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15th July, 2021 Job no 18.41 PT

351-53 NEW SOUTH HEAD ROAD, DOUBLE BAY DESIGN QUALITY STATEMENT

This statement accompanies the Clause 4.55 Application on the above site, reflecting the various changes to the proposal since its original DA Approval.

The changes are detailed on the plans, sections and elevations, and responses inter alia to previous comments made by Woollahra Council's Urban Designer (noted in italics) are retained. New comments are added in red where relevant.

1.0 CONTEXT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD CHARACTER

An ideally located site

The site is located adjacent to the important regional centres of Double Bay and Edgecliff. Within a 5 minute / 500 metres are Edgecliff train station and bus interchange, the main Double Bay shopping areas and Edgecliff commercial centre. Both centres contain many services for the benefit of residents and workers. Over 170 years of urban development, the area is evolving as a heterogeneous mix of major retail and entertainment, apartment buildings of all types and sizes, terraces, and remnant individual houses.

The site has convenient access to Sydney's city centre, to multiple transport modes, shops, many public facilities and open spaces, the harbour foreshore, and thus is well suited to this proposal as it provides high levels of amenity in an established and diverse neighbourhood.

A Positive Street Presence

The site is an amalgamation of two large irregular lots, each occupied by large houses which have had some commercial use. The address is to the northern boundary that fronts New South Head Road, which is the primary connective main street for the eastern suburbs that hug the harbour's southern shores. The

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street frontages have a range of heights, varying between two large storeys up to nine storeys. Outside the commercial centre, which is directly opposite the site and only just to the east, landscape setbacks are common, particularly the major landscape frontage to the immediate west. The design forms an appropriate transition between these conditions, retaining and extending the existing sandstone street wall and setting back the building to retain in a planted foreground a semi-mature Moreton Bay Fig tree that is close to the wall. The design has since been modified to set the building further back from the street, giving the fig tree more deep soil area and potential for canopy growth.

In contradistinction to Council's Urban Design response, the varied urban scale is well represented in detailed urban analysis drawings DA2.002 - 2.005 that form part of this application. Council's UD statement that buildings along New South Head Road between Manning Road and Edgecliff have a 'predominant scale of 2-3 storey is no longer accurate – such buildings are the exception, and the recently approved and constructed buildings on this side of the street are 4-5 storeys.

Notwithstanding the controls in the Double Bay Centre DCP, which my office prepared for Council, a number of applications in the centre have approved by Council with increased heights than envisaged by the DCP.

Overall, the design responds to its particular site conditions, appropriately addressing the varied and evolving character of street frontage and the topography.

An established medium / high density area

As is appropriate so close to major centres, both sides of New South Head Road and all the lots behind have long been zoned by Council to enable apartment buildings and shop-top housing, and many of the neighbouring residential buildings in the immediate visual catchment well exceed the current height and floor space controls. There are quite a number of taller buildings dotted throughout areas to the south and west, which all sit on higher ground than the subject site, and so are far more visually prominent. In contrast, many of foreground commercial buildings have significant unused redevelopment potential, with opportunities for increased height similar to this proposal.

The design is based on a thorough analysis of the existing conditions (see urban analysis drawings DA2.002-2.004 in DA submission). The scale of neighbouring buildings is diverse, varying between 2 and 13 storeys in height. This is due to the incremental redevelopment over the last 8 decades of the lower buildings around Double Bay, which have been gradually replaced by more intensive forms of development. Frontage widths and setbacks vary greatly throughout the area.

DA 2.005 clearly shows the limited visual catchment of the proposal, which is due to New South Head Road's curving alignment. Street vistas to the proposal are quite localised and the established fig tree at the front of the site will be retained, which disproves the contention that the proposal "dominates the

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streetscape and will disrupt the consistent landscape character of the street". Nonetheless the street setback of the northwest corner to the street has been increased to 3.2metres (now increased again 5.0 metres at the closest point) to allow a larger area of new planting, as detailed on the submitted landscape architects' plans. Including the landscaped space to retain the fig tree, the street setback is considerably more than the existing neighbour to the east, and also more than new developments up the hill towards Edgecliff. The street setbacks have been further increased in the CI 4.55.

