

Outline & Preliminary Environmental Assessment

Peninsula Apartments

Royal Newcastle Hospital Site
Cnr. Watt Street & Shortland Esplanade
Newcastle NSW 2300



Prepared by EJE Architecture
on behalf of Watt Street Developments ACN 108014008 ABN 24909029679
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1.0 Introduction

This report is submitted to the Department of Planning under Part 3A of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 as the proposed outline and preliminary environmental assessment for a residential apartment development on the Royal Newcastle Hospital Site owned by Watt Street developments. We are seeking the Director General's Environmental Assessment requirements pursuant to section 75F of the Act.

This report relates to a Project Application for the Peninsula Apartments only and should be read in conjunction with the concurrent Concept Plan for the entire Hospital Site.

This report has been prepared by EJE Architecture on behalf of the owner and applicant Watt Street Developments, and is based on a design prepared by EJE Architecture.

This report follows the calling in of the Royal Newcastle Hospital Site by the Minister for Planning under Part 3A of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act.

In accordance with the Department of Planning's guidelines titled Steps in the Assessment of Major Projects under Part 3 A, this Outline and Preliminary Environmental Assessment has been prepared for the following purposes:

- to describe the site, outline the proposed development concept and provide a preliminary environmental assessment,
- to request the Director General's Environmental Assessment Requirements for a Project Application for the proposed residential apartment building under Section 75 P(1) (b) of the EP & A Act.

2.0 Approvals Sought

Watt Street Developments Pty Ltd is seeking a Project Approval for the demolition of the existing building on the site and the construction of the building outlined in this document.

3.0 Project Team

The project team includes:

Landowner and Developer:	Watt Street Developments
Architect:	EJE Architecture
Part 3A Project Manager:	Crozier CGS Pty Ltd

4.0 Background

The EJE Group was initially engaged by Ticor Developments Pty Ltd to undertake feasibility studies to the recently purchased site located at the corner of Watt Street and Shortland Esplanade, known as Wirraway Apartments.

As part of the process EJE considered three development options for the site:

- strata the building in its current form with minor cosmetic works to the interior and exterior of the existing building.
- Excavate under the existing building, to provide car parking spaces. Provide minor cosmetic works to the interior and exterior of the building and strata the development.
- Demolish the existing building and construct a new residential development.

The poor condition of the existing building, including non BCA compliance, in conjunction with the exorbitant costs of constructing car parking under the existing building, demonstrated that option three is the only feasible development for the site.

Additionally, DCP 57 nominates the site as a gateway development site, further reinforcing the decision to proceed with option three.

The proposal has been developed in consultation with Council Officers and the Urban Design Consultative Group.

A Development Application was lodged with Newcastle City Council on October 16th 2002. The Development Application was withdrawn following advice from Newcastle City Council that the Masterplan for the Newcastle Hospital Site was required.

The site was subsequently sold by Ticor Developments Pty.Ltd. to Watt Street Developments

A Development Application is currently lodged with Newcastle City Council by Watt Street Developments for the refurbishment of the existing 'Wirraway' Apartments. If the Minister agrees to the Project Application the Development Application will be withdrawn.

5.0 Consultation

Newcastle City Council Urban Design Consultative Group meetings:

- September 19th 2003
- December 4th 2002
- August 21st 2002
- July 25th 2002

In summary the Urban Design Consultative Group:

- expressed in principle, support for the general design approach.
- considered 'the height, scale and bulk of the proposed development, as well as the nominated external colours, to be appropriate to the site context at the southern edge of the CBD'.
- Highlighted the need for the maximum allowable FSR to be relative to the proposed development of the Royal Newcastle Hospital Site.

Please refer to Appendix A for minutes of the above meetings.

6.0 Site Description & Analysis

The Real Property Description of the site is Lot 129, DP 747358, 67 Watt Street Newcastle. The total area of the site is 764sqm with the current building footprint occupying approximately 75% of the site area.

