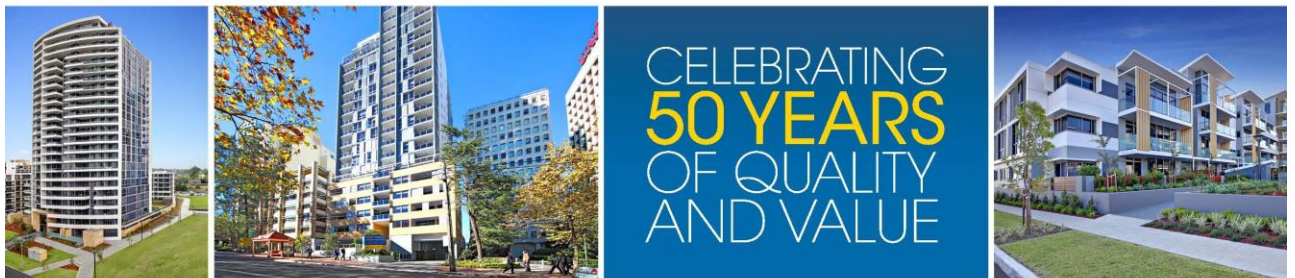


# Preferred Project Report

16 Thomas Street Chatswood

MP 09\_0066 MOD 6

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# 1 Introduction

An application under Section 75W of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act was lodged with the NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure on 19 December 2012 to amend Project Approval MP09\_0066 that was granted consent on the 28 September 2010, and is known as the Thomas Street Car Park site. This application (MOD 6) was publicly exhibited from 30 January 2012 to 1 March 2013.

Development plans for the site have been considerably changed following consultation with:

- NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure;
- Willoughby City Council;
- a meeting with a representative from 12 Thomas Street; and
- a review of public submissions.

The most important element of the design change includes:

- the introduction of a pedestrian link to the rear of 12 Thomas Street for people with a disability;
- “sleeving” 2 levels of the above ground car park with units; and
- replacing the awning feature with a “see-through” vehicle bridge above the “through site-link” to improve pedestrian amenity.

This report:

- Summarises the design changes of the proposal;
- Addresses the issues raised by the public that were received during the exhibition period;
- Addresses the issues raised by the NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure.

## 2 Changes to the Proposal

This Preferred Project Report responds to written submissions from the public, consultation with Willoughby City Council and the NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure list of issues. Following a review of the issues raised by the relevant parties, design changes were made which are outlined below.

### 2.1 Amended Proposal

The primary changes to the proposal are listed below.

- Provide a pedestrian crossing through the basement to the rear of 12 Thomas Street for people with a disability.
- Increase retail space along Albert Avenue, Thomas Street and the through site-link.
- Relocate the serviced apartment swimming pool / gym from the ground floor to the podium roof (Level 4).
- The Child Care Centre has been reinstated into the development.
- Relocate the public art sculpture to the Thomas Street entry of the walkway.
- Sleeve 2 podium levels fronting Albert Avenue for approximately two thirds of the façade length with serviced apartments.
- Sleeve two levels of the above ground parking along Thomas Street with units.
- The third level of podium car parking along Thomas Street and Albert Avenue has been designed to match the units below.
- Reduction in the number of entry /egress driveways from the Thomas Street frontage.
- Two see-through bridges connecting the car parking podiums below the residential and services apartment buildings.
- Increase the height and width of the through site-link to improve pedestrian amenity.
- Delete the orange terracotta colour awning fronting Albert Avenue.
- Retain 250 public car spaces, and reduce the number of residential / services apartment car spaces as requested by the NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure.

**Annexure 1** contains a copy of the amended plans sharing the above list of changes.

### 3 Response to NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure comments

The Department has sought the following issues to be addressed. Each of the matters are addressed in detail below.

#### Issue 1

The proposal seeks multiple parking levels above and below ground. The Department seeks reconsideration of the level of parking associated with serviced apartments, in particular the opportunity to reduce parking spaces.