Due to the marked topography, buildings on the eastern side of New South Head Road on both sides of the centre are seen against a backdrop of established landscape and taller buildings on the slopes above.

The above analysis and the documentation in the DA package show that the proposal is well-considered in terms of Context and Neighbourhood Character.

2.0 BUILT FORM AND SCALE

Building Organisation

Previously revisions had lowered the apartment numbers from 18 to 1, now reduced to 15 larger apartments. The dwelling sizes are diverse within a compact urban building, comprising a total of 1 549 square metres of floor space distributed over 5 residential levels above a single level basement car park. There are two residential entries accessed directly off New South Head Road via gated but open common spaces that allow views through the building to the garden beyond. At the rear on the ground floor are communal facilities and extensive common garden spaces. Accommodation on each of the levels varies;

- Ground Floor has 2 garden apartments
- Level 1, 2 and 3 each have 4 apartments per level
- Level 4 has a communal roof terrace, a large penthouse

The vertical circulation comprises two centrally located cores, each with open galleries, tiled lightwells, lifts and open stairs which provide access to all levels. The smaller eastern core serves only 3 apartments, with the remainder on the western side with the lightwell and open vista to the garden. In the manner of Professor Wilkinson's Silchester apartments on the eastern slopes of Double Bay, the common circulation is made as sheltered breezeways, integrating and open to the landscape, providing a delightful homecoming for residents. BCA advice just received confirms that the stair in the western core can be opened both to the rear and to an enlarged vertical courtyard.

The car park driveway is accessed off the lowest point on the New South Head Road frontage (where there is an existing driveway and a layover in the street geometry). The driveway is embedded within the building footprint to decrease its presence, noise and impact on both future residents and

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neighbours. This allows all the site's perimeter to be landscaped. A long section through the car park ramp has been provided.

Site Planning

On this irregular site with a frontage of 28.13m, communal gardens are located on all sides of this free-standing building, with more generous spaces to the south to equally benefit future residents and the neighbours to the south and east. The site slopes up from a low point on the street frontage on the south east corner, rising steeply on the diagonal to the north-west corner which is 5.97m metres higher than the street.

The built form is precisely tailored to the particular site conditions. The carpark below is predominantly located directly under the building footprint. The building setbacks consider the amenity of the neighbouring buildings while ensuring the proposed design complies with the DCP or the ADG guidelines. The increased setback to the northern street boundary varies between 2.3 and 6.5 metres to the face of the balconies, with the north-eastern corner aligning to the immediate neighbour to the east. To comply with the 12 metre setback in the ADG, there is a greater setback to the rear where the neighbour is built close to the south boundary.

To east side boundary, the front (north) part of the building has a setback of 3 metres, which strengthens the presentation to the street, while to the rear it tapers away to be 4.8 metres from the boundary. This matches the pattern of the neighbour, and the proposal along this side is 3 storeys over the driveway to match the scale of the neighbour. The windows along this side are purposely angled to minimise overlooking, catch northern sun and provide options for ventilation from the quieter garden side.

The west side boundary is to an ascending driveway which serves the residential tower building to the south. Further west on higher ground is a blocky 5 to 7 storey apartment building set in extensive lush gardens. Due to the dense mature planting, this neighbour is hardly visible from the subject site. Therefore the proposal's mass is concentrated to this frontage, rising to 5 storeys to the street and 4 storeys plus a common roof terrace on the higher ground to the rear.

Due to the restricted width of the site, the proposal departs somewhat from the numeric setback controls, however the design compensates for this by having predominantly screened or solid side elevations. The project gains daylight from all orientations, and the communal gardens that occupy the setbacks benefit from sunlight and visual connections.

Counter to Council's UD comments, the site planning is carefully attuned to the site. The levels are matched to the sloping existing ground, and setbacks to neighbours carefully considered & integrated with the landscape design;

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- To the rear boundary a generous setback is provided opposite the existing neighbouring building, which is set very close to the boundary and relies on this property for its outlook (this setback exceeds the 12metres required under the ADG not acknowledged in the UD assessment);
- The frontage along the western boundary is broken into two distinct forms, separated by an open balcony. The setback from the driveway along the western boundary is all occupied by dense planting in deep soil
- The setback along the eastern side is actually more generous than the existing condition
- The rain forest garden to the rear is already heavily shaded, and assessments undertaken with this application show that any additional shadow will not adversely affect this landscape.

