CLOUSTON associates

ELEMENT PROPERTY AUSTRALIA

52 ALFRED ST
VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

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Cover Image:
Existing Building 52 Alfred St South • Milsons Point

52 ALFRED STREET
VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

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Note: This document is Preliminary unless validated.

Above: Nearmap aerial of site

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The proposal site (right of picture) viewed from the northeast

1. INTRODUCTION

THE PROJECT

CLOUSTON Associates has been commissioned by Koichi Takada Architects to prepare a Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) as part of a Planning Proposal for the reconstruction of an existing building at 52 Alfred Street South, Milsons Point (hereafter referred to as 'the Project'). The Planning Proposal is seeking additional height in line with the building envelopes of adjoining buildings.

SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

This Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) is comprised of two parts:

- assessment of the visual impact of the new building from key public domain viewpoints
- assessment of the extent of view loss from occupiers of adjoining buildings as a result of the design for the new building.

The assessment of the former has been undertaken through site evaluation at street level while the latter has been established through the use of drone photography at representative levels of residences in the adjoining buildings.

It should be noted that the VIA has been undertaken based on the architect's general 3D modelling and photomontages (illustrated in this report) which, while integral to the overall assessment, do not cover all of the specific views selected for this assessment.

1.1.1 VISUAL ASSESSMENT RATIONALE

A VIA takes into account all effects of change and development in a visual scene that may impact visual amenity. It is concerned with how the surroundings of individuals or groups of people may be specifically affected by change in the visual scene, both quantitatively and qualitatively.

Judgement as to the significance of the effects is arrived at by a process of reasoning, based upon analysis of the baseline conditions, identification of visual receptors (viewers of the scene) and assessment of their sensitivity, as well as the magnitude and nature of the changes that may result from any development.

This assessment is an independent report and is based on a professional analysis of the visual environment and the Project at the time of writing. The current and potential future viewers (visual receptors) have not been consulted about their perceptions. The analysis and conclusions are therefore based solely on a professional assessment of the anticipated impacts, based on a best practice methodology.

1.2 REPORT STRUCTURE

The report is divided into the following sections:

1 - INTRODUCTION
An introduction section that describes the planning and methodology context for the VIA.

2 - THE PROJECT
A description of the proposed works.

3 - EXISTING VISUAL ENVIRONMENT
A description of the existing site and visual environment of the study area.

4 - VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT
A study of the visual impacts of the Project. Each of the selected viewpoints are assessed on a range of qualitative and quantitative criteria.

5 - VISUAL IMPACT MITIGATION RECOMMENDATIONS
A discussion as to the means by which any visual impacts identified can be precluded, reduced or offset.

6 - VIEW SHARING AND VIEW LOSS ASSESSMENT
Assessment of potential view loss based on 3D photomontage modelling from adjoining buildings.

7 - CONCLUSIONS
Conclusions are drawn on the overall visual impact of the Project within the study area and potential view loss from adjoining buildings.

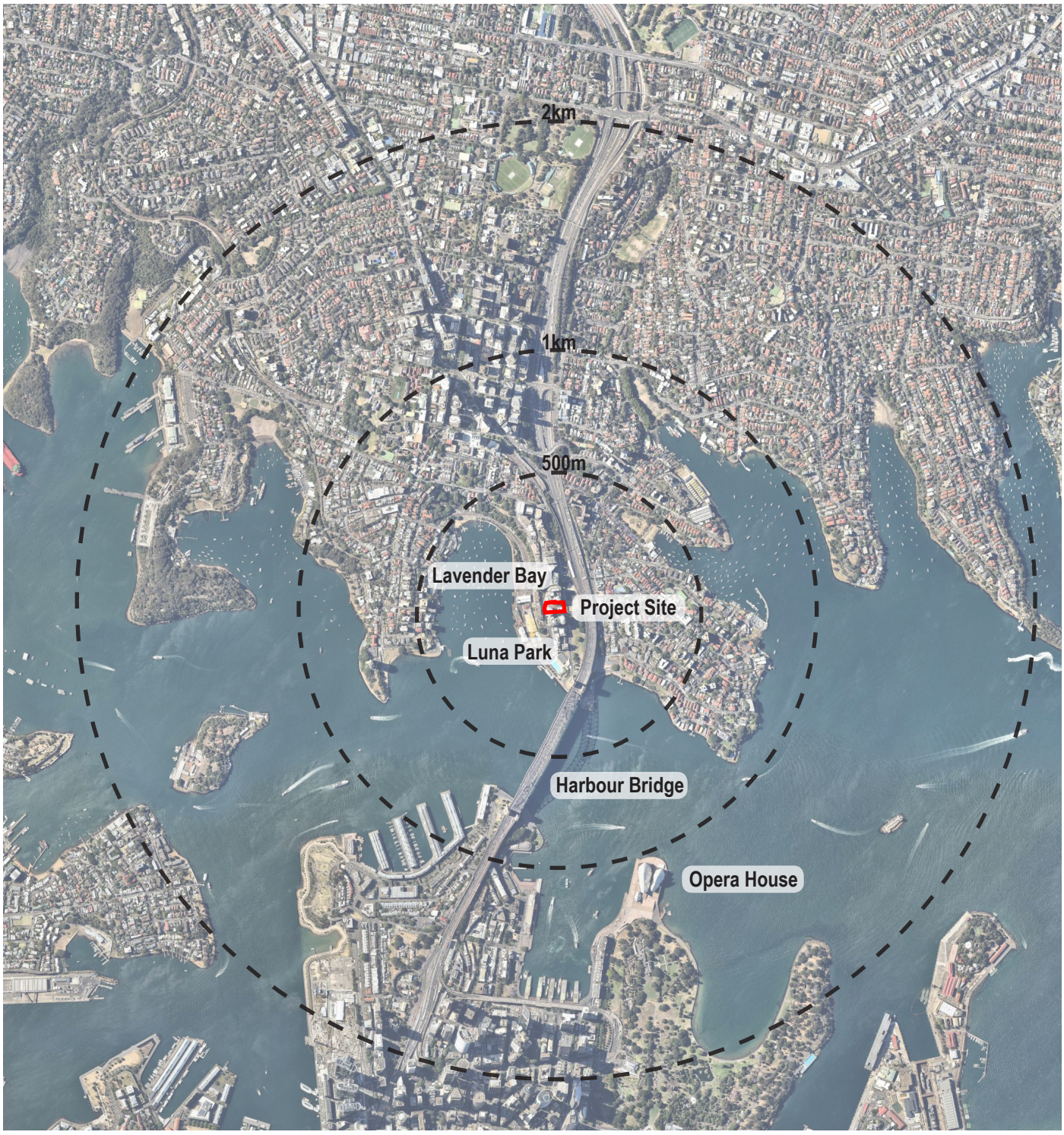

Figure 1.1 - Project location (Source: NearMap)

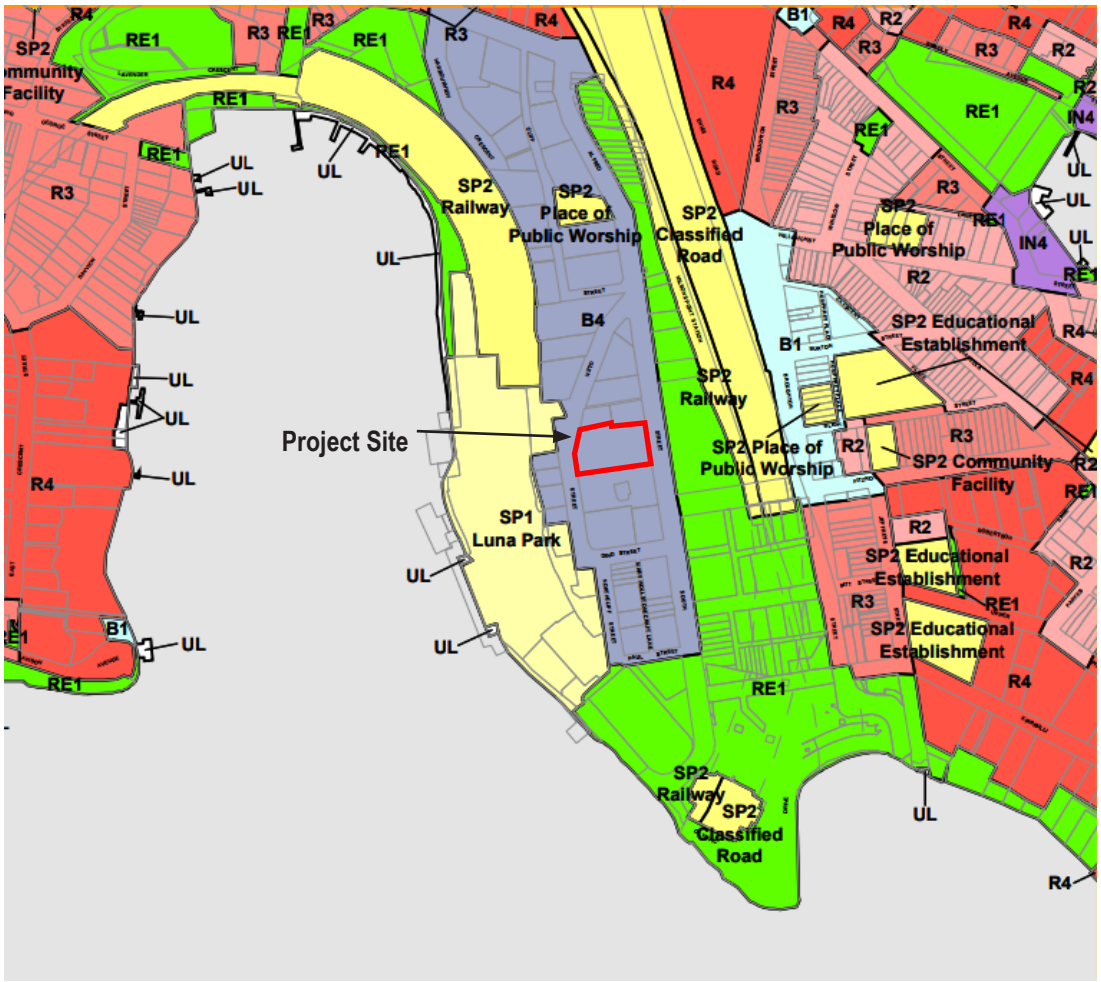

Figure 1.2 - Land Zoning Map

1.3 LEGISLATIVE POLICY AND PLANNING CONTEXT

The planning instruments and guidelines that have the most direct bearing on the visual assessment of the Project include;

