramatta (C) (Local Government Areas). Of these 62.9% were employed full time, 26.0% were employed part-time and 7.0% were unemployed.
- The median weekly personal income for people aged 15 years and over in Parramatta (C) (Local Government Areas) was \$722.
- Of occupied private dwellings in Parramatta (C) (Local Government Areas), 45.7% were separate houses, 15.2% were semi-detached, row or terrace houses, townhouses etc, 38.4% were flat or apartments and 0.3% were other dwellings.
- In Parramatta (C) (Local Government Areas), of occupied private dwellings 6.7% had 1 bedroom, 32.9% had 2 bedrooms and 33.1% had 3 bedrooms. The average number of bedrooms per occupied private dwelling was 2.8. The average household size was 2.8 people.
- The average weekly rent was \$440 and the average monthly mortgage repayments were \$2167.

The population of Parramatta are primarily made up of Australia born, China born and India born employed young adults working in professional fields. This group are more likely to rent in either group or lone person households and live in higher density dwellings compared to the general population of Greater Sydney.

The population of Parramatta LGA will experience significant growth within the next 10 years noting the strategic planning documents identifying Parramatta as a major centre within the greater Sydney metropolitan area.

The LGA contains a higher than average proportion of renters, which may be attributed to the high housing cost of housing within the LGA, where median monthly mortgage repayments and median weekly rent are significantly greater than across Greater Sydney and NSW as a whole.

5.0 Local Services and Other Infrastructure

The following section provides an overview of the key social infrastructure currently available in Parramatta and surrounding suburbs. The audit is limited to facilities that would be of direct benefit to the incoming residential population of the proposed development.

Health Services

- Rosehill Family Medical Practice (750m)
- Isra Medical Services Parramatta (900m)
- Rivaside Medical Practice (1.2km)
- Parramatta Medical Centre (1.35 km)
- Westmead Hospital (4.8km)

The nearby health services will provide residents of the proposed boarding house with required medical services within the locality. The health services are easily accessible via public transport noting the site's proximity to well-serviced bus stops.

Tertiary Education Institutions

- Western Sydney University, Parramatta South Campus (350m)
- Western Sydney University, Parramatta North Campus (550m)
- University of New England, Parramatta Campus (1.5km)
- Charles Sturt University, Parramatta Campus (2.3km)

The surrounding educational institutions within the locality of the proposed development indicate that the subject site is suitable for a boarding house development which will provide affordable short-medium term rental housing to key demographic groups including students. Additionally, the site's location close to well-serviced bus stops and walking/cycle paths along Parramatta River will promote active transport for students who reside within the development and travel to and from University.

Public Transport

- Bus Routes 500N, 501, 521, 523, 524, 525 (500m) along Victoria Road opposite Collett Park
- Bus Route 545 (600m) at Macarthur Street before Thomas Street
- Parramatta Station (1.7km)

The existing public transport facilities within the surrounding locality of the proposed boarding house offer services to Parramatta CBD and surrounding suburbs. The bus connections allow for access to nearby Parramatta Railway Station, which offers further connections to Greater Sydney. The local public transport system is well integrated across the Parramatta district and will enable the residents of the proposed boarding house to utilise existing public transport available. Access to the bus stops along Victoria Road and Macarthur Street is accessible via the existing pedestrian pathway network.

Community Facilities

- PCYC Parramatta (1.2 km)
- Powerhouse Community Space (1.9 km)
- Parramatta Police Station (1.9 km)
- Service NSW (2.4 km)

The site is located within close proximity to a number of community facilities within the locality, including PCYC Parramatta and the Powerhouse Community Centre. The broader locality offers further community facilities and foundations aimed at servicing at-need demographics of the local population.

Open Space

- Baludarri Wetlands (150m)
- Parramatta River Walk (220m)
- Foveaux Park (280m)

The subject site is within close proximity to a range of public open spaces including local and regional parks.

