

Planning Proposal Edgecliff Centre

Heritage Impact Statement

March 2024

We acknowledge the Gadigal of the Eora Nation as the Traditional Owners of the land on which the Edgecliff Centre sits today. We recognise the Gadigal continuing connection to land, waters and culture. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

Document Information

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Executive Summary

Curio Projects Pty Ltd were commissioned by Longhurst Investments No. 1 (Longhurst) to prepare a Heritage Impact Statement (HIS) to support a planning proposal for the redevelopment of the Edgecliff Centre at 203-233 New South Head Road, Edgecliff. In particular, this report assesses any potential visual heritage impacts associated with the proposed overall precinct concept and redevelopment of the site.

The Site

The Edgecliff Centre which is the subject site for the Planning Proposal is not a heritage listed item, nor does it fall within a HCA. It is located adjacent to and above the Edgecliff Railway Station, which is listed as a heritage item on Sydney Train's s170 Heritage & Conservation Register. There are several heritage items along New South Head Road in the vicinity of the subject site, along with three Heritage Conservation Areas (HCAs) – Mona Road HCA to the north, and Paddington HCA and Woollahra HCA to the south.

Background

The Planning Proposal seeks amendments to the *Woollahra Local Environmental Plan 2014* in terms of maximum permissible height of building development, and maximum permitted Gross Floor Area (GFA) to support the mixed-use redevelopment of the existing Edgecliff Centre. The indicative development concept for the subject site, seeks to revitalise the site for a vibrant mixed-use development that can simultaneously give back to the community through a combination of community uses and public open spaces, the provision of affordable housing and retail amenities whilst increasing employment generating floor space and housing close to transport.

The planning proposal seeks to increase the height and FSR standards for the site, so as to allow for development that will best utilise the site's location, its urban setting, and the connectivity and transport opportunities, which is consistent with the emerging and desired future character of this section of New South Head Road (Edgecliff Commercial Corridor – ECC) as prescribed in Council's *Draft Edgecliff Commercial Centre Planning and Urban Design Strategy*¹ (Woollahra Council Draft Strategy). The built envelopes proposed by Council's Planning Proposal along with those of this planning proposal will allow for the formation of a cluster of tall buildings in the area, similar to Darlinghurst and Darling Point.

Summary

In this report, the Planning Proposal has been considered in terms of its potential to have a positive, negative or neutral impact on items and/or areas of heritage significance in line with the NSW Heritage Assessment guidelines. The following summary concludes that any potential heritage impacts arising from the Planning Proposal will not adversely affect any heritage items or HCAs within the vicinity of the site, similarly to Woollahra Council's Draft Strategy.

As discussed in detail in Section 7.0 (Heritage Impact Assessment) of this report, the Edgecliff Centre subject site does not include any heritage items within its boundaries, nor is it located within a Heritage Conservation Area. The adjacent Edgecliff Train Station is listed on Sydney Rail's Section 170

¹ Woollahra Municipal Council, 2021, *Draft Edgecliff Commercial Centre Planning and Urban Design Strategy*

Register, however, there is no proposal to have any major impacts on its original fabric. As a result, the Planning Proposal will not result in any adverse physical impacts to items of heritage significance.

As further discussed in this report and as demonstrated in the View Impact Analysis², and Edgecliff Centre – Urban Design Report³ prepared for this planning proposal, there is no perceivable difference in the visual impacts of the Planning Proposal on surrounding Heritage Conservation Areas (HCAs)/Heritage Items when compared with the visual impacts associated with Woollahra Council's Draft Strategy.

The impacts, when assessed either as part of the standalone Planning Proposal, or in conjunction with Woollahra Council's Draft Strategy, are not considered to have a major adverse impact on the heritage significance of the local Heritage Conservation Areas (HCAs), and/or any impacts on individually listed heritage items. The impacts, from a heritage perspective, are limited to the visibility of the towers from within some viewpoints when observed from the HCAs as part of the skyline of the Edgecliff Centre and its surrounds. These impacts are not considered to have a major adverse impact on the significance, the character or readability of the HCAs.

In summary, the proposed height and form of the Podium, Towers, Public Domain and Public Access proposed in the Planning Proposal do not detract from the heritage attributes of the HCAs (to the north, south, east and west) as summarised below:

- They do not obstruct or impede any key views within the HCAs themselves,
- They do not obstruct key sightlines from one HCA to another,
- In several key viewpoints the Planning Proposal is partially obscured by the mature plantings and naturally low-set topography of the winding, low-scale streetscapes across the various HCAs and either difficult or not possible to see;
- The Towers, when viewed in the context of the existing ECC skyline and proposed future Woollahra Draft Strategy skyline, provide continuity to the ECC and form part of a positive cluster of tower development in the ECC precinct that will not have any physical impact on heritage items, will not block views to or from heritage items and will not have a major, unacceptable impact on the day to day amenity, aesthetics and overall heritage significance of each of the surrounding HCAs, including Trumper Park, the Paddington HCA, Rushcutters Bay and Mona Road HCA.

Conclusions & Recommendations

Overall, the planning proposal for the Edgecliff Centre will not have an adverse impact on or result in any major alteration to the character and significance of any nearby heritage items, nor any of the nearby HCAs (Paddington, Woollahra or Mona Road). The planning proposal is considered to be consistent with the existing built context of the ECC and from a heritage perspective is location so as not to impact on heritage items and/or heritage conservation areas in a detrimental way.

When viewed from the perspective of similar developments across the city, the planning proposal for the Edgecliff Centre presents an opportunity to develop the site in a way that is historically geared in terms of densities of development and is futuristic in its shared vision with Woollahra Council of

² RLA 2023

³ Longhurst, Rev 2. 25/07/23

encouraging tall buildings in the right locations to support regeneration of New South Head Road, while positively conserving the historic environment of the HCAs.

As demonstrated through the case studies in Section 6.0 Comparative Analysis, there is strong precedent for the successful integration of low-scale historic residential and mixed-use precincts on the periphery and/or in close vicinity to, high-rise tower clusters where the clustering of high-rise towers do not have a detrimental impact on the significance of surrounding HCAs and heritage items.

A close examination of the The Rocks and Chippendale as case studies, demonstrate that where the clusters of towers are surrounded by low-scale HCAs and heritage-listed items, the clustering of high-density, high-rise towers, have served as a key driver for the ongoing protection, and conservation and revitalisation of heritage items and HCAs within their vicinity. The low-scale historic residential and mixed-use occupants in the HCAs in The Rocks and Chippendale continue to thrive in terms of increasing real estate value and desirability for occupants (residential and commercial).

Both case studies demonstrate that the long-term presence of high-rise tower clusters close to the HCAs and heritage items, particularly when the new high-rise development is subject to design excellence (such as Chippendale and in more recent developments at The Rocks), have not resulted in detrimental impacts to the HCAs or lessened their heritage significance, but rather have worked alongside the heritage to create precincts where the HCAs are highly desirable locations from which to work and live.

The Planning Proposal demonstrates a sensitive response to its heritage context and meets with each of the key Heritage Built Form criteria⁴ identified in Woollahra Council's 2021 *Draft Edgecliff Commercial Centre Planning and Urban Design Strategy*. Specific to heritage, Section 5.5 Built Form states that future built form should respond to the heritage significance of the area by:

- *Retaining all heritage items and buildings in the HCAs;*
- *Transitioning to lower street wall heights around heritage items and HCAs;*
- *Providing active frontages and public domain improvements to showcase the heritage significance of the ECC.*⁵

The planning proposal meets each of the three criteria outlined above, in that it:

- retains all heritage items and buildings in the HCAs,
- transitions to lower street wall heights around heritage items and HCAs; and
- provides active frontages and public domain improvements to showcase the heritage significance of the ECC within its heritage context.

In conclusion, from a heritage perspective the Planning Proposal is consistent with and is appropriately located within the primary corridor of mixed use commercial and residential tower developments between Bondi Junction, Edgecliff, Darlinghurst and the Sydney CBD. With design excellence at the forefront of change, the towers proposed as part of the Planning Proposal can, and will form part of the significant, future landmark ECC skyline when viewed from the surrounding HCAs and will positively contribute to the future liveability of Edgecliff and its surrounds, without detrimental impact to the surrounding heritage items and precincts.

⁴ outlined in Section 5.5. *Built Form* of the Woollahra Municipal Council, 2021, *Draft Edgecliff Commercial Centre Planning and Urban Design Strategy*, p24

⁵ *Ibid*, p24.

1. Introduction

1. Introduction

This report supports the planning proposal for the redevelopment of the Edgecliff Centre (the subject site) at 203-233 New South Head Road, Edgecliff.

This Planning Proposal seeks to amend the Woollahra Local Environmental Plan 2014 (WLEP 2014) to support the mixed-use redevelopment of the existing Edgecliff Centre at 203-233 New South Head Road, Edgecliff (Site), as follows:

- Increasing the maximum permitted Height of Buildings from part 0m,6m and 26m to part 13 and part 35 storeys plus plant. ;
- Increase the maximum permitted GFA on the Edgecliff Centre portion of the site to 44,190 sqm;
- Increase the maximum permitted GFA on the Council-owned road reserve to 3,300 sqm; and
- Introduce a site-specific provision to retain a minimum 2:1 FSR for non-residential purposes.

The Planning Proposal will also incorporate a portion of residual land which forms part of the New McLean Street road-reserve, abutting the southern boundary of the Site, and the FSR and Height of Buildings development standard proposed for the Site are proposed to extend to this portion of land.

1.1 The Purpose of this Report

Curio Projects Pty Ltd (Curio) have been commissioned by Longhurst to prepare a Heritage Impact Statement (HIS), to support the Planning Proposal for the redevelopment of the Edgecliff Centre (the subject site) at 203-233 New South Head Road, Edgecliff

The purpose of this HIS is to identify any potential heritage impacts, particularly any potential visual heritage impacts that the proposed overall precinct concept and redevelopment may have on the values of identified heritage items and heritage conservation areas within the vicinity of the subject site.

This HIS has been prepared with reference to the following guideline documents Heritage Office, Dept. of Urban Affairs & Planning, 1996. *Heritage Curtilages*.

- NSW Heritage Office, 2023. *Assessing Heritage Significance*.
- Heritage Council of NSW & Government Architect, New South Wales 2019. *Better Placed: Design Guide for Heritage*.
- NSW Heritage Office/RAIA, 2005. *Design in Context – guidelines for infill development in the Historic Environment*.
- : Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance, 2013. *The Burra Charter*.
- NSW Heritage Branch, Dept. of Planning, 2009. *Assessing Significance for Historical Archaeological Sites and Relics*.

Curio has also prepared this HIS with regard to the documentation provided by Longhurst:

1.2 Background

The vision for the redevelopment of Edgecliff Centre is to:

- Create an iconic, world leading and best-in-class development
- Realise the identity of Edgecliff, creating a place, a town centre and connecting it to the wider city in a meaningful manner
- Curate a diverse mix of uses within the development in a truly integrated way.⁶

The planning proposal for the Edgecliff Centre seeks to provide:

A development that will support a combination of commercial (including office and retail), residential and community land uses, through a proposed built form that follows tower and podium typology. The proposal provides for a mixed-use podium between two and three storeys with retail, office, community uses and public open space; two individual buildings for commercial and residential uses; basement parking; activated and landscaped frontages to New McLean and New South Head Road, and network of laneways and site through links connecting retail amenity, public transport links and the surrounding road networks and parks.

In 2021, Woollahra Council released the *Draft Edgecliff Commercial Centre Planning and Urban Design Strategy* (the 'Woollahra Draft Strategy'), which "establishes a vision for the Edgecliff Commercial Centre (ECC) and provides recommendations on planning controls, urban design, public domain and transport to guide future development in the ECC".

1.3 Site Identification

The subject site is located in the Eastern Sydney suburb of Edgecliff, within the Woollahra Municipal Council Local Government Area (LGA) (as shown in Figure 1.1 and Figure 1.2 on the following page).

The subject site is known as 'The Edgecliff Centre', located at 203-233 New South Head Road, Edgecliff, and formally identified as Lot 203, DP1113922. The site is a corner site at the intersection of New South Head Road and New McLean Street to its west, with Edgecliff Station and Bus Interchange to its west.

1.4 Limitations and Constraints

This report has been prepared using all readily available historical data and documentation available for the subject site and surroundings, including relevant archaeological reports and assessments.

The report considers heritage matters only and no other non-heritage matters associated with the proposed redevelopment of the subject site.

1.5 Authorship

This report has been prepared using previous Curio documentation prepared by Sam Cooling and Natalie Vinton, Curio Projects (2020), and as updated and supplemented by Dr Vidhu Gandhi, Principal, Built Heritage Specialist and Natalie Vinton, CEO, both of Curio Projects (2023, 2024).