- North Sydney Development Control Plan 2013
- The North Sydney LEP (see Fig 1.2) under which the site is zoned B4 Mixed Use
- The Land and Environment Court's Planning Principles (for assessing visual impact and view sharing)
- Sydney Harbour REP (2005)

The two former documents do not provide any significant guidance on view management requirements in the locality, however the NSW Land and Environment Court does provide specific guidance on visual impact assessment principles and view loss, particularly with respect to some key cases decided in the Court, as set out below.
The Sydney Harbour REP contains visual management requirements in this locality with particular regard to views to and from the Sydney Harbour Bridge and Sydney Opera House, (see further details in Section 3 Existing Visual Environment).

1.3.1 The Land and Environment Court Planning Principles

The Land and Environment Court of New South Wales was established in 1980 by the Land and Environment Court Act 1979. Relevant planning principles have been established in visual assessment case judgments over the years to guide future decision-making in development appeals. Whilst a 'planning principle' is not binding law, it is described by the Court as a statement of a desirable outcome from a chain of reasoning aimed at reaching a planning decision. These include separate but related principles for private and public domain views.

The principles set out a process for assessing the acceptability of impact. The two most relevant cases to this site are:

- Public domain views - Rose Bay Marina Pty Limited v Woollahra Municipal Council (2013)
- Private views - Tenacity Consulting v Warringah Council (2004)

1.3.2 Planning Principles for Private views - Tenacity Consulting v Warringah Council (2004)

The Land & Environment Court established planning principles in respect of the assessment of impacts of development on views, set out in Tenacity Consulting v Warringah Council (2004) 'Tenacity'. These relate to Private views which are the most relevant for this project, particularly with respect to viewsharing.

Principles of View Sharing: The Impact on Neighbours

The notion of view sharing is invoked when a property enjoys existing views and a proposed development would share that view by taking some of it away for its own enjoyment. (Taking it all away cannot be called view sharing, although it may, in some circumstances, be quite reasonable.)

It is worth noting that the Court does not provide that anyone has a proprietary right to retain all or part of the views enjoyed (or capable of enjoyment) from their land.

The principles established in Tenacity suggest that view impact be assessed in accordance with a four step process which is identified within the methodology for assessing the impact on views for this project, including determining whether the impact is negligible, minor, moderate, severe or devastating.

The four stages include:

1 - Assessment of views to be affected

- Water views are valued more highly than land views
- Iconic views (eg of the Opera House, the Harbour Bridge or North Head) are valued more highly than views without icons
- Whole views are valued more highly than partial views, e.g. a water view in which the interface between land and water is visible is more valuable than one in which it is obscured.

2 - Consideration from what part of the property the views are obtained

- The protection of views across side boundaries is more difficult than the protection of views from front and rear boundaries
- Sitting views are more difficult to protect than standing views
- The expectation to retain side views and sitting views is often unrealistic.

3 - Assessment of the extent of the impact

- View loss assessment should be done for the whole of the property, but just for the view that is affected
- The impact on views from living areas is more significant than from bedrooms or service areas
- It is usually more useful to assess the view loss qualitatively as negligible, minor, moderate, severe or devastating as opposed to quantitatively.

4 - Assessment of the Reasonableness of the proposal

- Assessment of compliance with all planning controls - a development that complies with all planning controls would be considered more reasonable than one that breaches them
- Where an impact on views arises as a result of non-compliance with one or more planning controls, even a moderate impact may be considered unreasonable
- With a complying proposal, the question should be asked whether a more skilful design could provide the applicant with the same development potential and amenity and reduce the impact on the views of neighbours. If the answer to that question is no, then the view impact of a complying development would probably be considered acceptable and the view sharing reasonable.

The principles established by the Court from both cases have been integrated into the methodology approach adopted for this evaluation and detailed in the following sections.

1.4 METHODOLOGY - VISUAL IMPACT

Given the subjective nature of an individual's appreciation of any given scene, Visual Impact Assessment is by its nature not an exact science and consequently methodologies for preparing VIAs vary both in Australia and overseas.

Potentially subjective assessment material and differences of opinion about how to best assess visual characteristics, qualities, degrees of alteration and viewer sensitivity often arise.

As a consequence, and as identified by the NSW Land and Environment Court, the key to a robust process is to explain clearly the criteria upon which an assessment is made:

'The outcome of a qualitative assessment will necessarily be subjective. However, although beauty is inevitably in the eye of the beholder, the framework for how an assessment is undertaken must be clearly articulated. Any qualitative assessment must set out the factors taken into account and the weight attached to them. Whilst minds may differ on outcomes of such an assessment, there should not be issues arising concerning the rigour of the process.'

VIA methodologies are often inconsistent and while various governments have generated specific methodologies, no Australian national framework exists. Within NSW, there are two guidelines prepared by the NSW State Government most relevant to this context and development type that are recognised as best practice:

- Guidelines for Landscape Character and Visual Impact Assessment, WIA-N04, as published by the Roads and Maritime Service (RMS)
- Appendix D of the Sydney Harbour Foreshore Waterways Area Development Control Plan (SHFWA DCP), as published by the Department of Planning and developed for marina assessment.

Internationally, the following methodologies and guidelines are broadly considered best practice:

- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd edition, as published by the Landscape Institute UK and IEMA
- Visual Assessment of Windfarms: Best Practice as published by Scottish Natural Heritage.

In the case of the former guidelines these have been widely adopted through Europe in seeking to meet the EU Directive 2011/92/EU concerning preparation of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).

1.4.1 Adopted Methodology for Visual Impact Assessment

CLOUSTON Associates has developed a best practice methodology based on these internationally accredited approaches and 20 years of experience in the field of visual assessment. There are several critical dimensions demonstrated through this assessment and evaluation:

- ensuring all receptors (viewers) have been adequately identified, even at distance, with emphasis on public domain views. Note that where there are many receptors in a large visual catchment these may be grouped by area or receptor type to minimise duplication
- comprehensive evaluation of context to determine visual catchment of site from these areas
- being clear on and separately defining quantitative impacts (distance, magnitude, duration etc) as against qualitative impacts (receptor type and context of view)
- providing a clear rationale for how impacts are compared and contrasted
- ensuring photomontages include views from highest potential impact locations, identified from analysis above
- being clear on the differing forms of mitigation options, namely avoidance, reduction (reduced scale or bulk), alleviation (eg design), mitigation (eg screening) and/or compensation (on or offsite).

The methodology employed for this assessment is described in Figure 1.3.

1.4.2 Scoring and Rating System

For each factor assessed (Viewer sensitivity,quantum of view, magnitude etc as detailed in Table 2) a five point scoring scale is assessed for each view from Low to High. The general average of all of these scores is then provided for that view. The overall visual impact rating of the Project from any given viewpoint/visual receptor is then recorded using a six band rating from None to Devastating, based on the overall scoring average for that view- refer Table 1.

Qualitative - Sensitivity

Each visual receptor type has an inherent and varied sensitivity to change in the visual scene based on the personal context in which their view is being experienced (ie. at home, on the street, in a park etc.) This sensitivity has a direct bearing on the perception of visual impact experienced by the receptor and qualifies the quantitative impacts. Table 2 describes the levels of sensitivity for each receptor type and the numerical score allocated to each impact band.

Quantitative - Magnitude

A measure of the magnitude of the visual effects of the development within the landscape. A series of quantitative assessments are studied, including distance from development, quantum of view, period of view and scale of change.