The Wirraway Apartment development was constructed in 1939 and has gradually declined in condition over the years (refer Heritage Assessment Report).

Of the neighbouring developments the Royal Newcastle Hospital visually dominates the area. The McCaffery Wing (RL 69.00) and Nixon Wing (RL 55.00) provide a backdrop to the proposed development. The new Police Station diagonally opposite the site was constructed in 1983, while to the north, site contains car parking for the Royal Newcastle Hospital and the David Madison Building, constructed in 1981.

The Newcastle CBD has a strong street grid predominantly running east-west and north-south with the site located at an important corner of Watt Street and Church Street (extending to become Shortland Esplanade)

The site is within easy walking distance to the CBD and Newcastle beach and is well serviced by public transport (Newcastle Railway Station within 500m) with Newcastle Buses (a state transit authority service) providing bus services along Watt, King and Bolton Streets.

The existing topography of the site falls from a high point on Shortland Esplanade toward the north and west toward Watt Street. The broader views to the site are from higher points to the south across Fletcher Park and to the east from the cathedral on Church Street.

The eastern and southern sides of the site will have expansive views over the ocean, the western side will receive CBD and Cathedral views, and the northern side will view across the CBD toward the river and ocean.

Newcastle CBD has many distinct views to the river, ocean and landmark buildings. The view corridor along Watt Street extends from the top of the hill to the Hunter River and includes the T & G Office building tower and the clock tower of Custom's House.

There are no existing trees or other vegetation on the site.

The main opportunities and constraints presented by the site are as follows:

Opportunities:

- Provide high density residential development within walkable distance to a broad range of existing services and transport infrastructure
- Provide Ecologically Sustainable Development on the Site
- Increase housing choice
- Create employment opportunities
- Create a gateway to the CBD from the south along Watt Street

Constraints:

- Visually prominence from the foreshore
- Exposure to coastal winds and rain from the south and east
- Need to protect amenity on Newcastle Beach

7.0 Relevant Planning Instruments and Controls

The following planning instruments are relevant to the proposed development and were considered in the design of the proposed residential apartment development:

- Draft Concept Plan for the Royal Newcastle Hospital Site.
- State Environmental Planning Policy No. 65- Design Quality of Residential Flat Development (SEPP 65) and associated Residential Design Flat Code
- State Environmental planning Policy No. 71- Coastal protection (SEPP 71)
- The NSW Coastal Design Guidelines
- State Environmental Planning Policy- Building Sustainability Index (SEPP BASIX)
- Hunter Regional Environmental Plan 1989 (HREP 1989)
- Newcastle Local Environmental Plan 2003 (NLEP 2003)
- Newcastle Development Control Plan 2005 (NDCP 2005)
- Newcastle Development Control Plan No.57
- NSW Heritage Act 1977 (as amended- The Heritage Amended Act 1988)

The proposed development is generally consistent with the urban design objectives and detailed development provisions set out within the Newcastle DCP 2005, in particular Element 6.7 which is specific to the Royal Newcastle Hospital Site, despite being outside the prescribed maximum floor space ratio, setbacks and building height. The proposal clearly forms a Gateway into the city centre at the corner of Watt and Church Streets (as nominated in 6.7.2.c), whilst also respecting the heritage character of the context, solar access to Newcastle Beach and view corridors.

The project is also consistent with the objectives of the Draft Lower Hunter Regional Strategy in terms of achieving consolidation in key centres.

8.0 Outline of Project Application

The proposal accommodates 58 apartments in total consisting of 5/4 Bedroom, 14/3 Bedroom, 28/2 Bedroom and 11/1 Bedroom apartments. All apartments take advantage of the site and expansive views on offer. Due to its location and its exposure to the elements, deck spaces for the apartments are located so as to provide protection from these conditions. To compliment these deck areas generous facilities are located on the ground floor for the residents of the development. These facilities include a gymnasium and lap pool, overlooking a landscaped courtyard.

