

Social Impact Assessment

2-60 Cumberland Street, The
Rocks

September, 2020



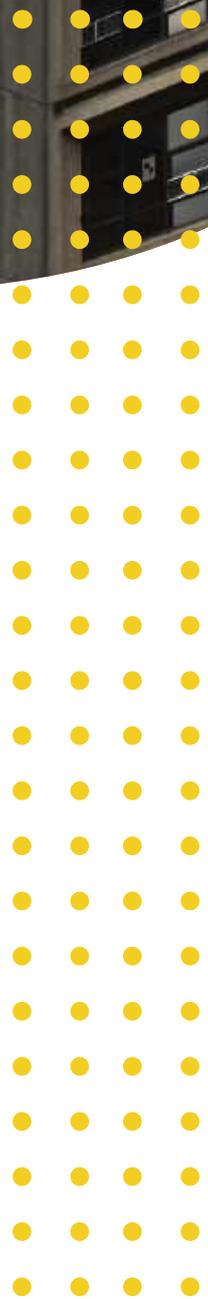
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Cumberland Street, The Rocks

Client: Sirius Developments Pty Ltd

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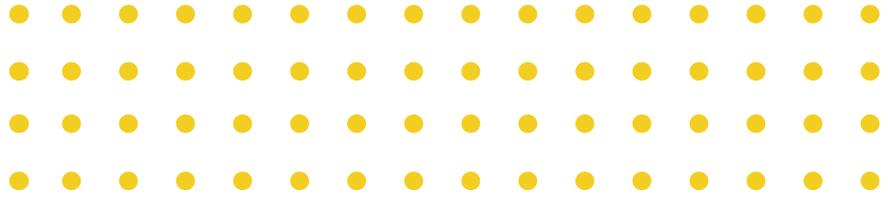


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Executive summary

Cred Consulting is an independent community planning consultancy. Cred was engaged by Sirius Developments Pty Ltd to prepare a Social Impact Assessment (SIA) considering the potential social impacts of a proposed adaptive reuse of 2 - 60 Cumberland Street, The Rocks, known as the 'Sirius site' and comprises the existing Sirius building. The Sirius building is a socially and architecturally significant building formerly providing 79 x 1 to 4 bedroom public housing dwellings.

Purpose

This SIA responds to the requirements of the Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) including:

- Identifies any social impacts that are predicted to flow from changes (i.e. alterations, additions, and other associated works) caused by the project.
- Considers any concerns or aspirations that people may have about the project and how it might affect their surroundings, or their access to and use of infrastructure, services and facilities, including during construction activities.
- Considers the positive and negative social impacts from the points of view of community stakeholders and how they expect to experience the project (using primary research and outcomes of engagement).
- Investigates the extent to which any group in the community may disproportionately benefit or experience negative impacts from the project.
- Proposes measures to avoid, minimise or mitigate any negative social impacts, and measures to enhance positive social impacts and details a monitoring and adaptive management framework for social impacts.

The proposal

The proposed development is for the adaptive reuse of the existing Sirius building, including alterations and additions. The existing building is proposed to be substantially retained and restored with integrity. New residential additions are proposed to be added to the existing structure in appropriate locations to maintain the legibility of the original architectural form, and new structures for commercial uses are proposed to be added at the Cumberland Street and Gloucester Walk frontages of the site. Proposed alterations and additions include:

- Alterations and additions to the existing building to provide for 77 apartments (a reduction from 79);
- Private pool, gym and cafe in Cumberland Building;
- Retail on Gloucester Walk;
- Public cafe with terrace opening to northern pocket park;
- Upgrades to Gloucester Walk including new paving, landscaping, and pedestrian access;
- Improvements to Cumberland Street including landscaping and improved car park entry; and

- Associated works including: minor demolition works; earthworks; structural upgrades; services upgrades; and landscaping works.

Other community benefits proposed include:

- Upgrades to pocket park at north of site (Cumberland Street);
- New through-site link connecting Cumberland Street and Gloucester Walk;
- New publicly accessible forecourt; and
- Public art incorporated in several locations including the through-site link, and Cumberland Street forecourt.

No affordable housing is proposed. The NSW Government divested the site to fund new social housing as part of its *Future Directions in Social Housing Strategy*, and sought the highest and best price for the Sirius site. Sirius Developments Pty Ltd were the successful bidders and as such are adapting the site to sell as private market housing. No provisions were included in the site-specific planning controls under the State Environmental Planning Policy (State Significant Precincts) 2005 (SEPP SSP) that require the delivery of affordable housing.

Social significance of the Sirius building

The existing Sirius building was designed in 1978–1979 by Tao Gofers for the Housing Commission of NSW and was used for social housing until 2018. The existing Sirius building comprises 79 apartments and 70 car parking spaces. The building is currently unoccupied. The existing Sirius building has been described as “a rare and fine example of the late Brutalist architectural style especially in its application to social housing,” by the NSW Heritage Council in a draft statement of significance. It is an important part of the social and cultural history of The Rocks. Nearby Millers Point is listed on the State Heritage Register for both its social and physical character. Opened in 1980, the building contained 79 flats and 400 residents at its peak. Its design brief was to provide units that cater for pensioner one-bedroom units, accessible two-bedroom units, two, three and four-bedroom split level units with balconies. The Sirius building's internal design represents bespoke 1970s design. In addition to its internal design, the building also created a visual style of public art through its coloured exhaust vents and steel balustrades and gardens in the sky which are enjoyed by passersby including on the highway.

With the relocation of social housing from the area (from Sirius building and previously Millers Point), there is an opportunity to reflect important local stories and history in the public domain and future public art, for future generations.

Strategic context

The Sirius site is located in the Eastern Harbour City under the Greater Sydney Commission's *Eastern City District Plan* which guides future adaptive reuse of the building to respond to the 10 directions for the district including social infrastructure provision, diverse housing, and great places.

Sustainable Sydney 2030 is the City of Sydney Council's (the City's) long term vision and is structured around 10 Strategic Directions, one of which seeks to ensure the City offers diverse housing, including dwellings with a range of sizes from 1 to 4 bedrooms, as proposed as part of the adaptive reuse. The City's Social Sustainability Policy includes actions to ensure diverse housing tenures and types including to:

- Increase supply of housing universally designed for people of all ages and abilities; and
- Improve housing choices for renters.

The *State Environmental Planning Policy Amendment (36–50 Cumberland Street, The Rocks—Sirius Site)* was approved in 2018 to include the Sirius site. The amendment to the SEPP aims to achieve a high quality architectural, urban and landscape design outcome for the Sirius site and the proposal responds to this intention through the retention of the Sirius site as a residential building with a diverse mix of household sizes, provision of communal rooms onsite and improvements to the public domain.

Population change

Based on 77 x studio, 1,2, 3 and 4 bedroom dwellings, the future population of the Sirius building will be around 177 residents. While there were 400 tenants at its peak, over the past 5 to 10 years, the number of tenants has declined with mostly older and single person households living in the Sirius building. Future residents are likely to be a range of age groups from children to retirees and larger household sizes and multiple bedroom apartments.

According to the 2016 ABS Census, the area has a decreasing proportion of families with children, however, with 3 and 4 bedroom dwellings included, there are likely to be children living here in the future requiring access to play facilities and outdoor space.

Previous engagement

In July 2018, a report was completed by the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE), to assess the proposed planning controls for land at 36-50 Cumberland Street, the Rocks (known as the Sirius Site). The *Explanation of Intended Effect* and supporting material was exhibited from 7 December 2017 to 16 February 2018. Based on the engagement completed for assessment of the proposed

planning controls for land at 36-50 Cumberland Street, The Rocks, the following impacts and considerations have emerged from the point of view of community stakeholders and how they expect to experience the project:

- A loss of social history and stories through the relocation of residents and change of use from social housing to private housing and a need to preserve for future generations.
- A need to preserve the cultural, social and cultural heritage of the building.
- Impacts around access for pedestrians to Gloucester walk.
- Concern about the change of use from social to private housing, but support for the retention of the building for residential housing.

The substantial retention of the Sirius building as proposed, including the Philip Room, responds to these concerns by retaining the building for residential housing rather than demolition of the building. The social history and stories could be addressed by reflecting these through the future Public Art Strategy.

Access to social infrastructure and services

The number of apartments will be reduced from 79 to 77 apartments. As such, use of existing community facilities, open space and demand for services and facilities is not expected to increase or be impacted. The area is well serviced in terms of access to community centres, childcare, cultural spaces, open space, public transport and other social infrastructure including Observatory Hill Park, Dawes Point Reserve within 400m radius of the site, as well as other iconic spaces such as the Royal Botanic Gardens and Barangaroo Reserve within 800m. The Sirius buildings' location at the foot of the Harbour Bridge also provides an iconic recreation link to Bradfield Park and North Sydney Olympic Pool in North Sydney. King George V Recreation Centre with several indoor and outdoor courts and gym is also located within a short walk of the site.

One local open space in proximity to the Sirius site is a small pocket park at the north of the site. This is proposed for embellishment (owned by Place Management and 100m² in size). The creation of a publicly accessible through-site link between Cumberland Street and Gloucester Walk (404.8m²) will also improve provision of and access to public space. No additional open space is required to be delivered. It is important that the pocket park and linkages are activated through the inclusion of playful elements, public art and lighting to ensure that users feel welcome and safe at all times and to support children and families who are likely to be living here.

The proposal does not trigger a requirement for the delivery of any new public community facilities within the area with demand for community services likely to decline given the change from public to private housing. However, for social sustainability outcomes, there is a need to deliver communal space on site, and to respect the social intentions of the existing Sirius building.

Social impact assessment & adaptive management framework

This Social Impact Assessment (SIA) responds to the requirement of the SEARs to provide an SIA relating to the proposed adaptive reuse of the Sirius building. A summary of social impacts during and post construction is provided below with an adaptive management framework provided in Section 7.4 detailing social impacts by type and mitigation and monitoring measures to address these.

