

SOCIAL IMPACT COMMENT AND CRIME PREVENTION THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN ASSESSMENT

854-874 Hunter Street, Newcastle West NSW 2302

Prepared for:
DOMA GROUP

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BASIS OF REPORT

This report has been prepared by SLR Consulting Australia Pty Ltd (SLR) with all reasonable skill, care and diligence, and taking account of the timescale and resources allocated to it by agreement with DOMA GROUP (the Client). Information reported herein is based on the interpretation of data collected, which has been accepted in good faith as being accurate and valid.

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The purpose of this report is to identify and assess crime risk associated with the proposed residential building component located at 854-874 Hunter Street, Newcastle West NSW 2302.

1 Introduction

The report has been prepared in accordance with the:

- Social Impact Assessment Policy (SIA Policy) for development application prepared by City of Newcastle (1999); and
- Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) guidelines prepared by the NSW Police in conjunction with the NSW Department of Urban Affairs and Planning (now the NSW Department of Planning and Environment).

The SIA Policy outlines the key principles of assessing social impacts, which generally refer to the consequences that people experience when a new project brings change. Among other things, the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 aims to promote the social and economic welfare of the community and facilitate ecologically sustainable development. It integrates relevant economic, environmental and social considerations in planning and assessment decisions and enables the community to participate in assessment.

Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) is a crime prevention strategy that focuses on the planning, design and structure of cities and neighbourhoods. It reduces opportunities for crime by using design and place management principles that reduce the likelihood of essential crime ingredients from intersecting in time and space.

There are four CPTED principles that need to be considered when designing developments.

- Surveillance;
- Access control;
- Territorial reinforcement; and
- Space management.

2 Description of Proposal

The DA seeks approval for the construction of a mixed-use development, comprising Stage 4 of the Concept Plan Approval.

A total of 356 residential apartments are proposed, with 185 apartments in the western tower and 171 apartments in the eastern tower. The DA is designed to integrate with the existing carparking structure, and includes the following elements:

- Basement level (1091sqm) for storage purposes, comprising 274 individual storage cages;
- Ground floor level comprising five (5) retail tenancies (ranging from 70-144sqm), a commercial lobby, a residential lobby and service areas;
- Commercial tenancies (office) on Levels 1-3, with 1202-1323sqm floor plates;
- Level 4 service and storage areas, including 82 individual storage cages;

- ### 3 Local Context

The site is an irregular polygon configuration with frontage to Hunter Street, Stewart Ave and the Great Northern Railway Line, wrapping around the corner of Cooper Street and Beresford Lane. The site has a total land area of approximately 2757m².

The map shows the city center of Newcastle, Australia. A red rectangle highlights a 'SITE' located on Hunter Street, between Station Street and the Hunter Street interchange. The site is adjacent to a parking area and a bus stop. Surrounding the site are various commercial and residential buildings, including Wickham Studios, My House Party, and the Newcastle City Centre. The Hunter Street interchange is visible to the right, and the Newcastle City Centre is to the left. The map also shows the Hunter Street interchange, the Newcastle City Centre, and the Hunter Street interchange.

Prior to the demolition of structures on the site, the site included buildings and improvements, most notably the heritage-listed former Co-Operative Store and a multi-level carpark. The site is immediately adjacent to the NTI.

The existing character of the immediate locality is mixed and comprises predominantly commercial buildings in the immediate vicinity of the site. The site is within Newcastle City Council's West End Precinct, which is currently being transformed as a future central business district (CBD), due to the close proximity to the NTI. The Precinct will feature predominantly commercial and mixed-use development taking advantage of the location.

The immediate north of the site supports the rail corridor, on which the NTI has been constructed. The NTI is the termination point for heavy rail and the starting point for light rail into the City. Further to the north of the NTI is predominantly residential development in the suburb of Wickham, and there are a number of residential flat building either recently completed or in the process of construction. To the immediate west of the site exist older style two-storey commercial buildings.

Hunter Street forms the southern boundary of the site, near the main intersection of Hunter Street and Stewart Avenue. Land to the south of Hunter Street is zoned for a greater density of commercial or mixed-use development than currently exists. The heritage-listed Cambridge Hotel; and Quest Apartments within the heritage-listed former brewery site, are each located opposite the site in Hunter Street. A multi storey building has recently been constructed at No. 12 Stewart Avenue (corner Hunter Street) which contains the Council offices and other commercial tenancies.