#### Response

At the time this application was initially lodged with the Department of Planning and Infrastructure, 89 serviced apartment car spaces were proposed at a rate of 0.25 per unit to comply with Willoughby City Council's Development Control Plan. Following the design changes to the podium the number of serviced apartment car spaces has been reduced to 79.

From our experience with managing well over 2000 serviced apartments, any further reduction in car spaces will not meet the demand for occupants, placing pressure on local streets and the future public car park. Serviced apartment occupants will travel by car to the site due to the character of tourist and business having short periods of tenancy.

While there is limited opportunity to reduce serviced apartment car parking spaces, this is not the case for residential car spaces. From our experience with managing thousands of residential apartments through leasing, selling and management, we have noted a shift in less parking with occupants in studios and 1 bedroom units where good public transport is available.

Recently, we have been successful with selling half of the studios and 1 bedroom units with no car spaces in Zetland, which is in close proximity to buses and the Green Square railway station.

We fully expect that future residents of the proposed development will also embrace a reduction in car parking for studios and 1 bedroom units due to the close location of the Chatswood CBD, trains, bus interchange and retail hub.

In this regard, we propose to reduce parking for studios and 1 bedroom apartments to 0.5 spaces per unit. The total reallocation and reduction in car parking spaces for the development is outlined in the table below.

	<b>MOD 6 as lodged</b>	<b>Current MOD 6</b>	<b>Balance</b>
Public Car Park	250	250	0
Residential	361	317	-44
Services Apartments	89	79	-10
Childcare	0	10	+10
Retail	4	4	0
Visitors	36	36	0
	<b>740</b>	<b>696</b>	<b>-44</b>

## Issue 2

The Department seeks justification for the above ground parking taking into consideration the associated urban design impacts.

### Response

There are numerous positive components for having aboveground car parking and these are listed below with no particular order.

- Above ground parking involves fewer disturbances to the geology of underground material. This has a direct positive impact by having less disturbances to any ground water flows and ground water tables for the locality.
- Less dewatering of the soils during excavation resulting in less use of Diesel pumps. An improved environmental outcome is therefore achieved.
- Significant reduction to the carbon footprint during the construction process will be achieved as listed below:
  - less movement of double bogey trucks to remove fill from the site,
  - reduction in the use of diesel fuels from heavy excavation machinery required for excavation, shoring and piling,
  - reduction in steel structures for columns and associated concrete,
  - less use of water to reduce dust from leaving the site,
  - less use of steel meshing required for basement floors, ceilings and ramps,
  - lift cores and fire stairs are not required to protrude deeper into the basement which would otherwise increase the use of materials required during construction.
  - long term energy savings on electrical and diesel fuels due to less lifts, pumps and mechanical systems,
  - water for emergency services requires more pumping to lower levels in the basement compared to above ground parking.
  - steel used for anchoring under the ground during excavation will be less and therefore the use of steel will be less, and
  - less vehicular travel in general.
- Above ground parking provides better separation between the public and private car parking areas. This results in better traffic flow within the development and on public streets.
- Above ground parking for this development removes the conflict of service trucks from private and public vehicles entering the basement.
- Less use of pumping mechanisms used to ventilate the lower basement levels back to the surface for fresh air.
- Less use of mechanical pumps to remove carbon-monoxide from vehicles from the lower levels.

It is clear from the above list that there are many environmental benefits to having less basement levels and more above ground parking levels.