Potential social impact	Type	Who will be impacted	Mitigation/Enhancement	Measure/Action
Potential social impacts - post construction				
New through-site link connecting Gloucester Walk and Cumberland Street.	Positive	Local residents People with disability Older people	<p>Consider provision of lighting to provide passive surveillance including lighting at night to ensure safety.</p> <p>Have consideration to the NSW Government streets as shared spaces concept and contribute to improved public space by including playful elements, public art and to ensure that users feel welcome.</p>	Agreement on responsibility for ongoing management and maintenance and to retaining it at high quality as a public space to keep it feeling welcoming and safe.
Reduction of 79 social housing dwellings (mostly lone person households) within the local area and City of Sydney and reuse for 77 private residential dwellings.	Neutral	Lower income and key workers	<p>None required. The reduction in dwellings will not impact on access to services or facilities. The Sirius site is currently vacant.</p>	None required.
Perceived loss of social history, stories, and cultural significance of Sirius building and its former residents and residents of nearby Millers Point.	Negative	Local community Broader Sydney community Future residents	<p>The NSW Government divested the site to fund new social housing as part of its Future Directions in Social Housing Strategy. Sirius Developments were the successful bidders and as such are adapting the site to sell as private market housing. No provisions were included in the site-specific planning controls under SEPP SSP that require the delivery of affordable housing.</p> <p>However, nearby Millers Point is listed on the State Heritage Register for both its social and physical character. The listing identifies Millers Point as a 'living cultural landscape'.</p> <p>Consider inclusion of social stories that convey the social and cultural history of Sirius, the Rocks, and Millers Point within the future Public Art Strategy and public art works.</p>	Commitment within the Public Art Strategy to reflect the social history and local stories in future public art in the public domain.

Potential social impact	Type	Who will be impacted	Mitigation/Enhancement	Measure/Action
A number of quality services and facilities for future residents are proposed including the provision of a communal pool, gym, communal outdoor courtyards, and communal spaces.	Positive	Future residents	None required.	Commit to build and have ready before the first resident has moved in.
Retention of Phillip Room as a communal space and consideration of incorporating conservation of the Rosier relief sculptures.	Positive	Future residents Broader Sydney community	Work with architects and designers on an interpretation strategy to retain and respect the Phillip Room generally in its current form.	Consideration as part of Architectural Design Report.
Upgrades to pocket park at north of site (Cumberland Street). Design will incorporate new shade trees, areas that are accessible to the general public at all times including improved landscaping and public seating.	Positive	Residents of Sirius including children and families Local community	Best outcome would be for this to remain a publicly accessible park and could potentially be embellished for play.	Consult with Place Management around future park amenity and public access.

Potential social impacts during construction

Temporary closure of Gloucester Walk and Cumberland Street during construction and during public domain upgrades.	Negative	Local residents, visitors and businesses	Provide alternative safe and universal access for pedestrians throughout construction.	Notification letter in mailbox community of change of route. During construction installing clear signage directing pedestrians. Keeping a register of incidents and ongoing monitoring of trip hazards - Construction Management Plan.
Increased traffic including trucks and large vehicles impacting on pedestrian access and safety and increased noise for residents.	Negative	Local residents, visitors and businesses	To be considered through the Construction Traffic Management Plan which should consider the impacts on residents and businesses to minimise impacts/ disruptions - not just what's most convenient for the construction.	Construction Traffic Management Plan clearly articulates the route that has the minimal disruption to residents to business and residents.
There will be noise and increased traffic during construction period which will impact on local amenity.	Negative	Local residents, business and visitors	To be addressed through the Construction Management Plan.	Community hotline contact number and email address to address community concerns.



1. Introduction

Cred Consulting is an independent community planning consultancy. Cred was engaged by Sirius Developments Pty Ltd to prepare a Social Impact Assessment (SIA) considering the potential social impacts of a proposed adaptive reuse of 2-60 Cumberland Street, The Rocks, known as the Sirius site and occupied by the existing Sirius building. The Sirius building is a socially and architecturally significant building formerly providing 79 x 1 to 4 bedroom public housing dwellings owned by the NSW Government.

1.1. SIA purpose

This SIA responds to the requirement of the SEARs to provide an SIA relating to the proposed adaptive reuse of the Sirius building. Its purpose is to:

- Identify any social impacts that are predicted to flow from changes (i.e., alterations, additions, and other associated works) caused by the adaptive reuse of the Sirius building.
- Consider any concerns or aspirations that people may have about the project and how it might affect their surroundings, or their access to and use of infrastructure, services and facilities, including during construction activities.
- Consider the positive and negative social impacts from the points of view of community stakeholders and how they expect to experience the project.
- Investigate the extent to which any group in the community may disproportionately benefit or experience negative impacts from the project.
- Propose measures to avoid, minimise or mitigate any negative social impacts, and measures to enhance positive social impacts.
- Provide a monitoring and adaptive management framework for social impacts identified.

This SIA has been completed in accordance with requirements of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* Sec 4.15(1), the Planning Institute of Australia's Social Impact Position Statement, and the SEARs.

1.2. Methodology

This study has been undertaken using the following methodology:

- Review of State and local strategic planning and policy context and implications.
- Pre and post development community profile of the local area.
- Social history and significance of the Sirius building.
- Summary of engagement outcomes from the 2018 Assessment Report prepared by DPIE, Proposal to amend planning controls for 2-60 Cumberland Street, The Rocks (the Sirius building) as they relate to potential social impacts to be considered by this report.
- Audit and mapping of social infrastructure, services, open space and recreation facilities within 800m of the site and benchmarking demand resulting from the proposal and considering best practice social outcomes that could be delivered for the existing and incoming community.
- Analysis of the potential social impacts that are predicted to flow from changes caused by the project (positive, negative and neutral) having consideration to the SEARs.
- Recommendations for mitigation measures to avoid, minimise or mitigate any negative social impacts, and measures to enhance positive social impacts, including a monitoring and adaptive management framework for social impacts.

1.3. About the proposal

Current and previous use

The existing Sirius building is currently unoccupied. It was previously a purpose built, social housing apartment building including:

- 79 dwellings;
- 28 studios or one-bedroom;
- 38 two-bedroom;
- 8 three-bedroom, and 5 four-bedroom apartment;
- 3 x communal rooms;
- Rooftop gardens; and
- Basement parking for 70 cars.

The Sirius building was sold by the NSW Government to fund new public housing across Sydney. The change of use from public to private is not the subject of this application. As shown in Figure 1, the Sirius building is located in The Rocks in the City of Sydney LGA.

The existing Sirius building has a varied height profile due to its modular form and due to the fall across the site when observed from Cumberland Street and from Gloucester Walk. The existing building rises from the north and south towards a central tower with a maximum height of 34.6m above ground level at Cumberland Street (equivalent to an 11-storey building). Due to the existing split-level apartments, the building is conveyed as having a greater number of levels (25 storeys).

Proposed development

The proposed development is for the adaptive reuse of the existing Sirius building, including alterations and additions. The existing building is proposed to be substantially retained and restored with integrity.

New residential additions are proposed to be added to the existing structure in appropriate locations to maintain the legibility of the original architectural form, and new structures for commercial uses are proposed to be added at the Cumberland Street and Gloucester Walk frontages of the site. The proposed alterations and additions to the existing building will increase the overall building height by 5.4m to a maximum building height of 40.9m above ground level at Cumberland Street. On the Cumberland Street entry side of the site, the building presents as thirteen (13) levels at the highest occupied level. When observed from Gloucester Walk, and due to the fall across the site, the building presents as fourteen (14) occupied levels. The proposed works include:

- Alterations and additions to the existing building to provide for:
 - Residential accommodation for 77 apartments including 4 studio home offices - a reduction in number from existing 79 apartments;
 - Commercial premises, including retail floor space; and
 - Basement car parking.
- Provision of a publicly accessible through-site link between Cumberland Street and Gloucester Walk.
- Upgrades to Gloucester Walk including landscaping and pedestrian access.
- Improvement to Cumberland Street including landscaping and improved car park entry.
- Associated works including: minor demolition works; earthworks; structural upgrades; services upgrades; and landscaping works.

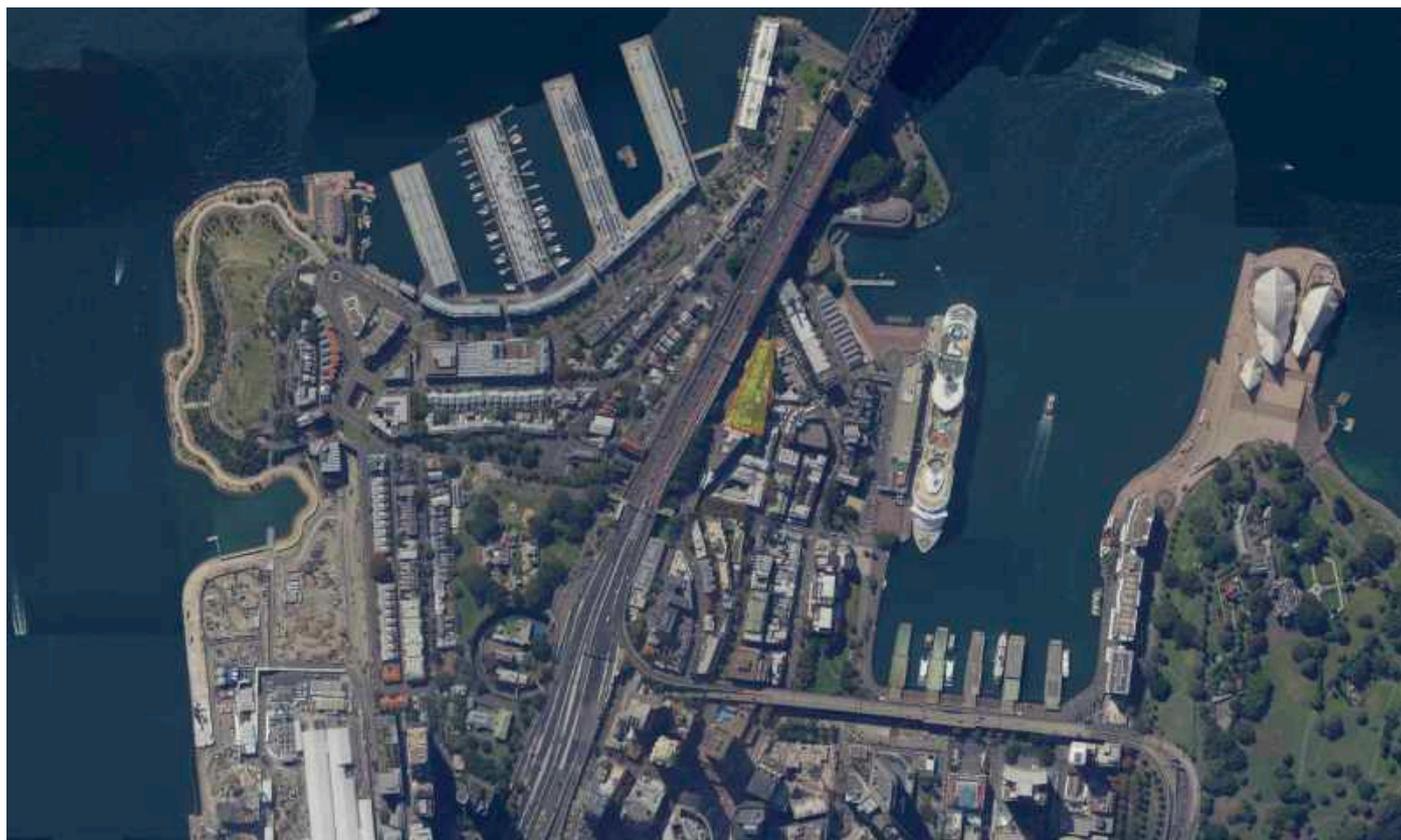


Figure 1 - Site location in The Rocks (source: Cred Consulting)

No affordable housing is proposed. The NSW Government divested the site to fund new social housing as part of its *Future Directions in Social Housing Strategy*, and sought the highest and best price for the Sirius site. Sirius Developments Pty Ltd were the successful bidders and as such are adapting the site to sell as private market housing. No provisions were included in the site-specific planning controls under SEPP SSP that require the delivery of affordable housing.

