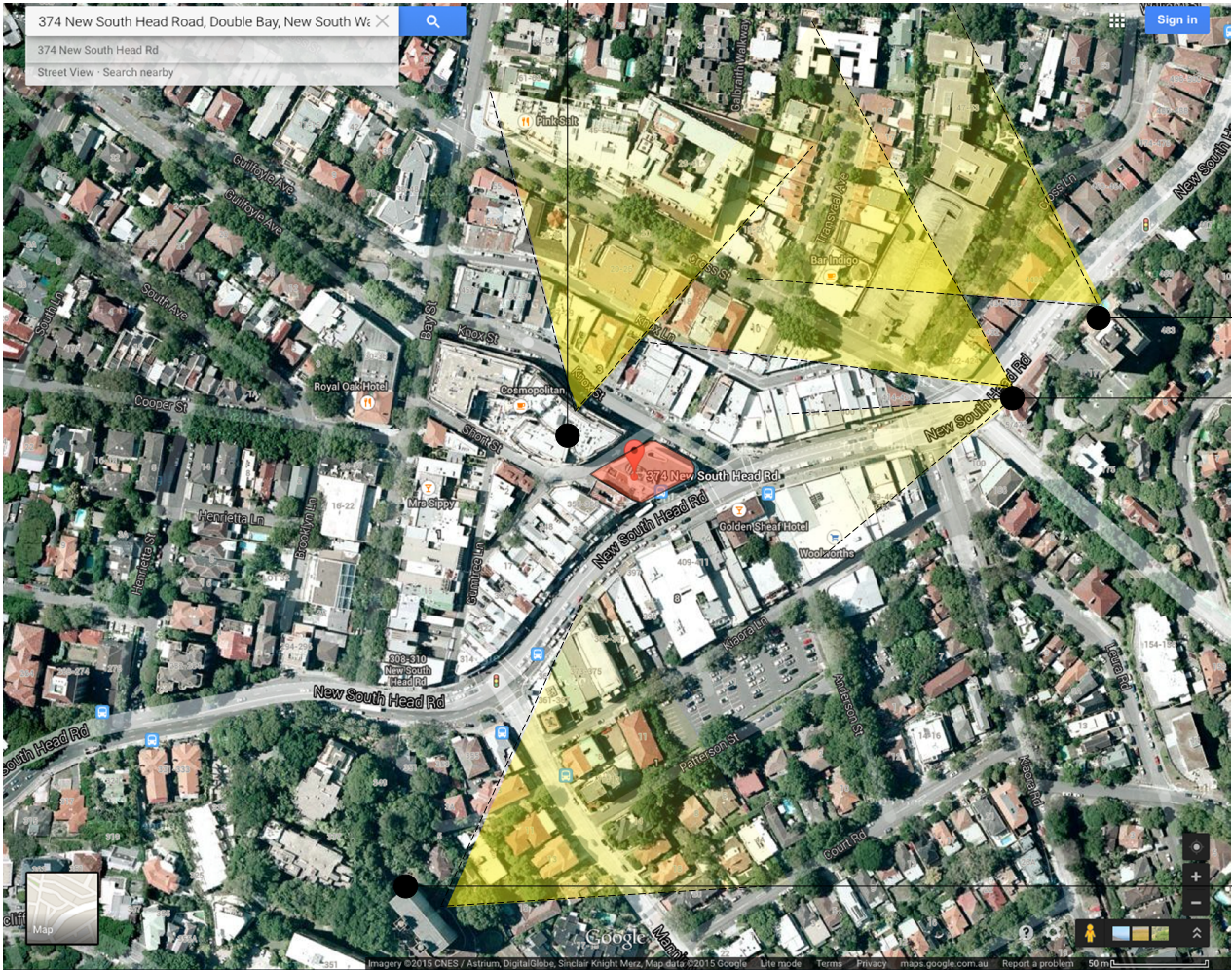




PANORAMIC VIEW FROM ROOF (LEVEL 4) OF SUBJECT SITE



VIEW CORRIDORS OF PROMINENT SITES



6.1.2 NEIGHBOURING VIEWS

There are no significant or direct views to Sydney Harbour from the subject sites or it's immediate surroundings. In addition, the neighbours assumed to be most affected by the development, No. 2-22 Knox Street, have their primary orientation directed away from the subject sites as demonstrated by the diagram on this page. As such the development assumes no affected neighbouring view loss.