A number of properties, bordered by Beresford Lane, Cooper Street, Hunter Street and Stewart Avenue do not form part of the subject site, and comprise two storey retail/commercial building uses of older style. Further to the east of the site, on the opposite side of Stewart Avenue comprises a range of older style commercial/retail buildings, with more recently completed multi storey mixed use buildings. To the south east of the site, a 14 storey Seniors Housing development has been constructed at 500 King Street Newcastle West in addition to a Holiday Inn at 514 King Street Newcastle West.

3.2 Crime Statistics

The crime statics for the area have been sourced from the NSW Bureau of Crime Statics and Research.

Data for the Newcastle LGA indicates the following:

- Incidents of assault (non-domestic assault) in the Newcastle LGA are stable and higher than the NSW average;
- Majority of incidents involving malicious damage to property and assaults occur at residential premises;
- Rates of break and enter of non-dwellings is higher per capita than NSW and the majority of break and enters are on the road/street/footpath; and
- Incidents of disorderly conduct (including trespassing) in Newcastle are stable and higher than the NSW average.

Figures 2-8 show graphs extracted representing the above data from BOCSAR mapping system.

Figure 2 Incidents of Assault (non-domestic assault) in Newcastle West (Source: BOSCAR Mapping)

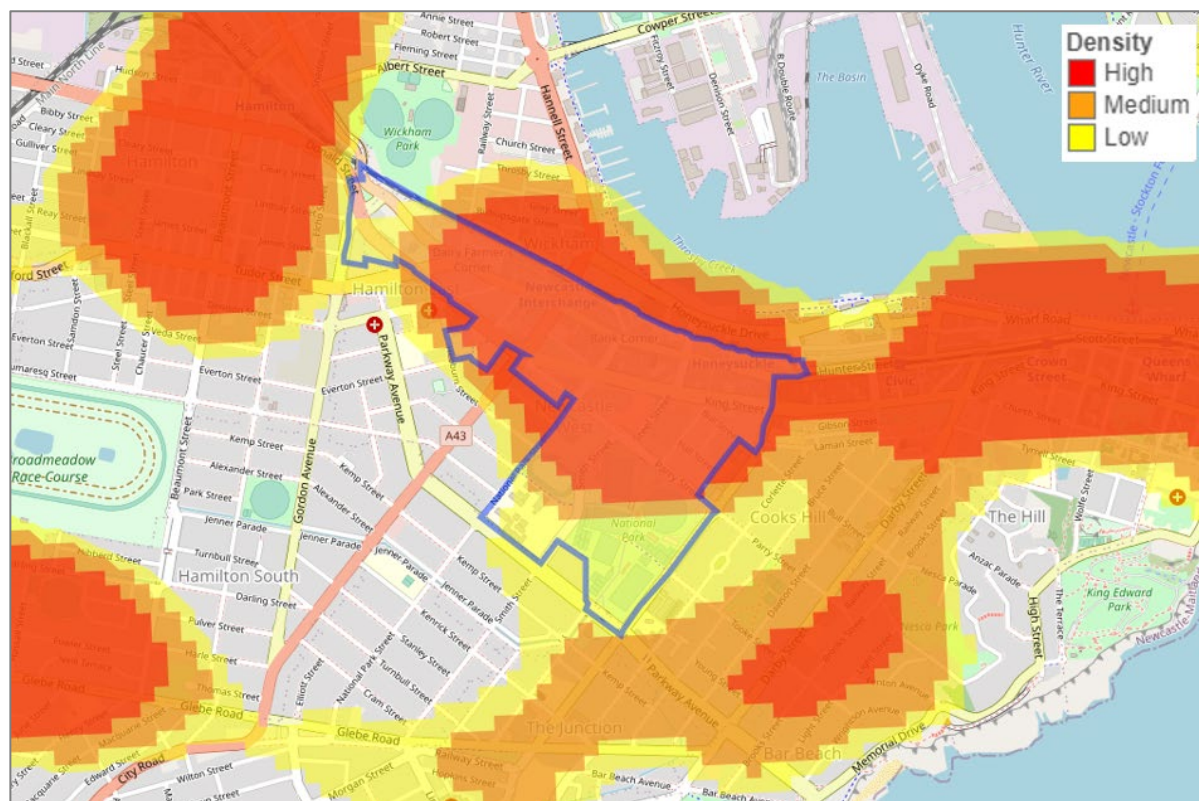


Figure 3 Incidents of Assault (Non-Domestic Assault) in Newcastle LGA from July 2019 to June 2021 (Source: BOSCAR Mapping)