### Issue 3

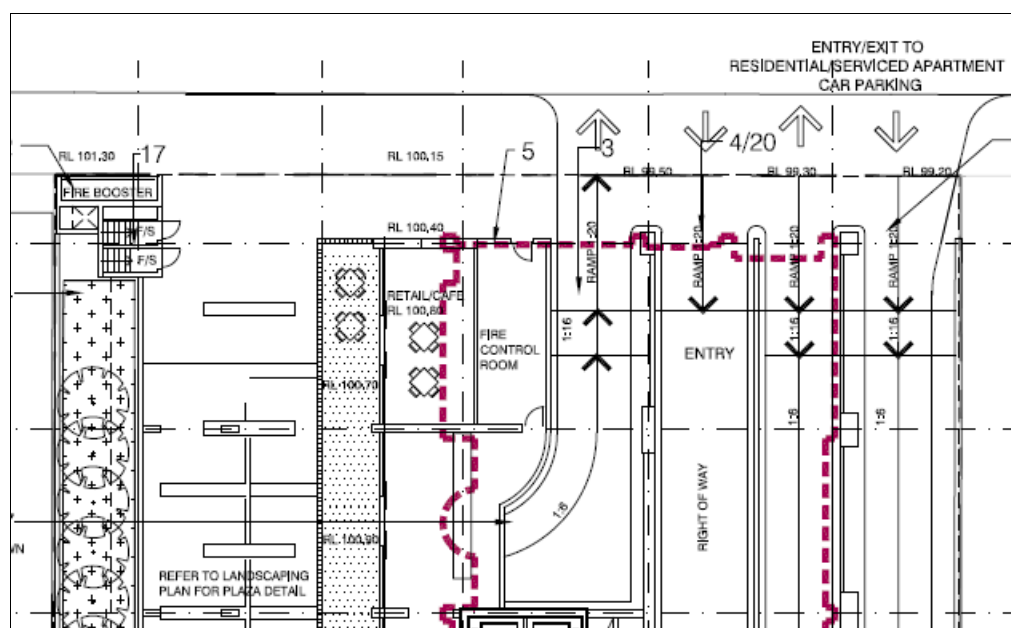
The Department seeks to understand if there is any opportunity to rationalise the number of vehicle access points with only one entry/exit for car parking.

### Response

MOD 3 was approved with a single entry and exit driveway from Albert Avenue. However the entry driveway from Albert Avenue is shared by residents, serviced apartment occupants, retail, child care, service vehicles and public car parking users. The egress driveway from Albert Avenue is also shared by the same users except that the public can also exit from Thomas Street.

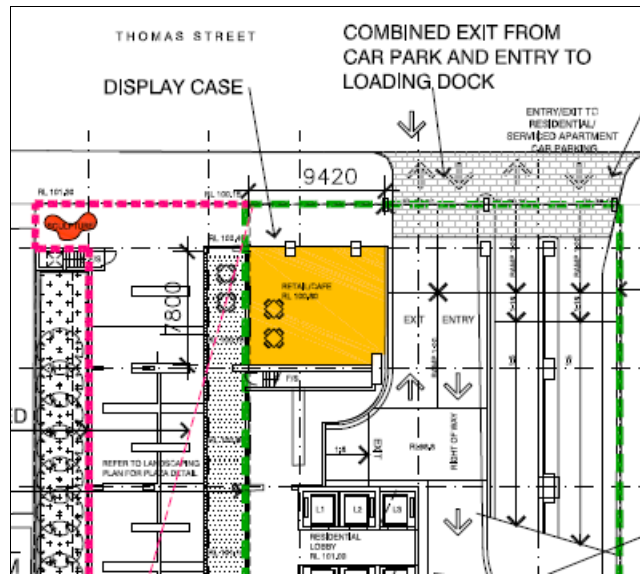
The MOD 6 application that was initially submitted to the NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure in December 2012 improved the filtering of vehicles from the site by introducing a separate entry/exit driveway from Thomas Street for the residents / serviced apartment drivers to take the pressure off Albert Avenue. Another driveway was also introduced in the December plans to provide a separate entry for service vehicles from Thomas Street for further improvements to vehicle movement. The December MOD 6 plans for vehicle entry / exits is shown in the diagram below.

**Diagram to show December Driveway widths for MOD 6**



Following consultation with Willoughby City Council, the NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure, and public submissions, the driveway width has been reduced by combining the service vehicle ramp with the Fleet Lane right of way ramp as show below.

