

VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

PREPARED BY ARCHITECTUS
THE STAR – MODIFICATION 13

THE  STAR

URBIS

An aerial photograph of a city waterfront. In the foreground, a marina is filled with numerous sailboats. To the right, a tall, curved skyscraper with a glass facade rises prominently. The surrounding area is a mix of modern and older buildings, with green spaces and a river or harbor in the background. The sky is clear and blue.

Visual Impact Assessment

Star Modification 13

For Star Entertainment Group

August 2018

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This document is for discussion purposes only unless signed.

Contents

Executive summary	4				
1	Introduction and Urban Context	7	4	Detailed assessment	41
1.1	Introduction	8	4.1	Introduction and format of assessment	42
1.2	The design competition process	11	4.2	Public domain views	43
1.3	The proposal	12	4.2.2	P1: Distant - North - Milsons Point Wharf	44
1.4	Urban context	13	4.2.3	P2: Distant - North - McMahon's Point Lookout	46
2	Key considerations for assessment	19	4.2.4	P3: Distant - North - Balls Head Reserve	48
2.1	Approach to assessment	20	4.2.5	P4: Distant - East - Observatory Hill	50
2.2	Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements	21	4.2.6	P5: Distant - East - Barangaroo Headland Park	52
2.3	Planning framework for visual and view assessment	22	4.2.7	P6: Distant - East - Central Barangaroo Foreshore	54
2.3.1	Draft Eastern City District Plan	22	4.2.8	P7: Distant - East - Martin Place near Macquarie Street	56
2.3.2	Sydney Regional Environmental Plan (Sydney Harbour Catchment) 2005	22	4.2.9	P8: Distant - East - Martin Place between Pitt St and George St	58
2.3.3	Foreshores and Waterways Development Control Plan 2005	23	4.2.10	P9: Distant - East - King Street Wharf	60
2.3.4	Sydney Local Environmental Plan 2012	24	4.2.11	P10: Distant - East - Pyrmont Bridge eastern approach	62
2.3.5	Sydney Development Control Plan 2012	24	4.2.12	P11: Distant - East - Pyrmont Bridge West	64
2.3.6	Draft Central Sydney Planning Strategy	24	4.2.13	P12: Distant - East - Cockle Bay	66
2.4	Planning principles regarding views	27	4.2.14	P13: Distant - Northwest - Peacock Point, Illoura Reserve	68
2.5	Previous approvals for the site	28	4.2.15	P14: Distant - Northwest - Ewerton Park	70
2.6	Standards for photography and photomontages	30	4.2.16	P15: Distant - Northwest - Robert Street Reserve	72
2.7	Criteria for assessment	32	4.2.17	P16: Distant - Southwest - Glebe Foreshore Parks	74
3	Selection of views for detailed assessment	35	4.2.18	P17: Distant - Southwest - Blackwattle Bay / Rozelle Bay	76
3.1	Selection of views for detailed analysis	36	4.2.19	P18: Distant - Southwest - Foreshore walk near Bridge Road	78
			4.2.20	P19: Distant - West - Gladesville Bridge	80
			4.2.21	P20: Medium distance - Union Square	82
			4.2.22	P21: Medium distance - Giba Park	84
			4.2.23	P22: Medium distance - Pirrama Park	86
			4.2.24	P23: Immediate - Pirrama Road / Jones Bay Road	88
			4.2.25	P24: Immediate - Pyrmont Bay Park	90
			4.3	Private views	92
			4.3.1	Pr 1: City West Housing - 88 John Street (7 th storey)	94
			4.3.2	Pr 2: City West Housing - 88 John Street (2 nd storey)	96
			4.3.3	Pr 3: City West Housing - 88 John Street (7 th storey)	98
			4.3.4	Pr 4: City West Housing - 88 John Street (2 nd storey)	100
			4.3.5	Pr 5: 'Watermark' 24 & 26 Point Street - South facade - 7 th storey	102
			4.3.6	Pr 6: 'Watermark' 24 & 26 Point Street - South facade - 1 st storey	104
			4.3.7	Pr 7: 'Watermark' 24 & 26 Point Street - East facade - 8 th storey	106
			4.3.8	Pr 8: 'Watermark' 24 & 26 Point Street - East facade - 5 th storey	108
			4.3.9	Pr 9: 'Watermark' 24 & 26 Point Street - East facade - 1 st storey	110
			4.3.10	Pr 10: 'Watermark' 24 & 26 Point Street - Inner facade	112
			4.3.11	Pr 11: 'Watermark Tower' - 2 Jones Bay Road - South facade - Level 8 (9 th storey)	114
			4.3.12	Pr 12: 'Watermark Tower' - 2 Jones Bay Road - South facade - Level 6 (7 th storey)	116
			4.3.13	Pr 13: 'Watermark Tower' - 2 Jones Bay Road - South facade - Level 3 (4 th storey)	118
			4.3.14	Pr 14: 'Watermark Tower' - 2 Jones Bay Road - East facade - Level 8 (9 th storey)	120
			4.3.15	Pr 15: 'Watermark Tower' - 2 Jones Bay Road - East Facade - Level 6 (7 th storey)	122
			4.3.16	Pr 16: 'Watermark Tower' - 2 Jones Bay Road - East facade - Level 3 (4 th storey)	124
			4.3.17	Pr 17: 21 Cadigal Avenue (15 th storey)	126
			4.3.18	Pr 18: 8 Distillery Drive (18 th storey)	128
			4.3.19	Pr 19: Astral Residences - Level 1 West	130
			4.3.20	Pr 20: Astral Residences - Level 1 East	132
			4.3.21	Pr 21: Astral Residences - Level 5 West	134
			4.3.22	Pr 22: Astral Residences - Level 5 East	136
			4.3.23	Pr 23: Astral Residences - Level 10 West	138
			4.3.24	Pr 24: Astral Residences - Level 10 East	140
5	Summary of impacts	143			
5.1	Visual catchment and public domain views	144			
5.2	Impacts on the current urban setting including heritage items	148			
5.3	Private views	150			
5.4	Comparison - existing approvals and proposal	152			
6	Assessment and conclusion	155			
6.1	Assessments of visual impact	156			
6.2	Conclusion	161			
Appendix A	Photographic assessment of public domain views	163			