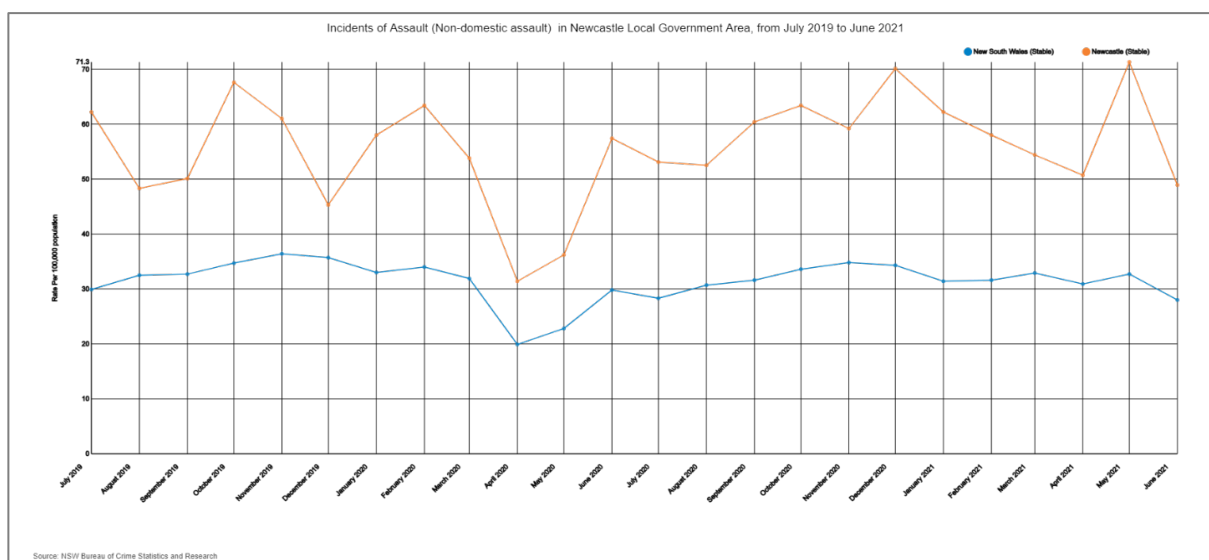


Figure 4 Incidents of Theft in Newcastle LGA and NSW from July 2019 to June 2021 (Source: BOSCAR Mapping)

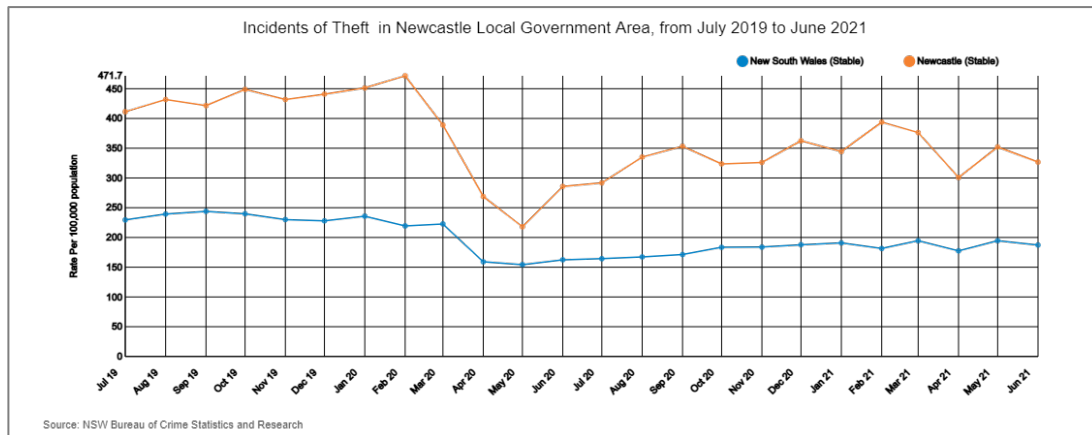


Figure 5 Incidents of Robbery in Newcastle LGA and NSW from July 2019 to June 2021 (Source: BOSCAR Mapping)