### Diagram to show the Current Driveway Rationalisation



The above change also includes a separately paved shared driveway to assist drivers and pedestrians. This can be imposed as a condition of any future approval. Importantly, the Thomas Street frontage now has 3 driveways where previously 4 existed.

There is no further reductions available to reduce the driveway width as space is required for column locations to ensure the structural integrity of the building, and the requirement to retain the right of way access across the site to the adjoining property at 12 Thomas Street that was established as a condition in the 2010 original consent.

#### **Issue 4**

Noting that the above ground car parking as proposed will only be partially skinned, the Department requires confidence that the final design will provide a positive visual impact. Please provide examples and further justification supporting the façade treatments for the podium.

#### **Response**

The first 2 aboveground levels along the Thomas Street frontage is located behind units and the third level will consist of building materials that will complement the new podium units as shown in the perspectives attached to **Annexure 5**.

Along the Albert Avenue frontage, units will 'skin' the above ground parking for two levels with a see-through bridge introduced between separated parking areas. This will result in approximately two-thirds of frontage being visually activated. The remaining one third of the frontage and the third level of aboveground parking will consist of building materials that complement the units fronting Albert Avenue.

PTW has also prepared an urban design statement explaining how the podium facades and materials will work in **Annexure 6**.

Above ground parking that is either skinned with designer facades or by apartments is not new, with some examples from around the world and in Sydney shown below.



*The façade of Dutch practice Paul de Ruiter's Veranda car park in Rotterdam; photo Rien van Rijthoven*



*Los Angeles Examples of Above Ground Parking*



*Cosmopolitan Building Double Bay*



*Wollli Creek Above Ground Parking*

## Issue 5

In relation to the Public Plaza/Through site-link, the Department remains concerned with the proposed modification to the public space, in particular it is noted that the proposed modification appears to substantially reduce the width of the public plaza/through site-link. To achieve better pedestrian amenity, the Department seeks that you reconsider the design in particular the width of the through site-link and the height and breadth of the enclosing structure above the link.

## Response

The Through Site-link width has been reinstated to the original 2010 approval to achieve better pedestrian amenity. Importantly, the pedestrian amenity will be enhanced further with new retail space at the ground floor of the Serviced Apartment building fronting the pedestrian through site-link. **Annexure 7** shows the MOD 3 approval and compares this against the MOD 6 proposal.

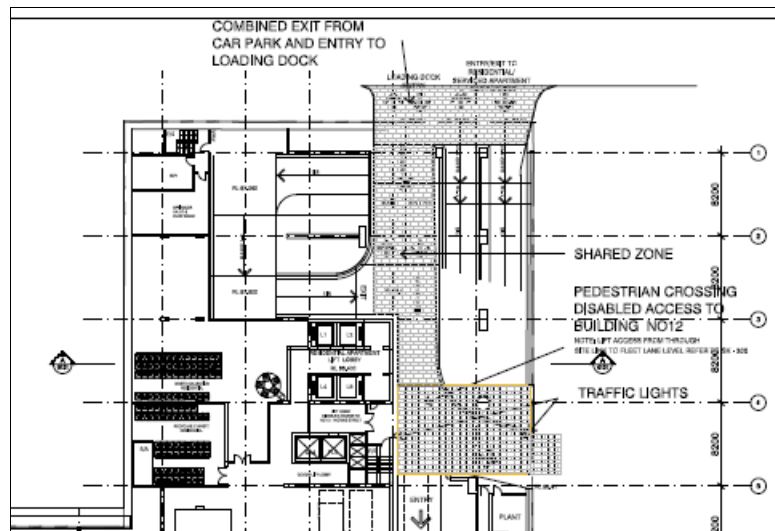
## Issue 6

The disabled access issue has been resolved. Please advise how this has been achieved.

## Response

Following direct consultation a representative of the adjoining neighbour, access is now provided from the public car park across a pedestrian crossing to the rear of 12 Thomas Street. This is shown in the diagram below.

### Plan to Show proposed Crossing for People with a disability



The above extract can be found in the architectural plans attached to **Annexure 1**.