Executive summary

The project

This Visual Impact Assessment has been prepared by Architectus to assess the potential visual impact of the proposed Modification 13 to the Star Casino development (MP08_0098 MOD 13).

The methodology for this assessment has been developed by Architectus based on experience with relevant planning principles for view assessment established by the New South Wales Land and Environment Court and experience in preparing Visual Impact Assessments for a variety of projects. It has also been based on the SEARs and the project's planning framework.

Architectus has also provided visual impact guidance within the design competition process for this site, which included three leading architectural firms (Grimshaw, BVN and FJMT), overseen by a Design Review Panel.

Urban context and consideration of visual impact

The site is located on the Pyrmont Peninsula which currently does not include buildings of this height. However, the also sits within the context of the Darling Harbour Waterfront, including Barangaroo, Kings Wharf, Cockle Bay and Darling Live, which does have a number of buildings of this scale, most of them recent additions to the skyline. This 'emerging global waterfront' precinct is the first signs of the changing context that is set to shape the future form of Central Sydney as it grows west.

The recently released Draft Eastern City District Plan and Draft Central Sydney Strategy both acknowledge that in order to accommodate growth, Central Sydney will need to grow west to include the Bays Precinct. Already this change has manifested itself through recent development including Barangaroo, the Sydney International Convention, Exhibition and Entertainment Precinct, the approved 'Ribbon' development, Four Points Hotel and Central Park. These developments substantially exceeded the previous heights within their context. Additional proposals including Harbourside and Cockle Bay Wharf, if approved, will continue this trend.

In terms of the future context of the tower, there are a limited number of sites in Pyrmont which are likely to be available to tall buildings. This is due to heritage, conservation areas, existing strata title, small sites and other considerations. However, there area a number of sites in Pyrmont which sit within the Bays Precinct redevelopment and are collectively known as the Bays Market District. These are waterfront sites as well and also have the capacity to accommodate tall buildings. Due to the limited number of sites, future taller development in this locality is likely to occur