⁶ Longhurst presentation, 'Vision & Brief', 12 December 2019

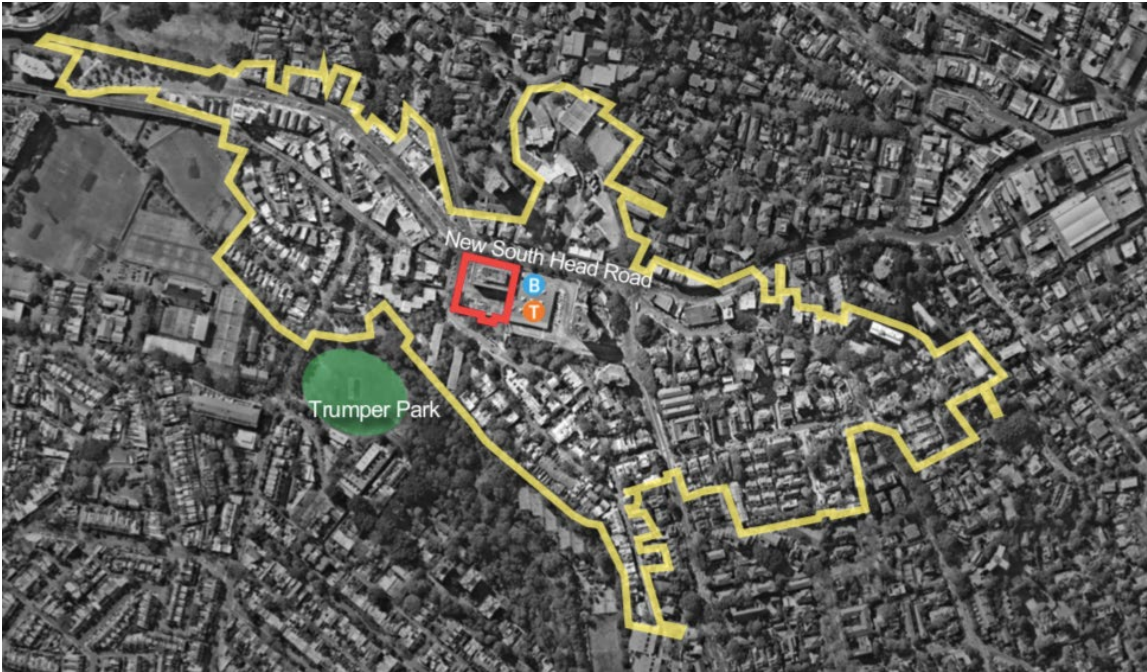


Figure 1.1: Subject Site Contextual Location (Source: Longhurst 2020)

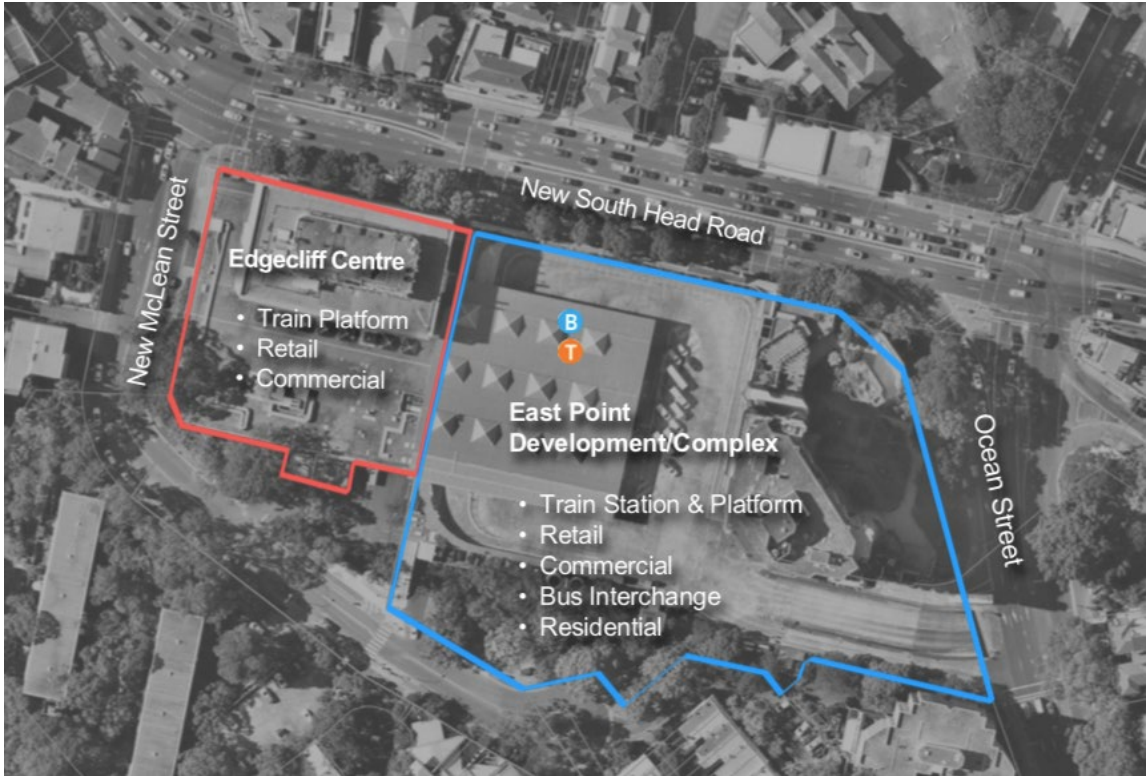


Figure 1.2: Locational Context (Source: Longhurst 2019)

2. Statutory Context

2. Statutory Context

2.1 Heritage Statutory Framework

In NSW, heritage items and known or potential archaeological resources are afforded statutory protection under the:

- Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (NSW) (EPA Act).
- Heritage Act 1977 (NSW) (Heritage Act); and
- Woollahra Local Environmental Plan 2014

There are further planning policies and controls that provide a non-statutory role in the protection of environmental heritage. These include Development Control Plans for each local Council area. This section of the report discusses the local and State planning context for the site concerning its built heritage values associated with local heritage items and conservation areas in the vicinity of the study area.

2.1.1. Environmental Planning and Assessment Act (NSW) 1979

The NSW Department of Planning and Environment administers the EPA Act, which provides the legislative context for environmental planning instruments to be made to legislate and guide the process of development and land use. Local heritage items, including known archaeological items, identified Aboriginal Places and heritage conservation areas are protected through listings on Local Environmental Plans (LEPs) or Regional Environmental Plans (REPs). The EPA Act also requires that potential Aboriginal and historical, archaeological resources are adequately assessed and considered as part of the development process, following the requirements of the NPW Act and the Heritage Act.

The planning proposal to which this HIS report relates seeks to amend the Woollahra height and floor space controls to facilitate the future redevelopment on the site. This planning proposal will be considered by Council and then progress through the Gateway process, including assessment by the Department, further assessment by Council, and public consultation.

2.1.2. Woollahra Local Environmental Plan 2014

The Woollahra LEP provides local environmental planning provisions for land within the Woollahra LGA. Clause 5.10 of the LEP sets out objective and planning controls for the conservation of heritage in the Council area, including the conservation of built heritage, archaeological sites, and heritage conservation areas.

While the subject site itself is not listed on the LEP, it is located in proximity to a number of heritage items and a heritage conservation area, which must be considered in the context of the proposed development.

2.1.3. Woollahra Development Control Plan 2015

The Woollahra DCP is a non-statutory development control plan that provides the detailed design guidelines to support the LEP 2014. The DCP provides simple guidance on how development may occur and includes notably main objectives to ensure that items of environmental heritage are conserved, respected and protected.

Chapter D4 of the DCP relates specifically to the 'Edgecliff Centre', including 203-233 New South Head Road, 235-285 New South Head Road, and 180 Ocean Street. That is, the area to which Chapter D4 of the DCP applies extends across an area larger than the specific subject area of this HIS (i.e. 203-233 New South Head Road only). The objectives for this chapter of the DCP are stated as:

- O1 To encourage a high standard of architectural and landscape design in any new development within the centre.*
- O2 To protect the amenity of residential and commercial development.*
- O3 To protect the amenity of adjoining residential areas.*
- O4 To improve connections within the centre and into the surrounding commercial and residential areas.*
- O5 To enhance the way development contributes to a sense of place.*
- O6 To encourage a diverse mix of uses in the centre, whilst maintaining its role of providing medical services.*
- O7 To activate the frontage to New McLean Street and Arthur Street*

2.2 NSW Heritage Act 1977

In NSW, heritage items are afforded statutory protection under the *NSW Heritage Act 1977* (the Heritage Act). Heritage places and items of particular importance to the people of New South Wales are listed on the NSW State Heritage Register (SHR). The Heritage Act defines a heritage item as a 'place, building, work, relic, moveable object or precinct'. The Heritage Act is responsible for the conservation and regulation of impacts to items of State heritage significance, with 'State Heritage Significance' defined as being of 'significance to the state in relation to the historical, scientific, cultural, social, archaeological, architectural, natural or aesthetic value of the item'.

Section 170 of the Heritage Act requires government agencies to identify, conserve and manage heritage assets owned, occupied or managed by that agency. Under Section 170, government agencies are required to keep a Register of heritage items, known as a *Heritage and Conservation Register* (S170 Register), as a record of the heritage assets owned or managed by the relevant government agency.

2.3 Heritage Listed Items/HCAs

The following subsection provides a brief summary of heritage listed items and Heritage Conservation Areas (HCAs) that are located within the vicinity of the subject site. Figures 2.1 and 2.2 on the following pages show the location of the existing heritage items and HCAs relative to the ECC.

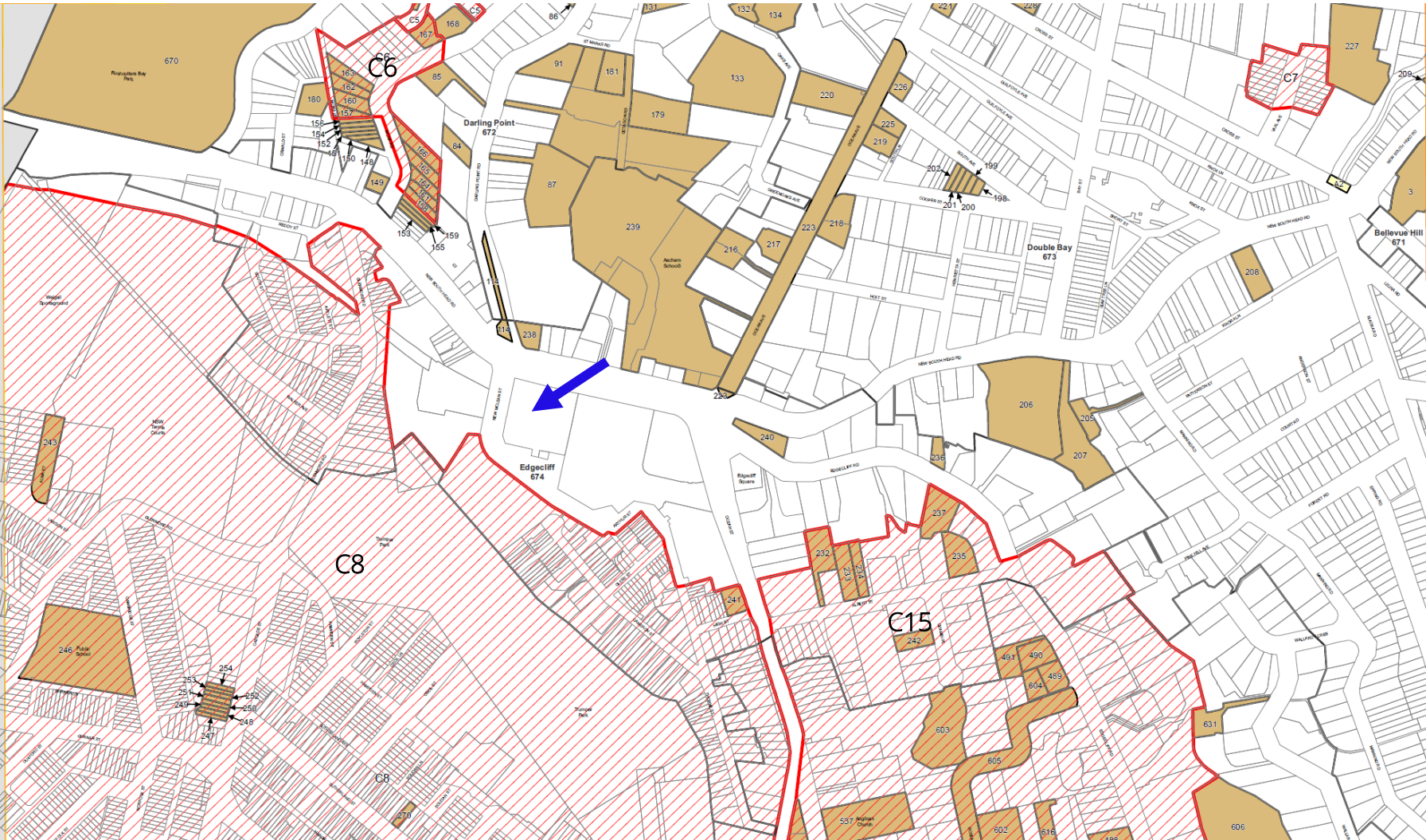


Figure 2.1: Woollahra Heritage Map 03A, heritage items in brown, heritage conservation areas in red, identified as relevant. Subject site indicated by arrow (Source: Woollahra LEP 2014, Heritage Map 3A with Curio Amendments in blue)

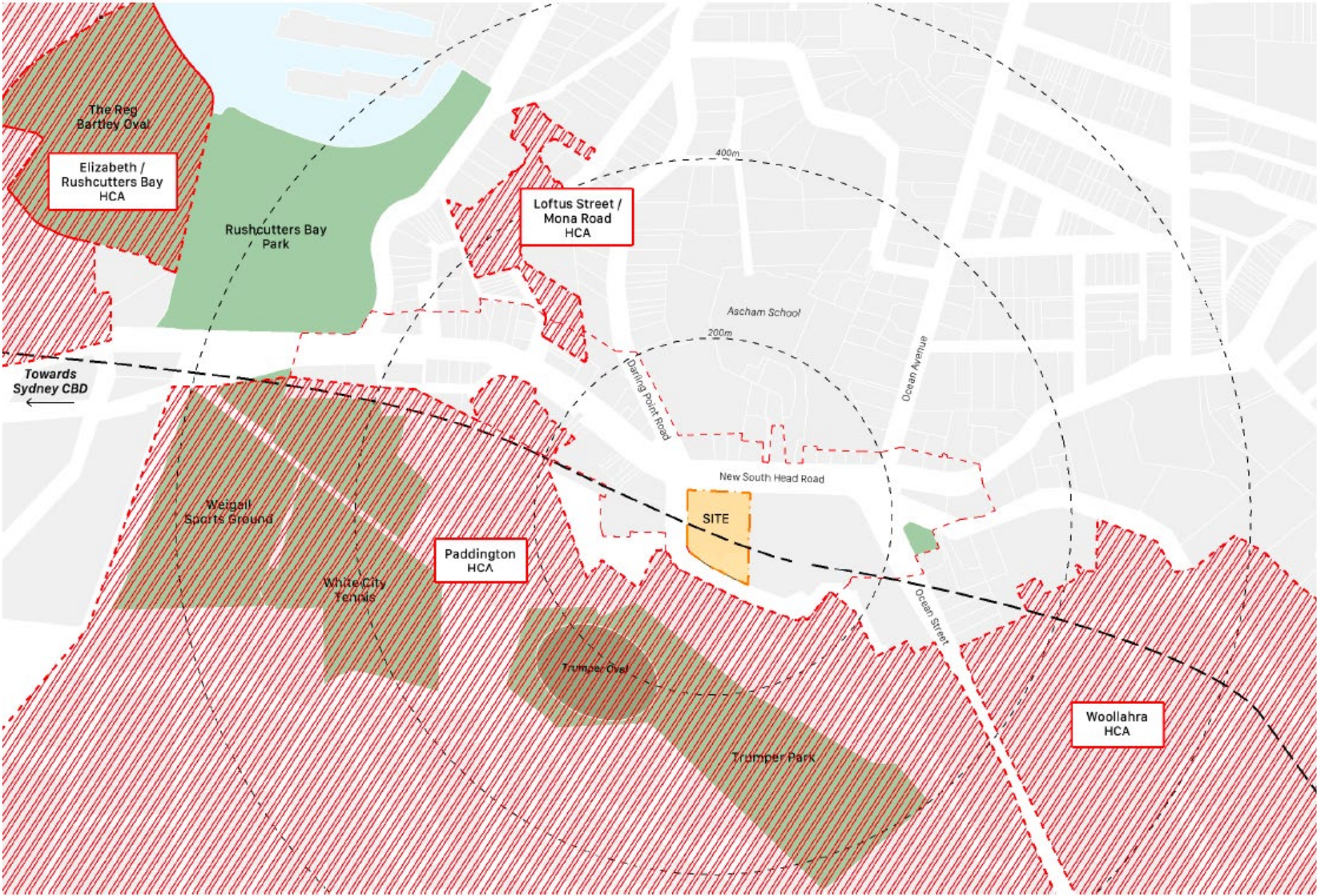


Figure 2.2: The subject site, as highlighted in orange, in relation to broader surrounding HCAs
(Source: FJC Studio Edgecliff Centre Urban Design. Longhurst — REV 2 —25/07/23)

2.3.1. Edgecliff Railway Station (S170)

The Edgecliff Centre subject site itself is not heritage listed, but it is located adjacent to the Edgecliff Railway Station which is listed as a heritage item on Sydney Train’s Section 170 Heritage Register (s170) – a statutory heritage register maintained by the NSW Heritage Division, under the provisions of the *NSW Heritage Act (1977)* (the Heritage Act). Figure 2.1 highlights where the train station sits in relation to the existing Edgecliff Centre.