## 4 Public Submission's

Public submissions received during the exhibition period have been reviewed. A response to the issues raised is outlined below.

**Issue: Restricted access to Right of Way and Fleet Lane for disabled persons seeking pedestrian access to No 12 Thomas Street**

**Response:** Following a meeting with a representative from the neighbour at 12 Thomas Street, a pedestrian crossing for people with a disability has been incorporated into the plans. The crossing provides a level link to the rear of 12 Thomas Street into Fleet Lane (refer to the architectural plans at **Annexure 1**).

**Issue: The proposal exceeds the FSR, density and height limits contained in the WLEP2012**

**Response:** The original approval in 2012 acknowledged the site being in close proximity to the Chatswood bus/rail interchange and the CBD to allow greater density and a new Council car park.

The current proposal increases the density and height to provide funds for much needed improvements to public open space facilities and infrastructure in the Chatswood CBD. To achieve additional density and provide a financial contribution for upgrading infrastructure and services, a Voluntary Planning Agreement was entered into with Council.

At the time of preparing this Preferred Project Report, the Voluntary Planning Agreement was on public exhibition (letter to **Annexure 2**).

In addition the additional density creates the opportunity to provide more units to address a significant shortfall in the supply of housing in New South Wales. The Sydney Metropolitan Plan, 2036 states that housing is a "critical factor in making Sydney a sustainable, affordable, liveable and equitable city".

The report states that Sydney will need 770,000 additional homes by 2036, a 46 % increase on the current 1.68 million homes. The report goes on to state that the location of additional dwellings should make, "efficient use of existing urban areas where small, medium and large centres enjoy good access to services, jobs and public transport". Chatswood CBD is ideally situated for additional density.

Within the Sub Regional Strategies of the Sydney Metropolitan Plan, Chatswood CBD is located within the Inner North region. The Willoughby Council area is to provide an additional 6,800 dwellings by 2031. The proposed 355 residential units will only account for just over 5% of the additional housing required in the Council area.

**Issue: Guaranteed separation between 12 Thomas Street and the development is now comprised including no pedestrian / disabled access along right of way and Fleet Lane to 12 Thomas Street**

**Response:** Disabled access to 12 Thomas Street has been introduced by proposing a pedestrian crossing through the basement level. The current approval has no provision to provide the adjoining owner with disabled access through the site.

**Issue: Excessive height has adverse impacts upon the streetscape and surrounding amenity**

**Response:** The height of the proposed development is in context with the evolving urban structure of the Chatswood CBD and is reflected in the Comparable Height Study plan contained in **Annexure 3**. Over time suburbs and cities do not remain “in-situ”, but are ever changing from increasing population and household structures.

**Issue: The three above ground car parking levels will create adverse noise impacts upon No 12 Thomas Street**

**Response:** The above ground parking levels will be placed behind units and contain building materials that are architectural designed into the façade to minimise noise from vehicles in the aboveground parking structure.

**Issue: The Open Space / Plaza area has been removed and is now covered**

**Response:** The original approval in 2010 and more recently the MOD 3 approval had a covered area between the two buildings to stop wind draft tunnelling down the towers into the plaza. A covered area is still required to protect people from wind drafts. In this regard, the design awning has now been replaced with a bridge connecting two separate podium parking levels which has resulted in the height of the through site-link being increased. The width of the through site-link has been increased by reducing the width of retail area under the serviced apartment tower at ground level.

**Issue: Increased height will lead to further overshadowing impacts upon No 12 Thomas Street**

**Response:** No. 12 Thomas Street is a 7 storey building located to the north east of the site. The impact associated with shadows is in no way exacerbated by the current proposal. The shadow above 30 storeys do not fall on the adjoining property.

**Issue: There exists an oversupply of residential units in Chatswood which will result in associated adverse social impacts**

**Response:** The additional units will seek to address a significant shortfall in the supply of housing in New South Wales. The Sydney Metropolitan Plan, 2036 states that housing is a “critical factor in making Sydney a sustainable, affordable, liveable and equitable city”.