Retail Facilities and Banks

A range of retail outlets and essential services are located at Parramatta CBD including food, pharmacies, gyms and post office located 1.8km walking distance from the site. In addition, local cafes, take away food outlets and other retail facilities are within walking distance the site along Broughton Street to the south of the site.

Accessibility

The proposed boarding house is capable of catering to those with a disability. The proposed car park will cater for accessible parking (as demonstrated on the submitted site plan) and the development has been designed to ensure suitable levels of accessibility to those with a disability. The boarding house provides 4 x accessible units that are capable of accommodating the needs of those with a disability.

6.0 Impact on Culture and Community

There is often a lack of understanding in the local communities of the people likely to be accommodated in affordable rental housing. Local opposition is often most acute for low-rise infill housing (including boarding houses) in areas adjoining low density residential houses.

The misunderstanding of tenants is frequently based on a misunderstanding of the nature of the people that qualify to occupy the affordable rental housing. This can lead to local resident opposition to new affordable housing proposals as they object to “social housing” occupants in their area, because of perceived social issues and potential for impacts on property values.

The demand for boarding house developments are driven from a much wider potential resident group than that typically associated those occupying Social Housing. This includes single people, students, contractors, couples and young

working people at the start of their careers in the process of saving for a house- with these persons not on a sufficiently low income to qualify for Government social housing. Developers have indicated that reasonable rents, lease flexibility and accessible locations are typically the main housing priorities for people seeking this type of accommodation.

The development proposal may lead to local resident opposition as a result of its nature, however the realistic impacts of the proposal are to provide accommodation for students, key workers, young workers and young couples particularly those seeking lower rental levels in order to offset lower incomes or to facilitate savings to enable aspirational home ownership in the future.

6.1 Health and Wellbeing

As mentioned earlier Parramatta LGA has high residential amenity with access to a wide range of local facilities and amenities. The proposal is a suitable form of development for the R4 – High Density Residential zone and would not discernibly impact on the existing amenity and character of the locality.

The subject site includes open space areas to accommodate the lodgers in each boarding room. Additionally, as previously mentioned, the subject site is located within the catchment of a number of community facilities such as parks, tertiary education and medical facilities and is within walking distance to bus stops which provides access to surrounding centres.

6.2 Local Economy and Employment

The development proposal is likely to attract students and working age tenants who are in receipt of a market based income. The proximity to good bus and train connections will assist in access to employment.

The labour force participation rate refers to the proportion of the population over 15 years of age that was employed or actively looking for work. *"The labour force is a fundamental input to domestic production. Its size and composition are therefore crucial factors in economic growth. From the viewpoint of social development, earnings from paid work are a major influence on levels of economic well-being."* (Australian Bureau of Statistics, Australian Social Trends 1995).

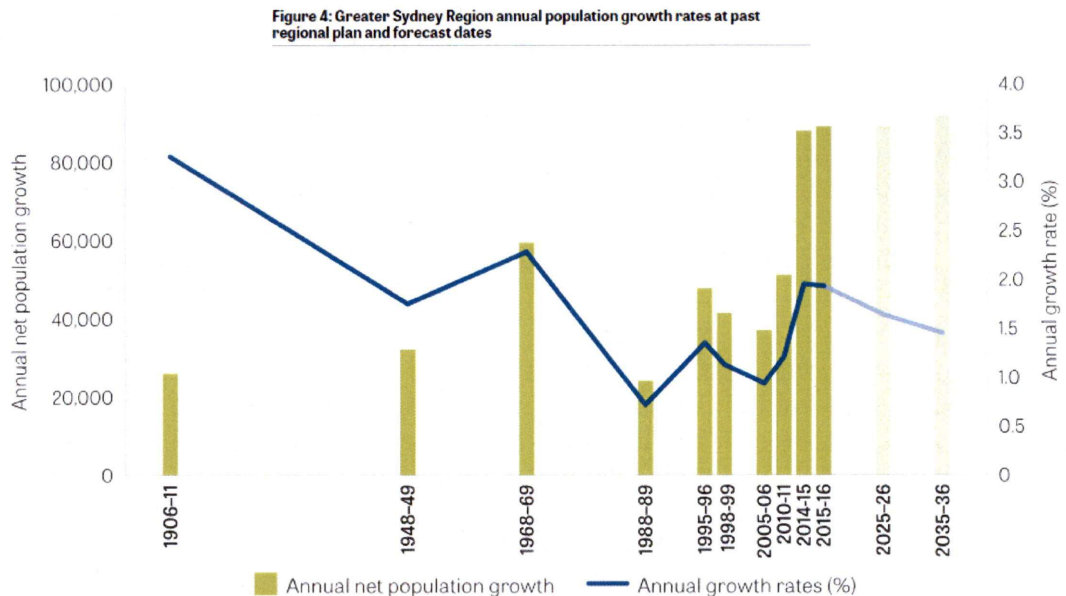
Analysis of the labour force participation rate of the population in Parramatta in 2016 shows there were 114,603 people who reported being in the labour force in the week before Census night in Parramatta (C) (Local Government Areas). Of these 62.9% were employed full time, 26.0% were employed part-time and 7.0% were unemployed.