The State Heritage Inventory Datasheet for Edgecliff Station states that:

Edgecliff Station is of local significance as one of a group of stations that make up the Eastern Suburbs Railway (ESR) line, one of the largest and most contentious post-war rail projects undertaken in the Sydney system. The stations were designed as part of a collection but with individual design and colour styles to differentiate them within it. They represent a continuation of the design principles of the underground system as first displayed in the Museum and St James stations and also represent the latest in construction and design technology at the time.

The subject site is also located in close vicinity to a high density of significant local and SHR listed items, as shown on the Woollahra LEP (2014) Heritage Map 3A (Figure 2.2).

It is also located in close vicinity to the Heritage Conservation Areas (HCA): Paddington, including parts of Woollahra and Edgecliff (C6), and in the vicinity of Mona Road HCA (C6), as well as nearby heritage items at 136 New South Head Road and 188 New South Head Road, Rushcutters Bay Park (LEP #1403 and SHR #02041) is also located c.700m to the northwest of the Edgecliff Centre.

136 New South Head Road is currently subject to a gateway approval for increase height and FSR. Nearby heritage listings and their significance are summarised in the relevant subsections below.

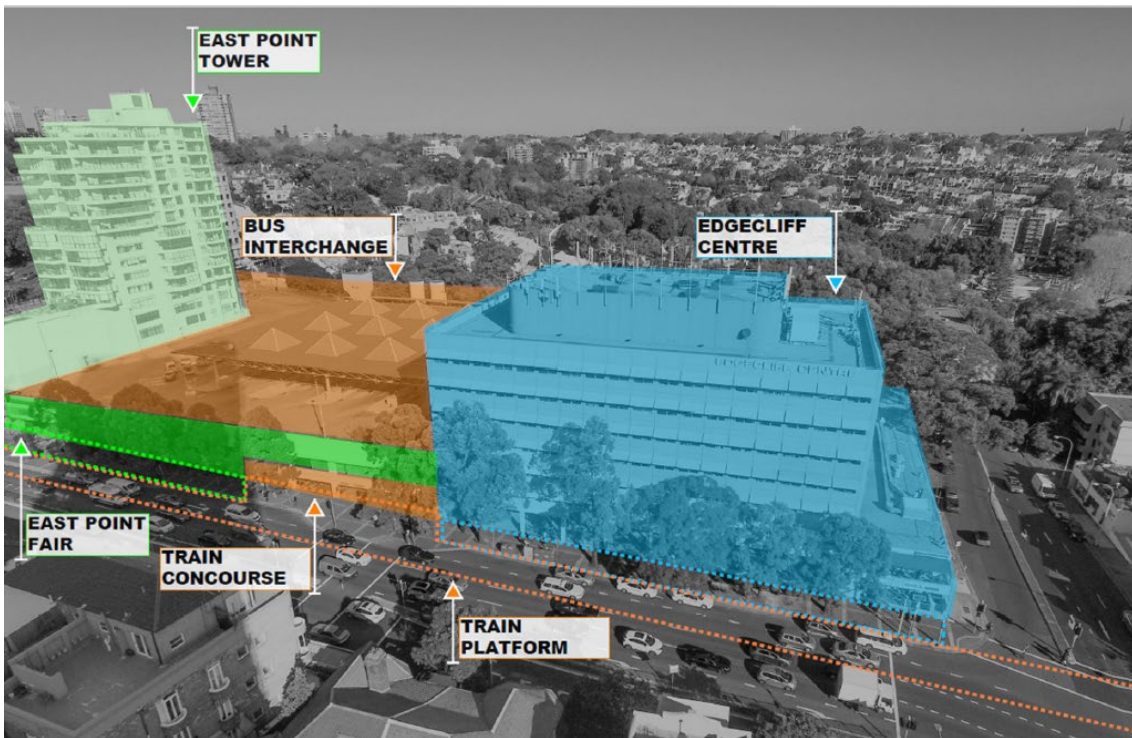


Figure 2.1: Edgecliff Station’s location in relation to Edgecliff Centre subject site (Source: Longhurst 2019.Rev 1.)

2.3.2. Local Heritage-Listed Items

Local heritage items listed on the Woollahra LEP in the immediate vicinity of the subject site include:

- 136 New South Head Road- *Building & Interiors* (LEP 238)
- 188 New South Head Road- *Ascham school precinct* (LEP 239)
- Darling Point Road, near New South Head Road intersection- *Concrete balustrade* (LEP 114)

All three of these local heritage items are located across New South Head Road to the north from the current subject site. The Ascham School Precinct (LEP 239) includes a group of heritage items, including 'Fiona and former entrance gates', 'Glenrock and inner and outer gates', and 'Dower House', 'The Octagon', 'Yeomerry', as well as other landscape features including sands-stone works, remaining open space and oval adjacent to Fiona, and Moreton Bay Figs.

2.3.3. Paddington HCA (C8)

The suburb of Paddington is located across two LGAs: City of Sydney; and Municipality Woollahra. The significance of the Paddington HCA as per the Woollahra LEP is described as follows:

a unique urban area which possesses historical, aesthetic, technical and social significance at a National and State level. An important factor in the significance of Paddington is its exceptional unity, encompassing scale, character, history, architecture and urban form

...Paddington has a unique aesthetic significance due to the superimposition of the built form on a sloping topography which overlooks Sydney Harbour and its foreshores. The coherent and extensive Victorian built form comprising groups of terrace buildings on narrow allotments which step down hills, turn corners or sit in ranks along tree lined streets produces a singularly recognisable image.⁷

The heritage character of Paddington is typified by its predominantly 19th century residential character (represented by late-Victorian terrace houses, modest workers' cottages, etc), including other townscape features such as significant trees, historical sandstone kerbs and gutters. Retention of the heritage character and significance of the HCA is achieved through the conservation of the character, form and setting of the key items and structures within the HCA curtilage.

2.3.4. Woollahra HCA (C15)

The Woollahra HCA is located approximately 300 metres southeast of the Edgecliff Centre subject site (i.e. around the intersection of Albert and Ocean Streets-see Figure 2.), the significance of the Woollahra HCA is summarised as:

The Woollahra Heritage Conservation Area (Woollahra HCA) is a place of outstanding local heritage significance. The special character of the Woollahra HCA derives from its unique historic background and the expression of this background in its interrelationship of buildings, their settings, landscaping and open spaces, topography and land uses.⁸

⁷ Woollahra DCP 2015: Chapter C1: 7

⁸ Woollahra DCP 2015: Chapter C2: 1

2.3.5. Mona Road HCA (C6)

The Mona Road HCA is located approximately 300 metres northwest of Edgecliff Centre subject site. The following has been extracted from the Statement of Significance for the Mona Road HCA:

The Mona Road HCA is located within the Darling Point residential precinct and comprises dwelling houses, semi-detached houses and apartments that demonstrate the important characteristics of the Federation Arts and Crafts and Federation Queen Anne styles.

This HCA contains a cohesive group of substantial but speculative housing built within the first decade of the 20th century on part of the Mona Estate that demonstrates the more intense residential development pattern of Darling Point. Some of the dwellings were subsequently converted to duplexes or triplexes in the 1920s without changing their form or altering their integrity.

The winding alignment of Mona Road through the steep topography results in extensive rusticated ashlar or brick retaining walls which, together with the mature Hill's Weeping Fig street trees form a distinctive streetscape with cohesive groups of buildings on each side of Mona Road which are orientated towards the harbour view.⁹

Following from the Statement of Significance for the Mona Road HCA, it can be seen that—similar to that of the Paddington HCA—the significance of the Mona Road HCA relates mainly to the conservation of the residential character, historical subdivision pattern, built form and landscape features within the curtilage of the HCA.

2.3.6. Rushcutters Bay Park (LEP I1403, SHR #02041)

Located c.700m northwest of the Edgecliff Centre subject site, Rushcutters Bay Park was recently listed on the SHR (June 2020) (listed as “Rushcutters Bay Park and Yarranabbe Park”) as:

...state significant examples of the reservation of land for public recreation by councils in response to community lobbying. Both demonstrate the importance placed on inalienable and accessible public lands in Sydney from the mid to late-19th century and are amongst the largest harbour reclamation schemes for public recreation undertaken in the history of NSW. This broad expanse of open foreshore land, punctuated with rows of huge Moreton Bay figs form a magnificent southern boundary to this bay-side common, located beside the most densely populated area of Sydney, a Sydney Harbour.¹⁰

Rushcutters Bay Park has historical significance for its demonstration of early reshaping of the creek valley of this natural bay and as an early example of reservation of land for public recreation, as well as aesthetic significance “a large-scaled inner-harbour foreshore informally-landscaped park, providing dramatic views to and from the harbour and surrounds”. The social value of the Park is also of State significance, as a place of continuous multi-purpose public use since the mid-1870s (including being the site of key major public events), and as a reflection of public lobbying in the mid to late 1800s for the establishment and protection of this area as a park. The Park also has technical significance at a State level for its part of a major public works program including land reclamation

⁹ Woollahra DCP 2015: Chapter B2: 9-10

¹⁰ Rushcutters Bay Park and Yarranabbe Park, SHR Listing:

<https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/heritageapp/ViewHeritageltemDetails.aspx?ID=5067067>

and seawall construction, and research potential to inform knowledge of contact and possible contact between Aboriginal people and earlier colonial settlers in inner Sydney. Rushcutters Bay Park is a rare example of a large scaled 19th Century inner-suburban park and continues to demonstrate the importance placed by the community and Councils on inalienable and accessible public lands in Sydney from the early to mid 19th Century.

Consideration of the heritage significance of Rushcutters Bay Park indicates that its significance is also focused on the location, experience and historical significance of the park itself, and in what it represents as part of a wider expanse of inner Sydney parks that have been protected for continuous public access and recreation. While the State level heritage significance of this item is recognised, it would follow that the key views of significance to Rushcutters Bay Park (as relevant to its history and significance) would be internal views within the park and connectivity to the harbour and surrounding spaces and immediate developments and features along the shoreline, as opposed to general visibility to built form and features at a greater distance inland from the park.

3. Historical Summary

3. Historical Summary

The name of the Woollahra area is anecdotally derived from local Aboriginal word ‘Woo-la-ra’, meaning ‘camp’ or ‘meeting ground’, selected by Sir Daniel Cooper as the name for his planned mansion at Point Piper in 1856.¹¹

Following the establishment of the NSW Colony in 1788, the early Woollahra area consisted of early land grants and subsequent large estates developed along what is now Oxford St and Old South Head Road from the 1810s onwards. early land grants mostly for soldiers (eg. Captain John Piper, who then sold to Daniel Cooper who developed/expanded area from 1827 onwards).

The Borough of Woollahra was incorporated on 17 April 1860, following which time the area remained largely residential, with some industries commencing operations later in the 19th Century. Tram services were extended through the area in the 1880s, first along Oxford St to Ocean St in 1881, and further to Waverley via Old South Head Road in 1887. A cable tram opened in the area 1894, which operated from King St in the City to Ocean Street in Edgecliff, until electrification in 1905.

In the 1960s, shops and residences along the southern side of New South Head Road were demolished to make way for the construction of Edgecliff Station (a new station proposed for the Eastern Suburbs Railway (ESR)- under construction at the time). Eventually opening in 1979, Edgecliff Station is an underground station, constructed over two levels—concourse and platforms—with a gallery and bus interchange above. Edgecliff Centre (203-233 New South Head Road) was developed in the late 1960s/early 1970s in association with the ESR and future Edgecliff Station.¹²



Figure 3.1: 1970s View east along New South Head Road, Edgecliff Centre visible in background
(Source: Woollahra Library, pf006360/0343)

¹¹ Woollahra Municipal Council, *A brief history of Woollahra*, accessed 30 March 2020 from https://www.woollahra.nsw.gov.au/library/local_history/a_brief_history_of_woollahra

¹² DCP 2015: D4, p. 5



Figure 3.2: c.1972 New McLean Street, looking across to Edgecliff Centre, block of flats 'Ranelagh' visible (3-17 Darling Point Rd)
(Source: Woollahra Library Local History Collection, pf004134)



Figure 3.3: Edgecliff Centre 1982 (Source: Woollahra Library Local History Collection, Field Surveys (6874))

4. Physical Analysis

4. Physical Analysis

4.1 Site Context

4.1.1. Edgecliff Centre

The following site context for the Edgecliff Centre has been incorporated from the *Edgecliff Centre Redevelopment Briefing Summary* and is included for ease of reference.

The site forms the gateway precinct to the eastern suburbs and is a substantial land holding within both the Edgecliff corridor and the Woollahra LGA overall. The corridor has positioned itself as a fundamental hub for all mixed-uses including commercial, retail & residential. These are well serviced with close proximity to the major transport node of the Woollahra LGA, being the Edgecliff train station and bus terminal located within the adjoining East Point Development, and below the Edgecliff Centre.

The Edgecliff Centre site is boarded by New South Head Rd to the north, New Mclean St to the west, a small council owned road reserve to the south and East Point Centre to the east. The adjacent East Point Centre incorporates the transport interchange (bus & rail), retail mall, residential, commercial & car parking all within a stratum arrangement.

The Edgecliff Centre site area is approximately 4,900m² and accommodates a 7-storey retail/commercial building with a further 2 storey cut-in car park. It has a total of 11,217 sqm of NLA with 254 car spaces. The site sits above the Eastern Suburbs Railway line, a commuter railway line completed in June 1979. The tunnel sits at a relatively shallow depth and is located directly below the lowest level of basement parking at the centre.¹³

The DCP provides the following Precinct Character Statement for the overall 'Edgecliff Centre' precinct within which the current subject site (i.e 203-233 New South Head Road, Edgecliff) is located.