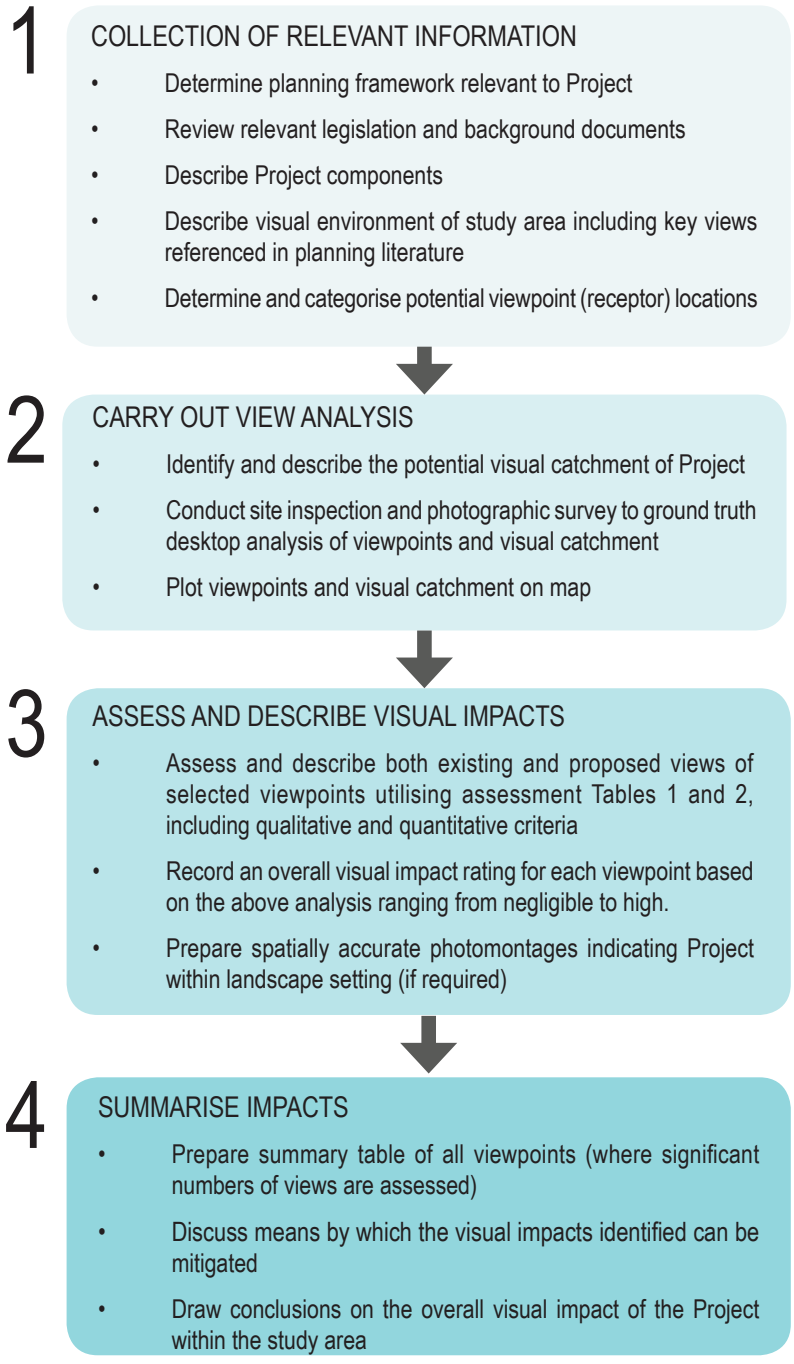

Figure 1.3 - Summary of CLOUSTON methodology for assessment of visual impact

AVERAGE COLLECTIVE RATING (see Table 2)	OVERALL IMPACT RATING	BASIS OF RATING
NONE	NONE	No part of the proposal, or work or activity associated with it is discernible.
LOW	NEGLIGIBLE	Only a very small part of the proposal is discernible and/or is at such a distance that it is scarcely appreciated. Consequently, it would have very little effect on the scene.
MODERATE/LOW	MINOR	The proposal constitutes only a minor component of the wider view, which might be missed by the casual observer or receptor. Awareness of the proposal would not have a marked effect on the overall quality of the scene.
MODERATE	MODERATE	The proposal may form a visible and recognisable new element within the overall scene that affects and changes its overall character.
MODERATE/HIGH	SEVERE	The proposal forms a significant and immediately apparent part of the scene that affects and changes its overall character.
HIGH	DEVASTATING	The proposal becomes the dominant feature of the scene to which other elements become subordinate, and significantly affects and changes the character.

Table 1 - Overall Visual Impact ratings

	HIGH MAGNITUDE	MODERATE MAGNITUDE	LOW MAGNITUDE	NEGLIGIBLE MAGNITUDE
HIGH SENSITIVITY	HIGH	HIGH - MODERATE	MODERATE	NEGLIGIBLE
MODERATE SENSITIVITY	HIGH - MODERATE	MODERATE	MODERATE/ LOW	NEGLIGIBLE
LOW SENSITIVITY	MODERATE	MODERATE/LOW	LOW	NEGLIGIBLE
NEGLIGIBLE	NEGLIGIBLE	NEGLIGIBLE	NEGLIGIBLE	NEGLIGIBLE

Table 2: Impact Rating as a combination of Sensitivity and Magnitude. Source: Modified from RMS Guidelines for Landscape Character and Visual Impact Assessment

	FACTOR	DESCRIPTION	LOW	MODERATE/LOW	MODERATE	MODERATE/HIGH	HIGH
QUALITATIVE SENSITIVITY	Viewer Sensitivity	Each visual receptor type has an inherent and varied sensitivity to change in the visual scene based on the personal context in which their view is being experienced. This sensitivity has a direct bearing on the perception of visual impact experienced by the receptor and qualifies the quantitative impacts. Number of viewers also has a bearing on sensitivity. Viewpoints have a varied number of potential receivers depending on whether the viewpoint is public or private, the popularity of the viewing location and its ease of accessibility. Views from public reserves and open space are often given the highest weighting due to the increased number of viewers affected.	Vacant lot, uninhabited building, car park.	Minor roads, service providers.	Residential properties with limited views, commercial properties, scenic public roads (eg official tourist routes).	Public open space, public reserves, living areas or gardens/balconies of residential properties with direct views of Project.	Nationally or internationally significant viewpoint specifically documented as such.
QUANTITATIVE MAGNITUDE	Quantum of View	The quantum of view relates to the openness of the view and the receptor's angle of view to the scene. A development located in the direct line of sight has a higher impact than if it were located obliquely at the edge of the view. Whether the view of the Project is filtered by vegetation or built form also affects the impact, as does the nature of the view (panoramic, restricted etc.). A small element within a panoramic view has less impact than the same element within a restricted or narrow view.	Only an insignificant part of the Project is discernible.	An oblique, highly filtered or largely obscured view of the Project or a view where the Project occupies a very small section of the view frame.	A direct view of the Project or its presence in a broader view where the Project occupies a moderate proportion of the view frame.	A direct view of the Project or its presence (sometimes in a very narrow or highly framed view), where the Project occupies the greater proportion of the view frame.	The Project occupies almost the entire view.
	Distance of View	The effect the Project has on the view relating to the distance between the Project and the visual receptor. The distances are from the site boundary.	Over 2,000m	Viewing distance of between 1,000m and 2,000m.	Viewing distance between 100m and 1,000m.	Viewing distance between 50 and 100m.	Viewing distance between 0 and 50m.
	Period of View	The length of time the visual receptor is exposed to the view. The duration of view affects the impact of the Project on the viewer - the longer the exposure the more detailed the impression of the proposed change in terms of visual impact.	Less than 1 second	1 to 10 seconds: often from a road or walking past.	1 to 5 minutes: usually from a road/ driveway entrance, walking past.	Several hours of the day: usually from a residential property.	Significant part of the day, eg time spent in popular parks.
	Scale of Change	Scale of change is a quantitative assessment of the change in compositional elements of the view. If the proposed development is largely similar in nature and scale to that of existing elements in the vicinity, the scale of change is low. If the development radically changes the nature or composition of the elements in the view, the scale of change is high. Distance from the development would accentuate or moderate the scale and variety of visible elements in the overall view and hence influence this rating.	Project barely discernible	Elements and composition of the view would remain largely unaltered.	Elements within the view would not be wholly compatible with existing features in the landscape.	Elements within the view would greatly dominate existing features in the landscape.	Elements within the project would be completely at odds with the existing landscape.

Table 3 - Assessment Criteria

1.5 METHODOLOGY - VIEW SHARING AND VIEW LOSS

The planning Principles established in Tenacity require the assessment of the impact of views in accordance with a four step process.

The methodology employed for this assessment is described in Figure 1.4.

For the purpose of this view loss assessment representative views from within the adjoining building to the north (37 Glen Street) were provided by the project Architects. Representative views were taken from the living areas (based on those views that would be impacted by the additional building height sought under this Planning Proposal). Given that access was not available into the apartments in that building, drone photography was selected.

The drone was employed to photograph the nearest available view from the apartment level selected location (approximately 4-5 metres in front of the respective windows) and the resulting images were adjusted and inserted into an architectural model of that room's windows and view angle by the architects, to resemble, as closely as was practical the viewer's field of view from that particular viewpoint.

It should be stressed that, while this methodology provides a fair representation of those views, photographs taken from the exact standpoint in the respective apartment would provide the most definitive assessment.