Additionally views to the subject sites are obscured by the curvature of New South Head Road and the bulk of Cosmopolitan Shopping Centre 2-22 Knox Street and other buildings.

7.0 CONCLUSION

The Original Planning Proposal sought approval for a 7 level development. Following a concern expressed by Council Officers, the Applicant has decided to seek a revised Planning Proposal for only 6 levels. The following comments, in the Original Planning Proposal can be equally applied to the Revised Planning Proposal.

The Revised Planning Proposal is consistent with the relevant outcomes encouraged in the Sydney Metropolitan Strategy “*A Plan for Growing Sydney Issued by the NSW Planning and Environment*” and the anticipated future growth of the Double Bay Commercial Centre.

The Revised Planning Proposal has given due consideration to the Woollahra Council Kiaora Lands development, other adjoining developments and the opportunities the corner site provides.

The merits of the Revised Planning Proposal include, but are not limited to, the following:

- The development will be a truly mixed-use building which will contribute to the variety of building types of a vibrant centre.
- The increase in density created by the Revised Planning Proposal will provide increased economic activity, including after hours, in the immediate neighbourhood, particularly encouraging the use of the Kiaora Lands Development.
- It will generate strong pedestrian traffic and an incentive to use the lane ways.
- The Revised Planning Proposal would result in strengthening and defining the corner of New South Head Road and Knox Street, resulting in an improvement in the visual balance of the precinct.



12 May 2015
JOB NO 15.19/ PT

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT, 374 + 376 – 382 NEW SOUTH HEAD ROAD, DOUBLE BAY
URBAN DESIGN OPINION

1.0 BACKGROUND
1.1 Purpose of Report

This report provides an Urban Design opinion in support of Planning Proposal at 374 +376 – 382 New South Head Road in Double Bay. The proposal is to modify an approved and constructed retail / office building on the site. Designed by Eeles Trelease Pty Ltd Architects, the building is highly regarded, having won a number of architectural and environmental awards. It is often cited as an exemplar of a well-considered urban architecture.

This statement has been prepared by Philip Thalís, Director of Hill Thalís, Architecture + Urban Projects Pty Ltd, based on information provided by Eeles Trelease Pty Ltd Architects, on behalf of Fivex Pty Ltd.

I provided an Urban Design opinion in support of both the original DA and the approved 5th storey scheme.

1.2 Background

Under my direction, my practice prepared the Double Bay Development Control Plan 2002 for Woollahra Municipal Council. The DCP and PDIP subsequently received an Urban Design Award from the Planning Institute of Australia. I have also been retained by Council to advise on the following projects in Double Bay;

- Sir Stanford redesign – Council Design Review Panel member
- Kiaora Lands joint project with Solitel and Woolworths – Council's architectural advisor
- Intercontinental redevelopment proposal - review and opinion for Council

Involvement with Woollahra Council in these and other projects has provided me with a very good understanding of Double Bay's urban form and potential.

I also co-authored the book *Public Sydney; Drawing the City* published in 2013.

My full Curriculum Vitae is attached.

2.0 THE PROPOSAL

The proposal is to add to the existing 4 storey commercial building at 376 – 382 New South Head Road to add a mix of uses. It is important to note that Woollahra Council has already approved an additional 5th storey already on the subject site. This 5th storey has not yet been constructed, but it is still the subject to an active Development Consent.