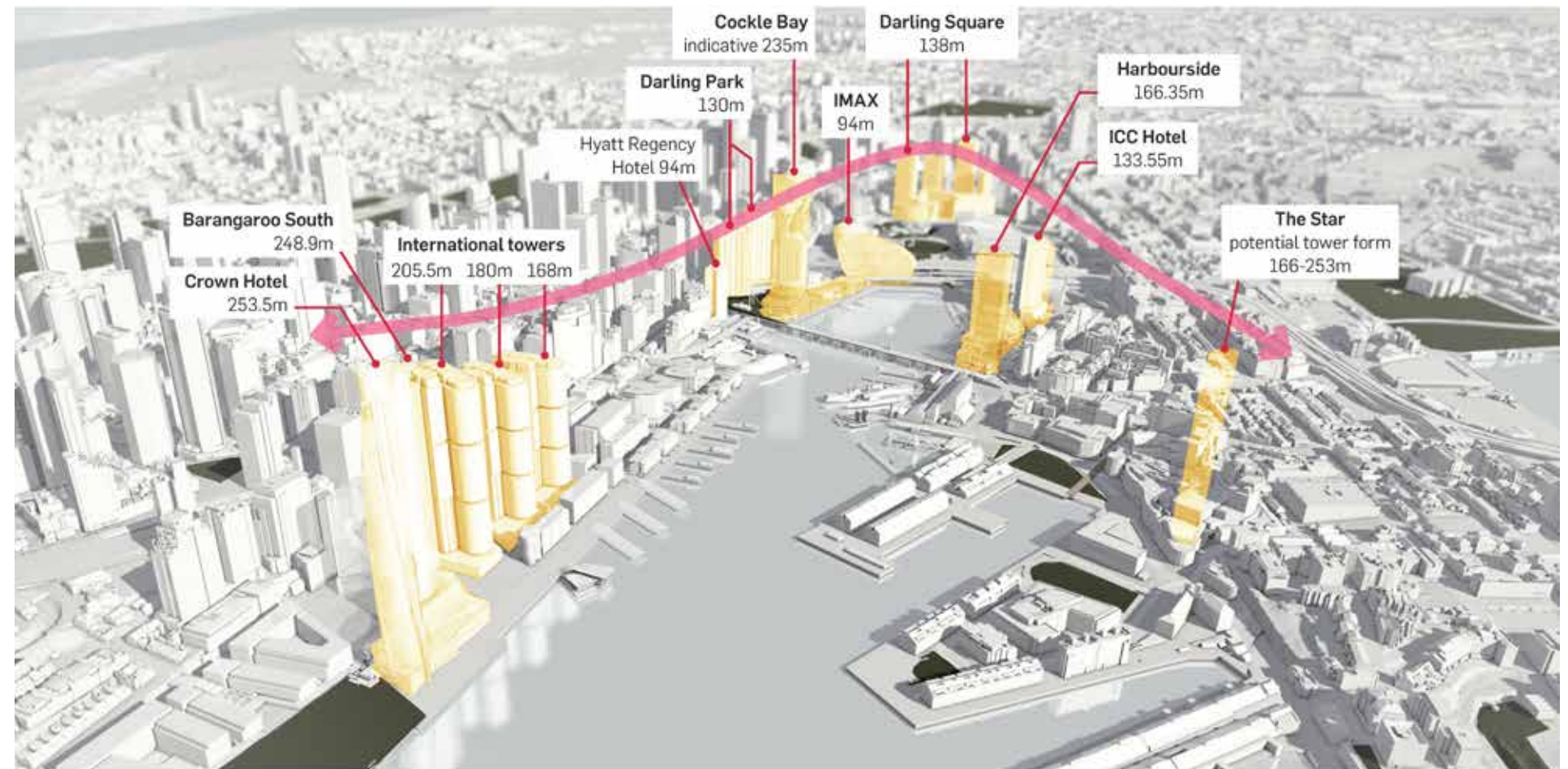


Figure 1: Location of tower within the context of approved and proposed development in Darling Harbour

as a singular tower or small clusters of towers rather than the significant skyline cluster that occurs in the Sydney CBD. This means, buildings are likely to be seen ‘in the round’, at least in the short to medium term.

The Bays Precinct, with over 95 ha of land largely located on the waterfront, also has significant capacity to accommodate buildings taller than its existing context. To date, there is no identified guidance as to the future form of buildings in this precinct.

In Architectus’ view, due to both its location and its changing context, the most important aspect of the future development should be its visual qualities - with a focus on slenderness and the ability to be viewed in the round. This advice was provided by Architectus to the Design Competition participants for the site.