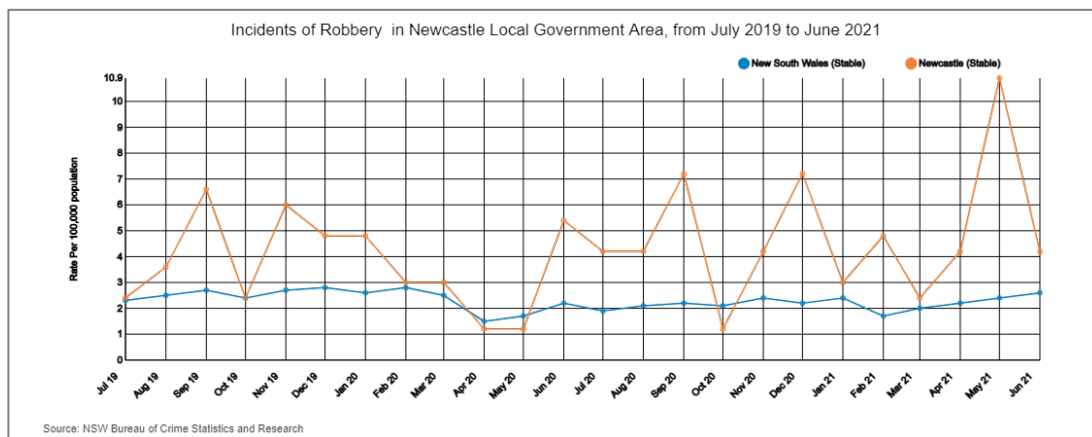


Figure 6 Incidents of Theft by Premises in Newcastle LGA from July 2019 to June 2021 (Source: BOSCAR Mapping)

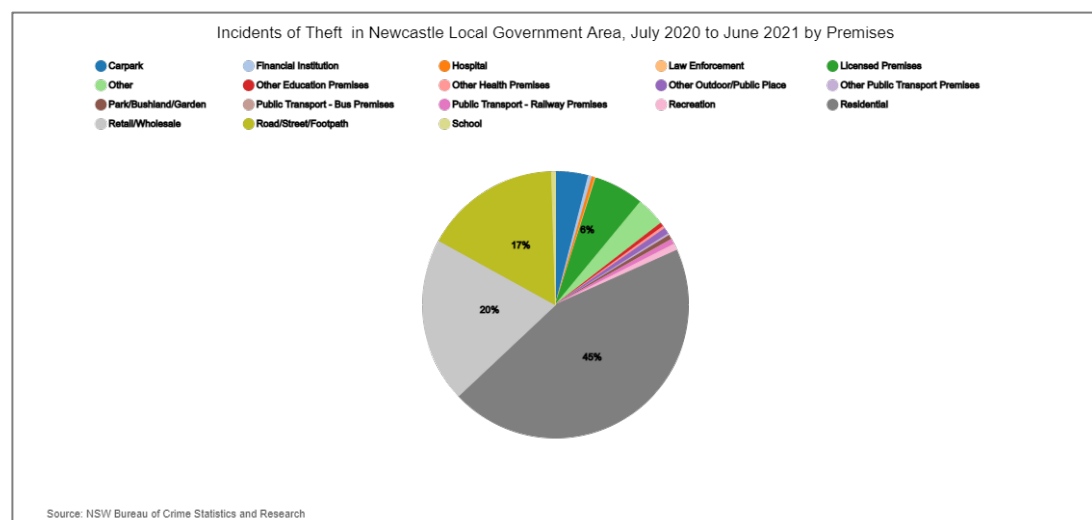


Figure 7 Incidents of Robbery by Premises in Newcastle LGA from July 2019 to June 2021 (Source: BOSCAR Mapping)