Chatswood CBD is ideally situated for additional density. Within the Sub Regional Strategies of the Sydney Metropolitan Plan, Chatswood CBD is located within the Inner North region. The Willoughby Council area is to provide an additional 6,800 dwellings by 2031.

The proposed residential units will only account for just over 5% of the additional housing required in the Council area. Overall, the proposed modification will provide an additional 153 residential units to the area from that already approved.

With regards to any associated adverse social impacts, there is no evidence to suggest that increases in apartment numbers leads to adverse social impacts. Quite the contrary, people are wanting to live in apartments for affordable housing and the close proximity to services and public transport.

**Issue: Increased density of the proposal will result in additional lack of pedestrian safety and security problems with the surrounding locality.**

**Response:** The increased residential nature of the project will lead to greater surveillance of the surrounding locality, particularly when compared to commercial related development, where natural surveillance of the public domain spaces is generally limited to within business hours.

**Issue: There remains a lack of Commercial floor space within the Chatswood Centre therefore the change of use to Service apartments should not be supported**

**Response:** The change of use which permitted the service apartments component of the development was approved as part of Modification 3 to the development. As stipulated in the Departments Report for Modification 3, the office market in Chatswood has been generally static for over 10 years and that no new commercial office developments have been constructed in Chatswood since 2001.

Further, given the existing vacancy rates and the abundance of land zoned for office purposes in other centres (particularly Macquarie Park), the short to medium term demand for office floor space in Chatswood is unlikely to improve in the foreseeable future. The Department considered that although the office space was approved within Building 2, the construction of office related development is unlikely to be viable until the market conditions improve. Council also acknowledged this in resolving not to object to the proposed change of use to serviced apartments when approving MOD 3.

**Issue: Proposal will result in increased noise impacts upon the surrounding locality**

**Response:** Noise associated with the Chatswood town centre remains predominantly associated with a commercial level of amenity. The current proposal is predominantly residential in nature. Noise generated by the development will be consistent with a residential level of amenity and considered to be an improvement upon the existing noise levels generated by the surrounding commercial developments.

**Issue: Increased car parking spaces will lead to greater traffic generation. The number of parking spaces should be reduced due to the sites proximity to public transport. Further pressure on street parking**

**Response:** The proposal as originally lodged with the Department of Planning and Infrastructure on 16 December 2012 has now been reduced as shown in the table below:

	<b>MOD 6 as lodged</b>	<b>Current MOD 6</b>	<b>Balance</b>
Public Car Park	250	250	0
Residential	361	317	-44
Services Apartments	89	79	-10
Childcare	0	10	+10
Retail	4	4	0
Visitors	36	36	0
	<b>740</b>	<b>696</b>	<b>-44</b>

The primary reduction in car spaces has come from the residential use. Experience from selling units with less or no car spaces that have a neighbouring public transport hub in other projects. As the subject site is within 5 minutes walking distance to the bus / train interchange, we see no concern to reduce the number of residential car spaces by 44.

There has also been a reduction of 10 services apartment car spaces. From our experience with operating over 2000 services apartments, any less car spaces will not address demand and could result in occupants parking off site.

**Issue: No details of the proposed locations and details of the disabled car parking spaces to be contained within the future Public Council car park**

**Response:** Location of the proposed disabled car spaces in the Council's public car park is shown on the Architectural Plans (Plan A-0115 F) submitted with the application. The spaces have been proposed adjacent the Council lift lobby.

The final location of disabled car spaces will generally be at the discretion of Council, being a public car park.

**Issue: Construction – work hours should not be altered**

**Response:** The approved work hours are 7am - 5.00pm, Monday to Friday and 7.00am – 12 Noon on Saturdays. There is no proposed change to the working hours.

**Issue: The increased height will result in overshadowing impacts upon Chatswood Park and Oval.**

**Response:** The additional shadow cast by the additional height is considered to be a relatively fast moving shadow which will move at the rate of 150m in an hour and by late afternoon 75m.