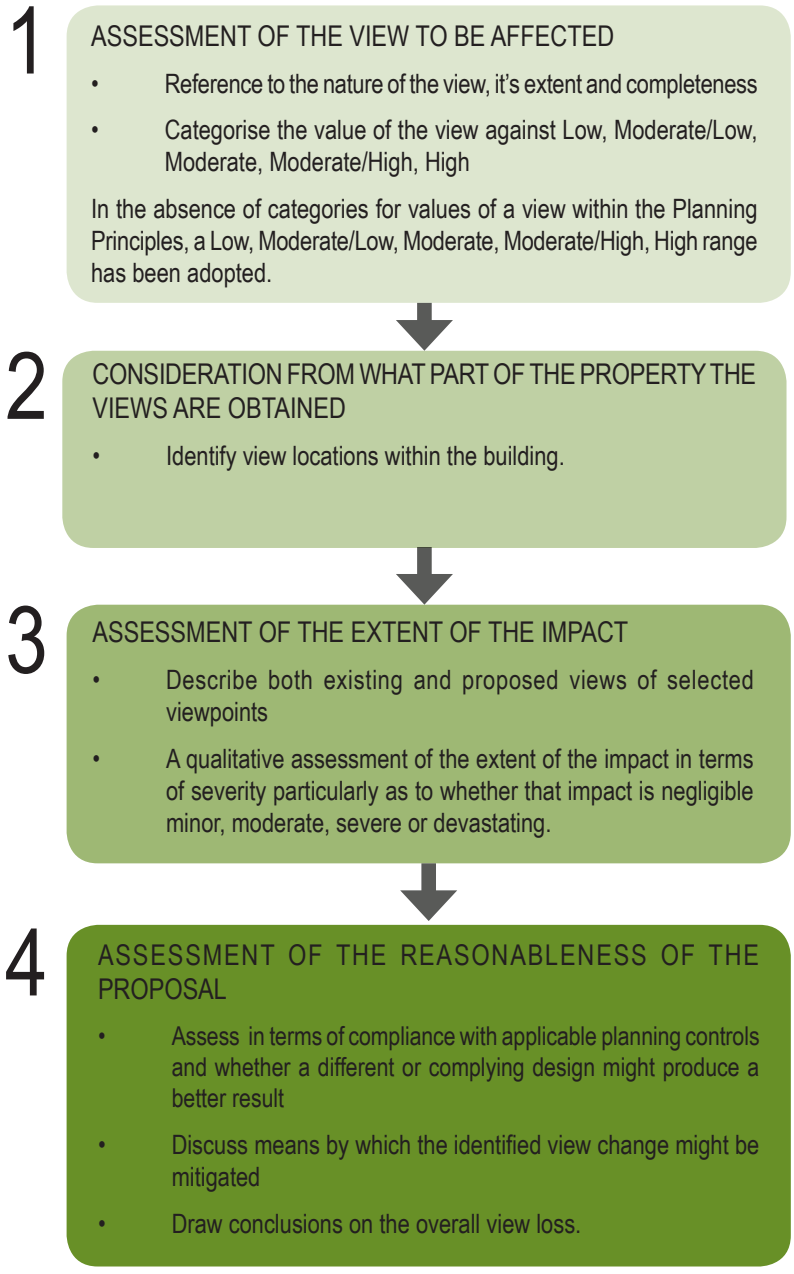

Figure 1.4 - Summary of CLOUSTON methodology for assessment of view loss

Figure 2.1 - Context Map

2. THE PROJECT

2.1 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed development is a mixed use tower in the heart of Milson's Point which includes an enhanced through-site link and new ground level public plaza. In summary, the proposed development is comprised of the following:

- New 25 storey residential tower (including 4 basement levels fronting Glen Street);
- Provision of a publicly accessible civic square at ground level on Alfred Street;
- Improved through-site link between Alfred Street and Glen Street;
- Provision of several new food and beverage and small retail outlets;
- Provision of approximately 1746m^2 of new commercial space.

The development comprises of a 3 storey high podium with 2 tower components at differing heights. The proposed height of the podium on the Alfred St frontage adheres to the typical 3 storey podium heights of the surrounding developments in order to preserve a visually unified street frontage. Each proposed tower component built forms relate to the two differing scales of the existing Glen and Alfred frontages.

Fronting Alfred St, the building form is 17 storeys (including the 3 storey podium) but die to the terraced form stepping away from Alfred St, there is a streetscape perception of 14 storeys and alignment to the adjacent 68 Alfred St in maintaining a continuous street wall. The built form to Glen Street reaches a maximum height of RL96.05 at 25 storeys (including the 4 basement storeys). The height is generally in keeping with that of other residential developments to the immediate north and south of the subject site along Glen Street.

The existing pedestrian access through the site to Glen Street is via a series of winding staircases. The proposal seeks to improve this connection with the provision of an active through site link, landscaping to create visual interest and a series of retail tenancies with outdoor seating to promote activation. Pedestrian amenity will be improved by removing the existing vehicular basement access to the site via Alfred St and thus reducing the volume of traffic, access would continue to be provided along the western boundary via Glen Street.