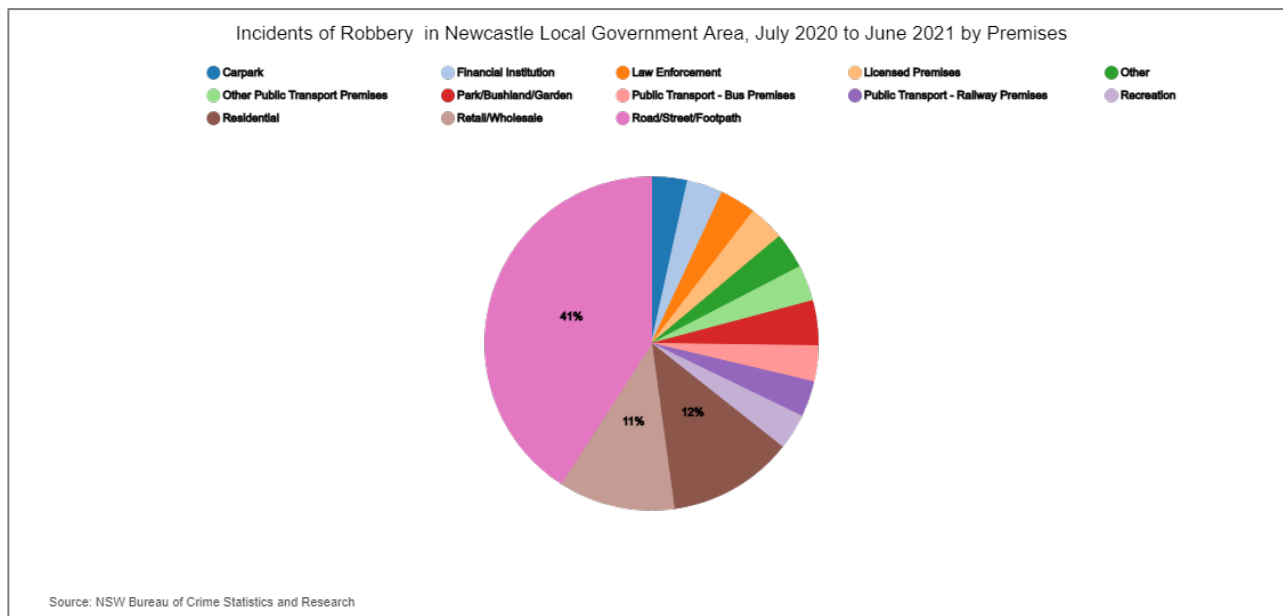
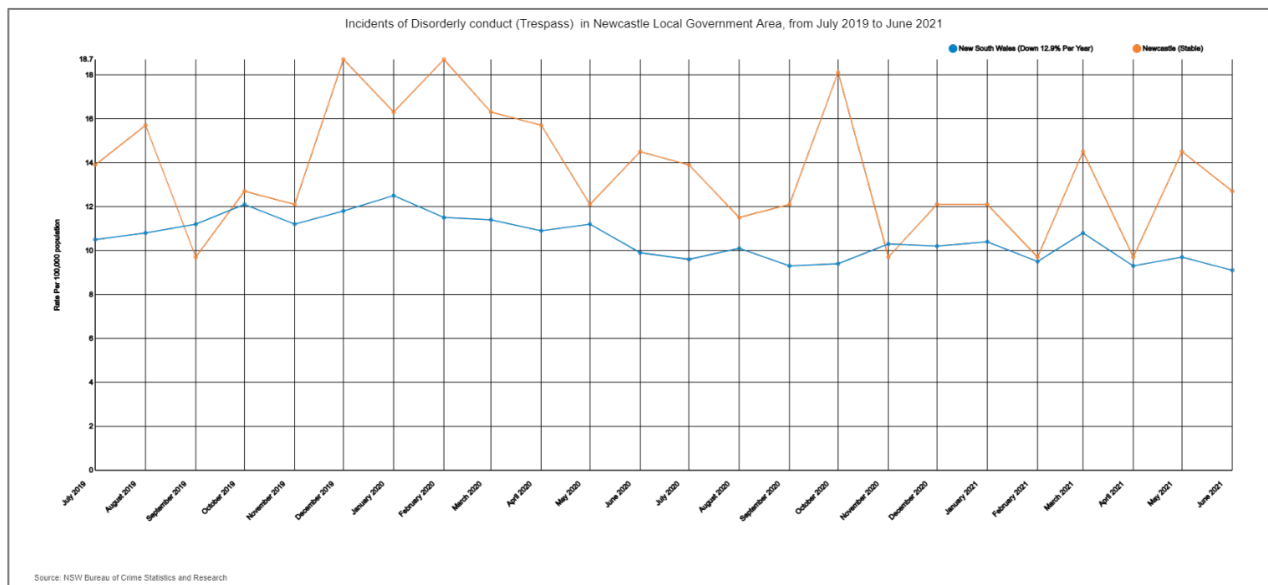