<u>Urban Presence</u>

The building alignment to the street accords with the eastern neighbour and the former building at the western frontage, with a garden setback fronting the street. On the street façade, deeply modelled angled balconies allow views up and down the street. The façade's heights rise with the slope of the land and in relation to neighbours' heights, many of which are well above the 10.5metre LEP height.

The architectural expression is united by a palette of materials and balanced asymmetrical forms that should make it an exemplar of such an apartment building type. Well-scaled concrete blade walls set the outboard corners, framing projecting concrete slabs. The body of the building is a white face brick, with lightweight cladding on the angled projecting bays which provide modelling and well-proportioned articulation to the side elevations. The proposal creates an appropriate urban presence to the primary street and side boundary frontages.

The Built Form and Scale need to be understood as intrinsic to the design, which at times on such a complex site may vary from the generic and untested LEP controls. Therefore we maintain that it is incorrect to state that the scheme does not comply with this design principle.

3.0 DENSITY

Density appropriate to the context

While the proposed density is above the current Council's Planning Controls, it is consistent with many neighbouring buildings and appropriate to this highly urban context which has a strong visual relationship to Double Bay Centre. The site is well located close to excellent public transport, shopping and a wide range of public facilities including Council's new Library and schools, which are all within a 10 minute or less walk. There are a number of new buildings either newly built, under construction or proposed in the vicinity that accord to the proposed floor space ratios and heights.

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The revised proposal has 15 apartments in a variety of configurations. The project adds to the area's housing stock, with compact dwellings suitable for singles or couples, particularly those interested in taking advantage of frequent public transport into the city, nearby parks and the harbourfront, shops and employment in the immediate area. The apartment plans are finely tailored to these particular site conditions.

The enclosed building footprint varies from level to level. At its greatest extent on Levels 1 and 2, the overall footprint (including balconies, circulation and external walls) has been slightly reduced from 601 square metres to 581 m^2 . The total floor space of 1 547 square metres, and a proposed Floor Space Ratio of 1.25:1, of which a significant percentage ($394 \text{ m}^2 = 25.5\%$) is to be designated as Affordable Housing under the Affordable Housing SEPP. The FSR of the remainder is compliant with the LEP (refer Drawing DA2.015 for detailed calculations).

The proposed development provides an appropriate type of accommodation that supplements Double Bay's existing housing stock. The accord with the context's heights and the high levels of amenity achieved demonstrate that the project is not an overdevelopment of the site.

Density promoting housing choice

A mix of unit plans are proposed, with diverse architectural characters and qualities. The 15 new apartments offer compact internal arrangements to provide a selection of more affordable accommodation, tailored to the particular site conditions. The variations include;

- 1 x level two bedroom garden apartment, with direct street access and private terrace;
- 1 x level one bedroom apartment, with direct street access and with private terrace;
- 3 x single level two bedroom through apartments with north facing balconies;
- 3 x single level two bedroom corner apartments with north facing balconies;
- 2 x single level adaptable two bedroom apartments with no common walls and large north facing balcony;
- 1 x single level two bedroom apartments with no common walls and large north facing balcony;
- 3 x single level three bedroom corner apartment with north facing balcony;
- 1 x three bedroom + home theatre penthouse apartment with large roof terrace;

Therefore the proposed development provides a mix of accommodation to support the needs of a future population. The diversity, design merit and the high levels of amenity achieved demonstrate that the project is an appropriate development of this site in this location.

4.0 SUSTAINABILITY

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The project fully complies with BASIX, as demonstrated by the compliance documentation provided as part of this application.

Compact living and renewal – working hard to produce sustainable outcomes

The renewal of this site promotes Compact City planning principles and is consistent with a raft of planning objectives.

Sunlight and daylight

All apartments receive controlled solar access to living areas and their various balconies and terraces. All windows and sliding doors have projecting slabs and wide balcony overhangs. Winter sun will penetrate deep into all apartments as the apartment plans have a slender depth ratio. The setbacks and screen planting provides privacy to the neighbours to the south, west and east.