Proposed dwellings

A mix of 1, 2, 3 and 4 bedroom dwellings is proposed in keeping with the original intent of the building. The overall number of dwellings is reduced from 79 to 77 dwellings, including:

- 11x studio;
- 5x 1 bed;
- 42 x 2 bed ;
- 14x 3 bed; and
- 5x 4 bed.

Neighbouring uses

The site is bounded by motorcycle parking to the north, commercial development to the east and south and the Sydney Harbour Bridge and commercial development along the street frontage to the west.

The surrounding area of The Rocks comprises a mix of

residential, commercial and tourist accommodation development. Residential development is largely located on the western side of the Sydney Harbour Bridge and commercial and tourist accommodation uses are located east of the Sydney Harbour Bridge in addition to a number of retail/ entertainment facilities and museums.

Proposed communal & public benefits

The proposed community benefits offered include:

- Publicly accessible through-site link between Cumberland Street and Gloucester Walk;
- Public domain improvements to Cumberland Street and upgrades to Gloucester Walk;
- Communal pool and gym in Cumberland building;
- Communal space with reading room;
- Upgrades to pocket park at north of site (Cumberland Street). Design will incorporate new shade trees, areas that are accessible to the general public at all times including improved landscaping;
- Public art incorporated in several locations including the through-site link, and Cumberland Street forecourt (as detailed in UAP Public Art Strategy report); and
- Increasing the number of apartments with level access from 59% to 79% of apartments improved access for people with disability.

The provision of affordable housing is not part of this proposal for the adaptive reuse of the building or a requirement of SEPP SSP.



Figure 2 - Aerial visulation (source BVN, July, 2020)

2. Social significance of the Sirius site

The existing Sirius building is socially and culturally significant for a range of reasons as explored in this section. It was an early example of how architectural design can deliver social sustainability outcomes for residents of high density dwellings, including for lower income social housing residents and children, families and older people.

2.1. What is social sustainability?

Social sustainability is the ability of a social system to support the capacity of current and future generations to maintain a high level of social wellbeing. Social sustainability recognises that individual and community wellbeing are linked, and that by addressing the needs of the most disadvantaged, the whole community benefits.

City of Sydney Council in its *Social Sustainability Action Plan* recognises that our personal wellbeing impacts on, and is impacted by, our collective wellbeing. Cities that make equality and social justice central to their growth are stronger and more resilient, with opportunities for everyone to thrive.

A socially sustainable community is one that has good access to amenities, social infrastructure and open space that supports their needs, has a vibrant social and cultural life and provides opportunities to have a voice and influence the place they care for. Integrating these principles into the development will ensure a more resilient community, and create a great place to live. Saffron Woodcrofts *Design for Social Sustainability, A framework for creating thriving new communities*, identifies four building blocks for social sustainability¹:

- Amenities and infrastructure;
- Social and cultural life;
- Spaces to grow; and
- Voice and influence.

Quality of life is a key concept within social sustainability and can be defined as the degree to which societies provide living conditions conducive to health and well-being (physical, mental, social, spiritual). In addition to the social or human elements of social sustainability, there are a number of physical characteristics that are current best practice²:

- Safe and secure places;
- Accessibility;
- Provision of social infrastructure;
- Promotion of social interaction and inclusion through design;

- Diverse housing options; and
- Preservation of local characteristics.



Figure 3 - The coloured exhausts of the Sirius building and “gardens in the sky” for passers-by to enjoy

1 Woodcroft Saffron for the Young Foundation, *Design for Social Sustainability, A framework for creating thriving communities*, 2011

2 Based on the work of Jan Gehl

2.2. Social significance of Sirius

“Sirius was a good name for a visionary building with a great practical and social mission: a place where vulnerable people have found anchorage” - Grace Korshens

Social history

The Rocks was once the city’s maritime centre, is one of Sydney’s oldest neighbourhoods and was the birth place of public housing in Australia. Nearby Millers Point is listed on the State Heritage Register for both its social and physical character. The listing identifies Millers Point as a ‘*living cultural landscape*’.

One of the area’s significant buildings - architecturally, culturally and socially – is the brutalist icon, the Sirius building. Designed by architect Tao Gofers for the NSW Housing Commission in 1978-79, this apartment building not only provided public housing for local community members but was a demonstration (and now a tangible reminder) of the environmental and social activism in the 1970s.

Redevelopment of The Rocks in the 1970s was threatening the displacement of long time residents. Nita McCrae, leader of The Rocks Residents’ Group enlisted the Builders and Labourers’ Federation (BLF) to support The Rocks community and The Rocks Green Ban was put in place.

“The driving conviction of the Green Ban Movement and the Battle for The Rocks in the 1970s were not so much heritage and architecture and saving the fabric of old Sydney from obliteration of high-rise commercial development, as about the defense of social and urban rights, the rights of people and working-class communication to remaining in their familiar city neighbourhoods” (Korskens 2017:11)

The Green Bans there were lifted when the State government agreed to “*the people’s plan*” put forward by residents and the BLF to preserve the built fabric and provide low-income housing in the area.

The result was Sirius, which was commissioned by the NSW Housing Commission to rehouse public tenants displaced during the 1960s and 1970s.

Social housing design and intention

Opened in 1980, the building contained 79 flats and 400 residents at its peak. Its design brief was to provide units that cater for pensioner one-bedroom units, accessible two-bedroom units, two, three and four-bedroom split level units with balconies. The brief for the building also required inclusion of community facility areas and a special pensioners community space, of which in 1980, the NSW Housing Commission wrote ‘*Elderly folk need never be lonely with this community room provided specially for their use*’.

The four design options developed by Tao Gofers’ team were presented to representatives from the State Government (Premiers Department and NSW Housing Commission), The Rocks Residents’ Group, The Sydney Cove Redevelopment Authority, Sydney City Council, Maritime Services Board and Jack Munday and the Building and Labourers’ Federation.

The success of the Sirius building as social housing is partly due to the mix of dwelling types. Unlike much social housing at the time, the design of Sirius catered to the needs of a diverse demographic, from the elderly to varying family sizes. The ambition for the Sirius was to create a community, supported by the common areas (community space at ground level and the Heritage Room for seniors), and shared courtyards, and possibly responding to the disruption and sense of loss of community resulting from the redevelopment the previous two decades.

The details of the Sirius building reflect the design approach that was not influenced by the idea that public housing tenants do not deserve quality housing, but instead it was to be a space where tenants did not feel pigeonholed by class. It has become what some have described as a ‘utopian glimpse of what public housing could be.’

In 1980, the first tenants moved into the Sirius building and the building was listed by the National Trust in 2014 for its architectural and social significance. But the building is not listed as a local or State heritage item.

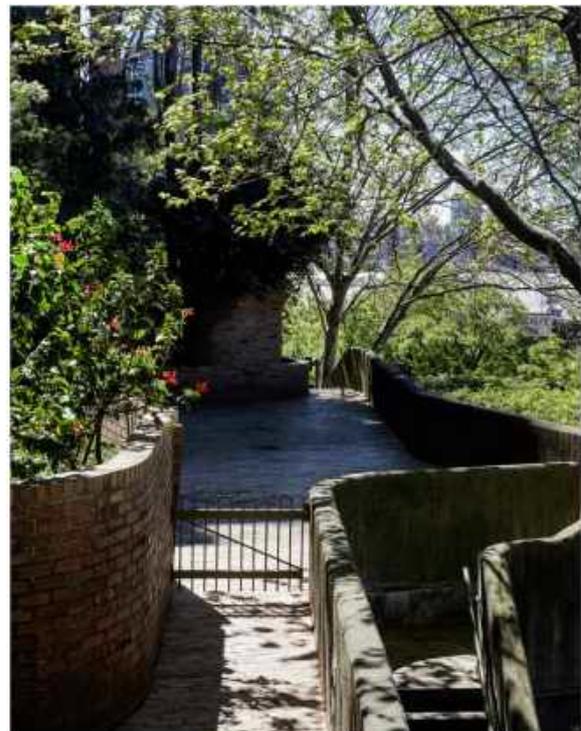


Figure 4 - Communal courtyards overlooking harbour source: The Design Files, September, 2016

Human design and community spaces

The Sirius building has been described as “a rare and fine example of the late Brutalist architectural style especially in its application to social housing,” by the NSW Heritage Council in a draft statement of significance. It was unusual for the Housing Commission to combine aged and family units in the one development, and the early 1970s was a time when many Housing Commission high-rise towers elsewhere were failing to provide safe and secure accommodation for residents. Mixing old and young people was a success right from the start - with diverse households proven to deliver social sustainability.

The Sirius building was designed and built with social and community spaces, including community rooms, play spaces and a viewing platform, for the tenants of the building to use communally. Sirius also has three internal community rooms. The largest is the Philip Room (Figure 5) which was designed to be used by tenants and guests for relaxation and assorted functions such as birthday parties and even weddings. The timber linings and Penny Rosier’s laminated timber animal sculptures (Figure 6) created a unique space for a Housing Commission complex.