The median weekly personal income for people aged 15 years and over in Parramatta (C) (Local Government Areas) was \$722.

6.3 Needs of Population Groups

The need for accommodation across Sydney is expressed in all strategic planning documents for the greater Sydney region noting the significant spike

in population growth in recent years and the need for housing. The below image from 'The Greater Sydney Commission' provides an insight.



The boarding house adds to the available housing stock in the locality, demolishing the existing dwellings to provide 72 x boarding rooms providing a unique form of flexible medium – long term accommodation at a lower price point than traditional residential dwellings/units. The accommodation will provide for students, young professionals and contract workers who only wish to rent a small room and it would be inappropriate to be committed to long term residential lease agreements.

The proposed boarding house development will cater for a variety of socio-economic groups. This will ensure that Parramatta LGA maintains its existing social diversity and housing choice, affordability and social mix.

7.0 Assessment of Social Impacts and Responses

This section provides an assessment of the potential social impacts arising from the proposal including the relative equity of these impacts. The policy review, demographic analysis and the social infrastructure audit are drawn upon to provide a deeper understanding of the potential social changes resultant from the proposal. This section also outlines any mitigation measures implemented in response to potential negative social impacts.

7.1 Community Consultation

The development proposal has been implemented on this site as a response to government policy documents, and metropolitan strategy documents identifying the need for housing and affordable housing across Sydney, specifically in major centres close to employment opportunities. The site is located within an accessible area and has been designed to meet the provisions of SEPP

(Affordable Rental Housing) 2009.

The community has been notified of the development proposal during the notification period of the development application assessment process.

7.2 Housing Affordability and Housing Choice

When related to rental stock, rental pricing and housing choice, there are limited options for those persons identified as within the target demographic for boarding house development.

The primary housing stock includes residential dwellings, with limited options for single persons, low income earners, or those incapable of committing to a long term lease.

The proposal responds to the housing affordability problems faced by residents in the area by providing a housing option specifically targeted towards lower income persons and those unable to commit to long term lease. The proposed development is likely to have a positive social impact by increasing the provision of low cost rental housing within the LGA.

The proposed land use can be considered both appropriate and timely, as it aligns with Council's strategic directions expressed within the Parramatta 2038 City Plan and Sydney Metropolitan Strategies which aim to promote diverse and affordable housing options and increase densities within established centres.

7.3 Availability of Social Infrastructure

Both local and regional strategic planning documents promote the development of housing in areas with established social infrastructure and in proximity to public transport. The review of the relevant social infrastructure has indicated the immediate and wider Parramatta locality is well serviced by medical facilities of varying scales, education, employment options and speciality shops and has ample public transport and access to amenities.

7.4 Safety and Security

The proposal has been designed to minimise real and perceived feelings of safety that may be experienced by incoming residents.