The site planning and building design maximise the benefits of passive solar design to all dwellings;

- 15 out of 15 dwellings (100%) have windows facing north to their primary habitable rooms
- 15 out of 15 dwellings (100%) receive more than the minimum 2 hours mid-winter sun between 9am and 3pm with many units receiving sun extended sunlight between 9am and 3pm
- all dwellings have private outdoor space that is open to sun and outlook;
- all communal areas have fresh air and daylight

Passive cross ventilation

All primary private open spaces open directly off living rooms and main bedrooms and offer protection from direct sun to interiors in summer. All of the apartments in the proposal gain light and air from at least two sides, while 11 of the 15 dwellings (73%) achieve light and air from 3 or more sides. The dwellings have been designed to exploit good air cross flow by the ability to manipulate differential air pressures through the careful selection of window types on opposing elevations, including the two studio apartments which have secondary windows to the lightwell and open stair.

All dwellings are cooled through passive means through their thin cross sections, assisted with air movement by ceiling fans, so that they do not need to rely on air conditioning. The width in the main body of the proposed building varies between 8.4m and 17.8m (the rear part is just 7.5m) – clearly less than the SEPP65 maximum of 18m. All areas in all unit are within 8 metres of openable windows for good ventilation.

Passive sun control

Sun control, in the form of balconies, slab overhangs, deep reveals and the like is provided to living area and bedroom windows which have west, east or north orientation.

Passive thermal control

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The expressed structure of the building is a concrete frame, with brick and lightweight infill construction with insulation. Coupled with the use of concrete floors to habitable rooms, this maximises the benefit of thermal mass in regulating internal temperatures. Use of concrete in this way also helps to achieve excellent acoustic attenuation of noise issues – allowing the building to have multiple operable windows without compromising the internal acoustic environment.

Minimising energy usage

Energy use is reduced by;

- All 15 apartments (100%) are cross ventilated, with secondary windows on the guieter sides;
- 11 of the 15 kitchens (73%) have operable windows;
- Many toilets/bathrooms have daylight and operable windows;
- The careful selection of elements such as low energy bulbs to common areas, motion sensor lighting and the like;
- Water heating is proposed to be centralised gas hot water to minimise energy usage;
- The lobbies and common stairs on all floors are sheltered but open to natural light and ventilation.
- The areas of flat roof are fully insulated.

The gardens and associated planting aid the creation of a suitable micro climate.

Minimising water usage

Even on this heavily constrained site the project is planning to make use of captured roof water for garden irrigation within the site. Beyond BASIX compliance, it is included to extend the environmental performance of the building. The landscape species are selected to minimise water consumption.

Despite the above description and superior performance of the building obvious in its design, Council's UD questioned the deep soil and cross ventilation. Additional drawings have been prepared to further address these issues.

5.0 LANDSCAPE

On such tight urban sites, landscape area is usually at a premium. Whereas due to its compact planning, this proposal complies with the deep soil landscape area of at least 50% of the site area outside the buildable area and the landscape area required by the Woollahra LEP (refer to drawing DA2.008). The deep soil, has been increased to 421m², which equates to 34.7% of the site area, is provided along almost the entire site perimeter, to allow the planting of consolidated landscape with trees. Where a portion of the garden to the rear is over the basement, good soil depth is provided to allow the sustainable growth of screen planting.

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To supplement the extensive though more shaded communal gardens to the rear at ground floor, a generous communal roof terrace has been provided. This area, more than 6 metres in width, is open to the sky and mature vegetation to the rear, and so receives excellent sun – satisfying the ADG requirement. It allows all residents to enjoy the available district views. There are planters to the rear, and concrete ledges and balustrades to minimise overlooking of neighbours.

The areas of the both the combined communal gardens are calculated on DA2.026, showing that Council's requirement has been met.

The deep soil landscape is calculated on DA2.008, showing that it exceeds Council's minimum requirements.

The landscape design has been carried out by leading landscape architects, Melissa Wilson Landscape Architecture. The design takes advantage of the site conditions and features terraced courtyards and common gardens.

For the above reasons, the scheme does comply with the Landscape Design principle.