On the eight floor is another community room, which was purposely designed for older people and people with disability with a large balcony (about four by 15 metres) for them to watch New Year’s Eve fireworks and other Sydney Harbour displays. For any nostalgic tenant, the whole south wall of the Heritage Room is covered by a computer-generated mural of the 1978 Sydney skyline as seen from that room. A small internal balcony area which was to have been a library overlooks the Philip Room. It was never used as a library, although it was used in one event as a setting for an amateur production of Romeo and Juliet.



Figure 5 - Philip Room and foyer of the existing Sirius building, occupied by residents. Source: Save Our Sirius, 2016

Public art and mid century design

The Sirius building’s internal design is full of bespoke seventies furniture, carpeting, lighting, painting and sculptures with murals by Gofers and Penny Rosier that resemble cave painting animals from Lascaux (The Telegraph, London, January, 2019). Architect Theo Gofers calls these sculptures UROs, not quite UFOs, but unidentified running objects.

In addition to its internal design, the building also created a visual style of public art through its coloured exhaust vents and steel balustrades and gardens in the sky which are enjoyed by passersby including on the highway (see Figure 3).

“The colour of the exhaust vents and steel balustrades ranged from blue in the North to red in the South with a gradual gradation of eight colours from north to south. The most prominent colour was purple which was obvious because it could be seen from the bridge” - John Dunn

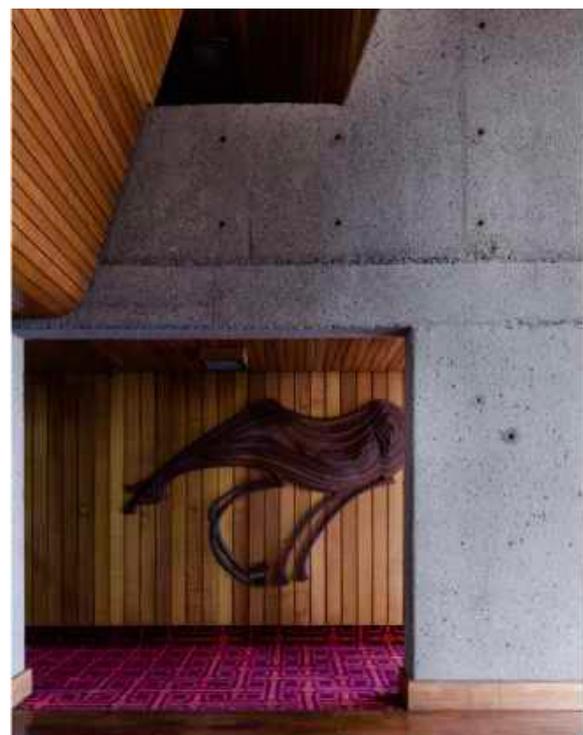


Figure 6 - Philip Room and foyer of Sirius, showing mid century design carpets and Penny Rosier laminated timber animals. Source: Stuart Harrison, The Design Files, September, 2016



2.3. What does this mean for the proposal?

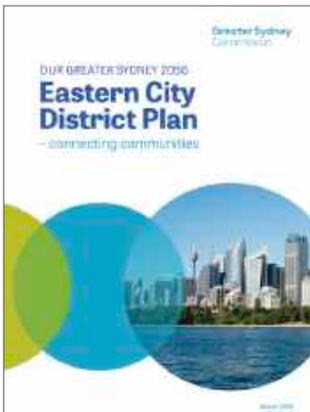
- The existing Sirius building is an important part of the social and cultural history of The Rocks. Nearby Millers Point is listed on the State Heritage Register for both its social and physical character. The listing identifies Millers Point as a *‘living cultural landscape.’* The retention of the Sirius building as proposed respects its intention as a residential building. There are opportunities for the proposal to reflect this social history through the Public Art Strategy.
- The existing Sirius building was designed intentionally to support diverse households and age groups living together. The mix of 1, 2, 3, and 4 bedroom units supported diverse residents living together, which is an indicator of socially sustainable communities. The proposal respects this intention through the provision of a mix of dwellings including studio, 1, 2, 3, and 4 bedroom units.
- The communal spaces in the building were part of its social design. The proposal intends to retain the Phillip Room as a communal space and also to maintain and restore the Rosier relief sculptures.

3. Strategic context

This section provides a summary of the NSW and local strategic plans and policies that inform the social impact analysis relating to the proposed adaptive reuse of the Sirius building.

3.1. NSW Government

Eastern City District Plan



The Sirius site is located in the 'Eastern Harbour City' under the *Eastern City District Plan*. The Plan outlines ten directions for the Eastern Harbour City, with directions relevant to the Sirius site including:

- A city supported by infrastructure, including infrastructure supporting new developments;
- A city for people, celebrating diversity and putting people at the heart of planning;
- Housing the City, giving people housing choices ;
- A city of great places including designing places for people that are within walking distance of open space;
- A well connected city, developing a more accessible and walkable city;
- An efficient city, using resources wisely; and
- A resilient city, adapting to a changing world.

The Sirius site is located in the Eastern Harbour City established under the *Greater Sydney Region Plan* and guides future adaptive reuse of the building to respond to the 10 directions for the district including social infrastructure provision, diverse housing, and great places.

Better Placed

'Better Placed' is a design led NSW Government policy intent upon guiding the delivery of world-class planning and design outcomes. The policy establishes 7 principles for the built environment,

1. Contextual, local and of its place.
2. Sustainable, efficient and durable.
3. Equitable, inclusive and diverse.
4. Enjoyable, safe and comfortable.
5. Functional, responsive and fit for purpose.
6. Value-creating and cost effective.
7. Distinctive, visually interesting and appealing.

State Environmental Planning Policy (State Significant Precinct, 2005)

The amendment to SEPP SSP provides site-specific planning controls for the Sirius site. The controls include the application of a new zone, provisions for design excellence, an additional gross floor area allowance if the building is retained and reused.

Under the amendment, the Sirius site is zoned B8 Metropolitan Centre Zone. The objective of the zone is for future development that contributes to Sydney's global status, to "provide for the pre-eminent role of business, office, retail, entertainment and tourist premises in Australia's participation in the global economy and "permit a diversity of compatible land uses characteristics of Sydney's global status and that service the workforce, visitors and wider community".

The SEPP SSP amendment also outlines the matters in which a future development proposal must consider to achieve design excellence and the highest standard of architectural, urban and landscape design in response to a design competition for the building. The proposal generally complies with the site-specific controls under Appendix 18 of SEPP SSP. Refer to further detail in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

The amendment to the SEPP SSP aims to achieve a high quality architectural, urban and landscape design outcome. The proposal responds to the Plan, the Eastern City District Plan and Better Placed through the provision of a diverse dwelling mix (in terms of bedroom numbers), and communal spaces onsite for residents.

Further it responds to Better Placed which seeks to create a 'well-designed built environment that is healthy, responsive, integrated, equitable and resilient' through high quality design, landscaping and improved public domain and a Public Art Strategy and considers its role in connecting within its place in terms of design, street connection and neighbourhood connection.

3.2. City of Sydney

City of Sydney Development Control Plan 2012

The *Sydney Development Control Plan 2012 (Sydney DCP 2012)* provides detailed planning and design guidelines to support the planning controls in the LEP. It should be noted that the Sydney DCP and Sydney LEP does not apply to the site given that it is within The Rocks area (SRD SEPP).

The Sydney DCP 2012 provides controls which guide development in order to:

- a. Encourage development to respond to its context and is compatible with the existing built environment and public domain;
- b. Recognise and reinforce the distinctive characteristics of the City of Sydney's neighbourhoods and centres;
- c. Protect and enhance the public domain;
- d. Achieve the objectives of the City's Sustainable Sydney 2030 Strategy; and
- e. Encourage ecologically sustainable development and reduce the impacts of development on the environment.

Sustainable Sydney 2030

Sustainable Sydney 2030 is Council's Community Strategic Plan (CSP) (2017-2021). The document is the City's long term vision that strives to achieve, as much as possible, a city that is:

- **Green:** with a low environmental impact, trees and open space, and for a healthy and resilient community.
- **Global:** in economic orientation and partnerships, an open-minded outlook, and a diverse community.
- **Connected:** physically by walking, cycling and high-planning statement delivers on the 10 strategic directions of Sustainable Sydney 2030 and has been informed by the City's other social, environmental, economic and cultural plans and strategies. It has also been developed alongside the preparation of the City's next community strategic plan, Sustainable Sydney 2050.

Strategic Direction 8 'Housing for a diverse population' establishes key targets to achieve a wide range of affordable housing options to meet the needs of the growing and diverse population. The proposal provides a diverse range of dwellings with a range of bedrooms from studios to 4 bedroom apartments supporting single person to large family households to live there.

Social Sustainability Action Plan 2018 - 2028

The Action Plan is a framework that puts people at the heart of cities. It recognises that our personal wellbeing impacts on, and is impacted by, our collective wellbeing. Cities that make equality and social justice central to their growth are stronger and more resilient, creating opportunities for everyone to thrive.

The City of Sydney's policy identifies the City's strengths to build on and the challenges they should address. It articulates the City's role in strengthening wellbeing and resilience.

The action plan sets out a range of activities the City will carry out with stakeholders and the wider community. Over the next decade, their aim is to build a strong, resilient, equitable and sustainable city for everyone.

The City's Policy includes actions to ensure diverse housing tenures and types including to:

- Increase supply of subsidised social, affordable rental and supported housing;
- Increase supply of housing universally designed for people of all ages and abilities; and
- Improve housing choices for renters.

Social sustainability is a high priority for the City of Sydney Council. The proposal responds to the City's Social Sustainability Action Plan by providing communal facilities on site to support social connectivity between residents.

The objectives of the B8 Metropolitan Centre Zone include that future development of the site include a diversity of compatible land uses characteristic of Sydney's global status and service the workforce, visitors and the wider community.

While delivery of key workers housing is a priority for the Eastern City and the City of Sydney, the SEPP does not require delivery of social or affordable housing as part of the development.

City Plan 2036 - Draft Local Strategic Planning Statement

City Plan 2036 is the City of Sydney Council's draft Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS). It sets out a 20-year land use vision, balancing the need for housing and economic activities while protecting and enhancing local character, heritage, public places and spaces.