The site is an irregularly shaped parallelogram, with three street frontages. The extensions would be both lateral to the south, incorporating the adjoining property at 374 New South Head Road, with additions over the entire footprint to lift the scale from an approved 5 storey height to a proposed 7 storey height. The additional 2 storeys additional storeys would all comprise compact residential units. The retail and commercial tenancies on the lower floor will be retained and extended laterally into the 374 New South Head Road site.

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3.0 THE PROPOSAL'S QUALITIES

I have reviewed the architects' plans, sections, elevations, urban analysis, and 3D views, and particularly support the following aspects of the proposal;

3.1 Architectural Qualities
The architecture of the additions is very compatible with the fine existing structure, being the work of the same distinguished architectural practice Eeles Trelease. When first constructed, the building won a number of professional awards, including two from the Australian Institute of Architects.

A number of distinguished Sydney buildings have been sympathetically enlarged over the last 100 years, without in any way detracting from their qualities. If anything they have grown in response to the evolving city around them, as documented in my book *Public Sydney; Drawing the City* (co-authored with Peter John Cantrill). Out of many that could be cited, a strong example is the Dental Hospital in Elizabeth Street, initially designed by Stephenson Turner and then extended three times by the same architects, both vertically and laterally. So seamless are the additions that today few would imagine that the building was so boldly enlarged.



Dental Hospital in Elizabeth Street, 1940



and more recently

In addition to the dozens of public buildings illustrated in the *Public Sydney*, there have also been many prominent commercial buildings so extended.

3.2 Key Corner Site in the heart of Double Bay Centre

The site occupies the most visually prominent corner location in Double Bay, being at the acute angle of New South Head Road and Knox Street, the very heart of Double Bay. As a result it is a memorable wayfinding and identity along New South Head Road.

The site has long been nominated in the DCP as a prominent corner that requires a strong architectural response.

The New South Head Road's curvilinear geometry further emphasises the prominence of the building when passing through Double Bay. The building corner presents differently when approaching from east

and west, frontally from the east and in profile from the west. This responsiveness to place further adds to its reading and identity.

The architects have taken full account of the importance of this corner, and designed a distinctive and distinguished proposal, as demonstrated by the submitted montages. The architectural qualities of such prominent corners can lift the urban image of the place, as demonstrated by many great exemplars such as the Flatiron Building in New York, various 'prow' buildings in Paris including Pierre Patout's Immeuble Paquebot, the BBC building on Regent Street in London, and many, many others.

Prominent Sydney examples include the Dental Hospital on Elizabeth Street, the former SMH Building (now the Radisson Hotel) on Pitt Street, the Kings Cross Fire Station on Darlinghurst Road in Kings Cross, and the former Edgecliff Post Office on New South Head Road. Such buildings always stand out by their position – their design makes them become emblematic of their place in the city.



Flatiron Building in New York



BBC building on Regent Street in London



Kings Cross Fire Station corner Victoria Street and Darlinghurst Road



Pierre Patout's Immeuble Paquebot



Former Edgecliff Post Office Road

This building celebrates its prow-like form. The inset rooftop garden would form a complex silhouette against the sky, and be highly visible westward from New South Head Road and eastward along Knox Street– the commercial centre of Double Bay.

It is also of note that, as a key corner site in the heart of Double Bay Centre, there are many relevant planning authorities and planning publications which stress the importance of stronger street edges on such prominent corner sites. For example, SEPP 65, The Residential Flat Design Pattern Book, The Residential Flat Design Code and the document prepared by the previous Urban Design Advisory Service relating to Mixed Use in Business Zones all highlight the importance of corner sites in the urban scene, and are supportive of strongly modeled buildings in such locations. These buildings often have higher floor space ratios due to building to all street alignments, particularly when they occupy a smaller site where their footprint covers the entire site area.

The proposal should act as a positive model for the many other corner sites in the Double Bay Centre, which are nominated in the DCP.