The Edgecliff Centre is part of the wider Edgecliff commercial area which includes the land zoned B4 Mixed Use along New South Head Road. New South Head Road is a major State road linking the Eastern Suburbs to the city and is the primary route for vehicles to the Edgecliff Centre.

The Edgecliff Centre comprises three main sites: two contain a multi-storey retail and commercial buildings. The centre provides a good range of convenience retailing opportunities, including supermarkets and speciality stores and services the surrounding residential suburbs including, Edgecliff, Elizabeth Bay, Darlinghurst, Darling Point, Kings Cross, Paddington, Potts Point, and Woollahra. The centre also has a high proportion of medical services and experienced a 40% increase in health care related jobs from 2006 to 2011.

¹³ From *Edgecliff Centre Redevelopment Briefing Summary*, prepared by Longhurst, April 2019

The Edgecliff Bus and Rail Interchange also form part of the centre. Local and regional bus routes service the bus interchange which is located above the Eastpoint Shopping Centre.¹⁴

The DCP describes the connectivity across the Edgecliff Centre Precinct as being 'restricted', noting that along New McLean Street (i.e. to the southern boundary of the current subject site):

car park entries and loading bays dominate the streetscape, and the landscaping is sparse and uncoordinated. This creates an unwelcoming pedestrian environment with little visual interest and provides a harsh transition to the residential land opposite.¹⁵

The desired future character of the Edgecliff Centre as described in the DCP includes recommendations for an active street frontage along New McLean Street.



Figure 4.1: An aerial view of the site within its immediate setting (Source: Longhurst, April 2019)

¹⁴ DCP Chapter D4, Section D4.2.1, p. 4. Last updated 16 March 2020

¹⁵ DCP 2015 D4, p.5



Figure 4.2: View of Existing Edgecliff Centre, from New South Head Road, Edgecliff (Source: Longhurst, April 2019)

4.1.2. Edgecliff Station

Edgecliff Station is located across two separate levels: concourse level with street access from New South Head Road and New McLean Street (including retail shops and station ticket gates); and a platform level located below the concourse level that provides access to train services. A gallery level is also located above the concourse level, providing street access to New South Head Road, as well as retail shops and access to the bus interchange above. The bus interchange is located on the roof of the East Point Complex.

The SHI Datasheet for Edgecliff Station identifies its attributes as follows:

Physical description: STATION BUILDING (1979)

Edgecliff Station consists of the concourse level and the underground island platform area below. The concourse is accessed via the Edgecliff Centre on New South Head Road. The concourse area is tiled in light grey tiles and includes manned ticket booths, automatic ticketing machines and automatic gates through to the station area.

The station platforms are accessed via two escalators from the concourse level. The escalator shaft ceilings are of moulded plywood. This plywood, with recessed fluorescent strip lights, is used throughout the station platform area. Station walls are painted yellow, with dark blue tiled sections displaying the station name in tri-level banked white lettering.

The platform end walls (adjacent to the tunnel shafts) are tiled with glazed tiles in deep orange/red and station platform columns are tiled in dark blue. The platform faces are concrete.

The platform area includes three cross-passages joining the up and down platforms and allowing for passenger flow. The station group includes a bus interchange at the upper (exterior) level.

The Edgecliff Train Station and Bus Terminal have recently undergone a set of works as part of the Transport Access Program by Transport for NSW, which has included the introduction of new facilities including Kiss & Ride, elevators, automated gated ticket readers and escalators.

4.1.3. Broader Precinct Context

The immediate urban context of the subject site along this section of New South Head Road, Edgecliff, can generally be characterised by medium to high rise residential and commercial properties with a few tall buildings in the vicinity of the site including the 32 storey residential tower 'Ranelagh' at 3-17 Darling Point Road to the north, across the road from the Edgecliff Centre, East Point Centre and the site; the 14 storey mixed residential and commercial tower adjacent at 235-287 New South Head Road, and the recently completed 12 storey residential building at 448 Edgecliff Road, Edgecliff (Figure 4.3).

The VIA prepared for the project (RLA 2023), describes the built form context of the area as

Clusters of taller building and tower forms also respond to the location of infrastructure, historical transport routes and historical demand for housing on the periphery of low density early settlement areas like Paddington and Darlinghurst... Tower form residential developments are scattered throughout the Eastern Suburbs but concentrated on the transport routes and ridges leading toward the Harbour, such as the vicinity of the Site. Mixed late 20th century development of various scales are also concentrated in commercial areas on transport nodes including the vicinity of the Site. Thus the proposal would be visually compatible with the overall distribution of built form in the visual setting. (RLA 2020: 6)

The VIA also describes the existing built form in the vicinity of the subject site as being:

... variable and of no consistency in terms of building typology, height or massing. ... (RLA 2023: 6)

As identified in the LEP, the subject site is surrounded by a high density of heritage-listed items of varying ages, types and significance. In particular, the site is located within close vicinity to the iconic Ascham school precinct which comprises: "Fiona" including interiors and former entrance gates, "Glenrock" including interiors and inner and outer gates, the Dower House including interiors, sandstone works, remaining open space and oval adjacent to "Fiona", 4 Moreton Bay Figs, related items "The Octagon", (Octagon Road), "Yeomerry" (1 St Mark's Road) and "Duntrim" (37 Darling Point Road) which are also part of Ascham school.

The school site itself is leafy, contains significant cultural plantings and many significant sandstone buildings. It should also be noted that while the school is accessed via the sandstone entry gates from New South Head Road, the majority of the precinct is set back significantly from the road itself, with modern commercial and retail buildings along the street frontage obscuring the majority of heritage items from view from the road (Figure 4.4).

Beyond the school site, there are many other heritage items, including churches, 1930s-1940s buildings and late 19th housing which make up the urban fabric of the neighbourhood. The predominant materiality of the precinct varies from sandstone buildings with dark grey/black slate

roofing, through to the red and orange-roofed blue and red brick apartment buildings of the 1930s-1940s.

Mature cultural plantings, and greenery are a significant streetscape factor within the broader streetscapes surrounding the site, to the south with Trumper Park and Paddington HCAs, northwest within the Darling Point HCA, Rushcutters Bay to the west and as part of the landscaping for the majority of heritage listed items.



Figure 4.3: Immediate context of the existing Edgecliff Centre (View west towards Sydney CBD) (Source: Longhurst 2019)



Figure 4.4: View from Edgecliff Centre across New South Head Rd towards Ascham school precinct. Sandstone school gates visible in right of image. Majority of precinct itself obscured by contemporary medium density development along street frontage (Source: Google Maps 2020)

5. Planning Proposal

5. Description of Planning Proposal

This Planning Proposal relates to the Edgecliff Centre at 203–233 New South Head Road and part of the adjoining Council-owned road reserve fronting New McLean Street (herein collectively identified as the **site**). It seeks the following amendments to the Woollahra Local Environmental Plan 2014 (**WLEP 2014**) to support the mixed-use redevelopment of the site:

- Increasing the maximum permitted Height of Buildings from part 0m, part 6m and 26m to part 13 and part 35 storeys plus plant.
- Increase the maximum permitted GFA on the Edgecliff Centre portion of the site to 44,190 sqm;
- Increase the maximum permitted GFA on the Council-owned road reserve to 3,300 sqm; and
- Introduce a site-specific provision to retain a minimum 2:1 FSR for non-residential purposes.

The Planning Proposal will also incorporate a portion of residual land which forms part of the New MacLean Street road-reserve, abutting the southern boundary of the Site, and the FSR and Height of Buildings development standard proposed for the Site are proposed to extend to this portion of land.

The Planning Proposal is supported by an indicative development concept to demonstrate the anticipated built form outcome envisioned for the site under the proposed amendments to the WLEP 2014. The concept is centred around revitalising the site for a vibrant mixed-use development that can simultaneously give back to the community through a combination of community uses and public open spaces, the provision of essential medical services whilst increasing employment generating floor space and housing close to transport.

Specifically, the concept includes:

- A combination of commercial (including office and retail), residential, and medical land uses with a total Gross Floor Area of circa 44,190 sqm;
- The distribution of form comprising:
 - A mixed-use podium between two and three storeys with retail, office, medical, community uses and public open space;
 - Two individual tower components for commercial and residential uses up to a height of part 13 storeys and part 35 storeys plus plant;
- Basement with capacity for End of Trip facilities along with circa 333 car parking spaces, 429 bicycle spaces and 34 motorcycle spaces;
- Activated and landscaped frontages to New McLean and New South Head Road within an integrated civic ground floor retail precinct;
- Delivery of a town square plaza, open green space and forecourt visibly prominent and publicly accessible.
- Delivery of approx 500 sqm community facility with funding and (part) land dedication to facilitate integrating this with the proposed two-storey community facility with urban greening rooftop fronting New McLean Street on council owned land; and
- Introduction of a network of pedestrian laneways, through site links and colonnade.

A detailed description is provided within the Planning Proposal Justification Report prepared by Ethos Urban.



Figure 5.1: View of proposed development (Source: fjmtstudio, 2023)



Figure 5.2: View of proposed development at New South Head Road (Source: fjmtstudio, 2023)



Figure 5.3: View of proposed development (Source: fjmtstudio, 2023)



Figure 5.4: View of proposed development from New McLean Street (Source: fjmtstudio, 2023)

6. Comparative Analysis

6. Comparative Analysis

The planning proposal seeks an increase to the height and FSR standards for the site, to allow for development that will best utilise the site's location, its urban setting, and the connectivity and transport opportunities it is able to provide within the LGA, and across to the Sydney CBD and the Eastern Suburbs, without having an adverse impact on the surrounding Heritage Items and Heritage Conservation Areas (HCAs).

This section of the report considers case studies of similar urban contexts involving clusters of high-rise buildings located within the close vicinity of heritage items and HCAs. It provides:

- A historical overview of the development of the suburbs of Paddington, Woollahra and Edgecliff in terms of the densities of built fabric.
- A comparative analysis of clusters of high-rises set within similar urban and heritage contexts as the Edgecliff Centre and
- A comparison of the ECC Planning Proposal and Woollahra Council's Draft ECC Strategy in terms of proposed building heights and densities.

6.1 Growth and development of Paddington, Woollahra and Edgecliff

The area surrounding the Edgecliff Centre comprises the suburbs of Edgecliff to the north and west, Paddington to the south and west, and Woollahra to the east. The built profile of the area ranges from single storied detached dwellings, terrace housing, multi-storied apartment blocks, to the double and multi-storied commercial and retail strip along New South Head Road. The density of the area varies based on the location and development history of each of the surrounding suburbs.

The few small-scale local industries in Woollahra and Paddington during the 19th century, and the industries and factories which were part of 20th century fabric of Paddington, have generally been replaced by residential developments with the gentrification of the area from the 1960s onward. The introduction of the Eastern suburb's railway line and the establishment and the building of the Edgecliff Centre contributed to the redevelopment of the area.

The suburb with the highest concentration of residential lots within the vicinity of the Edgecliff Centre is Paddington, with its narrow lot sizes reflecting the origins of the suburb. Referred to, by the Paddington Society, as an "exceptionally cohesive dormitory suburb"¹⁶ – a suburb "occupied mainly by the homes of commuters",¹⁷

In 1851, Paddington along with Glebe, Balmain and Redfern were the most populous residential suburbs of Sydney.¹⁸

Subdivisions in Paddington commenced as early as the late 1830s with the building of Victoria Barracks, and the resulting need for housing for tradespeople, and lots for shops and services.¹⁹ The built fabric comprised of terraces of two, three or four storeys – a trend that was observable during the last quarter of the 19th century, in suburbs close the city including Darlinghurst, Surry Hills and Paddington.²⁰

¹⁶ The Paddington Society, <https://www.paddingtonociety.org.au/>, accessed on 19 September 2023

¹⁷ Collins Dictionary, <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/dormitory-suburb>, accessed on 19 September 2023

¹⁸ Janet Lyndall, Robinson, 1989, Suburban development in Sydney, 1850 to 1920, p.52

¹⁹ Gary Wotherspoon, 2012

²⁰ Janet Lyndall, Robinson, 1989, p.65

The form and development of inner city suburbs was influenced by access to work, as majority of work remained concentrated in the city up until the mid-20th century. With public transport to the city being largely unreliable up until the 1870s, the inner city suburbs developed rapidly as they were within walking distance of the city.²¹ The suburbs which saw maximum growth, and had the majority of terrace houses were Woolloomooloo, Paddington, parts of Woollahra, Surry Hills, Redfern, Darlinghurst, Chippendale, Darlington and Glebe.²²

The low rise terraced, and densely built profile of Paddington demonstrates its working-class origins, with working-class families and migrant workers continuing to be the primary resident group in the area during the first half of the twentieth century and during the post WWII years. However, gentrification of the area during the 1960s and 1970s saw a change in the demographic of the area, resulting in Paddington becoming one of the more affluent suburbs of Sydney in the following decades.²³

The terrace housing of Paddington, once considered as slums, are now part of the heritage listed suburb of Paddington, with its characteristic features of terrace housing, variable building heights and “a variable and intricate street, lane and pedestrian network”.²⁴

Like Paddington, Woollahra and Edgecliff developed predominantly as residential suburbs. The historical growth of population in these suburbs is reflected in the change of lot sizes, and changes in dwelling types. Both the suburbs have areas which are heritage listed for their extant built form and historical character. Rosemont Precinct, which forms part of the Woollahra HCA, borders the Edgecliff Centre. It has irregularly shaped lots which were subdivided from larger lots, and a range of dwellings including Victorian houses set in landscaped grounds, large Victorian or Federation terraces and semi-detached houses and Inter-War period houses and residential flat buildings. The diversity of the built form reflects the historic changes in the suburbs’ population, which originally included smaller populations of landlords, who were replaced by working class families in the 20th century.²⁵

The historically relevant section of Edgecliff that is located to the north of the Edgecliff Centre, is the Mona Road HCA, which is a residential precinct comprising dwelling houses, semi-detached houses and apartment buildings. The HCA is also associated with early 20th century residential development patterns, which sought to increase housing density in the area through the construction of groups of substantial and speculative housing. “Some of these dwellings were subsequently converted to duplexes or triplexes in the 1920s” to cater to the growing population of the area.²⁶ There has therefore been a slow but growing trend of building high-rises in the area around Edgecliff Centre and Station, with the construction of high-rise buildings at 3-17 Darling Point Road, Darling Point and 442-446 Edgecliff Road, Edgecliff in the 1970s, followed by the mixed-use mid to high rise development at 180 Ocean Road in the 1980s, and more recently with the 12 storeyed residential building at 448 Edgecliff Road, Edgecliff.