Figure 8 Incidents of Disorderly Conduct (Trespass) in Newcastle LGA from July 2019 to June 2021 (Source: BOSCAR Mapping)



4 Social Impact Comment

To ensure that unacceptable social impacts do not occur as a result of the proposed development, consideration has been given to the social impact of the proposal in accordance with Council's Social Impact Assessment Policy for Development Applications, 1999. The aim of this policy is to identify the impact categories and the positive and negative implications of the proposed uses, which will assist to maximize the social wellbeing and safety of the patrons, employees and surrounding community.

Accommodation and Housing

The proposed development will have a positive impact within the community through the provision of additional, well-designed housing opportunities within the Newcastle City Centre locality. The apartments will be designed to achieve a high level of liveability and comply with the design criteria of ADG. Impressive views across the city and hinterlands will be afforded to residents.

The design of the development optimises amenity for the future occupants and will meet the needs of and appeal to a wide variety of people. The site is highly accessible for alternate modes of transport; and is compatible with the desired future character of the West End Precinct. Furthermore, the supply of additional housing in Newcastle will likely contribute to improving housing affordability.

Crime and Public Safety

The proposed ground floor plane has been designed in accordance with the Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) standards. The design of the development optimises amenity for the future occupants, is a highly accessible site for alternate modes of transport; and is compatible with the desired future character of the West End precinct.

The proposed development provides excellent casual surveillance, through the orientation of entrances and the design of ground floor retail tenancies, which provide open visual connection between uses and public domain. The proposed development includes high quality public spaces and walkways that will be carefully designed to enhance visual connections and appropriate lighting.

The proposed development has been designed in accordance with the Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) four (4) principles (Territorial Re-enforcement, Surveillance, Access Control and Space/Activity Management) and Council's principles for retail /food and drink premises and residential accommodation.

Safety measures will be employed as discussed further in Section 5 of this assessment.

Local Economic Effects

The proposed development will result in a positive economic impact as the proposed development will redevelop a currently underutilised site. The proposed redevelopment of the site will significantly contribute to the Newcastle economy at all stages of development, by employing a range of contractors during the construction stage and through trade for local businesses from the additional residents in the locality.

Population Change

The proposed development responds to the demand generated by the significant increase population growth within the Newcastle Local Government Area.

The proposed development will have a positive impact within the community as it will provide additional, well-designed and well-connected residential apartments and commercial / retail floor space within the Newcastle City Centre locality.

The proposal will achieve a minimum benchmark of 20% of the total apartments incorporating the Liveable Housing Guideline's silver level universal design features

The proposed development will positively contribute to the diversity of the precinct and is unlikely to result in any negative social impacts on the community. Given the configuration of the site and its setting as an infill development site, the proposed development has satisfactorily and readily addressed potential crime risk elements in the design.

Overall, the proposed development will have a positive impact within the community as it will provide additional, well-designed and varied housing opportunities within the locality.

Employment

The proposal will provide new commercial floor space in this CBD location including retail premises to activate the building at the ground level. The development will bring significant employment opportunities throughout the construction of the building project as well as once the development is operational.

The job creation during construction of the project will be diverse, from construction labourers and project management teams to professional consultants. Post-construction the development affords employment in office/professional services, retail and building services.

Although demand for parking in and around the site may impact traffic and parking for locals in the area; this is partly alleviated by the multi-story storey carpark which will provide on-site parking for the construction workers to minimise off-site impacts during the construction phase.

Access and Mobility

The design of the development will meet regulatory access requirements. The typical layout of the apartments demonstrates an efficient use of space to achieve excellent amenity for residents and compliance with the principles of the ADG. A selection of apartments have been designed as liveable units to adhere to ADG standards to provide more flexible apartments to meet the needs of a wider proposition of the community or occupants with special health needs.

Community Services and Facilities

With the addition of a large number of apartments the proposed development will increase the need for community services and facilities. The applicable S7.12 contributions payable at a rate of 3% CIV for residential development will greatly contribute to the future community services and facilities provision in the locality.

The proposal incorporates new meeting places and public spaces, including public art, to enjoy before and after travel for commuters and visitors. The public domain areas will be well landscaped including street furniture and lighting.