3.3 An Appropriate Urban Scale

It is noted that the proposal exceeds both the Height and Floor Space Ratio Controls in both Council's existing and proposed Local Environmental Plans and Double Bay Centre Development Control Plan. As the architects' montages show, the proposed additions will make the building more prominent in both Knox Street and New South Head Road streetscapes. The additions will be more comparable in height to the large Sir Stamford development adjoining the site to the west along the curve of Knox Street, and still smaller than the InterContinental Hotel nearby in Cross Street.



The architects' (Eeles Trelease) montages

It is also important to note that the DCP envisages significant changes to the area's urban form, changes which will take a few decades to eventuate. The Kiaora Lands Redevelopment, which replaced Woolworths, is now almost complete, and points to a much more urban frontage to New South Head Road (refer photomontage of the New South Head façade of the Kiaora Lands Redevelopment in the Eeles Trelease report). It would therefore be inappropriate to compare the proposed 7 storey development to the existing fragmented low and mid scale on adjoining properties, given that the Double Bay Centre DCP contemplates higher building forms on these adjoining properties.

The proposal would not impede on any views form conservation areas or heritage items.

3.4 A Model of Mixed Use

The mix of retail at ground floor, 3 storeys of offices surmounted by 3 storeys of smaller apartments would make it a rare exemplar of the genuine mixed use building in Sydney. As opposed to the dated approach of exclusionary of zoning, based on homogenising precepts, this building would bring a mix of inhabitants and visitors across the 7 days a week cycle, from morning throughout the day into the night.

Allied to the zero on site car parking, bike parking and numerous effective environmental initiatives, this proposal is one of the most far-sighted for Sydney in terms of being a genuine model for sustainable best practice.

In my experience a greater residential density on the subject site and other corner sites would contribute to the vitality and growth in the Double Bay Town Centre. I note the European experience in many cities where there is a strong residential component and these residents contribute to the street life and economic vitality of such centres.

4.0 REVIEW OF URBAN DESIGN ISSUES ASSOCIATED WITH THE SITE

4.1 Individual Taller Buildings in the Vicinity

The area around Double Bay Centre already has many higher buildings, although almost all of these are inconsistent with the current and proposed controls (see discussion below).

The attached analysis (see figs 1.1 and 1.2) shows the distribution and heights of these buildings. Many exist in direct relationship to neighbouring lower buildings, without undue amenity issues. Some have very large footprints, while a number of others are up to 15 – 18 storeys in height. The attached analysis shows the buildings in plan and on oblique aerial photos. Some of the buildings are very prominent in location, scale and visibility.

The Double Bay Centre occupies the valley floor and is therefore heavily overlooked from private property on the elevated slopes of Double Bay, Darling Point, Edgecliff, Bellevue Hill and Bondi Junction. The development of neighbouring sites such as the Sir Stamford and Kiaora Lands are conspicuous elements of Double Bay Centre's skyline. Due to quirks of history and geography, the Double Bay Centre is not easily seen from the public domain of these upper slopes, with the exception of district views from certain streets in and around Bondi Junction and Syd Einfeld Drive.

It is worth highlighting that Double Bay Centre already has a number of 5 to 8 storey buildings across the area. Against the background of which will become a more uniformed 4 to 5 storey scale as the older buildings, these occasional taller buildings have the effect of articulating the skyline, an important consideration in an area that is so overlooked. The relatively small footprint of the proposal when seen from this altitude and distance would not be at all noticeable, in my estimation.

See attached analysis (figs 1.1 and 1.2).