The increase in building heights within Edgecliff has been further explored by Woollahra Council in its Draft Strategy which seeks amendments to the Woollahra LEP 2014 to “facilitate higher density

²¹ Gary Wotherspoon, 201

²² Janet Lyndall, Robinson, 1989, p.89

²³ Ibid

²⁴ Woollahra Municipal Council, 2015, ‘Chapter C1 Paddington Heritage Conservation Area’, *Woollahra Development Control Plan 2015*, p.8

²⁵ Woollahra Municipal Council, 2015, ‘Chapter C2 Woollahra Heritage Conservation Area’, *Woollahra Development Control Plan 2015*

²⁶ Ibid. p17

development, with regard to the Height of Buildings and Floor Space Ratio" on the basis of meeting certain criteria including "suitable site amalgamation".²⁷

Woollahra Council's Draft Strategy also recognises that, "...a large number of lots within and surrounding the ECC have been previously developed and strata subdivided. This limits their potential for future development".²⁸

While the larger residential areas surrounding the ECC is not subject to Council's 2021 *Draft ECC Planning Proposal* the observation regarding limited potential for future development also holds true for the historically narrower lots of Paddington and the smaller, former working-class family lots in Edgecliff and Woollahra. Recognising the built form constraints associated with the high density of historic residential lots in the surrounding HCAs and the often insurmountable complications associated with the consolidation and redevelopment of strata titled lots, Woollahra Council's *iDraft Strategy* has proposed an increase in the height of built form along the ECC corridor, so as to maximise the benefits of the existing topography, views along New South Head Road (Figure 6.1), access to transportation and importantly to "*provide the opportunity for the establishment of a cluster of tall buildings in the area, rather than singular tall buildings dispersed in the area*".²⁹

The topographical advantages of the ECC area in terms of "*the excellent views to the Sydney CBD and Harbour*", have been outlined in the Draft Strategy which also recommends capitalising view sharing opportunities for future development. It is also noted that while views of the city skyline can be seen from majority of New South Head Road, it is limited from areas surrounding the ECC, with the exception of a number of taller buildings in and around the ECC which have "*...largely uninterrupted regional views...to the CBD skyline to the west, Harbour to the north, district views to the east, or regional views towards Centennial Park, Paddington and Darlinghurst to the south*".

One of its guiding principles that, "Development must ensure that the character of the HCAs is not negatively impacted by the bulk and scale of the built form", with section 5.7 of Council's 2021 Draft Strategy outlining how a design excellence process can be applied³⁰.

²⁷ Ibid p.31

²⁸ Ibid p.15

²⁹ Woollahra Municipal Council, 2021, *Draft Edgecliff Commercial Centre Planning and Urban Design Strategy*, p26.

³⁰

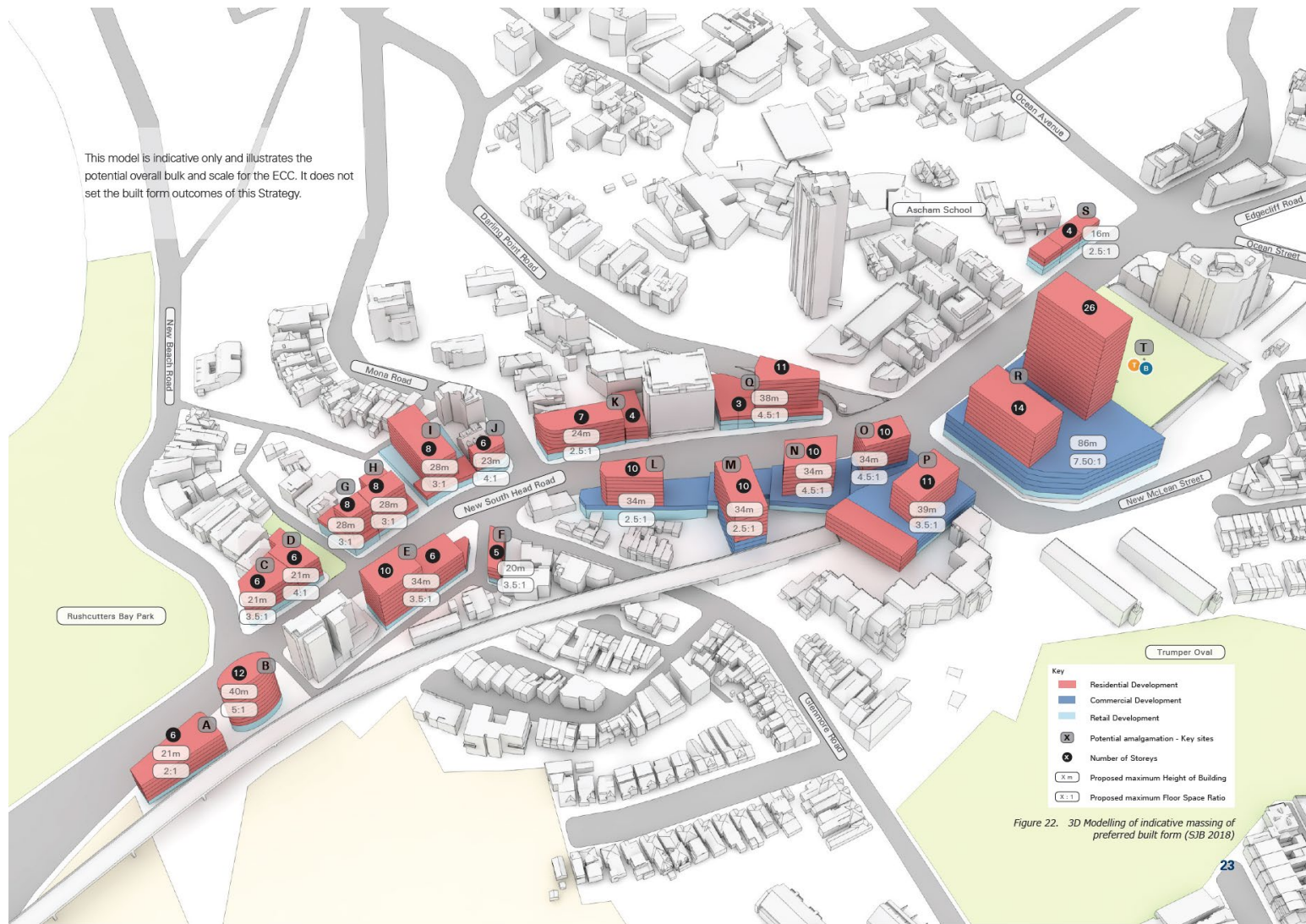


Figure 6.1: Indicative massing of preferred built form for the ECC (Source: Woollahra Council, 2021)

6.2 Tall buildings: Heritage Case Studies

Historic England publication, *Tall Buildings: Historic England Advice Note 4*, is a document that seeks “to support local planning authorities (LPAs), developers, communities and other stakeholders in dealing with tall buildings proposals within the legislative and planning framework relevant to the historic environment”.³¹ Some of the key takeaways from this document which are relevant to the planning proposal for the redevelopment of the Edgecliff Centre and remain commensurate with the principles of Council’s 2021 Draft Strategy include:

- *In the right locations tall buildings can support major change or regeneration while positively influencing place-shaping and conserving the historic environment. Special qualities such as design or use of new technologies have been recognised, with several tall buildings (including post-war examples such as the BT Communications Tower and Lloyd's building in London, and the Alpha Tower in Birmingham) now listed. In the right place well-designed tall buildings can make a positive contribution.*³²
- *Tall building clusters*
 - *Strategically planning for tall buildings in clusters can bring townscape benefits while avoiding or reducing the potential impacts upon the historic environment.*
 - *Establishing a consolidated form of tall buildings as a cluster can bring some benefits if it is well-defined, well-designed, integrated, and managed. Without careful consideration and long-term management there is a risk that the cluster could sprawl. If appropriately managed as an integrated whole, clusters can deliver high densities while minimising cumulative impacts that may be harmful to the historic environment. Policy and design guidance can be used to enable the curation of the cluster.*³³

Figure 7: Impact of tall buildings on a townscape / cityscape.
a: a town / city skyline.
b: dispersed tall buildings.
c: a tall buildings cluster.
© Historic England.

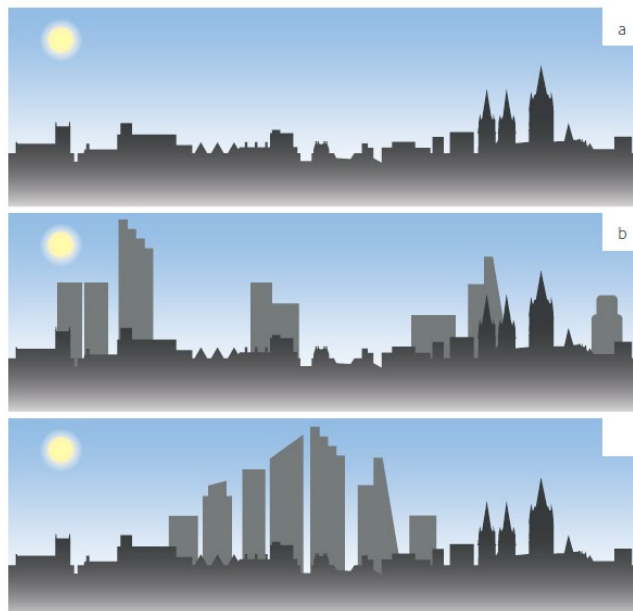


Figure 6.2: Impact of tall buildings on townscape/cityscape (Source: Historic England, 2022)

³¹ Historic England 2022 Tall Buildings: Historic England Advice Note 4. Swindon. Historic England.

³² Ibid, p.6

³³ Ibid, pp.20-21

Tall building clusters are found in a number of locations along the corridor between the CBD of Sydney and the Eastern Suburbs, as shown in the diagram presented below by fjcstudio in their report *Edgecliff Centre - Urban Design Report (2023)*. FJC Studio discuss in detail how the tall building clusters work together to create an appropriate urban design outcome and use the diagrams (as shown in Figure 6.3) to demonstrate how the planning proposal is commensurate with, and contributes positively to the Edgecliff cluster of tall buildings.

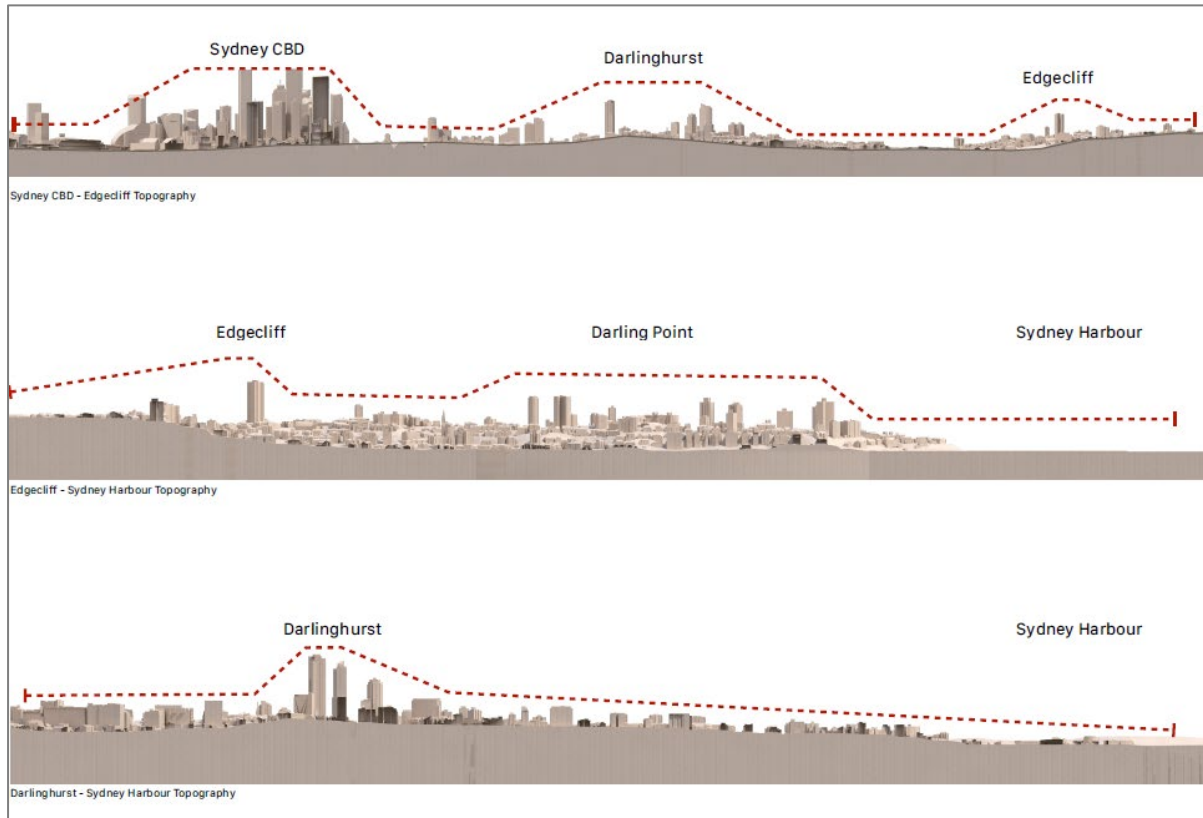


Figure 6.3: Tall building clusters along the Eastern Harbour ridgeline (Source: fjcstudio, 2023)

6.3 Case Studies

In the following subsection, two centralised mixed-use case studies with a focus on tall building clusters in locations that are surrounded by heritage items and HCAs, similar to the ECC have been considered.

The two case studies demonstrate how there can be positive urban design and heritage outcomes where tall buildings are clustered within the close vicinity of heritage items and HCAs. The case studies summarise how excellence in the design process can ensure that heritage precincts and tall building clusters can coincide, without the undue compromise or major negative impacts often associated with such scenarios.

These case studies support and further the case for the height and density increases proposed by the Planning Proposal for the Edgecliff Centre.