The high quality indoor and outdoor communal open space areas will service the future occupants of the dwellings, enabling passive and active recreation, as well as social interaction.

The diverse range of retail and commercial tenancies proposed within the podium area will provide future opportunities for service and facility industries to be accommodated within the site.

Public Safety and Crime Prevention

The proposed scheme has been designed in accordance with the Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) standards, as demonstrated in Section 5 below.

The common areas within the proposal are highly visible; and security measures including CCTV will be adopted for the carpark areas and basements. Secured entry to the car parks and buildings has been incorporated in the design.

All ground level floor plans of public spaces. It is understood that the NSW Police will be consulted during DA assessment given the scale of the development. the development incorporate active (predominantly retail) land uses with good surveillance to the street and surrounding

Social Interaction and Community Values

The ground plane encourages permeability with through site links and new meeting places and open public spaces and laneways to foster interaction & create safe and secure thoroughfare. Highly activated building edges encourage pedestrian activation & public gatherings.

New communal open space areas and facilities are provided for the future residential occupants to allow opportunities for positive social interaction in a pleasant environment.

Overall, it is considered that the proposal will have a positive outcome on the amenity of the area and will have various positive social impacts with appropriate mitigation measures to minimise potential adverse impacts.

5 Assessment Against CPTED Principles

5.1 Crime Opportunity

The proposed development involves the construction of a new mixed use building, including two residential towers with lower level commercial and retail premises, and a basement. The commercial building will provide high quality residential accommodation, in close proximity to public transport and the Newcastle Centre Business District.

Given the proximity of the site of a public transport hub with a lot of passing pedestrians this presents an opportunity for crimes or anti-social behaviour (e.g. vandalism, graffiti, litter, excessive noise) at the site, particularly during night time hours.

5.2 Surveillance

Natural surveillance limits the opportunity for crime by increasing awareness that people can be seen. Potential offenders therefore feel increased scrutiny and limitations on their escape routes.

Good surveillance is achieved by:

- a. Clear sightlines between private and public spaces;
- b. Effective lighting of public places; and
- c. Landscaping that makes places attractive, but not a place to hide.

The design of the development includes natural surveillance by the strategic placement of physical features to maximise visibility.

Positive surveillance features of the development include:

- Large expanses of glass to the Hunter Street frontage at street level and adjacent public domain around;
- The maintenance levels for paths of travel with comply with AS1680;
- An active street frontage having commercial premises which open onto the street and public promenade to the Newcastle Bus Interchange;
- Direct views and overlooking of the public domain from all levels of the building;
- Installation of 24/7 video surveillance (CCTV) within the development;
- Fire exit doors will be alarmed (where required)'
- Appropriate day and night lighting to the building and adjoining public domain;
- 'Hidden spots' avoided within the site where possible, by siting the buildings around the perimeter of the site allowing optimal surveillance over the remaining internal areas of the site. Where 'hidden spots' are unavoidable, CCTV cameras and appropriate lighting will be installed; and
- The separation of the two towers increases through site links and sightlines to the Newcastle Transport Interchange, maximising visibility and enhancing ease of access;
- Natural surveillance is provided over communal areas and adjacent public domain; and
- Large glazed windows are provided on the commercial spaces on Levels 1-3 to allow for passive surveillance of the streets below.

Recommendations:

- Trees and landscaping should be regularly maintained to ensure clear sightlines remain on site;
- Signs should be placed in prominent locations around the building advising that the building is under 24-hour camera surveillance and that any anti-social behaviour will be reported to the NSW Police Service.
- Broken light fixtures and bulbs within the building and adjacent promenade will be replaced within 24 hours.
- Routine maintenance checks and reporting should be carried out by personnel employed (building maintenance) to ensure the property is maintained and to reduce the likelihood of crime or vandalism. Any vandalism or graffiti should be repaired and removed promptly by staff or contractors.

5.3 Natural Access Control

Natural access control limits the opportunity for crime by taking steps to clearly differentiate between public space and private space.

Good access control for the movement of people is achieved by:

- a. Landscapes and physical locations that channel and group pedestrians into target areas;

- b. Public spaces that attract rather than discourage people from gathering; and
- c. Restricted access to internal or high-risk areas (e.g. car parks).