The vision of this strategic document adapts the City's Sustainable Sydney 2030 vision of green, global and connected in the land use planning context. The draft LSPS contains 13 planning priorities organised into the Greater Sydney Commission's themes of infrastructure, liveability, productivity, sustainability and implementation.

4. Community profile

This section summarises the current community profile using the suburb boundaries of The Rocks - Millers Point - Dawes Point as shown in Figure 1. This data is sourced from the 2016 ABS Census obtained via Profile.id and Atlas.id. For the purposes of this section, this suburb will be referred to as the subject area. It should be noted that the relocation of tenants from Millers Point social housing, and the Sirius site, will have changed the local community profile since the 2016 census.

4.1. Suburb characteristics (2016)

The Sirius building is located within the suburb boundaries of The Rocks-Millers Point-Dawes Point, in the City of Sydney Local Government Area (LGA). In 2016, the Usual Resident Population (URP) of the City of Sydney LGA 208,374, an increase of 38,873 residents since 2011.

Total population

In 2016, the total population (URP) of the subject area was 2,642 people. The population decreased by 423 people (-13.8%) between 2011 and 2016.

Profile.id for the LGA estimates that the population of the area in 2019 had increased to 3,298.

Service age profile

The subject area population is characterised by a relatively much older age profile with a median age of 45 (compared to 32 across the City of Sydney LGA).

Table 1 provides a breakdown of age characteristics by service age group that reflect typical life-stages. As shown in the table below, compared to the City of Sydney LGA, the subject area has:

- A much older population, with a higher proportion of people aged 60 years and over (25.4% vs 11.7%);
- Almost double the proportion of residents aged between 50 to 59 (17.5% vs 9%);
- A much lower proportion of young people aged 18 to 24 (7.9% vs 16.7%);
- A much lower proportion of young workforce aged 25 to 34 (17.5% vs 33%); and
- A higher proportion of parents and homebuilders aged between 35 to 39 (25.7% vs 21.7%).

Table 1 - Service age profile The Rocks-Millers Point-Dawes Point 2011 to 2016 (source: profile.id for the City of Sydney)

Service age group	2016			2011			Total
	#	%	LGA %	#	%	LGA %	2011 to 2016
Babies and pre-schoolers (0 to 4)	61	2.3	3.3	94	3.1	3.6	-32
Primary schoolers (5 to 11)	56	2.1	2.5	53	1.7	2.6	+4
Secondary schoolers (12 to 17)	39	1.5	1.9	66	2.2	2.0	-27
Tertiary education and independence (18 to 24)	208	7.9	16.7	222	7.2	14.8	-14
Young workforce (25 to 34)	462	17.5	33.0	625	20.4	32.6	-163
Parents and homebuilders (35 to 49)	677	25.7	21.7	655	21.4	23.1	+22
Older workers and pre-retirees (50 to 59)	462	17.5	9.0	554	18.1	9.5	-91
Empty nesters and retirees (60 to 69)	394	15.0	6.5	477	15.6	6.5	-82
Seniors (70 to 84)	251	9.5	4.3	281	9.2	4.3	-29
Elderly aged (85 and over)	23	0.9	0.9	38	1.2	0.9	-14
Total:	2,638	100.0	100.0	3,065	100.0	100.0	-427

Cultural diversity

Low cultural and linguistic diversity

The subject area has a significantly lower proportion of residents born overseas (27.3%) compared to the City of Sydney LGA (44.9%) and Greater Sydney (36.7%), with the top countries of birth including the United Kingdom (6.4%), China (3.9%) and Japan (2.6%).

26.9% of the overseas born population arrived to Australia between 2011 to 2016 (representing 7.4% of the suburb population, significantly lower than the City of Sydney LGA at 19.9%).

16.1% of residents speak a language other than English at home, a significantly lower proportion compared to the City of Sydney LGA (33.8%) and Greater Sydney (35.8%). The most common languages other than English are Mandarin (4.1%), Japanese (2.5%), Cantonese (1.6%) and Italian (1.2%).

The subject area has a lower proportion of residents identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (0.8%), compared to the City of Sydney LGA and Greater Sydney (1.2% and 1.5% respectively).

Density and housing

High density dwellings

The subject area has a much higher proportion of high density dwellings compared to City of Sydney (82.9% compared to 74.6%), and significantly higher than Greater Sydney (23.5%).

Smaller household sizes

With 1.79 persons per dwellings, the subject area has a relatively lower average household size compared to the City of Sydney LGA (1.97 persons per dwelling), and a significantly smaller household size than Greater Sydney (2.72 persons per dwelling).

More people living alone and fewer couples with children

The subject area population is primarily comprised of couples without children (30.3%), and more likely to live in lone person households (29.8%).

Between 2011 and 2016, the greatest change in household types in the subject area were lone person households (-192 households; -32.8%), with older and middle-aged lone persons (-71 persons and -80 persons respectively) experiencing a significant change during this period.

One parent families (-64 households) also experienced a significant change between 2011 and 2016.

More households renting privately

In 2016, 43% of the subject area households were renting (43.0%), with the highest proportion of households renting privately (39.7%). The subject area has the highest median rents in the LGA (\$1,089 compared to \$574), however the lowest proportion of rental stress in the LGA (5.7% compared to 21.1%).

Less social housing

3.3% of households are renting social housing in the subject area, representing a significantly smaller proportion compared to the City of Sydney LGA (8.0%) and a slightly lower proportion than Greater Sydney (4.6%). This is a decline from 18.2% in 2011 due to the sale of 206 social housing dwellings in Millers Point.

More home owners

Compared to the City of Sydney LGA, there is a higher proportion of home ownership in the subject area (23.1% compared to 12.5%). Home ownership in the subject area increased between 2011 and 2016 by 21.8% (58 households).

In 2016, there was a slightly lower proportion of households with a mortgage compared to the City of Sydney LGA (15.5% compared to 17.5%).

Income and wellbeing

High income households

More than half of households in the subject area (51.7%) are high income households (more than \$2,500 per week), the highest proportion of high income households in the City of Sydney LGA. 2011 data is not available for comparative purposes, but considering the sale of social housing in Millers Point, income levels would likely have increased significantly from 2011 to 2016 and will continue to increase with the changing of housing tenure in the Sirius building.

The subject area (7.5%) has a significantly lower proportion of low income households (less than \$650 per week) compared to the City of Sydney LGA (18.2%) and Greater Sydney (15.1%).

Median household income

The subject area (\$3,520) has the highest median household income in the LGA. This is a significantly higher proportion compared to City of Sydney (\$1,915) and Greater Sydney (\$1,745).

Need for assistance and unpaid carers

The subject area (1%) has a lower proportion of people in need of assistance due to disability compared to the City of Sydney LGA (2.3%) and Greater Sydney (4.9%).

Education and employment

Students

There is lower proportion of people attending university or TAFE in the subject area (6.2%) compared to the City of Sydney LGA (16.8%) and Greater Sydney (8.0%).

Employment

2.1% of the subject area population is unemployed, a significantly lower proportion compared to the City of Sydney LGA and Greater Sydney (6.0% and 6.0% respectively).

The largest industries that residents work in were:

- Professional, Scientific and Technical Services (22.2%);
- Financial and Insurance Services (17.3%); and
- Health Care and Social Assistance (7.0%).

Method of travel to work

In the subject area, 39.7% of the population walk as their main mode of travel to work, a significantly higher proportion compared to the City of Sydney LGA (24.0%) and 10 times the amount of Greater Sydney (4.0%). 23.9% of residents drive to work, which is significantly higher than City of Sydney LGA (19.9%).

Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) Score

The Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage has “been constructed so that relatively disadvantaged areas have low index values.” The subject area (1112.0) has the highest SEIFA score across the City of Sydney LGA, indicating relatively low levels of disadvantage. This is significantly higher compared to City of Sydney (1027.0) and Greater Sydney (1018.0).

4.2. Forecast population change

The proposal will reduce the number of apartments from 79 to 77. However, household size is likely to increase significantly given that over the past 10 years most units were occupied by single or couple older households.

Based on an average household size of 2.3 persons (using similar high density apartment buildings in the City of Sydney, and considering the apartment mix including studio, 1, 2, 3 and 4 bedroom dwellings), the forecast population of the Sirius building is approximately 177 residents.

Compared to 2016 population characteristics, and given the change to the Millers Point area from primarily social housing, the residents of Sirius are likely to be:

- Higher income residents including working aged and retirement age;
- Couples without children or couples with young children given there are 19 x 3 and 4 bedroom apartments proposed; and
- More culturally diverse, following the trend of increased cultural diversity in high density inner city dwellings.

Table 2 - Proposed dwelling mix for adaptive reuse of Sirius

Dwelling type	Number	%
Studio	11	14%
1 bed	5	6%
2 bed	42	55%
3 bed	14	18%
4 bed	5	7%
Total	77	100%



4.3. What does this mean for the proposal?



- While the number of dwellings will decline, the future population of the Sirius building will be around 177 residents. Previous tenants were mostly older and single households but the future residents are likely to be a range of age groups from children to retirees and larger household sizes.



- The area has a decreasing proportion of families with children, however, with 3 and 4 bedroom dwellings included, there are likely to be children living here requiring access to play facilities and outdoor space.



- With a high density population living in high-rise and medium rise buildings, there is a need for residents to be well connected to outdoor open spaces and recreation in the suburb and the LGA.
- The area has high income households and therefore access to social services may not be as a high a priority for previous social housing residents of the area.



- Given its proximity to Sydney's CBD, residents in the subject area are more likely to walk or cycle to work, indicating most residents work within close proximity to inner City and that cycle storage will be required on site.
- The number of employed people in the area will increase.



5. Community stakeholder consultation

This section provides a summary of previously completed community engagement relating to the Assessment Report prepared by DPIE, *Proposal to Amend Planning controls for 2-60 Cumberland Street, The Rocks (Sirius Site)* as it responds to the SEARS requirement to consider the positive and negative social impacts from the points of view of community stakeholders and how they expect to experience the project.

5.1. Background

In July 2018, the *Assessment Report, Proposal to amend planning controls for 36-50 Cumberland Street, The Rocks (Sirius Site)* was completed by DPIE to assess the proposed planning controls for land at 36-50 Cumberland Street, the Rocks (known as the Sirius building). The *Explanation of Intended Effect* and supporting material was exhibited from 7 December 2017 to 16 February 2018. A letterbox drop was also undertaken to notify local resident in the neighbourhoods of Millers Point and The Rocks. Exhibition documents were made available at DPIE's Pitt Street Office, 320 Pitt Street, Sydney. The webpage dedicated to the project was updated with all exhibition material available to download.