6.3.1. Case Study 1: Chippendale

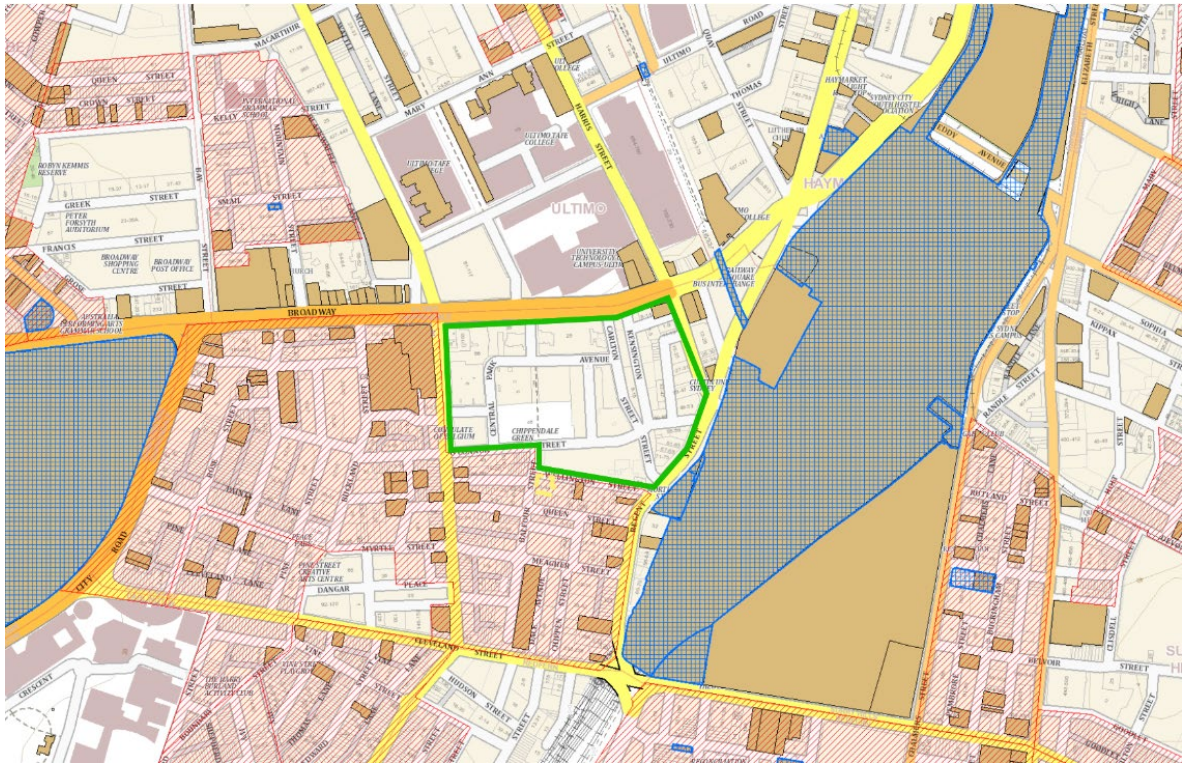


Fig 6.4 Sydney LEP 2012 heritage items and HCA in the vicinity of Central Park (Source: City of Sydney, 2012, with additions by Curio) The central park precinct is outlined in red.

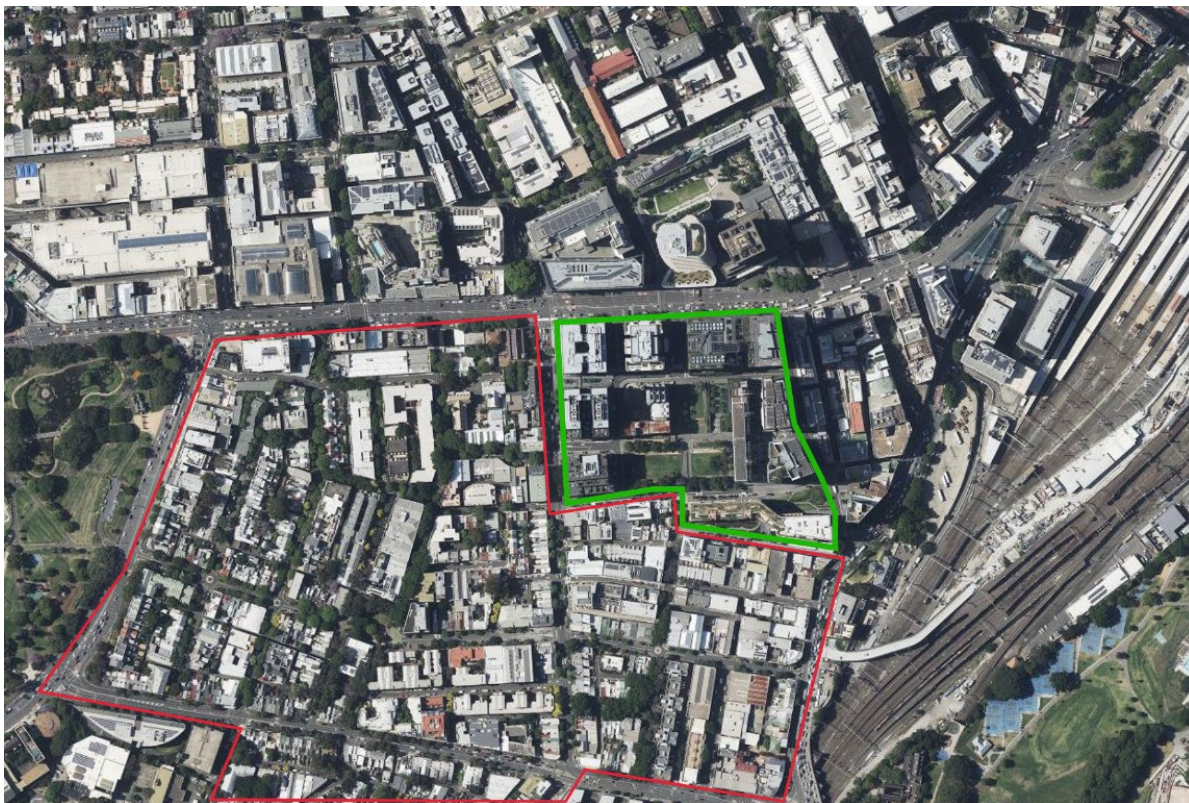


Fig 6.5: Aerial View over Chippendale and the surrounding area.

Central Park Sydney, UTS and surrounds (Chippendale)



Fig 6.6 One Central Park (Source: AchDaily)

Cluster of tall buildings – in the vicinity of HCAs and heritage items

Built: 2009-2015

Height of buildings: Circa 120m

- High-density residential & commercial development, open space, connections to surrounding streets and neighbourhoods, and adaptive re-use of heritage buildings.
- Close to the city's major transport hub at Central Station and two large universities,
- Closure of Carlton United Brewery/ Kent Brewery site – development of abandoned industrial site
- Designed around a network of lanes, streets, parks and heritage buildings.
- Former terrace houses and backlanes of Kensington Street Chippendale have been reinvented as “Spice Alley” – food and retail precinct.
- Central Park is a tall building cluster that supports the UTS tall building cluster.



Fig 6.7 Central Park (Source: <https://www.skyscrapercenter.com/complex/1254>)



Fig 6.8 The former Carlton Brewery to the left of the image (Source: <https://www.frasersproperty.com.au/Our-Properties/Completed/NSW/Central-Park>)

HERITAGE ATTRIBUTES

As per the current Sydney LEP 2012 there are a number of heritage items in the vicinity of the site, along with the Chippendale Heritage Conservation Area (C9).

There are currently no heritage items listed in the Sydney LEP 2012 for the Central Park site.

However, in the former Sydney LEP 2005 there were 5 heritage items of local significance including:

- 46-48 Kensington Street – sandstone terrace pair
- County Clare Inn, 20-24 Broadway
- Administration building 10A (part of former Carlton United Brewery site)
- Administration building 10B (part of former Carlton United Brewery site)
- Main formal gateway to the Brewery (heritage item (townscape))

The Brewery - No.5 Central Park Avenue

The State Significant Development application called for new structural additions containing commercial and retail spaces. The Brewery precinct, which dates from the early twentieth century, is now known as Central Park. As Tzannes explains, it is the largest group of retained heritage buildings on site, established by Tooth and Company in 1835. The built form of the project aimed to create a memorable expression of new technology within the urban context. The additions include a new roof form, glazed northern facade, a new entrance lobby, and two floor levels.³⁴



Figure 6.9: The Brewery Yard Source: Tzannes



Figure 6.10: The Brewery Yard Source: Tzannes

³⁴ <https://www.archdaily.com/930409/tzannes-unveils-new-additions-to-sydneys-irving-street-brewery>



Figure 6.11: The Brewery Yard Source: Tzannes

White Rabbit Gallery - 30 Balfour St, Chippendale

The White Rabbit Gallery commission involved the conversion of a large, freestanding brick warehouse and its rooftop to accommodate four floors of gallery space, a tea-house, digital media theatre, reception, car parking and an artist-in-residence studio. A complex brief, and one we responded to with a quiet simplicity of vision: the raw, textured brick shell of the industrial warehouse is complimented by crisp, modern alterations to create an invigorating gallery experience and a robust backdrop for the striking artwork collection.³⁵



Fig 6.12: White Rabbit Gallery Source: Smart design Studio

Kensington Street, Chippendale



Fig 6.13: White Rabbit Gallery Source: Smart design Studio

³⁵ <https://www.smartdesignstudio.com/architecture/public/white-rabbit-gallery/>

Kensington Street's highly innovative design and carefully executed heritage adaptive reuse strategy has revitalised one of Sydney's oldest streets into a vibrant new public place that contributes to the evolving street typology of the city. The place is a hive of activity, buzzing from the early morning until late at night with people of all ages and backgrounds exploring the street's creative spaces, dining and cultural offerings.³⁶



Figure 6.14: Kensington Street, Chippendale Source: Landscape Australia



Figure 6.15: Kensington Street, Chippendale Source: Landscape Australia

³⁶ <https://landscapeaustralia.com/articles/kensington-street-chippendale/>

FINDINGS & SUMMARY

- Central Park and the cluster of tall buildings at UTS in Chippendale demonstrate how the purposeful, well-designed development of a cluster of tall buildings in one key location can enhance the experience of transitioning from the city fringe to the low-scale historic areas with complete ease. The allotments in the surrounding streets of Chippendale, Ultimo and Pyrmont are similar to those in the Paddington HCA, with a high density of c.19th residential terraces, low scale apartment buildings and converted historic warehouses, used for a mix of residential, retail and commercial purposes
- Up until the 1970s there were very few buildings in the area which were taller than 4-5 storeys. The construction of the **UTS Tower in the late 1970s marked the first high-rise** building along Broadway, and the tower which is an example of Brutalist architecture, stood out as singular example of an often-disliked high-rise in the area.
- In the 1990s, additional high-rise buildings were constructed in the vicinity of the UTS Tower which indicated the potential **emergence of a cluster of high-rise buildings** in the area.
- Development of Central Park over more than a decade firmly established the **tall-building cluster in Chippendale**.
- The tall-building cluster responded to the surrounding area complimenting the existing low-rise heritage and tall building, previously considered intrusive creating a positive contribution to the Sydney skyline.
- The impact of the redevelopment of Central Park has been to focus the amenity of the neighbourhood, encourage excellence in design at UTS, with the introduction of the Frank Gehry Building, amongst other major new works, and has resulted in a precinct that is world-known for its cluster of beautifully designed tall buildings, mixed-use precincts, interspersed with historic warehouses, heritage-listed residential terraces and intact HCAs, as demonstrated in Figure 6.20 above.

6.3.2. CASE STUDY 2 – The Rocks and Circular Quay



Fig 6.16 Map showing the local and state listed heritage items and HCAs that form the context of Circular Quay and The Rocks (Source: NSW Government, 2023)



Fig 6.17: Aerial View over Chippendale and the surrounding area.

The Rocks and Circular Quay



Cluster of tall buildings – in the vicinity of HCAs and heritage items

High-density commercial, retail and residential development at Circular Quay

Predominantly low to mid rise retail and commercial historic development at The Rocks. And Millers Point

Circular Quay Train Station, Sydney Ferries and eastern suburbs light rail and bus services at Circular Quay.

Sydney's primary tourist area – The Rocks and Circular Quay



Multi-storeyed high rises Circular Quay:

Quay Quarter Tower: 216m

Sales Force Tower: 263m

One Circular Quay: 198m

Gateway Plaza: 164m

AMP Building: 115m

Four Seasons Hotel: 110m

Goldfields House: 110m

The Quay Building: 95m

Bennelong Apartments: 45m

Multi-storeyed high rises The Rocks:

Shangri-La Hotel: 127m

Multi-storeyed high in the vicinity:

Grosvenor Place: 180m

EY Centre: 155m

Figure 6.18 and Figure 6.19 Circular Quay (Source: Property Council of Australia, 2023) Built:1788-ongoing

Figures 6.18 and Figure 6.19 show how the cluster of highrise tower development, concentrated within Circular Quay and the CBD forms a backdrop to the iconic, State-Heritage listed Rocks Precinct and nearby Millers Point Heritage Conservation Area.



Figure 6.20 Cluster of high rise towers sit behind and to the left of State-listed heritage items and HCAs of The Rocks (Source: Dietmar Rabich, 2019)

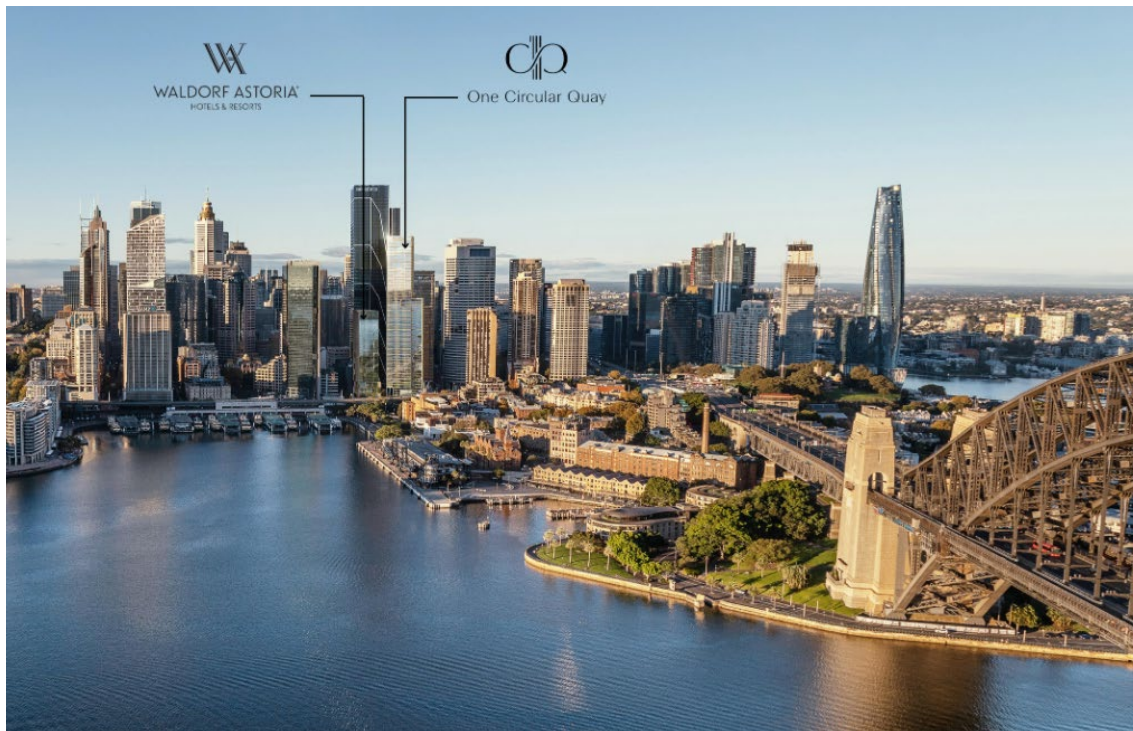


Figure 6.21 An aerial view of the HCAs of The Rocks and Millers Point and the heritage listed harbour bridge in the broader context of the cluster of highrise development in Sydney's Circular Quay and CBD(Source: One Circular Quay)



Figure 6.22 The Rocks, the State Heritage Listed precinct to the right (Source:Viator)



Figure 6.23 Heritage-Listed Housing in Gloucester St, The Rocks
(<https://rocksdiscoverymuseum.com/place/113-115-gloucester-street>)



Figure 6.24 Shows the close proximity of the heritage-listed housing of The Rocks and the backdrop of the highrise towers of Circular Quay and the CBD (Source The Australian)

Whilst the Cahill Expressway provides separation between the houses of The Rocks and the highrise towers of Circular Quay and the CBD, the experience at ground level remains intimate and historic as shown in the next figure (Figure 6.25) below.