Visual impact - Public domain views

Impacts on existing views

An assessment of view/visual impacts for the project finds that the impacts on public domain views range from low to moderate-high. The moderate-high impacts around the eastern side of Darling Harbour foreshore between Pyrmont Bridge and Central Barangaroo. The moderate impacts take in a wider area of Darling Harbour foreshore, Observatory Hill, Eastern Pyrmont, Union Square and one view from Martin Place near Macquarie Street.

In all public domain views considered, even those mostly highly impacted, the proposal does not obstruct views of water and the land-water interface, which are typically the most important elements within the views under the relevant planning principles. Nor does the proposal obstruct views between public places, of heritage items, or landmarks. The proposal typically obstructs an area of sky, the majority of which is retained. Because of this, while the proposal is highly prominent within many views it does not generally reduce the quality of views or their ability to be appreciated.

Impacts on future character

It is to be expected that growth of Central Sydney westwards towards the Bays Precinct will create visual impacts. While the proposal is prominent in many views it will not impact on the key elements of importance such as water views in any further locations.

While the proposal will change the views in its locality, this is an area strategically envisioned for growth and other developments in the local area have also been accepted which include a significant impact on views and change the scale of their context similarly including Barangaroo, the Sydney International Convention, Exhibition and Entertainment Precinct (SICEEP), the ‘Ribbon’ development to replace the existing IMAX building and Central Park. The proposal should also be considered within the context of future tall buildings to the west within the Bays Precinct, and potentially also within Ultimo-Pyrmont. It is to be expected that the growth of Sydney westwards towards the Bays Precinct will create visual impacts on the city skyline but will ‘ground’ the new tower within the built form of the city context.

On this basis, the proposal’s impacts on public domain views are considered acceptable.

Visual impact - Private views

The impact on private domain views includes:

- high or moderate-high impact - approximately 16 apartments in 2 Jones Bay Road and 14 apartments within the Astral Residences.
- moderate impacts (a significant portion of the existing view is retained)
 - further apartments in Jones Bay Road, 88 John Street, 24 & 26 Point Street, 8 Distillery Drive and 21 Cadigal Avenue.

The requirement for view sharing needs to be based on what is reasonable. There is no specific requirement for the retention of existing private views within any relevant planning document.

The Planning Principles describe that impacts from a compliant building is likely to be more reasonable than a non-compliant one.

For all locations which receive a high impact (2 Jones Bay Road), an LEP height compliant proposal would obstruct the same horizon and water views, which are considered the most significant elements within these views in accordance with the Planning Principles.

Relevant considerations from the NSW Land and Environment Court Planning Principles are the ‘reasonableness of the proposal’ and whether a ‘more skilful design’ could reduce the visual impact. With regard to these, it is notable that:

- The areas of the design which affect view loss of the most important elements (Darling Harbour, Sydney Harbour and the city skyline) for existing apartments are generally within the existing 28m Height of Building Control.
- Within the context of an acknowledged area of growth within Sydney, that is also within proximity to Central Sydney, it would be unreasonable to expect that views from most residences within a street-wall building should remain unobstructed.
- The proposal has adopted an ‘inset’ at the lower-tower levels which widens the ‘gap’ for private views along the axis of John Street.
- With regard to the Sydney Development Control Plan 2012’s requirement that development provides a pleasant outlook (short range prospect), the proposal responds appropriately.

With regard to the above, Architectus regard the impacts of the proposal on private residences to be acceptable.

Contextual fit

Existing effects

In considering its waterfront context, the proposal is between the height of the approved Barangaroo towers and that of the ICC Hotel. Future waterfront development within the Bays Precinct is also expected to be of a significantly greater scale than its immediate surrounds and establish a new context for the renewal precinct as a whole.

Future fit

While the proposal is not similar in scale to its immediate surrounds, it is appropriate to its emerging context within an area of significant change in Sydney. This context includes recent developments and approvals such as Barangaroo and the ICC Hotel as well as future change of the Bays Precinct.