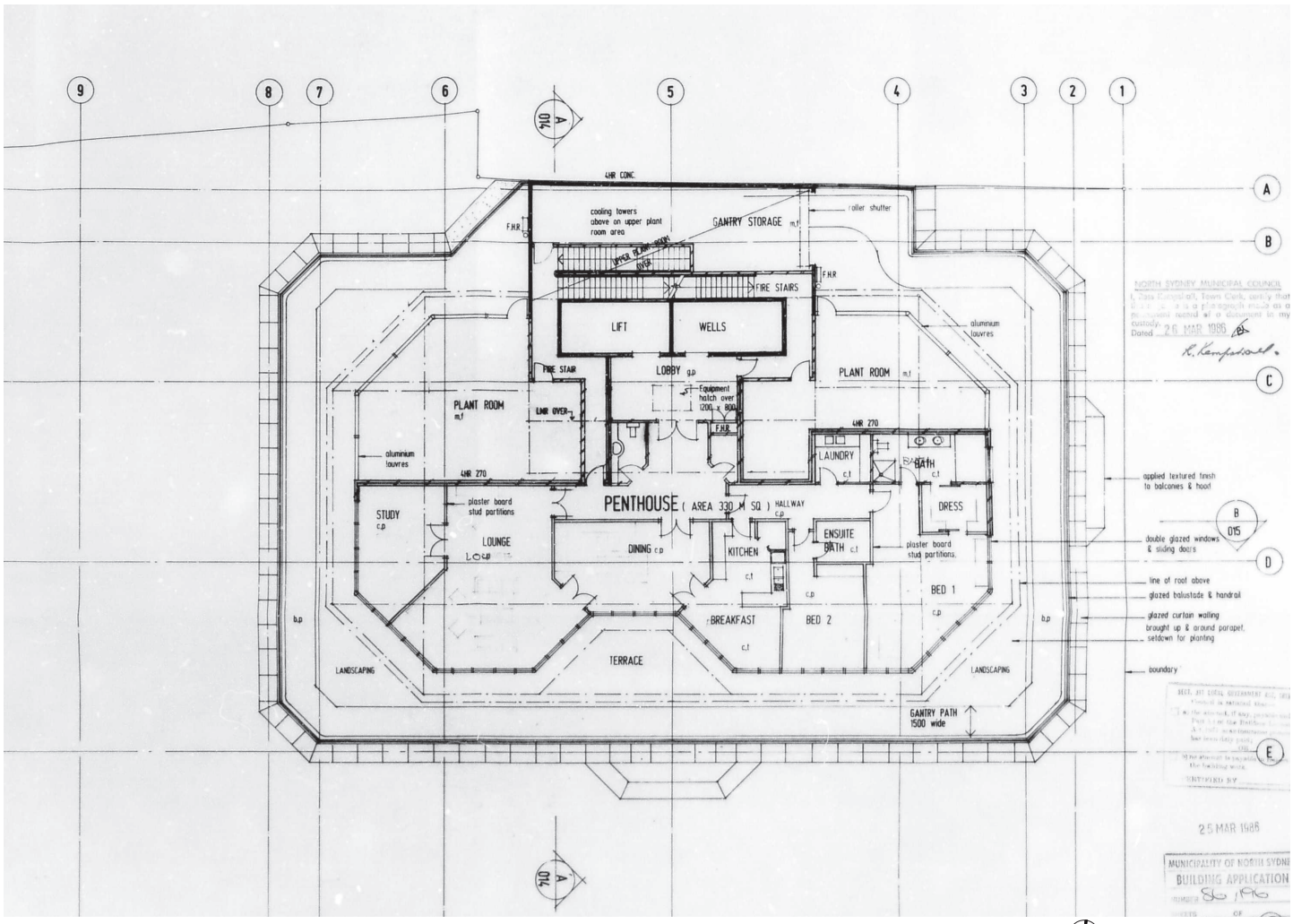

Figure 2.2 - Existing Building Layout Plan - Penthouse Level

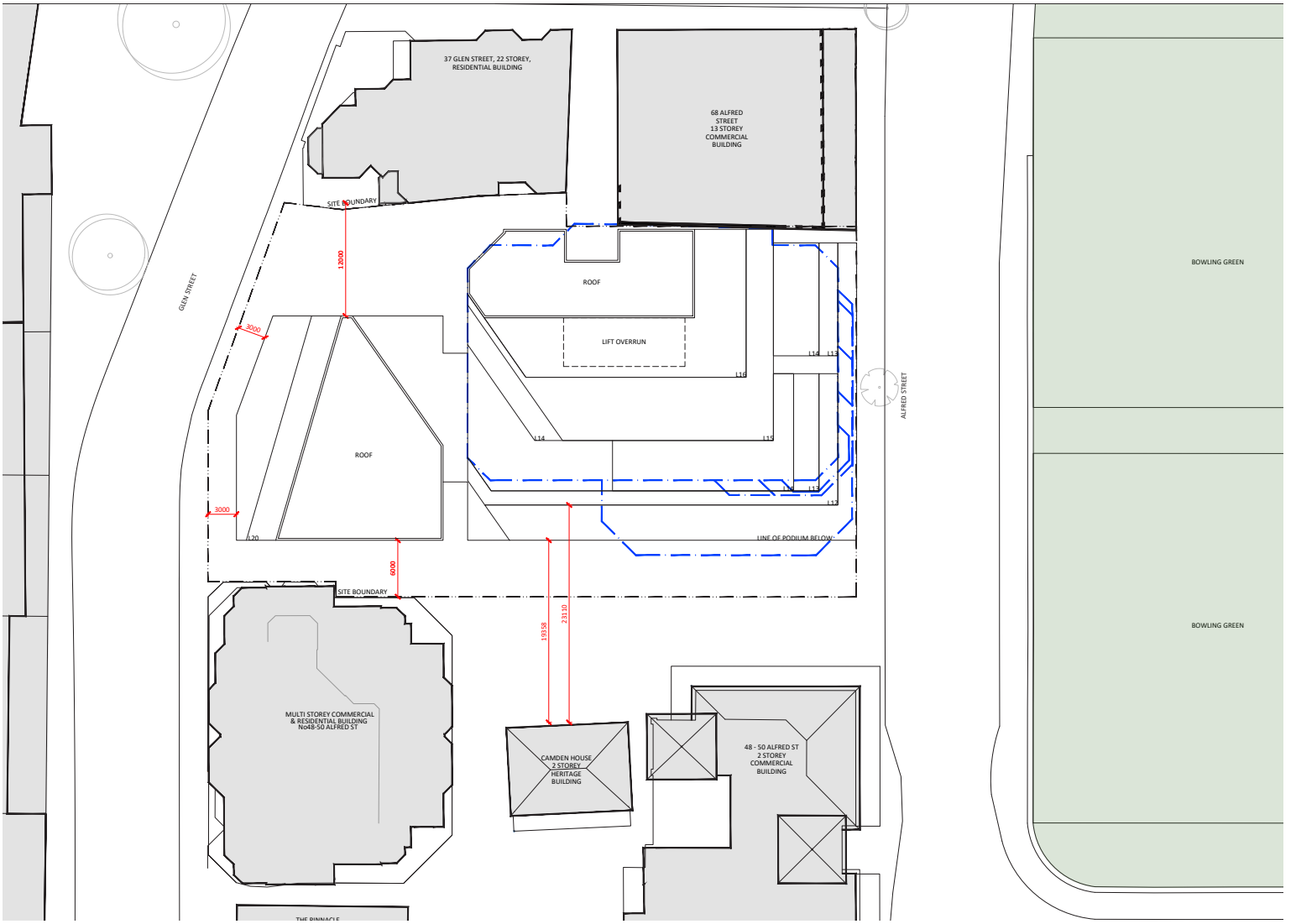

Figure 2.3 - Proposed Building Layout Plan - Roof Level

Figure 2.4 - 3D render of proposed building by Koichi Takada - Viewed from the north west.

Figure 2.5 - 3D render of proposed building by Koichi Takada - Viewed from the south east with Alfred St in the foreground.

3.0 EXISTING VISUAL ENVIRONMENT

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As required by the Land and Environment Court Planning Principles, this assessment starts by identifying the nature and scope of the existing views from the public and private domain.

The visual environment of the study area includes harbour foreshore public open space, marinas, roads, mixed commercial premises and medium to high density residential development as well as from the harbour itself.

As can be seen from Fig 3.1 the visual catchment of the project is significant, however the building is one of many highrises in Milsons Point and thus is not visually prominent in its own right.

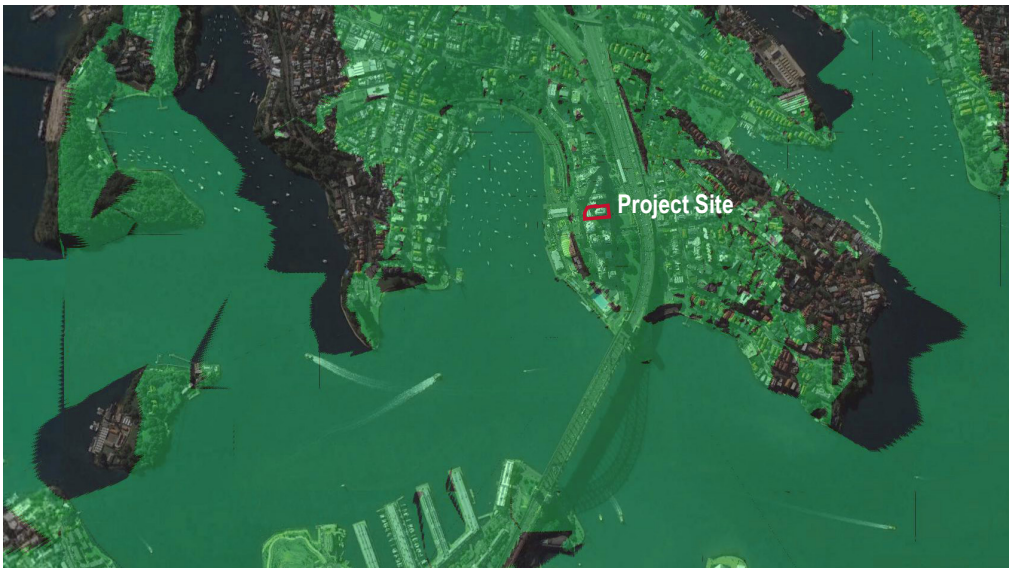


Figure 3.1 Visual Catchment attained from desktop evaluation of proposed building height using only topography data (Source: Google Earth Pro)

3.1 KEY VIEWPOINTS IN THE PUBLIC REALM

While the Sydney Harbour REP addresses the visual context of Sydney Harbour, a key part of the Land and Environment Court's Planning Principles requires a record as to whether or not there is any document that identifies the importance of the view to be assessed. As stated within Rose Bay Marina Pty Limited v Woollahra Municipal Council (2013), 'the absence of such a provision does not exclude a broad public interest consideration of impacts on public domain views'.

A desktop study of the planning literature did not identify any specific references to views or vistas towards the harbour from this locality. However, for residents and the public views to the Harbour and the Harbour Bridge are important and as a nationally significant heritage item and internationally recognised structure views to and from the Harbour Bridge are deemed of high value.

Views in the visual catchment of the Harbour are specifically protected in the document Sydney Harbour Bridge Conservation Management Plan 2007.

3.2 Harbour Visual Catchment

Due to the size and location of the bridge views are available from many key points around the harbour and the surrounding landscape. Protection of these views are a key element of the conservation of the cultural values of the bridge. The Sydney Harbour Bridge is listed in the State Heritage Register and National Heritage Listing, which provides some protections.

Views of the Bridge and its component parts are listed as a heritage item (Item 67) in the Sydney Regional Environmental Plan (Sydney Harbour Catchment) 2005 (NSW). The area listed in the REP extends from the Heads of Sydney Harbour up the extent of Parramatta River and includes all the land falling within. Figure 3.2 from Sydney Harbour Bridge—Conservation Management Plan, July 2007 depicts the extent where inappropriate development could impact views of the Bridge.

Extract from Sydney Harbour Bridge - Conservation Management Plan 2007

…matters to be taken into consideration in relation to the maintenance, protection and enhancement of views are as follows: … (b) development should minimise any adverse impacts on views and vistas to and from public spaces, landmarks and heritage items …(Cl.28).

The REP curtilage extends from the entrance to Sydney Harbour in the east to Parramatta in the west, and includes land that varies in its distance from the harbour shoreline.

Notwithstanding the extent of locations around the harbour and its hinterland from which views of the bridge are possible, the setting map attached at Figure 3.2 outlines that section within the REP curtilage within which inappropriate development could impact upon the cultural values of the bridge in its setting, and where the provisions of the REP that apply to 'impacts on views and vistas to and from … heritage items' should be rigorously applied.

Relevance of the Harbour Bridge

With respect to this Planning Proposal, the location of the project, nestled between existing high rise buildings is such that it would not have any increased impact on views from the Harbour Bridge or Sydney Opera House.

With respect to views towards both structures from the Project site, existing views southeast towards the Opera House will not change (except with additional views from new upper levels).

The principal view change would relate to view sharing from the Western elevation of the Project south towards the Harbour Bridge (see Section 6.0).