Figure 6.25 Carahers Lane, The Rocks – Residential Heritage Properties, new infill development with the tower cluster as a backdrop. The sense of history and place is retained.

(Source: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/spikebot/106501206>)

HERITAGE LISTINGS

The Rocks Conservation Area (HCA), listed on the Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority (SHFA) Section 170 Heritage and Conservation Register. It is also adjacent to the Millers Point Heritage Conservation Area. Listings include (but are not listed to)

- The Rocks HCA
- Millers Point HCA
- Circular Quay Railway Station including interior (SHR #11660)
- Former Customs House including interior (SHR #11661*)
- "AMP Building" including interior (Sydney LEP 2012 #11662*)
- Cast iron railings (Circular Quay Sydney LEP 2012#11709) (Circular Quay Sydney LEP 2012#11710)
- Former Harbour Warden's Post and Public Lavatory including interior (Sydney LEP 2012#11711*)
- Customs House Lane (Sydney LEP 2012#11731*)
- Tank Stream Fountain (Sydney LEP 2012#11807)
- Former Ship Inn facade (Sydney LEP 2012# 11858)
- Paragon Hotel facades and interior (Sydney LEP 2012#11857)
- Justice & Police Museum including interiors and front and rear courtyards (Sydney LEP 2012# 11906*)
- Former Department of Health building including interiors (Sydney LEP 2012# 11869)
- Situated in the vicinity of the UNESCO World Heritage Buffer Zone for the Sydney Opera House.

DISCUSSION

Circular Quay and The Rocks present an instance of a large cluster of tall buildings set in the context of International, National, State and locally listed heritage items and HCAs. Both areas historically were comprised of **low to mid rise residential, industrial and commercial areas**, with The Rocks still retaining its low to mid-rise historic built character as a result of Green Bans in 1970s.

Up until the 1960s there were very few buildings in the area which were taller than 4-5 storeys. The construction of the **AMP Building** and the **Goldfields House in the mid to late 1960s were the first tall buildings** at Circular Quay.

More tall buildings were constructed in the 1980s, but in the **1990s a tall buildings cluster** began to emerge, and today Circular Quay represents a high-rise skyline which sits closely alongside the heritage items, HCAs of the international renown Rocks Precinct and is in the visual proximity of the Sydney Opera House, an iconic World Heritage listed site.

The Heritage-listed assets within The Rocks and Millers Point have been the subject of a major change of use, rather than change in conservation status, over the last 20 years as they change from predominantly government-sued housing commission residential properties and tourism-focused commercial and retail tenancies to more high-end privately owned residential premises and a broader mix of local services, as well as tourism-based commercial and retail. Significantly, the low-scale HCAs offer a significant respite from the large-scale of the city and its tower, both for residents and tourists alike. The mix of low-scale residential housing stock within and around Millers Point and The Rocks act as local anchors to the transitions to the highrise built form of Circular Quay and is successful in ensuring that the city retains its connection to its history and local community connections. It creates a sense of community mixed with every day work and international tourism.

6.3 Conclusions

When viewed from the perspective of similar developments across the city, the planning proposal for the Edgecliff Centre presents an opportunity to develop the site in a way that is historically geared in terms of densities of development and is futuristic in its shared vision with Woollahra Council of encouraging tall buildings in the right locations to support regeneration of New South Head Road, while positively conserving the historic environment of the HCAs.

As demonstrated through the case studies across Chippendale and Circular Quay & The Rocks Comparative Analysis, there is strong precedent for the successful integration of low-scale historic residential and mixed-use precincts on the periphery and/or in close vicinity to, highrise tower clusters where the clustering of highrise towers do not have a detrimental impact on the significance of surrounding HCAs and heritage items.

A close examination of the The Rocks and Chippendale as case studies, demonstrate that where the clusters of towers are surrounded by low-scale HCAs and heritage-listed items, the clustering of high-density, high-rise towers, have served as a key driver for the ongoing protection, and conservation and revitalisation of heritage items and HCAs within their vicinity. The low-scale historic residential and mixed-use occupants in the HCAs in The Rocks and Chippendale continue to thrive in terms of increasing real estate value and desirability for occupants (residential and commercial).

Both case studies demonstrate that the long-term presence of high-rise tower clusters close to the HCAs and heritage items, particularly when the new high-rise development is subject to design excellence (such as Chippendale and in more recent developments at The Rocks), have not resulted in detrimental impacts to the HCAs or lessened their heritage significance, but rather have worked alongside the heritage to create precincts where the HCAs are highly desirable locations from which to work and live.

7. Heritage Impact Assessment

7. Heritage Impact Assessment

7.1 Physical Impacts

Since the Edgecliff Centre subject site does not include any heritage items within its boundaries, nor is it located within a Heritage Conservation Area, neither the planning proposal nor the future concept design DA will result in any direct physical impacts to any heritage items or fabric.

The planning proposal does not propose any interventions to Edgecliff Station³⁷, itself, but would include significant upgrade and improvements to the connectivity to the station, as well as improved retail offering and public amenities associated with the transport interchange. As a result, detailed future design of the development at the appropriate stage would need to consider measures that will manage physical impacts to Edgecliff Station, given that the Station is listed on Sydney Train's Section 170 Register.

Should any future development occur as a result of the planning proposal, features requiring activities such as bulk excavation etc, the location of these activities should be carefully considered to ensure that potential for either direct or indirect impact to the underground Edgecliff Station and ESR is avoided.

7.2 Visual Impact

Both the Planning Proposal and Woollahra Council's Draft Strategy for the ECC allow for an increase in height to accommodate a mixed use development tower that would be visible from surrounding heritage items (i.e. Rushcutters Bay Park) and adjacent HCAs (i.e. Paddington and Woollahra to the south). However, this report notes that in terms of visual impact, Woollahra Council have identified that *'due to the topography and abundance of street trees, it is difficult to perceive a full or direct view towards the ECC from street level in the surrounding areas'*³⁸, which also holds true for this Planning Proposal in terms of visibility from most HCAs.

A preliminary View Impact Analysis (VIA) has been undertaken from several viewpoints around the subject site to investigate the potential visual impact of the planning proposal on view lines to and from key HCAs and heritage items noted in the existing LEP and Woollahra Council Draft Strategy as being significant.³⁹ The impacts of Woollahra's Council's Draft Strategy, has been used as one of the considerations in the following discussion of any potential visual heritage impacts the Planning Proposal may have on surrounding heritage items and HCAs, as well as the existing current condition of the ECC. Figure 7.1 to Figure 7.11 represent the proposed building form, scale and bulk being sought in this Planning Proposal only.

As per the findings of Dr Richard Lamb, the VIAs demonstrates that the bulk and massing of the Planning Proposal visual impact are barely discernible from that proposed by Woollahra Council in their 2021 *Draft Strategy* envelopes. The setbacks of the towers comply with the Draft Council Planning Proposal built form requirements⁴⁰ for heritage and are considered to provide an appropriate transition from the ECC to the nearby HCAs.

Specifically, the setback and scale of the podium and towers allow for a sensitive transition between the street wall and the nearby HCAs and heritage items, particularly to the South of the site, and the

³⁷ which is identified as an item of heritage significance on the Sydney Train's S170 register

³⁸ Woollahra Municipal Council, 2021, *Draft Edgecliff Commercial Centre Planning and Urban Design Strategy*, p41.

³⁹ RLA 2023

⁴⁰ Ibid, p24.

building envelop allows for active street frontages including improved permeability of the HCAs. In particular, the transition between the southern boundary of the site and the nearby HCA has been carefully considered to ensure that the streetscape experience is enhanced, compared to both the existing development, and Woollahra Council's Draft Strategy.

There is no perceivable difference in the visual impacts of the Planning Proposal on surrounding Heritage Conservation Areas (HCAs)/Heritage Items when compared with the visual impacts associated with Woollahra Council's Draft Strategy. The impacts are limited to the visibility of the towers from the surrounding areas, which has been identified in Woollahra Council's Draft Strategy on multiple occasions as having a positive impact in terms of *'creating a recognisable skyline that can be easily identified from surrounding areas and create a sense of identity and urban wayfinder'*⁴¹.

7.2.1. Edgecliff Station

As noted in Section 7.1, the planning proposal does not propose any interventions to Edgecliff Station itself but would include significant upgrade and improvements to the connectivity to the station, as well as improved retail offering and public amenities associated with the transport interchange. Therefore, whilst the detailed future design of the development at the appropriate stage would need to consider measures that will manage visual impacts to Edgecliff Station, given that the Station is listed on Sydney Train's Section 170 Register the Planning Proposal would have an overall positive impact. Given the heritage significance of the station, as part of any future development under the Planning Proposal:

- It will be important that any connections to station concourse must be commensurate with aesthetic significance and qualities of the station, with little to no impact on the heritage fabric of the station.
- While the design of new connections and upgrades should not replicate the exact colour scheme, materiality, and colour palettes of Edgecliff Station, connections should visually relate to, and be commensurate with, significant fabric.
- Detailed design of new and revised station entrances should be sympathetic to the heritage values and features of the station, to ensure that the design has as a minimum, a neutral (complimentary) or at best, a positive, visual impact to the readability of the entrances to Edgecliff station.

7.2.2. New South Head Road

The existing character of New South Head Road ranges from medium to high density development comprising a mix of residential and commercial uses. The emerging and future character of the area, as noted in the Woollahra Council Draft Strategy similarly supports a diversity of scale and bulk along New South Head Road.

The mixed-use character of the area is reflected in the planning proposal, with the two to three storeyed podium comprising retail, office, community uses and public open space, and two individual buildings. While the height and scale of the taller buildings will be visible along New South Head Road, the impact will be mitigated by the proposal to distribute the overall development bulk across the podium and between two buildings.

The height variations between the two buildings of the proposal will contribute to creating a cluster of tall buildings, when viewed from New South Head Road, along with future developments to be

⁴¹ Woollahra Municipal Council, 2021, *Draft Edgecliff Commercial Centre Planning and Urban Design Strategy*, p56.

built in line with the projected height envelopes of the Planning Proposal (see Figure 7.1 on the following page). Care has been taken to ensure that a part two and part three storey publicly accessible open green space which is stepped back from the corner of New South Head Road and New McLean Street, presents a considered design option which is sensitive to the heritage items directly opposite the site. The placement of the individual buildings also presents a sympathetic response to the existing character of the area as it mirrors the bulk and scale of the 1969 built 32 storeyed Ranelagh at 3-17 Darling Point Road, Darling Point as demonstrated in Figure 7.2, and the recently approved redevelopment of 136 New South Head Road.



Figure 7.1: View of the proposal looking from the west along New South Head Road – the existing train station and bus interchange will be retained as indicated in the foreground. (Source: fjmtstudio, 2023)



Figure 7.2: View of proposed development from the junction of New South Head Road and Ocean Avenue (Source: fjmtstudio, 2023)

7.2.4. Rushcutters Bay Park

Both the Planning Proposal and Woollahra Council's Draft Strategy for the ECC allow for an increase in height to accommodate a mixed use development tower that would be visible from surrounding heritage items (i.e. Rushcutters Bay Park) and adjacent HCAs (i.e. Paddington and Woollahra to the south).

The heritage significance and associated key views and vistas of Rushcutters Bay Park relate predominantly to the location, experience and historical significance of the park itself, connectivity of the views and vistas to Sydney Harbour and surrounding inner Sydney parklands, as opposed to simple visibility of surrounding development as part of the wider skyline of Sydney's eastern suburbs.

When considering the significant views southeast from Rushcutters Bay Park towards the development area the developments in both the Planning Proposal and Woollahra Council's Draft Strategy have a similar impact, where both will be partly visible, along with the existing residential tower and larger scale buildings. Council, in its report describes towers as having the ability to 'create a recognisable skyline which can be easily identified from within the surrounding areas and create a sense of identify and urban wayfinder',⁴²

7.2.3. Transition to the South

Existing views from the southern HCAs towards the Edgecliff Centre are currently impacted by the existing Edgecliff Centre—a building that is unsympathetic to the heritage character of the HCAs. The redevelopment of the site presents the opportunity to improve the existing views and vistas to the site from the Southern HCAs, by the application of an improved and more sensitive design which incorporates improved permeability, accessibility and sympathetic materiality.

The proposed podium form along New McLean Street is for a 3-storey community activated podium form will create a more human scale and pedestrian experience. The residential podium and tower form is further setback 26m from the pedestrian foot path which will provide a significant setback and transition towards the HCA and residential south of the Edgecliff Centre.

Considerations for the visual experience from the street both along New South Head Road and New McLean Street through the stepping back of building envelopes and greater engagement with the podium will improve the public and pedestrian interface of future developments proposed on the site (See Figure 7.3 on the following page).

Comparatively, the Council's 2021 Draft Strategy proposed a 5-storey commercial office podium along the north frontage of New McLean Street, adjoining the Heritage Conservation Area (See Figure 7.4 for comparison). The proposed land uses and activation would be less complimentary to the character of the Heritage Conservation Area whilst the built form will offer a more abrupt and less human scale transition towards the residential and pedestrian nature of this area. It is therefore considered that the Planning Proposal offers a more improved and considered transition between the built form of the commercial and residential buildings as part of this planning proposal to the neighbouring HCA than the Woollahra Council's Draft Strategy.

In summary, it is considered that the Planning Proposal will not have an adverse impact or alteration to the character and significance of the HCA that is adjacent to the southern interface of the site.

⁴² Ibid, p56

The Planning proposal is considered to be consistent with the existing built context of this part of Edgecliff and will present opportunities for improvements to existing setting and character of the area than that of the existing building.