DPIE received 68 public submissions, including submissions from special interest groups. Submissions were also received from three State government agencies/advisory bodies and the City of Sydney Council.

In February 2017, two drop in sessions were held during the exhibition period, with 53 registrations including community action groups such as Save our Sirius.

5.2. Engagement outcomes & considerations

Summary of the public submissions are detailed below as they relate to the proposal for the adaptive reuse of the Sirius site, and potential social impacts. Common themes relating to social impacts raised through submissions include:

- The heritage, cultural, social and architectural significance of the building must be considered.
- There was strong support for the retention and adaptive reuse of the existing building.
- There was support for the building being retained for social housing and affordable housing.
- The proposal needs to consider any potential view loss and view impacts including the cumulative effective of nearby development.
- There was support for design excellence provisions.

In response concerns relating to consideration of the cultural and social history of the building, the proposal for the adaptive reuse of the Sirius site can consider how the social history and stories of the area, and its social significance, could be represented through the Public Art Strategy.

The Sirius building was sold by the NSW Government to fund new public housing across Sydney. The change of use from public to private use is not the subject of this application, however, the Sirius site has been retained and its original design respected.

Friends of Millers Point membership consists of local and other community and business leaders, private housing owners and residents, arts administrators and professionals, architects, federal, state and local politicians from all major parties, united in concern for and committed to saving the Millers Point community. The Friends raised concern about the change of use from social to private housing, but supported the retention of the building for residential housing.

"The same is true of the Sirius Apartment Building. Future generations will find value in the stories and people associated with Sirius and ascribe meaning to the building as Sydney's character changes. The continuing struggle to preserve Millers Point's unique community will add another layer to this narrative, and effectively ensures that Sirius will be regarded as a heritage site in the years to come. As a living monument, Sirius therefore has the potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of NSW's cultural history".
Friends of Millers Point, submission

The substantial retention of the Sirius building as proposed, including the Philip Room, responds to this concern by retaining the building for residential housing rather than demolition of the building, which would have also been permissible under the legislation.

6. Access to social infrastructure & services

This section provides an audit and mapping of existing social infrastructure (including community facilities and open space and recreation facilities), and consideration of the needs of the future residents of the Sirius site and how the proposal for the adaptive reuse of the Sirius site might affect existing resident's surroundings, or their access to and use of infrastructure, services and facilities, including during construction activities.

6.1. Community facilities

Defining community facilities

For the purposes of this study community facilities refer to public and communal/semi-private community and cultural facilities and services. Community and cultural facilities are those indoor (built form) spaces for individuals and organisations to conduct and engage in a range of community development, recreational, social and cultural activities that enhance the community's wellbeing.

Public community facilities are those facilities that are accessible by the general public including community centres and childcare centres.

Communal or semi-private community facilities are those facilities located within medium and high-density buildings and are specifically created for the private use of those tenants.

Why are community facilities important?

For a healthy, liveable and sustainable community, housing should be within walking, cycling, or close public transport distance to employment, education, good parks, shops, and community services and facilities. Quality social infrastructure and services play an important role in supporting and facilitating community harmony and connectedness, and open space provides opportunities for play, exercise, connection to nature and a space to build social connections. In high density areas, a hierarchy and diversity of connected, quality open spaces is needed, including private, semi-private, and public open space, and local parks as well as access to regional and district spaces. There is a need for social infrastructure that provides space to build community within the development, as well as connection to the broader community, and that is adaptable to diverse uses.

"Evidence from around the world indicates that social infrastructure (including community facilities) needs to be in place before new residents move in" - Liverpool Community Facilities Strategy

Audit of existing community facilities

An audit of all community facilities within 1km of the site is shown in Figure 7. The site is well located in terms of access to community facilities including community centres. A summary of this social infrastructure is provided below:

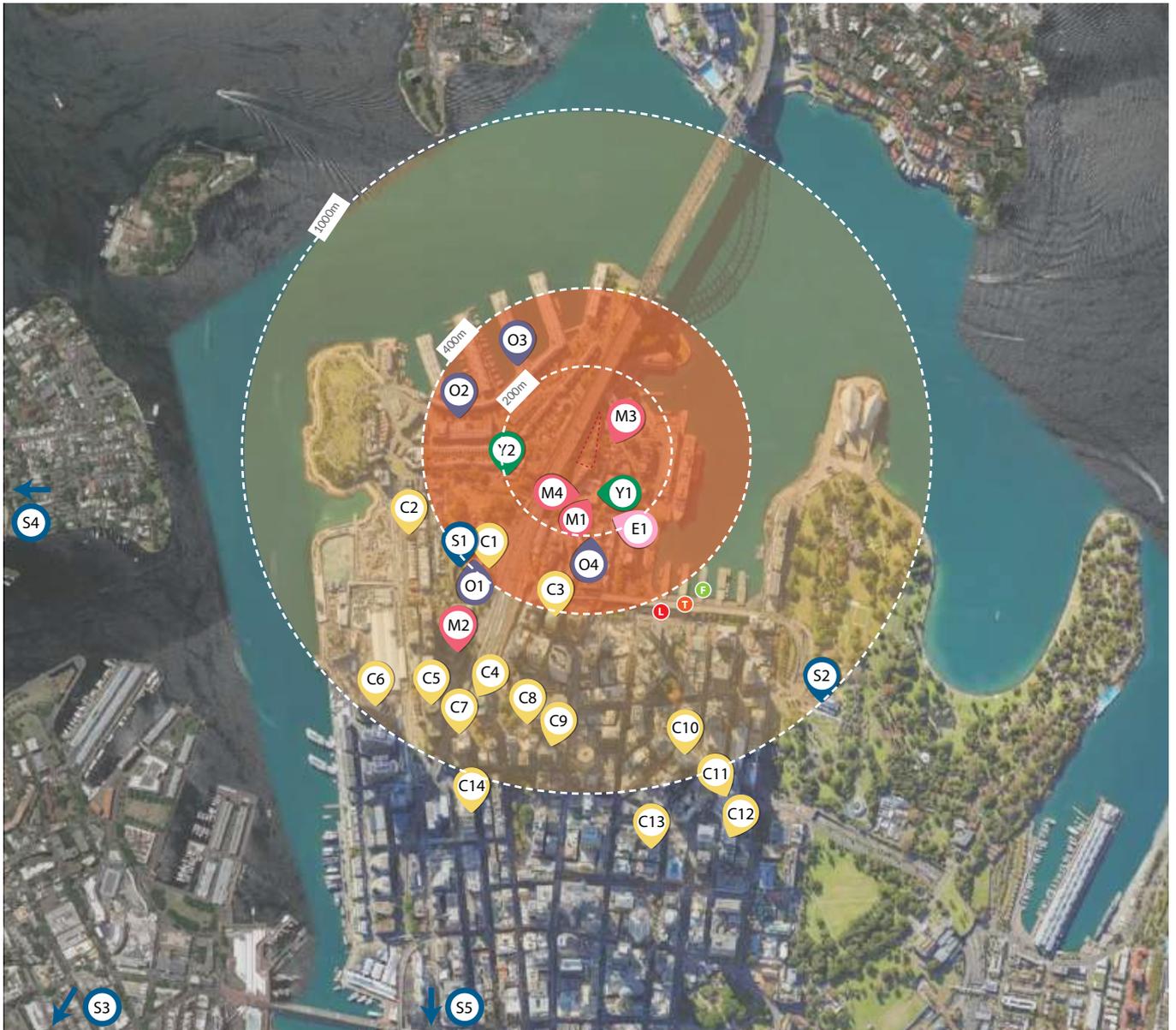
- There are two community halls within 400m of the site, one public (owned and managed by the City of Sydney Council) and one situated within a church. Council's Harry Jensen Centre & Abraham Mott Hall also provides an onsite community worker.
- There is one childcare centre located within 400m of the site. Eight other childcare services are located within 1km of the site.
- There are three medical facilities within 400m walking distance of the site. One other medical centre is situated within the 1km radius from the site.
- Two schools, Fort St Public School and Conservatorium High School, are both situated over 400m from the site, but within 1km of the site.
- There are a number of Metropolitan significant cultural facilities located at The Rocks including the Museum of Contemporary Art. There is also a district museum 'The Susannah Place museum' which tells the story of The Rocks.
- Additionally, the area is ideally located in close proximity to Circular Quay Station, Ferry Terminal, Argyle Street bus terminal and Sydney buses terminus outside Abraham Mott Hall.

Proposed community facilities

The proposal does not include any new public community facilities. However, the proposed development will include publicly accessible open space including a new through-site link and upgraded public domain, private communal open space and private communal rooms for residents.

Community facility needs

As indicated, the area is well serviced in terms of access to community centres, childcare, cultural spaces, and other community facilities, and given its access to transport is ideally located for housing. The number of apartments proposed (77) is less than previously (79) and given the provision of community spaces onsite will not require the delivery of any new public community facilities within the area.



Map Ref	Name	Map Ref	Name
C1	Fort St Public School OSHC	S1	Fort St Public School
C2	KU Childrens Services - Lance Childrens Centre	S2	Conservatorium High School
C3	Little Kingdom Education Pty Ltd - The Rocks	S3	Sydney Secondary College Blackwattle Bay Campus
C4	Little Genius Academy	S4	Sydney Secondary College Balmain Campus
C5	Lighthouse ELC on Kent Pty Ltd	S5	Inner Sydney High School
C6	Guardian Childcare & Education Barangaroo	M1	Harry Jensen Centre
C7	Community Kids Sydney	M2	Observatory Tower Medical Centre
C8	Sydney Cove Childrens Centre West & East	M3	Bennelong Firstcare
C9	Guardian Childcare & Education Margaret Street	M4	Doctor at the Rocks
C10	Guardian Childcare & Education Bligh Street	Y1	Abraham Mott Hall
C11	Chifley Early Learning Centre	Y2	Garrison Church Hall
C12	Guardian Childcare & Education Phillip Street	O1	Sydney Observatory
C13	Explore & Develop Castlereagh Street, Sydney	O2	Roslyn Packer Theatre
C14	Kids Club Clarence Street Pty Ltd	O3	Sydney Theatre Company
		O4	Susannah Place Museum
		E1	The Rocks Police Station

Figure 7 - Audit and map of community facilities (source: Cred Consulting)

6.2. Open space and recreation facilities

Defining open space & recreation facilities

Public open space

Public open space includes outdoor open space including: parks, outdoor courts, sports fields and play spaces. It is open space, which is publicly owned, accessible to all members of the public, and can be planned and managed by local, state or federal government. Public open space has been defined for this SIA to include:

- Sports space;
- Park;
- Natural space;
- Linkage (green grid);
- Waterways; and
- Civic/urban public space.