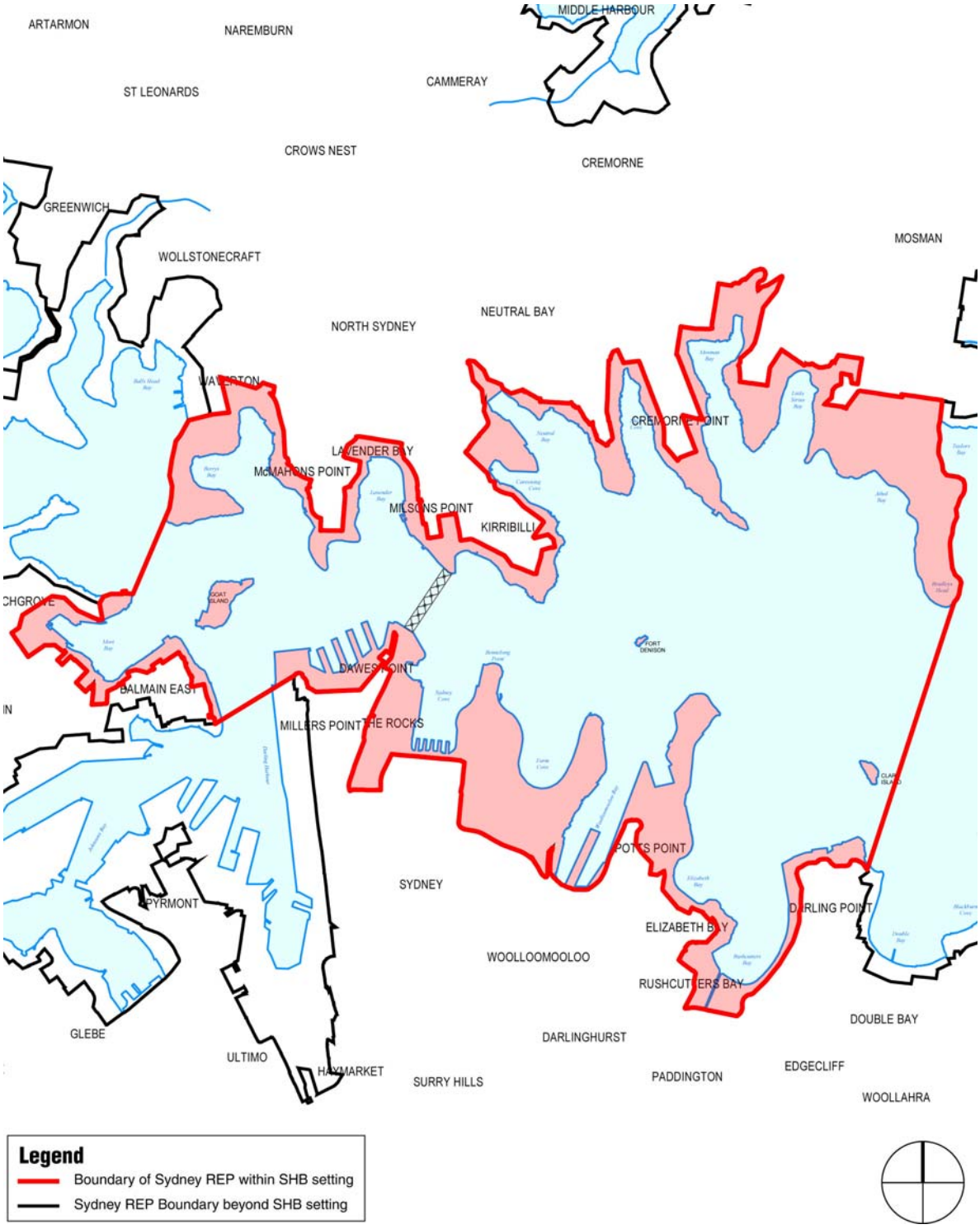


Figure 3.2 Sydney Harbour Bridge Setting Map (Adapted from the Sydney Regional Environmental Plan (REP) Foreshores and Waterways Area Map, Sheet 3 of 5. Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources, 2005)

3.3 Selected Key Views

For the purposes of this report, the following views have been selected to assess the potential visual impact of the development.

- Viewpoint 1 - Kirribilli Markets near Burton St looking south
- Viewpoint 2 - Looking west from Bradfield Bowling Green
- Viewpoint 3 - Corner of Burton and Fitzroy Street looking north
- Viewpoint 4 - Glen Street looking north
- Viewpoint 5 - Glen Street looking south

It is acknowledged that views are also available from many other locations including from the Harbour Bridge and the raised rail line. However, the above are the closest views of the project with the highest potential for visible change to the general public.

Figure 3.3 - Key viewpoint locations

Figure 3.4 Key View 1: Kirribilli Markets near Burton St looking south

Figure 3.5 Key View 2: Looking west from Bradfield Bowling Green

Figure 3.6 Key View 3: Corner of Burton and Fitzroy Street looking north

Figure 3.7 Key View 4: Glen Street looking north

Figure 3.8 Key View 5: Glen Street looking south

4.0 VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

4. VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The following pages detail the visual impact assessment from each of the five selected viewpoints.

For each selected view the assessment includes:
- an image of the viewpoint and angle of view
- the location and distance to the Project.
- nature of the receptor type
- a description of the view
- impact assessment evaluation table.

4.1 Additional Building Height
While the Planning Proposal is seeking additional building height, it should be noted that there are no public domain locations within the immediate locality from which any loss of views to the Harbour Bridge, Sydney Harbour or Sydney Opera House would be additionally impacted by virtue of the extra building storeys.

4.2 Photographic Format of Images
Note that the photographs for each viewpoint in this assessment have been photographed with a DSLR camera (full frame sensor) with the focal length set at 50mm (which is deemed to be as close as replicable to the human eye). Where necessary two or more photographs have been stitched together to assist in illustrating the full extent of the building or element being assessed.

4.1 VIEWPOINT ANALYSIS

The following section assesses the visual impact of the Project on each of the selected viewpoints shown in Figure 13. This includes a description of the current view from each viewpoint followed by a discussion of the potential visual impacts of the SSP Proposal on that view. Each viewpoint is accompanied by a photograph of the current view. For residential receptors access was not possible to the property itself and so drone photography was undertaken (see Section 6.0). The description of visual impact is estimated from the property's main dwelling area.

For a detailed description of the assessment factors and impact ratings used, see 'Methodology'.

EXAMPLE

VIEWPOINT X — Viewpoint number

Location map

Outline of proposed works

Photo location and direction marker

Location
Blackwattle Bay Park — Viewpoint location

Distance to Proposal
xxx metres — Distance to centre of Investigation Area

Receptors — Description of the viewers
xx

Current View — Description of current views
xx

VISUAL IMPACT
xx — Description of expected visual impact

RECEPTOR TYPE	RECEPTOR IDENTIFICATION	RECEPTOR SENSITIVITY	MAGNITUDE				
			DISTANCE	QUANTUM OF VIEW	PERIOD OF VIEW	MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE	SUMMARY OF RATINGS
Public Re-serve	1	L	M	L	L	L	M/L

VISIBLE
- Refurbished dolphin wharf
- Dolphin wharf pontoons
- Berthed boats

Assessment matrix table

Visual Impact Rating	MODERATE/LOW

Overall visual impact rating

4.1.1 Scoring System

The overall impact rating of a proposal on any given receptor is based on factors of magnitude and sensitivity. The scores for each assessment factor within the matrix table are totalled and an average taken. The following scores are used to determine the overall visual impact rating (refer Methodology section of this report):

Low	Minorly adverse visual impact
Moderate/Low	Slightly adverse visual impact
Moderate	Moderately adverse visual impact
Moderate/High	Moderately to highly adverse visual impact
High	Highly adverse visual impact

4.1.2 Viewer Height

The Land and Environment Court (*Rose Bay Marina Pty Limited v Woollahra Municipal Council and anor 2013)* states that 'the impact on appreciation of a public domain view should not be subject to any eye height constraint. A public domain view is one that is for the enjoyment of the whole population, old or young and whether able-bodied or less mobile.'

Although the photos and photomontages within this study have been taken at standing eye level, the assessment of visual impacts on each viewpoint is relevant to both sitting and standing positions. The difference between the two is not considered significant enough from any one viewpoint to justify a separate assessment.

LOCATION	Kirribilli Markets near Burton St
DISTANCE	Approx. 60m
RECEPTORS	Users of public open space, Market patrons, commuters, residents
EXISTING VIEW	This view is taken from the site of the Kirribilli Markets near Burton and Alfred Street. Diagonal to the investigation site the view foreground consists of the gravel square as well as hedge and tree plantings. Multiple other office and residential buildings are positioned adjacent to the site as well as in the background.

EXPECTED VISUAL IMPACT

The proposed building will have a higher visible height of RL 74.25 from street level before stepping back on the higher levels. The podium height will sit within the surrounding buildings general range of 10m/3 storeys and will have a setback of 2 metres which is consistent with the surrounding setbacks of between 0 - 3 metres.

The visual impact from this location is expected to be minor given that the proposed building is similar in height to the existing building, and the podium height and setback is consistent with the surrounding buildings. Furthermore, the proposed building has a more articulated facade which tends to reduce the bulk somewhat. Given the multitude of surrounding towers within this area, the proposed building will not introduce a foreign element to the surrounding visual landscape.

Figure 4.1

IMPACT ASSESSMENT BEFORE MITIGATION

RECEPTOR TYPE	RECEPTOR IDENTIFICATION	RECEPTOR SENSITIVITY	MAGNITUDE				
			DISTANCE	QUANTUM OF VIEW	PERIOD OF VIEW	SCALE OF CHANGE	SUMMARY OF RATINGS
Public	1	M/H	M/H	L	L	L	L
Visual Impact Rating		LOW					

Figure 4.2

Key View 1: Burton Street looking south

LOCATION	Bradfield Park Bowling Green
DISTANCE	Approx. 40m
RECEPTORS	Users of public open space, lawn bowls participants, residents
EXISTING VIEW	This view is taken from directly opposite the investigation site on the Bradfield Park Bowling Green. Alfred St and associated parking spaces can be seen in the foreground along with sparse street trees. Other office and residential buildings of similar scale or larger can be seen adjacent to the site as well as in the background.

EXPECTED VISUAL IMPACT

The higher visible height of RL of 74.25 for the proposed building from this location is in alignment with the neighbouring property of 68 Alfred Street which has a RL of 73.60). This will mimic the existing view which shows the current building aligning with it's immediate neighbour.

The proposed podium height and setback will also conform with surrounding buildings, ensuring that the proposed building is not at odds with the existing visual environment. Furthermore, the proposed building has a more articulated facade which tends to reduce the bulk somewhat. Given the number of towers in this location the proposed building would not be at odds with its surrounds, and a minimal visual impact is expected from this location.

Figure 4.3

IMPACT ASSESSMENT BEFORE MITIGATION

RECEPTOR TYPE	RECEPTOR IDENTIFICATION	RECEPTOR SENSITIVITY	MAGNITUDE				
			DISTANCE	QUANTUM OF VIEW	PERIOD OF VIEW	SCALE OF CHANGE	SUMMARY OF RATINGS
Public	2	M/H	M/H	L	L	L	L
Visual Impact Rating		LOW					

Figure 4.4

Key View 2: Looking west from Bradfield Park Bowling Green

LOCATION	Corner of Alfred and Fitzroy Street
DISTANCE	Approx. 75m
RECEPTORS	Users of public open space, residents, shoppers, commuters
EXISTING VIEW	This view is taken from the corner of Bradfield Park near Alfred and Fitzroy Street looking North. The Alfred St roundabout, street trees and retail shops can be seen in the foreground with the existing building positioned behind.

EXPECTED VISUAL IMPACT

This view immediately adjoins Bradfield Park which is a popular public open space however the majority of viewers in this location are looking south to Sydney Harbour, the Harbour Bridge and the Sydney Opera House.