Chatswood Oval remains generally shadow free from the buildings on the subject site between the hours of 9am and just prior to 2pm. By 2pm, there is a small segment of shading beginning to encroach upon the south-west section of the oval. This is reflected in the shadow diagrams in **Annexure 3**.

**Issue: Proposal involves the removal of the Child Care Centre. The Child Care Centre should be retained.**

**Response:** Meriton shares the view of Council that a future child care centre will provide a valuable facility for the Willoughby community at large. Therefore, we have reinstated the child care into the development proposal that will cater for approximately 50 Children.

**Issue: Developer is relying on the VPA for the increase in density**

**Response:** The Voluntary Planning Agreement process is a transparent policy contained in the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, which has been in place for many years. The Voluntary Planning Agreement has been publicly advertised and agreed between Meriton and Willoughby City Council in recognition of the additional height and density proposed.

Bonus payments are to be paid to Willoughby City Council to upgrade of Chatswood Oval, Chatswood High School Oval, redevelopment of the tennis courts, Beauchamp Oval and CBD streetscape improvements where required.

Proposed monetary contribution for the proposed embellishment works will provide a significant benefit to the Willoughby residents at large.

**Issue: Removal of the commercial component of the building will not assist in Chatswood achieving the employment targets contained in the 2036 Metro Plan**

**Response:** The change of use from office to service apartments was approved under MOD 3 on the 10 February 2013. This issue no longer applies.

**Issue: Meriton makes political donations and therefore the development should not be approved**

**Response:** No political donation has been made. A copy of the political donation statement that has been previously lodged for this site is attached at **Annexure 4**.

**Issue: The increased height and density of the development will have an adverse impact on the new 12 Storey Student Accommodation development at 73-77 Albert Avenue**

**Response:** The 12 storey Student Housing development currently under construction at 73-77 Albert Avenue is located immediately east of the subject site. Impact upon the adjoining site was initially made with the original approval in 2010. The current proposal has no additional overshadowing, acoustical or privacy impacts as the additional density occurs above 30 storeys. There is no change to the number of public car spaces. The serviced / residential vehicle entry / exits are from Thomas Street, which is not in the vicinity of the Albert Avenue frontage. Accordingly there is no discernable additional impact upon the adjoining Albert Avenue neighbour to the east.

**Issue: The proposed increased development will set a precedent for other future developments within the Chatswood CBD**

**Response:** Development proposals are considered on individual merit. Future developments within the Chatswood Town Centre as with the current proposal will need to demonstrate their individual merit to warrant approval rather than rely on any precedent set by this or any other development.

**Issue: There exists a lack of community services within the Chatswood Centre and the proposed increased development will lead to further reduction in these services**

**Response:** We are appreciative of the broader issues concerning the pressures on local community services, and in particular upon local schools.

In speaking directly with the Department of Education, it has been confirmed they are currently seeking to address this matter and have also publicly advised they are currently considering proposals to increase the number of available places, in addition to the provision of new classrooms for Killara High, Cammeray Public, Neutral Bay Public, Chatswood Public and Artarmon Public.

It should also be noted the Child Care Centre has been reinstated into the development which will cater for 50 children. This will provide a valuable additional resource for the Willoughby Community at large.

## 5 Conclusion

The modification application lodged in December 2012 has been changed as a direct result of addressing as many of the issues as possible that were raised by Willoughby City Council, NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure and the public.

The proposed amendment will provide Council with a spectacular mixed use development that will boost the local economy and go towards much needed improvements to public infrastructure.

## **Annexure 1: Amended Architectural Plans**

## **Annexure 2: Voluntary Planning Agreement**

## **Annexure 3: Comparable Height Study Plan**

## **Annexure 4: Donation Disclosure Statement**

## **Annexure 5: Albert Ave & Thomas St Perspectives**

## **Annexure 6: Urban Design Statement**

## **Annexure 7: MOD 3 & MOD 6 Through Site-link**

## **Annexure 8: Shadow Diagram**