Indoor recreation facilities include:

- Indoor recreation centres; and
- Aquatic facilities.

Communal open space & recreation facilities

Communal open space (semi-private) is open to all residents of a development, or within a particular high density building. Examples of communal (semi-private) open space include communal gardens and green spaces on rooftop parks, swimming pools, or gyms only accessible to residents of that development.



Figure 8 - Hickson Road Reserve (source: Cred Consulting)

Benefits of open space

The provision of open space within neighbourhoods provides many benefits to a community. These include:

- Personal - improved physical and psychological health;
- Social and community – strengthened family and community ties, and reduction of crime and anti-social behavior;
- Environmental – contrast to urban development, access to natural settings, improved visual landscape, and improved air quality from presence of trees; and
- Economic – attracts new residents to an area, property prices are higher adjacent to parks, and savings in health costs from increased physical exercise.

Proposed open space and recreation facilities

The following open space and recreation facilities are proposed:

Communal

- A communal open space at ground level, with space and amenities for children to play.
- Communal swimming pool and gymnasium (and private swimming pools connected to some apartments).

Public

- Upgrades to the pocket park to the north of the site including a new landscaped garden incorporating outdoor bench seating for public use and tree planting.



Figure 9 - KGV Indoor recreation centre (source: Cred Consulting)

Open space and recreation audit

An audit of all open space and recreational facilities within 200m, 400m, 800m and 2km of the site is shown in the map in Figure 8. This shows the aerial radial distance from the site, but not the walking distance which is often different due to barriers such as major roads and train stations.

As shown by Figure 10, overall there is one indoor recreation centre, one regional park, two district parks and five local parks that include two local play spaces and one pocket play space within an 800m radius of the site. These open spaces and recreation facilities are described in greater detail below:

Local open space and recreation

The site is well connected to open space within 400m as shown in Figure 10.

There are nine parks, including three playgrounds, (one pocket playground suitable for toddlers and young children - Trinity Avenue Playground- as well as two local playgrounds - Pottinger Park and Abraham Mott Playground). Hickson Road Reserve, Observatory Park, Foundation Park and Argyle Street Reserve are passive local open spaces located within 400m of the site. There are two district open spaces within 400m of the site including Dawes Point Reserve, situated to the north east, bordering the harbour and First Fleet Park a large area with open grass and play spaces for residents and tourists alike.

There is one district recreation centre within 200m of the site, King George V Recreation Centre, located along Cumberland Street. The centre includes multiple indoor courts suitable for basketball, netball and volleyball and

Regional open space

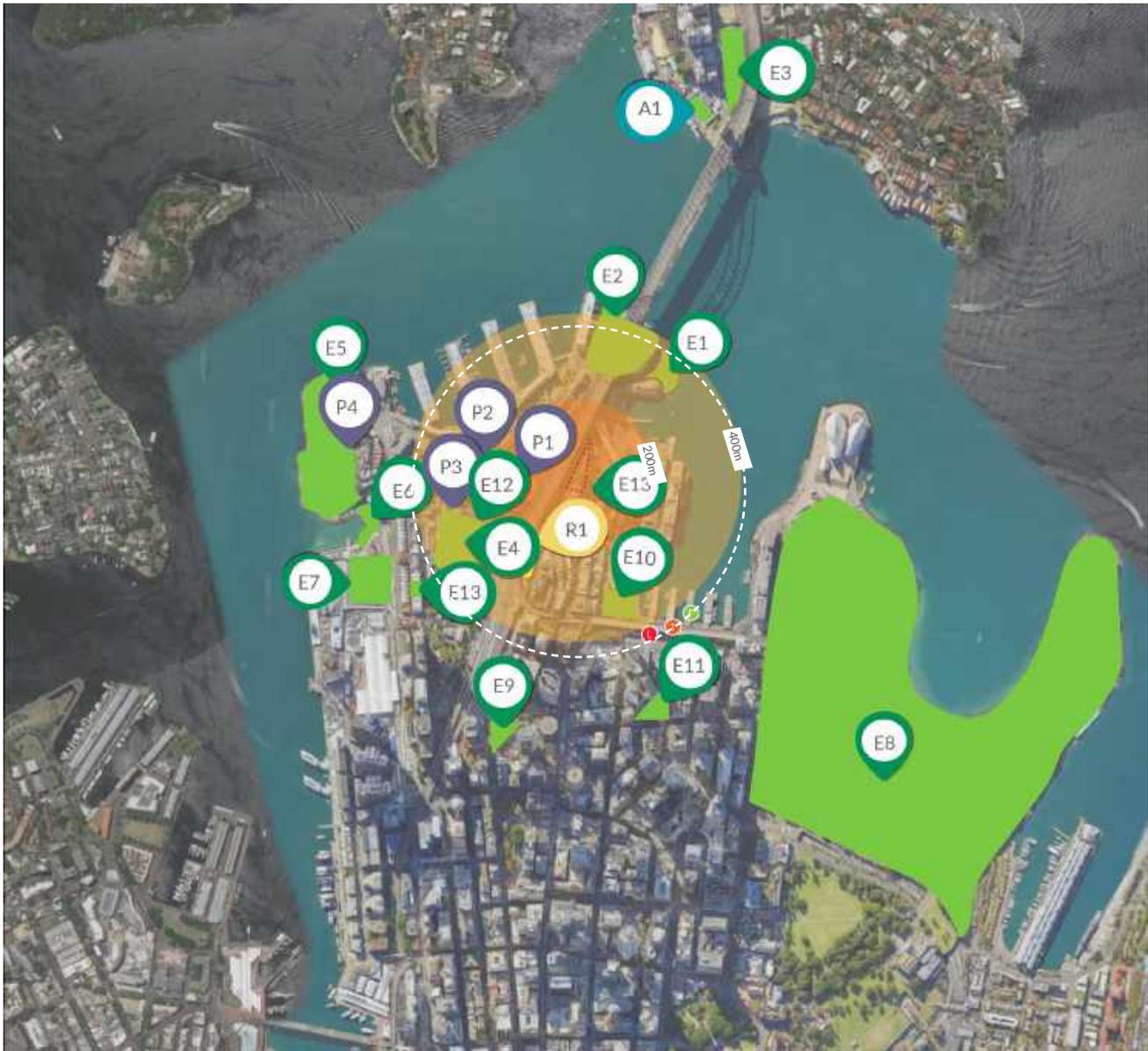
Observatory Hill park is a regionally significant open space located within 400m of the site, which includes various heritage items and an expansive view across the CBD and harbour. There are also other regional open spaces within 1km of the site including Barangaroo Reserve (900m, 11min walk) and the Royal Botanic Gardens (1km; 15mins walk) offering significant opportunities for future residents. Clyne Reserve is also a local play space connected Barangaroo Reserve.

Open space needs

The Government Architect NSW Draft Open Space for Recreation Guidelines provide benchmarks for the proximity of open space to dwellings and focus on the quality and function of spaces provided. The Greater Sydney Commission's District Plans also include a benchmark that all dwellings should be within 400m of quality local open space of at least 0.5ha, and that high density dwellings should also be within 200m of high quality open space of at least 0.1ha.

Considering that the Sirius building is located within 400m of several local, district and open spaces this benchmark is met by the proposal. However there is a need for embellishment of an open space within 200m of the site as there to support play spaces east of the bridge which is a barrier to easy access.

The proposal includes improving connections to Cumberland Street and embellishment and upgrade of a small 100m² pocket park north of the site which is currently owned by Place Management NSW and will remain theirs. The space can service the local open space need (within 200m of the site), including providing an opportunity to incorporate playful elements for children such as playful public artwork (see case studies), swing set or sensory play elements rather than the current proposal for a cafe Terrace.



Map Code	Name	Recreation assets	Map Code	Name	Recreation assets
E1	Hickson Road Reserve	Local passive open space	R1	King George V Recreation Centre	Indoor: 2 international-size basketball courts, 2 netball courts, 2 futsal spaces, 2 international-sized volleyball courts or 4 smaller volleyball courts, 6 badminton courts Outdoor: Multi-purpose courts Gym
E2	Dawes Point Reserve	Iconic district passive open space			
E3	Bradfield Park	Iconic district passive open space			
E4	Observatory Hill Park	Iconic regional passive open space	R2	Kent Street Tennis Court	Privately owned/managed Tennis Court facility located at the Langham Sydney
E5	Barangaroo Reserve	Iconic regional passive open space	A1	North Sydney Olympic Park Pool	50m outdoor pool, indoor pools and learn to swim programs
E6	Nawi Cove	Local passive open space	P1	Trinity Avenue Playground	Pocket play space suitable for toddlers and younger children
E7	Nawi Square Lawn	Local passive open space	P2	Pottinger Park (West) The Paddock	Small local playground and park that includes an adventure unit.
E8	Royal Botanical Gardens	Regional iconic passive open space	P3	Abraham Mott Hall Playground	Small local playground
E9	Lang Park	Local passive open space	P4	Clyne Reserve	Adventure playground overlooking Sydney Harbour with bbq and picnic facilities nearby
E10	First Fleet Park	District civic open space commonly used for events			
E11	Macquarie Place Park	Civic/passive open space			
E12	Argyle Street Park	Local passive park			
E13	Foundation Park	Local passive park			

Figure 10 - Open space and recreation of open space in proximity to Sirius building



6.3. What does this mean for the proposal?

The Sirius site benefits from good access to existing open space, a range of community facilities, and recreation facilities & a likely decline in demand due to reduced apartment numbers



The number of apartments will be reduced from 79 to 77 apartments and use of community facilities, open space and

demand for services and facilities is not expected to increase. The area is well serviced in terms of access to community centres, childcare, cultural spaces, public transport and other social infrastructure including Observatory Hill Park, Dawes Point Reserve within 400m radius of the site, as well as other iconic spaces such as the Royal Botanic Gardens and Barangaroo Reserve within 800m. Sirius' location at the foot of the Sydney Harbour Bridge also provides an iconic recreation link to Bradfield Park, and North Sydney Olympic Park Pool in North Sydney. King George V Recreation Centre with several indoor and outdoor courts and gym is also located within a short walk of the site. However many of these open spaces are west of the bridge, and the only local open space is the small pocket park at the north of the site which is proposed for embellishment.