The entrance path to the boarding house is central to the site fronting Thomas Street, with a secondary entrance at the Pemberton Street frontage. The entry pathways lead to an open pedestrian lobby area and are access controlled. The communal rooms and boarding rooms at upper levels will provide passive surveillance of the entry paths and internal areas of the boarding house development.

Controlled access to the proposal will be ensured through the provision of security cards/keys to residents of the boarding house. Street frontages and common areas, including the entry, communal areas, will include appropriate lighting and receive passive surveillance from the boarding rooms.

7.5 Cumulative Impact of Boarding Houses

A method to determine the relative level of socio-economic advantage and disadvantage of an area is through the application of the ABS Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) indicator. SEIFA ranks SA1 areas (the smaller geographical area for which data is collected by the ABS) in NSW according to relative socio-economic advantage and disadvantage. A low SEIFA score for an area indicates that a high proportion of relatively disadvantaged people reside in an area. The SA1 area where the subject site is located has a SEIFA decile of 2 out of 10. This rank indicates the SA1 sits within the lower end of the index score distribution and, generally speaking, has high levels of social and economic disadvantage.

Given the low SEIFA ranking of the SA1 area surrounding the site, the boarding house will serve to provide accommodation for those socially disadvantaged persons within the area.

Moreover, the proposed boarding house can be considered a new generation boarding house. New generation boarding houses operate in a different manner to traditional boarding houses and therefore attract a different tenant profile, with occupants tending to be young 'key workers' or professionals. New generation boarding houses are self-contained and designed with individual bathroom and kitchen facilities. The proposed development can be considered a new generation boarding house and therefore is likely to attract occupants with lower levels of social economic disadvantage than traditional boarding houses.

7.6 Management and Upkeep of the Premises

Existing community members can, at times, have negative perceptions regarding boarding houses and associate this development form with anti-social behaviour. As outlined above, this boarding house is considered to be a 'new generation' boarding house and therefore unlikely to generate anti-social behaviour beyond that of a more traditional residential development. Notwithstanding, a number of measures should be implemented discourage anti-social behaviour.

It is recommended that a Plan of Management be created to outline the ways in which the boarding house manager will ensure high amenity standards are maintained.

7.7 Residential Amenity

Ensuring residential amenity for the residents of boarding house and adjoining residents of dwellings is an important consideration that should be integrated into the proposal.

The acoustic and privacy impacts from the boarding house is consistent with the surrounding development noting the R4 – High Density Residential land use zoning.

The proposal includes balconies along the street frontages which provide passive surveillance of the public domain and casual surveillance of communal

areas within the site.

The communal open space at ground floor level will be screened by the boundary fence and proposed landscaping, mitigating potential privacy and overlooking issues of adjoining dwellings.

8.0 Conclusion

A social impact statement for a proposed boarding house at 71-73 Thomas Street, Parramatta has been undertaken.

The proposed development is anticipated to result in the following positive social benefits:

- Contribute to the provision of housing for low to moderate income households who are financially excluded from the existing housing market within the LGA;
- Meets the demand for boarding house-style accommodation in the LGA;
- Encourage housing diversity by providing a dwelling type suitable for lone person and small households;
- Provide housing in an area well serviced by public transport and social infrastructure; and
- Encourage development and uplift in housing stock within the R4 – High Density Residential zone.

In order to encourage the positive benefits from the proposed development, the following mitigation measures are suggested:

- A Plan of Management should be created and stipulate the boarding house managers responsibilities to facilitate general upkeep of the premises in order to minimise real or perceived perceptions of anti-social behaviour

The proposal responds to the housing affordability problems faced by low to moderate income households by providing a more affordable housing option. Further, the proposal provides a suitable housing option for lone person households, students and contractor workers, a demographic that is not reflected in the available housing stock. The proposal can be considered appropriate and timely, as the proposed land use aligns with Council's strategic directions and will be capable of accommodating the local population.