6.0 AMENITY

Compact spaces with high amenity

The shallow apartment plans with sheltered lightwells and ventilation on multiple sides ensures that all will have premium cross ventilation. Their window design, orientation and solar controls will also maximise cooling in summer and heating in winter. The compact apartment plans are extremely efficient, maximising habitable rooms that open out to outlook and outdoor areas to north, east, west and south. With the open air communal circulation throughout, there are operable fan light windows above all apartment entry doors.

There are no single-orientation south units - in fact, there are no single orientation units, despite its tight urban site conditions.

Appropriate private open spaces

All apartments have generous private outdoor spaces appropriate to differing uses, and are located to take advantage of sun and outlook. These private open spaces exceed the ADG minimum dimensions and areas. Careful consideration of position of window openings, louvres and design of blade walls ensures that privacy from the street, adjoining properties and between dwellings is thoroughly considered.

Privacy between dwellings

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The provision of the diverse range of types and scales of outdoor spaces has been arranged to ensure that each dwelling has ample privacy within the site. Careful consideration has been given to the thickness, height and type of balustrades and thresholds, and manipulation of the cross section, to prevent direct overlooking of the ground level courtyards – and to direct upper level outlook to district views wherever possible.

Being a good neighbour

Windows have been designed to minimise overlooking of neighbouring sites. The splay geometry, projecting blades and 3m minimum offset of all windows from the boundary allows for adequate separation distances to be achieved with neighbouring residential development. In response to the ADG guidance, windows are inset, angled or shielded to prevent overlooking.

Adaptability

The internal layouts of the dwellings have been carefully considered to provide adaptability to suit the changing needs of future occupants. The internal layouts comply with code requirements and expectations, with a total of 38.89% of dwellings having compliant adaptable or silver level performance.

Ceiling heights

In conformity with SEPP 65, all living and bedroom spaces have 2.7 metre high ceilings as a minimum. The top floor units have some loftier interior or exterior volumes.

Servicing and Car Parking Provision

Bike parking is conveniently located in a secure area at ground floor, adjoining the western entry. Other services such as plant rooms, metering and garbage are also discretely located at ground floor. Storage cages are compactly located in the basement car park, which is located directly under the building footprint. The car parking provides spaces for almost all apartments, with tandem spaces for the 3 bedroom apartments.

Storage

All dwellings have adequate built in storage, supplemented by additional storage cages in the basement (see notation on the plans).

Relative to the ADG norms of cross ventilation (60% required, 100% provided), sun access (70% required, 100% provided) and other requirements, the varied apartments in this DA have a superior level of amenity. The relationship to the neighbours has been satisfactorily resolved on all frontages through specific design responses. Of vertical proportions, the windows on the side boundaries exceed the light and ventilation requirements for bedrooms required under the NCC. Therefore in our view it is incorrect to claim that the DA does not comply with the Density design principle.

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7.0 SAFETY

Security within the site

Safety and security in both the street and within the site will be provided by the outlook and the overlooking windows and balconies that provides passive surveillance from all apartments.

The site perimeter is secure and the main street entries are provided with self-closing security gates with intercom. The careful consideration of the site planning avoids furtive spaces that are not overlooked. The building entries are clearly denoted to the street, and can be supplemented by signage and letterboxes. They have a clear line of sight deep into the plan, are daylight and open to the generous

rear garden.

Internally the clear and transparent circulation pathways and stairs provide the conditions for a safe

and secure environment.

Access and safety

Access and BCA assessments have already been carried out, and their recommendations incorporated into the submitted design.

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8.0 HOUSING DIVERSITY AND SOCIAL INTERACTION

Affordable Housing

The replacement Development Application includes 5 apartments to subject to the provisions of the Affordable Housing SEPP. These comprise 394m², or 0.33:1 FSR, leaving the remainder of the FSR at 0.92:1, under the 1.0:1 LEP control.

<u>Small is beautiful</u>

Australians build the largest and most profligate houses in terms of space and density, in the world. In contrast this proposal has a suite of distinctive, site specific plan configurations that offer a range of accommodation, from the more compact to the more generous. The dwellings offer comfortable well-

planned living choices.