Improved local open space & play

The proposed development includes public domain upgrades to the areas surrounding the Sirius site, including landscaping and accessibility improvements to the pocket-park to the north of the Sirius site (around 85m²) and through the creation of the publicly accessible through-site link between Cumberland Street and Gloucester Walk (approximately 404.8m²). This pocket park and link could be activated through the

inclusion of playful elements, public art, lighting and passive surveillance to ensure that users feel welcome and safe at all times and to support children and families who are likely to be living here. While there are three local/pocket play spaces within 400m radius of the site, the position of the bridge increases the actual walking distance. This means that there is a need for local play opportunities within 200m of the Sirius building. There is an opportunity to embed play into the embellishment and upgrade of the pocket park proposed. While a small space, there is scope for a traditional swing set, or opportunity to be creative and provide playful public art or other sensory and adventure elements such as climbing elements, pebble paths and fragrant planting.



Communal facilities onsite

Existing communal spaces within the Sirius building are proposed to be adapted and interpreted for continued use as communal space and no public community facilities are required as part of this proposal.



7. Social impact management plan

This section provides a summary of identified social impacts, both negative and positive, and proposes mitigation measures to address negative impacts, and opportunities to enhance positive impacts. It details a monitoring and adaptive management framework for social impacts.

7.1. What are social impacts?

Impact assessment is a method for predicting and assessing the consequences of a proposed action or initiative before a decision is made. Social Impact Assessment (SIA) refers to the assessment of the potential social consequences (positive, negative or neutral) of a proposed decision or action. The International Association for Impact Assessment identifies social consequences or impacts as occurring in one or more of the following areas:

- People's way of life - how they live, work, play and interact with each other;
- Their culture – their shared beliefs or customs;
- Their community – its cohesion, stability, character, services and facilities;
- The population – including increases or decreases in population numbers and population change;
- Their political systems – the extent to which people are able to participate in decisions affecting them;
- Their natural and built environment;
- Their health and well-being;
- Social equity and quality of life;
- Access and mobility;
- Their personal and property rights; and
- Their fears and aspirations and safety.

7.2. SEARs requirements

This SIA responds to the requirement of the SEARs to provide an SIA relating to the proposed adaptive reuse of the Sirius site. Its purpose is to:

- Identifies any social impacts that are predicted to flow from changes (i.e., alterations, additions, and other associated works) caused by the project.
- Considers any concerns or aspirations that people may have about the project and how it might affect their surroundings, or their access to and use of infrastructure, services and facilities, including during construction activities.
- Considers the positive and negative social impacts from the points of view of community stakeholders and how they expect to experience the project (using primary research and outcomes of engagement).
- Investigates the extent to which any group in the community may disproportionately benefit or experience negative impacts from the project.
- Proposes measures to avoid, minimise or mitigate any negative social impacts, and measures to enhance positive social impacts and details a monitoring and adaptive management framework for social impacts.

7.3. Social impact analysis

This SIA responds to the requirement of the SEARs to provide an SIA relating to the proposed adaptive reuse of the Sirius site. A summary of social impacts during and post construction is provided below with an adaptive management framework provided in Section 7.4 detailing social impacts by type and mitigation and monitoring measures to address these.

Social impacts flowing from change post construction

Population and dwelling change

- The number of dwellings will reduce from 79 social housing dwellings to 77 private dwellings. The NSW Government divested the site to fund new social housing as part of its *Future Directions in Social Housing Strategy*. Sirius Developments were the successful bidders and as such are adapting the site to sell as private market housing. No provisions were included in the site-specific planning controls under SEPP SSP that require the delivery of affordable housing.
- There will be approximately 177 people living within the new building. The population characteristics are likely to change from older seniors living in lone households, to a more diverse age range including children and working aged residents. More diverse age range of households enable more socially sustainable outcomes for residents.

Access and mobility

The proposal will improve accessibility within the building, but also in the public domain. Positive impacts will include:

- A new publicly accessible through-site link connecting Gloucester Walk and Cumberland Street is proposed improving local access and mobility.
- New paving is proposed along Gloucester Walk and Cumberland Street which will improve accessibility and pedestrian safety.
- Increasing the number of apartments with level access from 59% to 79% of apartments improved access for people with disability.

Community safety

- The activation of Gloucester Walk and Cumberland Street – new cafes, retail floor space and SoHo apartments overlooking the laneway will provide passive surveillance for the local area.
- New street lighting along Cumberland Street will provide improved safety.

Social infrastructure, services and facilities

- The proposal includes a reduced number of dwellings meaning it will not result in increased demand for community services, open space or facilities within the local area. The site is well connected to existing social infrastructure and will not require the delivery of new public social infrastructure within the area.
- Upgrades to the pocket park at north of site (Cumberland Street) will incorporate new shade trees, areas that are accessible to the general public at all times including improved landscaping and public seating.
- Communal spaces and facilities (gym, pool) will be provided onsite supporting future residents.

Community cohesion, character, and stories

- Previous engagement indicates that there is a perceived loss of social history, stories, and the cultural significance of the Sirius site resulting from the change of use from social to private housing. Public art will be incorporated in several locations including the through-site link, and Cumberland Street forecourt (as detailed in UAP Public Art Strategy report) and there are opportunities to reflect these stories about local people for future generations through the Public Art Strategy.
- Communal spaces proposed will support community cohesion and social sustainability, as well as reflecting the social intentions of the building. This includes retention of the Phillip Room with reading room and planning for interpretation of the original design and the Penny Rosier murals. Other communal spaces include a gym and pool for residents.

Social impacts during construction

Social impacts that will need to be addressed during construction include:

- Temporary closure of Gloucester Walk and Cumberland Street during construction and during public domain upgrades.
- Temporary traffic impacts during construction (managed through CTMP), increased traffic including trucks and large vehicles impacting on pedestrian access and safety.
- Temporary acoustic impacts during construction (managed through CMP with limited construction hours).

7.4. Adaptive management framework

The following is an adaptive management framework to manage and monitor social impacts and implementation of proposed mitigation measures.

Some of the mitigation measures identified in Table 3 below are dependent on the delivery of the Construction Management Plan (CMP) and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) report.

Table 3 - Sirius Social Impact Monitoring and Adaptive Management Framework

Potential social impact	Type	Who will be impacted	Mitigation/Enhancement	Measure/Action
Potential social impacts - post construction				
New through-site link connecting Gloucester Walk and Cumberland Street.	Positive	Local residents People with disability Older people	Consider provision of lighting to provide passive surveillance including lighting at night to ensure safety. Have consideration to the NSW Government streets as shared spaces concept and contribute to improved public space by including playful elements, public art and to ensure that users feel welcome.	Agreement on responsibility for ongoing management and maintenance and to retaining it at high quality as a publicly accessible space to keep it feeling welcoming and safe.
Reduction of 79 social housing dwellings (mostly lone person households) within the local area and City of Sydney and reuse for 77 private residential dwellings.	Neutral	Lower income and key workers	None required. The reduction in dwellings will not impact on access to services or facilities. The Sirius site is currently vacant.	None required.
A number of quality services and facilities for future residents are proposed including the provision of a communal pool, gym, and Phillip room communal room.	Positive	Future residents	None required.	Commit to build and have ready before the first resident has moved in.
Perceived loss of social history, stories, and cultural significance of Sirius building and its former residents and residents of nearby Millers Point.	Negative	Local community Broader Sydney community Future residents	The NSW Government divested the site to fund new social housing as part of its Future Directions in Social Housing Strategy. Sirius Developments were the successful bidders and as such are adapting the site to sell as private market housing. No provisions were included in the site-specific planning controls under SEPP SSP that require the delivery of affordable housing. However, nearby Millers Point is listed on the State Heritage Register for both its social and physical character. The listing identifies Millers Point as a 'living cultural landscape' . Consider inclusion of social stories that convey the social and cultural history of the Sirius building, The Rocks, and Millers Point within the future Public Art Strategy and public art works.	Consideration within the Public Art Strategy to reflect the social history and local stories in future public art in the public domain.

Potential social impact	Type	Who will be impacted	Mitigation/Enhancement	Measure/Action
Retention of Phillip Room as a communal space and consideration of incorporating conservation of the Rosier relief sculptures.	Positive	Future residents Broader Sydney community	Work with architects and designers on an interpretation strategy to respectfully interpret the Phillip Room and restoration of the Rosier relief sculptures.	Consider as part of Architectural Design Report.
Upgrades to pocket park at north of site (Cumberland Street). Design will incorporate new shade trees, areas that are accessible to the general public at all times including improved landscaping and public seating.	Positive	Residents of Sirius including children and families Local community	Best outcome would be for this to remain a publicly accessible park and could potentially be embellished for play.	Consult with Place Management around future park amenity and public access.

Potential social impacts during construction

Temporary closure of Gloucester Walk and Cumberland Street during construction and during public domain upgrades.	Negative	Local residents, visitors and businesses	Provide alternative safe and universal access for pedestrians throughout construction.	Notification letter in mailbox community of change of route. During construction installing clear signage directing pedestrians. Keeping a register of incidents and ongoing monitoring of trip hazards - Construction Management Plan.
Temporary closure of Gloucester Walk and Cumberland Street during construction.	Negative	Local residents, visitors and businesses	Provide alternative safe and universal access for pedestrians throughout construction.	Notification letter in mailbox community of change of route.
Increased traffic including trucks and large vehicles impacting on pedestrian access and safety and increased noise for residents.	Negative	Local residents, visitors and businesses	To be considered through the Construction Traffic Management Plan which should consider the impacts on residents and businesses to minimise impacts/ disruptions - not just what's most convenient for the construction.	Construction Traffic Management Plan clearly articulates the route that has minimal disruption to residents and businesses.
There will be noise and increased traffic during construction period which will impact on local amenity.	Negative	Local residents, business and visitors	To be addressed through the Construction Traffic Management Plan.	Community hotline contact number and email address to address community concerns.