4.2 Analysis of other comparable Centres across metropolitan Sydney

It is clear that Double Bay Centre retains quite conservative heights and low FSR's compared to many comparable centres across metropolitan Sydney. By way of analysis (see figs 2.1 and 2.2 attached), we have tabulated a comparison of other centres in terms of;

- their total physical area
- the range of heights that apply
- the range of FSR's that apply

The centres have been selected to cover centres in inner and middle ring suburbs. Some benefit from existing heavy rail stations, which contributes to their importance. Double Bay enjoys frequent bus services, is just within walking distance of Edgecliff Station (which is only 2 stations from Martin Place), and has a peak hour and weekend ferry service to Circular Quay. The centre has two major public car parks. While bicycle facilities are poor in comparison to other parts of Sydney, the area is very walkable, due to a finely calibrated street and lane network.

A comparison of the centres analysed shows;

	Distance to city	Heavy rail	bus	Light rail
Burwood	10km	yes	yes	
Rockdale	10km	yes	yes	
Maroubra Junction	8km		primarily	
Kogarah	12km	primarily	yes	
Kensington	4km		primarily	future
Double Bay	2.5km	yes	primarily	
Mosman Junction	5km		primarily	

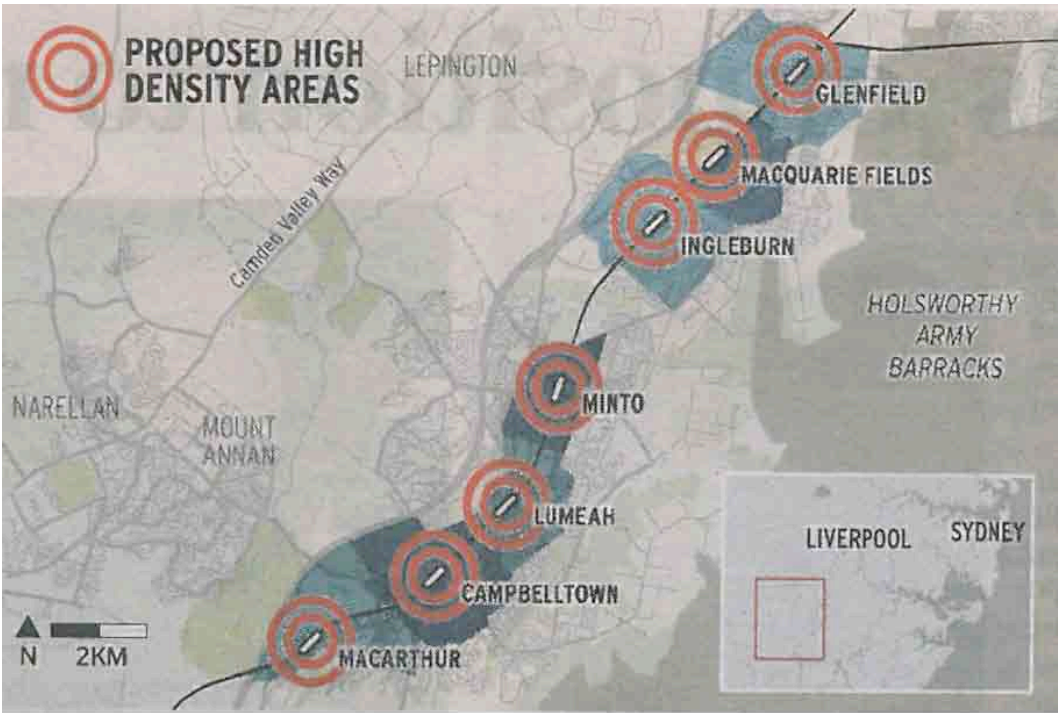
hill thalis

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Of these centres, Double Bay enjoys closest proximity to central Sydney, and also to three major universities, four major hospitals, Sydney airport and many other amenities. Of course it is also on the harbour as well.

Double Bay only 2.5km from the city centre, has regular bus service to the City, Watsons Bay, Dover Heights and Bondi Junction, and is a short though uphill walk of only 600m from Edgecliff and the Eastern Suburbs / Illawarra rail line.