A new building that will become part of the neighbourhood

The project is located on a main street open to the bustle of Double Bay. The neighbourhood has a lively street life in terms of public transport, vehicle and pedestrian traffic and activities. The site is suited to active residents, perhaps a younger population, who are likely to walk or cycle to work, who want proximity to the local amenity and infrastructure including shops, restaurants, public transport, local

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schools, Council's Library, Steyne Park and the beautiful promenade and beach on Double Bay's waterfront.

All dwellings are well planned to maximise available space, and living rooms open to external private areas. With lift access to all dwellings, the basement and roof terrace, the site planning allows contemporary dwellings with both adaptable and silver level liveability rating to be available for people with restricted mobility.

Communal facilities

The main entry promenades, communal roof terrace, open foyers, site facilities, compact carpark and gardens should all ensure a sense of community for the future inhabitants. Circulation areas, including stairs and landings, are covered but largely open air.

9.0 AESTHETICS

A rigorous architectural expression

The aesthetic qualities of the project are embodied in its architectural approach. The overall form is punctuated and given scale by the interplay its main distinctive elements. These include expressed concrete frame, infill face brick and lightweight vertical panels framed by concrete slabs, overhanging balconies and projecting bays to break down the overall massing. The considered composition of these elements will give the facades a direct and well-proportioned character.

The building's expression is created by the rigorous, elemental arrangement of contemporary materials of concrete, brick, recessed glass, and lightweight panels. Within the concrete frame, windows, panels and balustrades give a well-proportioned quality to all façades. The common areas at ground floor and as they rise through the building's lightwells are all tiled, providing a colourful and reflective homecoming for future residents.

Environmental performance coupled with amenity

The facades have a strong character, designed as finely detailed elevations that interpret the SEPP 65 requirements to create integrated frontages. The proposed architectural character expresses in a positive way the environmental and amenity objectives embodied throughout the design. For example the balconies have been designed to provide amenity with privacy and acoustic protection, and have a rhythmic presence in the elevations.

Scale to New South Head Road

In the replacement Development Application, the scale to New South Head Road has been reduced as the top floor balcony has been deleted, the setback at the north-west corner increased, and the roof form lowered around the entire perimeter of the main building.

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A model apartment building type

The form and scale of the facades set a strong precedent for the urban character of the building stock in Double Bay's fringes, and the proposed design is a refined model for such types. The three-dimensional design provides appropriate modulation and detail that responds in a confident contemporary way to the nearby buildings, without recourse to pastiche of period detail.



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CONCLUSION

With the revisions, the proposed transformation of 351-353 New South Head Road has been carefully considered to achieve a high quality architectural and urban design resolution, including;

- The site is ideal for compact and amenable apartments, with a range of price points.
- The site is situated on the edge of the regionally important Double Bay centre, is within easy
 walk of a wide range of facilities, and therefore offers shopping, work and recreational
 opportunities for future residents.
- Edgecliff Station, buses and the ferry service are all within easy walk, making the site **ideally** located for urban consolidation.
- The project **provides a positive presence to its street frontage**, and car parking, escapes and services are discretely located.
- The project has a distinctive architectural character and scale that will be an appropriate addition to Double Bay's urban landscape.
- The extensive landscaped spaces provided, which include compliant areas of deep soil
 planting, are of the equal benefit of future residents and the neighbouring properties.
- The communal roof terrace offers substantial amenity and potential sociability for the future residents, and is inset to respect the privacy of neighbours.
- Setbacks and screening to the neighbours on each side has been carefully considered.
- Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD) has been holistically incorporated into many aspects of the project.
- The project will create a **high-quality residential environment** for future residents, offering compact, well-planned apartments with character and high amenity.
- The proposal satisfactorily considers the privacy and overlooking of the neighbouring properties.
- The resolution of urban, architectural, environmental and social design considerations demonstrates that the proposal is an **appropriate fit to its site and context**.
- The site's redevelopment provides contemporary residential accommodation, incorporating
 the principles of adaptability and accessibility, to increase the housing choices available in
 Double Bay.
- Given the qualities of the proposal and the high level of compliance with all SEPP 65 principles, with very good amenity well above ADG requirements, we encourage Woollahra Council to consider this Clause 4.55 Application favourably.

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