Figure 7.3 Proposed setback along New McLean Street, when viewed from the south ((Source: fjstudio, 2023)



Figure 7.4 Proposed Woollahra Council's Draft Strategy setback along New McLean Street (Source:fjstudio 2023)

7.2.4. VIA Discussion

The VIA captured and assessed public interest views, even though it is noted that no specific views were found in any statutory planning documentation and that only 3 of 50 identified significant views in the Woollahra DCP (2015) have partial views of the site. None of these views, in terms of heritage, will be impacted by the Planning Proposal.

As noted by Woollahra Council themselves, in the Draft Strategy, "due to the topography and abundance of street trees, it is difficult to perceive a full or direct view towards the ECC from street level in the surrounding areas"⁴³

The following figures have been included to provide a highlight of where viewlines to and/or from HCAs have been consideration as part of the Planning Proposal.

Figure 7.3, below, highlights views of the planning proposal from north-west, namely from the heritage listed Rushcutters Bay Park, which show how the ECC cluster of buildings, that whilst obscuring Ranelagh (which is not heritage-listed) does not impact on any key views to and from HCAs in this location. Note that the Woollahra Council Draft Strategy blocking is also identified in this viewscape (as highlighted in solid form).



Figure 7.3: View of the proposal looking from the east, from the junction of New South Head Road and Mona Road (Source: fjmtstudio, 2023)

⁴³ Woollahra Municipal Council, 2021, *Draft Edgecliff Commercial Centre Planning and Urban Design Strategy*



Figure 7.4: View of proposed development from Waratah Street Rushcutters Bay (Source: ffmtstudio, 2023 with Curio addition)



Figure 7.5: View of proposed development from William Street Rushcutters Bay, with the blocking of the Woollahra Council Draft Strategy shown in white (Source: ffmtstudio, 2023)

The Paddington HCA (C8) is located to the south of the subject site and as shown in Figure 7.5. the views along New South Head Road are limited, owing to the close-knit density of the built fabric of the HCA, and the overall higher gradient of the streets, in relation New South Head Road.

Edgecliff Centre and Edgecliff Station are visible only from a few streets namely New McLean Street and Cameron Street. Existing high-rise developments in the larger area, including Ranelagh at 3-17

Darling Point Road, Darling Point, the Eastpoint Tower at 180 Ocean Street and the Ocean Point Tower at 170 Ocean Street, are visible from different parts of the HCA, and as previously noted in Woollahra Council's Draft Strategy, Council actually highlights how there is the opportunity for towers to create a recognisable skyline that creates a point of interest when viewed

The proposed new buildings in the Planning Proposal, will similarly be visible as background skyline elements from the HCA (Figures 7.8 and 7.9), resulting in some minimal changes to existing views. The impacts of these changes in viewscape does not have a major adverse impact on the significance of the HCA.

Views of the planning proposal when viewed in line with the proposed future views as per Woollahra Council's Draft Strategy, are generally consistent, albeit of a higher scale, with Council when viewed from Trumper Oval (Figure 7.6) and Cascade Street (Figure 7.7), and will read as a cluster of tall buildings, presenting a cohesive built fabric and not as singular high rise buildings.



Figure 7.6: View of proposed development from Trumper Oval, Paddington, with the blocking of the Woollahra Council Draft Strategy shown in white (Source: ffmtstudio, 2023)



Figure 7.7: View of proposed development from Cascade Street near Windsor Lane, Paddington with the blocking of the Woollahra Council Draft Strategy shown in white (Source: ffmtstudio, 2023)



Figure 7.8: View of proposed development from Elizabeth Street near Hargrave Street, Paddington (Source: fjmtstudio, 2023)



Figure 7.9: View of proposed development from Goodhope Street near Lawson Street, Paddington (Source: fjmtstudio, 2023)

The northern edge of the Paddington HCA is formed by New McLean Street, which also borders the Edgecliff Centre, therefore any proposed development that remains consistent with Woollahra Council's Draft Strategy will impact views along New McLean Street.

However, as the visual and pedestrian activation of New McLean Street has been recommended as part of Woollahra Council's DCP, the ECC Planning Proposal, accordingly, focuses on pedestrian level activation by unlocking the council road reserve through the proposed introduction of a community facility along this section of the proposed development. By creating a clear visual connection and a stepped back built form which is commensurate to a pedestrian friendly low-rise form that transitions and articulates with that of Arthur Street, Herbert Road and Cameron Street, the Planning Proposal demonstrates sensitivity to the character of the HCA.

The Woollahra HCA (C15) will be least visible by the planning proposal as there are no views from within the HCA towards the Edgecliff Centre, except from Ocean Street, from where the planning proposal is visible as a tall structure in the distance (Figure 7.11).



Figure 7.11: View of proposed development from Ocean Street and Jersey Road, Paddington (Source: fjmtstudio, 2023)

Generally, the planning proposal will have little or no perceivable difference to Woollahra Council's 2021 Draft Strategy tower and podium visual impacts on the HCAs and will not have a major adverse visual impact on the existing character, amenity, fabric and significance of the HCAs themselves.

7.2.5. Summary of Visual Impact

Whilst the towers of the Planning Proposal will be partly visible from the Paddington HCA and the Mona Road HCA, its visual influence on these areas is not necessarily detrimental as the towers contribute towards a planned cluster of towers, both existing and planned for the future, which create 'a recognisable skyline that can be easily identified from surrounding areas and create a sense of identity and urban wayfinder'⁴⁴.

Both the Planning Proposal and Woollahra Council's Draft Strategy for the ECC allow for an increase in height to accommodate a mixed use development tower that would be visible from surrounding heritage items (i.e. Rushcutters Bay Park) and adjacent HCAs (i.e. Paddington and Woollahra to the south). This report notes that in terms of visual impact, Council have identified that '*due to the topography and abundance of street trees, it is difficult to perceive a full or direct view towards the ECC from street level in the surrounding areas*'⁴⁵, which also holds true for this Planning Proposal.

The site and wider Edgecliff Precinct, which is not located within any HCA is visible from parts of the surrounding HCA's and has a vastly different streetscape, setting and precinct character to the nearby HCA's. The significance and character of the HCA's predominantly relate to the local, pedestrian level appreciation of the low scale high density residential character, walkable scale and architectural design of these areas, and is not associated with, nor influenced by, the built form of the Edgecliff Precinct which is a more modern, contrasting mixed-use and commercial context. There are similar characterised centres as the Edgecliff precinct and the proposal visible from the HCA's wider settings (e.g. Sydney CBD, Potts Point and Darlinghurst) which are desired vistas further reinforcing the significance of the HCA's internal character and the suitability of the proposal's form.

Similar to the HCAs, the heritage significance and associated key views and vistas of Rushcutters Bay Park relate predominantly to the location, experience and historical significance of the park itself, connectivity of the views and vistas to Sydney Harbour and surrounding inner Sydney parklands, as

⁴⁴ Woollahra Municipal Council, 2021, *Draft Edgecliff Commercial Centre Planning and Urban Design Strategy*, p56.

⁴⁵ Woollahra Municipal Council, 2021, *Draft Edgecliff Commercial Centre Planning and Urban Design Strategy*, p41.

opposed to simple visibility of surrounding development as part of the wider skyline of Sydney's eastern suburbs.

When considering the significant views southeast from Rushcutters Bay Park towards the development area the developments in both the Planning Proposal and Woollahra Council's Draft Strategy have a similar impact, where both will be partly visible, along with the existing residential tower and larger scale buildings. Council, in its report describes towers as having the ability to 'create a recognisable skyline which can be easily identified from within the surrounding areas and create a sense of identify and urban wayfinder',⁴⁶

Council also note that there is the opportunity to create a landmark development at the Edgecliff Centre Opportunity Site to serve as backdrop to the heritage-listed Cadry's building. Cadry's Building acts as a transitional hold point for a lower street wall along the intersection at the Paddington Gateway through to the Paddington Heritage Conservation Area⁴⁷. Given that the Planning Proposal sits within this similar viewline, it is considered commensurate in terms of its potential impact on the surrounding HCAs in this location.

Existing views from the southern HCAs towards the Edgecliff Centre are currently impacted by the existing Edgecliff Centre—a building that is unsympathetic to the heritage character of the HCAs. The redevelopment of the site presents the opportunity to improve the existing views and vistas to the site from the HCAs, by the application of an improved and more sensitive design, e.g. improved permeability, accessibility and sympathetic materiality. Considerations for the visual experience from the street both along New South Head Road and New McLean Street through the stepping back of building envelopes and greater engagement with the podium will greatly improve the public and pedestrian interface of future developments proposed on the site and is supported on heritage grounds.

It is noted that in Woollahra Council's Draft Strategy, there will be additional overshadowing impacts to the heritage-listed Trumper Park and Oval, as well as the Paddington Heritage Conservation Area, but that the shadow in the Paddington HCA moves fast enough to ensure that the residential dwellings continue to receive sunlight.⁴⁸ The same hold true for the proposal, in terms of the overshadowing impacts on Trumper Park, the Oval and the very small section of the Paddington HCA.

Key vistas from Trumper Park are influenced and dictated by the natural topography of the area, that is parkland and former swamp areas, framed to the south by the natural northfacing amphitheatre-shape of Paddington. The experience of Trumper Park, the Oval and a small section of the Paddington HCA will have new skyline views, as a result of the Planning Proposal with the towers being visible from several key viewpoints. This new viewscape will not result in a change of the significant historic use of Trumper Park or the Oval and will not result in any additional overshadowing impacts that will preclude ongoing future use of these significant amenities. The overshadowing impacts are actually less than those forecast in Woollahra Council's Draft Strategy, in terms of impact to Trumper Park and The Oval.

The change in the viewscales from Trumper Park, The Oval and the Paddington HCA (in some locations only) will not impact in such a way that the HCAs will require any type of significance assessment amendments or heritage listing amendments as result, and instead represents a careful

⁴⁶ Ibid, p56

⁴⁷ Ibid.p153

⁴⁸ Woollahra Municipal Council, 2021, *Draft Edgecliff Commercial Centre Planning and Urban Design Strategy*, p20.

placement of future development in a key built up centralised corridor, adjacent to a major transportation hub that is free of heritage-listed items.

Overall, the planning proposal for the Edgecliff Centre will not have an adverse impact on or result in any major alteration to the character and significance of any nearby heritage items, nor any of the nearby HCAs (Paddington, Woollahra or Mona Road). The planning proposal is considered to be consistent with the existing built context of the ECC and from a heritage perspective is located so as not to directly impact on heritage items and/or heritage conservation areas in a detrimental way.

8. Conclusions and Recommendations

8. Conclusions and Recommendations

9.1 Conclusions

Overall, the planning proposal for the Edgecliff Centre will not have an adverse impact on or result in any major alteration to the character and significance of any nearby heritage items, nor any of the nearby HCAs (Paddington, Woollahra or Mona Road). The planning proposal is considered to be consistent with the existing built context of the ECC and from a heritage perspective is located so as not to impact on heritage items and/or heritage conservation areas in any detrimental way.

When viewed from the perspective of similar developments across the city, the planning proposal for the Edgecliff Centre presents an opportunity to develop the site in a way that is historically geared in terms of densities of development and is futuristic in its shared vision with Woollahra Council of encouraging tall buildings in the right locations to support regeneration of New South Head Road, while positively conserving the historic environment of the HCAs.

As demonstrated through the case studies in Section 6.0 Comparative Analysis, there is strong precedent for the successful integration of low-scale historic residential and mixed-use precincts on the periphery and/or in close vicinity to, high-rise tower clusters where the clustering of high-rise towers do not have a detrimental impact on the significance of surrounding HCAs and heritage items.

A close examination of the The Rocks and Chippendale as case studies, demonstrate that where the clusters of towers are surrounded by low-scale HCAs and heritage-listed items, the clustering of high-density, high-rise towers, have served as a key driver for the ongoing protection, and conservation and revitalisation of heritage items and HCAs within their vicinity. The low-scale historic residential and mixed-use occupants in the HCAs in The Rocks and Chippendale continue to thrive in terms of increasing real estate value and desirability for occupants (residential and commercial).

Both case studies demonstrate that the long-term presence of high-rise tower clusters close to the HCAs and heritage items, particularly when the new high-rise development is subject to design excellence (such as Chippendale and in more recent developments at The Rocks), have not resulted in detrimental impacts to the HCAs or lessened their heritage significance, but rather have worked alongside the heritage to create precincts where the HCAs are highly desirable locations from which to work and live.

The Planning Proposal demonstrates a sensitive response to its heritage context and meets with each of the key Heritage Built Form criteria⁴⁹ identified in Woollahra Council's 2021 *Draft Edgecliff Commercial Centre Planning and Urban Design Strategy*. Specific to heritage, Section 5.5 Built Form states that future built form should respond to the heritage significance of the area by:

- *Retaining all heritage items and buildings in the HCAs;*
- *Transitioning to lower street wall heights around heritage items and HCAs;*
- *Providing active frontages and public domain improvements to showcase the heritage significance of the ECC.*⁵⁰

The planning proposal meets each of the three criteria outlined above, in that it:

⁴⁹ outlined in Section 5.5. *Built Form* of the Woollahra Municipal Council, 2021, *Draft Edgecliff Commercial Centre Planning and Urban Design Strategy*, p24

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, p24.

- retains all heritage items and buildings in the HCAs,
- transitions to lower street wall heights around heritage items and HCAs; and
- provides active frontages and public domain improvements to showcase the heritage significance of the ECC within its heritage context.

In conclusion, from a heritage perspective the Planning Proposal is consistent with and is appropriately located within the primary corridor of mixed use commercial and residential tower developments between Bondi Junction, Edgecliff, Darlinghurst and the Sydney CBD.

With design excellence at the forefront of change, the towers proposed as part of the Planning Proposal can, and will form part of the significant, future landmark ECC skyline when viewed from the surrounding HCAs and will positively contribute to the future liveability of Edgecliff and its surrounds, without detrimental impact to the surrounding heritage items and precincts.

9.2 Recommendations

Overall, the planning proposal for the Edgecliff Centre is considered to be consistent with the existing and emerging context of this part of New South Head Road, Edgecliff, complies with the desired outcomes of Council's 2021 Draft Strategy and will present opportunities for long-term improvements to the existing setting and character of the area.

Recommendations for the detailed design include:

- Carrying forward conceptual ideas of breaking down bulk and massing of the podium and towers through design interventions, so as to reduce the visual impact of the development.
- Developing heritage sensitive detailed design options for the podium and the towers in close consultation with a heritage specialist.
- Developing and integrating urban greening options for the development at the street level, and at the podium level, and at different levels of the buildings.
- Providing for meaningful integrated Public Art and Heritage Interpretation Opportunities in the future redevelopment of the site.



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