The proposed podium height and setback will help to ensure that the appearance of the current street front will remain relatively the same. As a result of the setback of the upper levels of the tower, the perceptible height will be similar to the existing building from this location. The corners of the facades of the proposed building is also more consistent across the height of the building.

The proposed building envelope is consistent with the majority of surrounding buildings in this area, and as a result a minor visual change is expected from this location.

Figure 4.5

IMPACT ASSESSMENT BEFORE MITIGATION

RECEPTOR TYPE	RECEPTOR IDENTIFICATION	RECEPTOR SENSITIVITY	MAGNITUDE				
			DISTANCE	QUANTUM OF VIEW	PERIOD OF VIEW	SCALE OF CHANGE	SUMMARY OF RATINGS
Public	3	M/H	M/H	L	L	L	L
Visual Impact Rating		LOW					

Figure 4.6

Key View 3: Corner of Burton and Fitzroy Street looking north

LOCATION	Southern end of Glen Street
DISTANCE	Approx. 20m
RECEPTORS	Users of public open space, residents, commuters, office workers
EXISTING VIEW	This view is taken from the Southern end of Glen Street looking North. The foreground and background of this view is dominated by the adjoining mixed use buildings. Street tree plantings along Glen St can also be glimpsed in the background.

EXPECTED VISUAL IMPACT

From here the taller of the two towers will be visible with a RL of 96.05 consisting of 25 storeys (including the 4 basement storeys).

The podium will be of a similar height to the existing building currently in view, with the tower setback from the podium edge. The proposed height of this tower is consistent with the heights of both the northern and southern neighbouring towers, ensuring that the proposed building does not create a visually dominating new addition.

It is anticipated that a moderate/low visual impact will occur from this location given the addition of a new tower. The height of the proposed tower corresponds with its neighbours and the built up nature of the area means that although a noticeable change will result, it would not be at odds with its surrounds.

Figure 4.7

IMPACT ASSESSMENT BEFORE MITIGATION

RECEPTOR TYPE	RECEPTOR IDENTIFICATION	RECEPTOR SENSITIVITY	MAGNITUDE				
			DISTANCE	QUANTUM OF VIEW	PERIOD OF VIEW	SCALE OF CHANGE	SUMMARY OF RATINGS
Public	4	M/L	H	M/H	L	M	M/L
Visual Impact Rating		MODERATE/LOW					

Figure 4.8

Key View 4: Glen Street looking north

LOCATION	Northern end of Glen Street
DISTANCE	Approx. 70m
RECEPTORS	Residents, commuters, office workers
EXISTING VIEW	This view is taken from the Northern end of Glen Street looking South. Street trees and planting associated with nearby buildings are positioned in the foreground. Only the lower back portion of the existing building can be seen from this viewpoint. A fraction of the Sydney Harbour Bridge can be viewed in the background.

EXPECTED VISUAL IMPACT

From this location the proposed building will be on a highly oblique angle. The podium will form the most visible element of the building.

The RL height of the tower will be 96.05, which is a significant departure from the current height of the existing building. Although a significant change in building height will occur, the setback of the tower combined with the dominance of 37 Alfred Street in the foreground will ensure that from this location only a minor presence of the tower will be perceptible resulting in a low visual impact.

Figure 4.9

IMPACT ASSESSMENT BEFORE MITIGATION

RECEPTOR TYPE	RECEPTOR IDENTIFICATION	RECEPTOR SENSITIVITY	MAGNITUDE				
			DISTANCE	QUANTUM OF VIEW	PERIOD OF VIEW	SCALE OF CHANGE	SUMMARY OF RATINGS
Public	4	M/L	H	L	L	L	L
Visual Impact Rating		LOW					

Figure 4.10

Key View 5: Glen Street looking south

5.0 VISUAL IMPACT MITIGATION RECOMMENDATIONS

5. VISUAL IMPACT MITIGATION

5.1 APPROACHES TO MITIGATION

There are typically four broad approaches to mitigating the visual impacts of any change to a scene that entails built form development. These are through:

- *Avoidance* – where the visual impact of the proposal is deemed of a scale that cannot be mitigated by any of the approaches outlined below, this approach implies relocating the proposal elsewhere on the site with lesser visual impacts or not proceeding with the proposal on the site at all
- *Reduction* – typically this approach seeks to mitigate impacts through the reduction of some part of the proposed structure or development (ie. reduced height, downscaling or omission of parts of the built structure/s)
- *Alleviation* – this approach entails design refinements to the proposal to mitigate visual impacts. These refinements might typically include built form articulation, choice of material reflectivity alleviation, colour choices and/or planting design
- *Offsite Compensation* – where none of the above approaches will provide adequate visual impact mitigation for offsite visual receptors, this approach entails offsite works on the land from which the viewpoint is experienced (eg screening close to the viewpoint).

Set out below are the relevant responses to these approaches with respect to the Project.

Applicability of Mitigation to the Planning Proposal

Given that the new building will stand on the site of an existing building with a similar footprint and the additional building height sought would not have significant additional visual impact, the need for Avoidance, Reduction or Offsite Compensation would not be warranted.

Some Alleviation may be required during the design development once fuller details are available on lighting, streetscape design and building finishes.

In the same vein some Alleviation may also be required during the construction phase to minimise visual impacts from the adjoining public domain.

Construction Phase

It can be expected that there will be some visual impact experienced during the demolition and construction phase (cranes, scaffolding, construction plant etc). However, these impacts would be temporary in nature and any mitigation if required, should be assessed when the construction methodology and associated elements are known.

6.0 VIEW LOSS AND VIEW SHARING ASSESSMENT

6. VIEW SHARING AND VIEW LOSS ASSESSMENT

The following pages detail the view loss assessment from each of the representative images provided by the project Architects. This includes a description of the current view from each viewpoint followed by a discussion of the potential view loss as a result of the Proposal. Each viewpoint is accompanied by a photograph of the current view and a photomontage of the Proposal within the view frame. The viewpoints are modelled from standing eye-level in the centre of living rooms on these floors.

The view loss assessment is carried out against the 4 steps as per the planning Principles established in Tenacity. For a detailed description of the assessment factors and impact ratings used, see 'Methodology'.

With respect to minimising view loss it is noted from the Planning Proposal that the new building on its western elevation has been designed to minimise view loss towards Sydney Harbour and the Harbour Bridge from the principal living areas of the adjoining building on its northern boundary, 37 Glen Street (see Fig. 6.1).

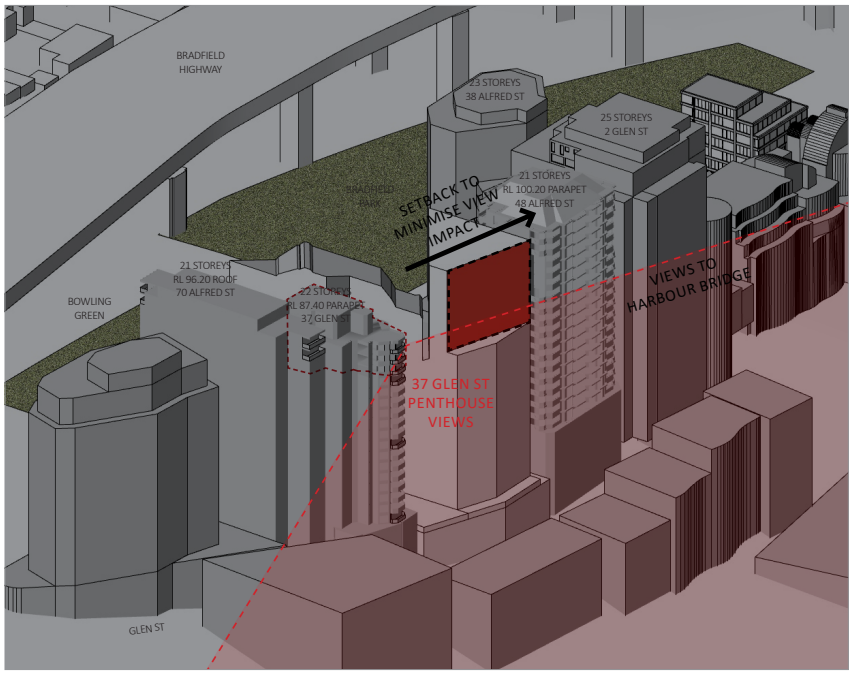


Fig. 6.1: Western elevation; building design to maximise view sharing and minimise view loss.

ASSESSMENT OF VIEW LOSS

1 - Assessment of the View to be affected
With reference to the extent and nature of the view to be affected the following ratings are used to determine the value of the view in question:

Low	Low value view
Moderate/Low	Moderate / Low value view
Moderate	Moderate value view
Moderate/High	Moderate / High value view
High	High value view

The residential building at 37 Glen Street is comprised of 26 storeys, many of the residential units have views over Sydney Harbour and towards Sydney Harbour Bridge. The views afforded by these units are deemed of High Value, given that they are whole views of the water and in many cases whole or part views of the Sydney Harbour Bridge.

2 - Consideration from what part of the property the views are obtained

For the purpose of this view loss assessment, representative units have been selected by the project Architects on levels 22 and 26 to assess the view loss from the living areas. Levels 22 and 26 were selected as representative, based on those views that would be impacted by the additional building height sought under this Planning Proposal.

Representative views are provided from within the living areas of these properties under the assumption that these are the areas which are inhabitated the most within each apartment

Whilst it is recognised that there are potential impacts from additional areas of these units where partial or oblique views are afforded, they do not form part of this assessment as they are afforded on the sides of the property across the land of this development proposal.