It is also worth noting that a number of other centres across metropolitan Sydney have recently been up-scaled, despite having none of the convenience or environmental quality enjoyed at Double Bay. Examples include Merrylands town centre, which allows buildings up to 65 m in height, with FSR's up to 7:1 (these controls are directly comparable to Bondi Junction, which is acknowledged as the primary regional centre in the Eastern Suburbs). The Minister for Planning recently announced high density zones for a string of centres in the outer south west, from Glenfield to Macarthur, 35-45 km from the City centre.



Parliament House March 2015 hill thalis

hill thalis

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Housing Sydney's Growth Density where there is greatest amenity!
Parliament House March 2015 hill thalis

In a recent talk with NSW Parliamentarians to the Better Planning Network at Parliament House, I advocated that higher densities instead should be located in the established areas with the highest amenity and accessibility - Double Bay Centre is certainly such an area.

With its innate advantages in terms of location, demographics, public transport, access to established services and the like, it is firmly my view that places such as Double Bay should be making more of a contribution to accommodating Sydney's continuing growth.

See attached analysis (figs 2.1 and 2.2).

4.3 Lack of Higher Densities in the Woollahra LEP

A review of Woollahra Municipal Council's current LEP 1995, and the new LEP 2014 (gazetted but not yet in force) that will take effect on the 23rd May 2015, show that the entire LGA is maintaining comparatively low development standards. This is puzzling given;

- the area's privileged location on Sydney Harbour, near beaches and major parks, with good public transport and convenient access to a range of shopping and work opportunities;
- the area's proximity to the City of Sydney, which is the country's major employment hub, in addition to being the centre for public transport, events, culture, religion, politics, tourism, shopping and business and the like;
- the pressures of Sydney's rapid population growth, and the unmet demand for housing in locations convenient to facilities and jobs;
- the pressures on housing affordability, which could in part be countered by the increased provision of smaller, less expensive units in convenient locations. Having no car parking in almost all instances has the effect of keeping units more affordable than they otherwise would be. (This is due both the capital cost of parking, especially in basements, and the running costs of services).



It is also puzzling that many of the established higher, or denser building types around Double Bay are well above the current planning controls. The lack of correlation between existing densities and heights and the controls can give rise to ongoing problems with even minor applications for such properties. In the author's experience, this is not the basis for enlightened, proactive planning.

5 ALTERNATIVE APPROACH – VPA’S FOR PUBLIC BENEFIT

Rather than solely relying on set controls such as height and floor space, there is an evolving use of progressive mechanisms such as Voluntary Planning Agreements (VPA's) and Inclusionary Zonings to achieve a balance of policy outcomes. Mechanisms such as additional height and/or floor space are increasingly being tied to a defined number of public benefits, such as;

- creation of new public domain elements, such as laneways, walkways, street widenings, pocket parks and the like;
- upgrading of existing public spaces, usually in the vicinity of the site – either by monetary contributions or independently valued works in kind;
- provision of public facilities, rooms and services, such as theatres, community halls, social facilities, libraries and the like;
- provision of social or affordable housing, usually granted or leased (preferably for 10 years as a minimum)to a recognised Community Housing Association;
- provision of subsidised or affordable work places, studios or creative spaces.

Due to its design and location, one or more of such public benefits could reasonably be associated with, or approved with, this proposal.

6 CONCLUSION

The subject site has unique characteristics, being a “key corner site in the heart of Double Centre” and approval of the Planning Proposal for the subject site would not constitute a precedence for approving increased densities elsewhere in the Town Centre due to the fact that the subject site has site-specific attributes not evidenced in the significant majority of the remaining properties in the Town Centre.

Given the Architectural and Urban Design merit embodied in the proposal, appropriate to the site and locality, I recommend that Woollahra Council favourably consider this Planning Proposal application. Please do not hesitate to contact us should you require further information.

Yours faithfully,

Philip Thalys
Principal
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Attachments;
Figs 1.2, 1.2, 2.1, 2.2; Philip Thalys CV