The site has been designed to encourage natural access and control flow of people by:

- Restricted access to the carpark and service area. All apartments are to be provided with two (2) key fobs to access the secure car parking area and lift control;
- An intercom will be provided to grant access to visitors entering via the entry gate and the lift;
- Access to each apartment will be enacted via a key;
- All access to communal areas will be secured with the use of a fob key;
- Clear vehicular access point and pedestrian access point to the building;
- Secure access is provided to residential lobbies;
- The boundary of the site is defined by the street wall;
- Appropriate lighting and signage for occupants and service vehicles;
- An active street frontage with commercial premises, attracting people;
- Within the building, access to office levels is restricted and secure; and
- Landscaping has been designed throughout the building to encourage gathering in a pleasant and well-maintained environment;
- Safety measures have been incorporated into the rooftop communal areas, including a windbreak and balustrade that is setback from the building edge to prevent access

5.4 Territorial Reinforcement (Community Ownership)

Territorial reinforcement promotes social control through increased definition of space and improved proprietary concern, i.e. it makes the normal user feel safe and makes the potential offender aware of a substantial risk of apprehension or scrutiny. By using buildings, fences, pavement, signs, lighting and landscape to express ownership and define public, semi-public and private space, natural territorial reinforcement occurs.

Community ownership (territorial reinforcement) makes people feel comfortable in a place and is achieved by:

- a. A design that encourages people to gather in public spaces;
- b. Having a clear transition between boundaries of public and private spaces; and
- c. Having clear design cues as to who is to use the space and what it is to be used for.

The proposed development has been designed to clearly delineate public space. This will ensure that any potential intruders will stand out and be easily identified. Elements of territorial reinforcement included into the design and management of the proposal include:

- Clearly defined boundaries of the site by the built form;
- A high-quality building design that affords a high level of amenity, thereby being a place occupants are proud of and take an interest in;

- The buildings connects with the public domain in terms of being accessible via cycling, walking, rail, bus and vehicle;
- The enhancement of the public domain through street trees, pavement;
- Identify / advertise the presence of CCTV;
- Provision of directional signage and information display within the building that will assist in controlling activities and movements throughout the premises (knowing how and where to enter/exit and find assistance can impact on safety); and
- Display of security system signage at access points.

5.5 Space Management

Space management strategies such as site maintenance, target hardening, and target removal are included in the development proposal.

Maintenance

Management and maintenance are closely linked to a sense of ownership. Good management and maintenance of a place, or property, is often the difference between it seeming safe or unsafe and it being cared for or uncared for. Deterioration indicates less control by the users of a site and indicates a greater tolerance of disorder.

It is in the interest of the future users to maintain the site to a high standard so that the value of the properties remain at their optimal level. Robust materials are proposed to be used where appropriate. Any vandalism or graffiti will be repaired and removed promptly by personnel or contractors.

Target Hardening and Removal

Target hardening and removal is the use of 'design out crime' strategies to make it harder for a crime to be committed and reduces the gains of crime. While this is the most long-established and traditional approach to crime prevention, it can create a 'fortress mentality' and imagery whereby users of the development withdraw behind physical barriers and the self-policing capacity of the built environment is damaged. This is effectively working against CPTED strategies that rely on surveillance, territoriality and positive image management.

The proposed development includes the use of some physical barriers associated with target hardening, however the site allows opportunities for natural surveillance from within the site, with clearly defined boundaries, and allows opportunities for natural access control. The building aims to ensure a safe environment for users of the building.

6 Conclusion

The above assessment of the proposal in accordance with the CPTED confirms the proposal can be managed to minimise the potential risk of crime. It shows that the proposed mixed used development has been designed with CPTED principles in mind and incorporates appropriate night lighting, site and building layout and landscaping as well as security devices such as CCTV cameras to assist in crime deterrence and prevention.

Additionally, consideration has been given to the social impact of the proposal in accordance with Council's Social Impact Assessment Policy and the proposed measures in place to ensure the development provides a positive addition to the community and potential adverse impacts are mitigated. The assessment integrates the relevant economic, environmental and social considerations in planning and assessment decisions and is considered to provide an overall desirable outcome for the site.

Implementation of the above-mentioned measures into the design of the proposal will create an environment that will dissuade offenders from committing crimes by manipulating the built environment in which those crimes proceed from or occur.

The design is considered to be consistent with the Department of Planning and Environment (former Department of Urban Affairs and Planning) Crime Prevention and the Assessment of Development Applications, 2001.

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