3 - Assessment of the Extent of the Impact

The images overleaf illustrate the before and after views from the representative levels selected of the residential building at 37 Glenn Street. For each view the view loss is assessed qualitatively against the following classifications:

Negligible	Negligible visual view impact
Minor	Minorly adverse view impact
Moderate	Moderately adverse view impact
Severe	Severely adverse view impact
Devastating	Devastatingly adverse visual view impact

It should be noted that the modelled views that follow are from single point locations. They do not provide confirmation that any additional or different view loss might be experienced from elsewhere in the room or on a balcony. Accordingly, the lowest view loss rating is 'Negligible'.

4 - Assessment of the Reasonableness of the Proposal

The reasonableness of the proposal is addressed within the summary of this section, providing:

- An assessment in terms of compliance with applicable planning controls and whether a different or complying design must produce a better result
- Discuss means by which the visual impacts identified can be precluded, reduced or offset
- Draw conclusions on the overall view loss.

LOCATION	Level 22, 37 Glenn Street
ASSESSMENT OF VIEW	Views are afforded across Sydney Harbour. The views are deemed of High Value, given they are whole views of the water and partial views of the Walsh Bay wharves.

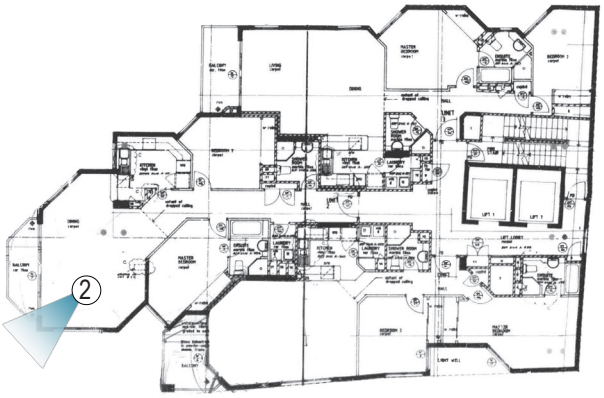
EXTENT OF IMPACT

The extent of impact from this viewpoint is considered Negligible as there is no significant impact from the proposal on the current view, with only a barely perceptible reduction in view of the Walsh Bay wharves.

View 1 without building

View 1 with building

LOCATION	Level 22, 37 Glenn Street
ASSESSMENT OF VIEW	Views are afforded across Sydney Harbour. The views are deemed of High Value, given they are whole views of the water and partial views of the iconic Sydney Harbour Bridge.



EXTENT OF IMPACT

The extent of impact from this viewpoint is considered Moderate due to the noticeable partial loss of view of the Sydney Harbour Bridge and reduction in view of water and towards Campbell Cove. The view over the rest of the bay remains unchanged.

View 2 without building

View 2 with building

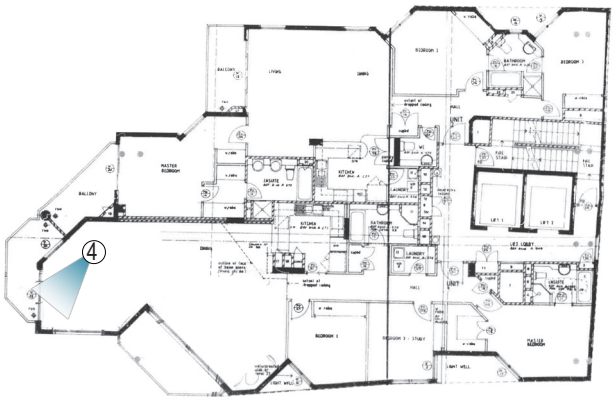
LOCATION	Level 26, 37 Glenn Street
ASSESSMENT OF VIEW	Views are afforded across Sydney Harbour. The views are deemed of High Value, given they are whole views of the water and partial views of the iconic Sydney Harbour Bridge.

EXTENT OF IMPACT
The extent of impact from this viewpoint is considered Moderate as the view of the southern pylon of the Sydney Harbour Bridge will be obscured. Views over the bay towards the Walsh Bay wharves remain unchanged.

View 3 without building

View 3 with building

LOCATION	Level 26, 37 Glenn Street
ASSESSMENT OF VIEW	Views are afforded across Sydney Harbour. The views are deemed of High Value, given they are whole views of the water and partial views of the iconic Sydney Harbour Bridge.



EXTENT OF IMPACT

The extent of impact from this viewpoint is considered Negligible as there is no significant impact from the proposal on the current view.

View 4 without building

View 4 with building

ASSESSMENT OF THE REASONABLENESS OF THE PROPOSAL

For the purpose of this view loss assessment representative views from within the adjoining building to the north (37 Glen Street) have been assessed based on those views that would be impacted by the additional building height sought under this Planning Proposal and as such assessment is provided on the height assumptions made within the proposal based on adjacent property heights.

Design Objectives to Minimise View Loss
With respect to the rationale behind the building design to minimise view loss, the following explanation from the planner's report (Ethos Urban P/L) has been considered:

"The Indicative Concept Scheme has sought to minimise view impacts by reducing the bulk of the development within the western portion of the site. The Indicative Concept Scheme is built to the northern boundary for the most part of the building's length but provides an increased setback of 8m to the rear where it aligns with 37 Glen Street (refer to Figure 6.1 on the previous pages).

From Level 14 to 18 additional 2m setback is provided to the Glen Street frontage for the purpose of protecting the view corridors of the adjoining property.

In addition, the floorplate adopts a modulated form that provides an increased setback at the north western boundary to where the site adjoins the building at 37 Glen Street. The modulated floorplate is to ensure the proposal provides an appropriate alignment with the adjoining developments located to the north (37 Glen Street) and South (48 - 50 Glen Street).

The proposal draws upon this alignment to reinforce a continuous building line along Glen Street. Consequently, the building envelope does not encroach beyond the alignment of the adjoining developments and view corridors obtained from living spaces and balconies are maximised.

The surrounding built form along with the siting and configuration of the building envelope will ensure view impacts are minimised. The proposal is sited to the direct south of 37 Glen Street. Accordingly, view impacts resulting from the proposal will predominantly impact its southern elevation.

Currently, the southern facing units largely receive views of the 20 storey tower located at 48 – 50 Alfred Street, Milsons Point. Accordingly, whilst the adjoining building receives some view corridors of Sydney Harbour, the existing composition of the view corridor is interrupted by other buildings and is therefore of lesser significance."

When considering the reasonableness of any view loss from the selected viewpoints, the following has been considered, in line with the Planning Principles arising from Tenacity Consulting v Warringah Council (see Section 1):

- Compliance with applicable planning controls
- Whole or partial Views.

As previously outlined, the basis of this assessment is that of the proposed building height changes in the Planning Proposal and on this basis it is understood that the development would meet the applicable controls (already applying to adjoining buildings).

Two of the four views receive Negligible view loss (no discernible change from the selected viewpoint) and although the other two have moderate results, the amount of view that the proposal actually blocks is minor, and is a result of the status of the Sydney Harbour Bridge more than the amount of view effected as previously mentioned. It should also be noted that although the Harbour Bridge is obstructed within these two views, this is from a single point location, and views of the Harbour Bridge may become visible again when moving around the room. Therefore the reasonableness test can be deemed to be met.

View 2 and 3 receives a Moderate view loss rating, with the item lost to view being the existing partial view of the Harbour Bridge's south pylon. The Planning Principles indicate that a whole view is more valuable than a partial view and thus - given the above compliance - the loss of this partial view at the left periphery of a view that is otherwise unaffected could be considered reasonable.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS

7. CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions relate to the two elements of this VIA, namely visual impact assessment when viewed from public domain viewpoints and the extent of view loss from adjoining buildings.

VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

From the foregoing assessment it is noted that of the five viewpoints assessed one receives a 'moderate/low' rating, with the other four receiving 'low' ratings. It is also noted that:

- The building replaces an existing high rise building on the site
- The new building does not incur any significant additional view loss from the public domain towards Sydney Harbour and the Harbour Bridge, beyond the existing site's visual environment.

Consequently, this assessment concludes that the proposed development is of minimal visual impact when viewed from the public domain. With respect to some detail aspects of the new building and associated external works (street front and laneway) it could also reasonably be argued that the proposed development makes a positive contribution to the visual environment of the locality by virtue of:

- A simpler and more contemporary streetscape and laneway design
- a more articulated facade design that would appear less bulky
- A visibly more active and appealing street front on Alfred Street (shops, eating places and outdoor space in the adjoining laneway)
- A wider and less cluttered pedestrian street front on Glenn Street
- New street tree planting.

Accordingly, no mitigation measures are considered warranted at this juncture in the planning process. It is suggested that some minor mitigation measures may need to be considered with respect to specific details during the design development phase and the construction methodology design stage (eg materials, finishes, reflectivity etc). These assessments should be carried out when this further detail is available.

VIEW LOSS ASSESSMENT

The views have been assessed based on those views that would be impacted by the additional building height sought under this Planning Proposal. Although it is recognised that the views assessed are highly valued and would qualify as 'iconic views',being views to Sydney Harbour and the Harbour Bridge, the massing of the proposed building has been designed to minimise the potential view loss impacts.

The viewpoints selected are from the living areas, accepting that these are the areas which are inhabited the most within each apartment. It is recognised that there are potential impacts from additional areas of these units where partial or oblique views are afforded (eg bedrooms), however they do not form part of this assessment as they are afforded views from the sides of the property across the land of this development proposal.

Based on conformance with the planning controls that would apply under the Planning Proposal, the Negligible view loss rating of two of the four representative views (no view loss is discernible from the modelled views) and the loss of a partial (not a whole view) of the Harbour Bridge's southern pylon for the other two views, the overall view losses are not considered significant overall.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