The design is such that all apartments utilise modern, open plan principles, allowing natural cross ventilation throughout the apartment. A 2.7m ceiling height to the living areas will ensure the apartments have a spacious and open feel, while the design of the building form ensures privacy for all apartments.

The proposal accommodates 69 car spaces with access from a single vehicular crossing off Watt Street. Car parking access is from the Watt Street frontage utilising an existing driveway crossing. Access from this street frontage is consistent with other developments. The car parking provided on site is over 3 ½ levels and is accessed through roller shutter doors that will require security card operation. These roller shutter doors have been recessed into the building so that vehicles waiting for the electronically operated doors to open are not parked across the footpath.

The Watt Street and Shortland Esplanade frontage will provide an interactive street frontage for its full length. As discussed previously, the topography and location of the site do not accommodate viable commercial space to be incorporated. The activity however is maintained with residential apartments, common facilities and the development foyer and lobby all incorporated at the ground floor.

The simple roof form of the Peninsula Development has been designed to be recessive at the upper level so that the more solid and stronger levels below it can relate in mass and height with the adjacent buildings.

The site is nominated as a "gateway" location. The physical size of the development is restricted by the dimensions of the site and as such is too small to include "corner" elements. Instead the entire building is treated as an element completing the rhythm established along Watt Street with Customs House, T & G Building and now Peninsula.

A neutral palette of colours has been selected to avoid clashing with the existing mix of colours of the surrounding buildings. The light colour selected for the general body of the development takes its cues from the T & G Building with the "bluestone" base of the development designed to compliment the masonry of the nearby Athcourt apartments.

This neutrality allows the building to sit comfortably amongst its neighbours yet provides its own modern identity worthy of the gateway to the Newcastle CBD area.

The design is such that visual privacy of all apartments is maintained. Fin walls between apartments and articulation of solid and glazed elements ensures no impact in regard to visual privacy.

Glazing to the apartments is designed to exceed the requirements of AS 2107. All apartments are proposed to be air conditioned. Walls between apartments and services shafts and between apartments and public spaces will be constructed in accordance with the Building Code of Australia in relation to acoustic and impact privacy.

Secure car parking spaces are proposed for the development along with security access to the lobby of the residential development. Access to public areas within the building will be restricted to authorised personnel. The security system will only allow people access to areas authorised by the pre-programmed security cards.

Recessed areas are minimised e.g. driveway recesses at roller shutter doors. These areas will be well illuminated.

This new development will enhance the existing security in the area. The existing building has numerous dark hiding spaces creating security issues. The new development will eliminate this situation.

The development has been designed to ensure views and amenity are not obstructed. The view corridor along Watt Street to the harbour is retained and enhanced by the proposal. In addition to most apartments having access to terraces and balconies and the like, more than 200m² of area is designated as recreational facilities for residents of the development and their guests. There are no adjacent public spaces that would be affected by the development.

The Project Application also covers the demolition of existing structures on the site.

9.0 Preliminary Environmental Assessment

- Compliance with Statutory Plans

The proposed residential apartment development is permissible within the 3(c) City Centre Zone under the Newcastle LEP 2003 and is consistent with the relevant planning objectives outlined in Section 7.0 above.

- **Building Design and Visual Impact**

An Urban Design Report for the proposed development was prepared by Conybeare Morrison and Partners and is available upon request.

The building design has been developed with considerable input from Newcastle City Council's Urban Design Consultative Group, with the minutes of meeting held on 25th July 2002, 21st August 2002, 4 December 2003 and the 19th September 2003 available upon request.

- **Access, Traffic and Parking**

A Traffic Assessment Report for the proposed development has been prepared by BJ Bradley and Associates and is available upon request.

- **Solar Analysis and Overshadowing**

Shadow studies have been undertaken for the existing building and proposed development and are included within the drawing documentation.

The proposed development does not significantly overshadow Newcastle Beach.

- **Heritage**

A Heritage Impact Statement has been prepared by EJE Heritage and is available upon request.

- **Ecologically Sustainable Design and Water Management**

All apartments will have access to natural light and ventilation. All apartments are to be naturally ventilated and cross ventilation has been provided where possible. Apartments are designed with large opening windows to maximise the opportunity of capturing the prevailing breezes.

The western orientated units along the Watt Street frontage are protected from the western sun by significant balcony overhangs as well as sun screening devices.

Concrete floor and masonry construction ensures thermal massing will assist with energy efficiency and heat soak.

Roofs will incorporate insulation in excess of code requirements to reduce unwanted heat loss or gain. Windows will be designed to allow close fitting furnishings.

Energy efficient gas fired hot water systems will be incorporated within the development, while low energy light fittings will be used throughout the development.

No additional stormwater runoff will be created as a result of this development. A stormwater concept plan prepared by Michael Fitzgerald Consulting Engineers is available upon request.

A BASIX and NatHERS assessment will be undertaken as part of the development phase.

Water efficient fixtures and appliances will be incorporated throughout the development.

Garbage Rooms are provided at ground level. These rooms will be appropriately mechanically ventilated. Garbage chutes are provided centrally near the lift cores on each floor. These chutes are accessible on each floor by all apartments. A garbage collection receptacle will be located under each garbage chute. Recycling areas are to be incorporated into the development and residents will be encouraged to utilise this facility.

The construction contractor and sub contractors too will be encouraged to recycle materials where possible.

- **Wind Analysis**

A Statement of Environmental Wind Effects for the proposed development has been prepared by Windtech Consultants Pty. Ltd. and is available upon request.

- **Site Contamination and Remediation**

As the existing building on the site is a residential apartment building no site contamination or remediation is anticipated to be required.

- **Geotechnical Considerations and Mine Subsidence**

The Mine Subsidence Board will need to be consulted during the development and construction phases of the project due to the potential presence of abandoned mine working under the site, despite the site not being in a designated mine subsidence district.

A geotechnical investigation with consideration to ground water relative to the proposed basement car park will be undertaken in the next phase of the project.

No site contamination issues are known at present, however if they are discovered then a Remediation Action Plan will be prepared as part of the development phase.

- **Site Infrastructure and services**

The proposed development can be adequately serviced by existing utilities.

- **Social and Economic Impact**

It is anticipated that the developed site will add in excess of 100 people to the existing residential population of the area.

The diverse range of residential type will ensure all measures of social planning are addressed. The proposal will provide an active street frontage to an area currently under-utilised.

The diversity of apartment designs and sizes and their location within the new development will result in the apartments being for sale at a large range of prices. This will ensure that there will be a large range of social personalities introduced into the area and this will have a positive impact on the social richness of the area.

The increase in population by this new development will have some increased demand on community facilities. As these facilities are located in the centre of Newcastle they are generally designed to cater for a regional population rather than the local population. Hence their design is easily able to cope with this relatively small increase in local population and in most instances will help to make them more viable.

The proposal will add to the community feeling of security and public safety as it adds residents with a sense of belonging to the area and positively develops a site that is currently a security and public safety risk particularly at night.

10.0 Conclusion

Watt Street Developments proposes to develop a residential apartment building on the site which requires consent from the Minister.

We request the Director General's Environmental Assessment Requirements for the project application outlined in this document.

We trust that the information provided in this report is sufficient for the Department to establish the scope of environmental assessment required for a Part 3A Application and look forward to receiving the environmental assessment requirements from the Director-General.

If you have any queries please contact Mathew Crozier: Tel. 0422002244, Fax. 02 4947 8272 or email matt@croziercgs.com.

Applicants Signature: _____ Date: _____

11.0 Appendix: Development Application Drawings

12.0 Appendix B: Urban Design Consultative Group Meeting Minutes