Assessment of environmental impacts beyond those already assessed

The SEARs for this project specifically request a comparison of environmental impact beyond those already assessed. With regard to this it is noted that:

- For public domain views, a maximum moderate-high impact is proposed for the majority of Eastern Darling Harbour where previous approvals included a moderate impact across a similar area (as part of the original MP08_0098 application). The current proposal, despite being quantitatively larger than the previous approvals is not considered to have a significantly greater impact as it does not obstruct views from the public domain to elements of identified importance and it is also in alignment with the current context of tall buildings developing around the edge of Darling Harbour.
- For private views approximately 30 apartments across two buildings are anticipated to be highly impacted (with the majority of their view being removed) where the approved MOD7 included similar view loss to a similar number of apartments.

Both of these are considered to be limited additional impacts.

Conclusion

The reasonableness of the visual impact of the proposal on the surrounding public and private domain is dependent on the quantum and severity of impacts, the strategic merit of the proposal, the importance / benefits of the facility (public benefit), and measures to ameliorate the visual impact.

Based on the above it is considered that the overall visual impact of the proposal on public and private views is acceptable. Furthermore, it is concluded the visual impacts of the proposal will have limited environmental impact beyond that approved up to and including Mod 14.

1 Introduction and Urban Context

1.1 Introduction

Purpose of this report

This Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) has been prepared by Architectus on behalf of Star Entertainment Group Limited (SEGL) for the modification and redevelopment of The Star, located at 80 Pyrmont St, Pyrmont. This report describes the visual impact of the proposal, also known as Modification 13.

Basis of assessment

This Visual Impact Assessment is based on best practice and Architectus' experience in the field of visual impact assessment. It has been designed to give comprehensive consideration to the following:

- The Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) for the project.
- The relevant planning framework for the site (as noted within the SEARs) as it relates to visual impact.
- Land and Environment Court Planning Principles for the assessment of views and visual impact, which set principles for the consideration of Visual Impact in New South Wales, particularly where this is not further defined within the Planning Framework.
- Land and Environment Court standards for photomontages.
- Previous Visual Impact Assessments for the site.

In considering visual impact generally it should be noted that a significant visual impact does not necessarily mean that a proposal is unacceptable in planning terms. These factors need to be considered within the context of the site, planning framework and assessment pathway for the project.

This report does not include consideration of visual impacts of proposed signage, which is covered separately in the EIS.

Architectural and design excellence

As the proposal has been through an independent design excellence process, this report focusses on the objective elements of view loss and degree of change. Further detail on the qualitative merit of the architectural design can be found in the Architectural Design Statement, Urban Context Report, and Design Excellence Report for the project.

The assessment pathway

This proposal (Modification 13) will be assessed on the basis that the proposal can be shown to have "limited environmental impact" over and above the existing site and approvals (including existing buildings and Modification 14, which is approved however not constructed - see further description below). This assessment includes a consideration of this as part of its conclusion.

Site location and context

The Star is located on the eastern slopes of Pyrmont peninsula in close proximity to Darling Island and Pyrmont Bay wharves, Pyrmont Park and Darling Harbour.

It is approximately two (2) kilometres west of the Central Sydney in the local government area of the City of Sydney. As of 2013, Pyrmont is Australia's most densely populated suburb.

The site occupies the whole block bounded by Pyrmont St, Union St, Jones Bay St and Pirrama St. The site is adjacent to Pyrmont Bay Park and Union Square precinct, a major heritage precinct. Several historic and heritage listed buildings are located within proximity to the site including the Pyrmont Fire Station in Pyrmont Street, the Post Office in Harris Street, The Harlequin Inn pub etc. These provide a strong civic and cultural backdrop to the town centre and to the site.

Existing development

The existing integrated resort includes a multi-storey entertainment facility, gaming areas, retail spaces, multiple restaurants and bars, the Sydney Lyric Theatre, 480 hotel rooms/serviced apartments across three towers, and basement parking.

Key elements of the existing development within The Star include the following:

- A range of gaming spaces including the main gaming floor, private gaming spaces, international gaming spaces and outdoor gaming spaces;
- A range of retail spaces;
- A mix of restaurants and bars;
- Two theatres - the Sydney Lyric Theatre and The Star Event Centre,
- A total of 318 hotel rooms within The Astral Tower;
- A total of 171 hotel rooms within The Darling;
- A total of 117 serviced apartments within The Astral Residences;
- The Star light rail station; and
- 2,795 Basement car parking spaces.

The existing towers on the site are approximately 70m in height.

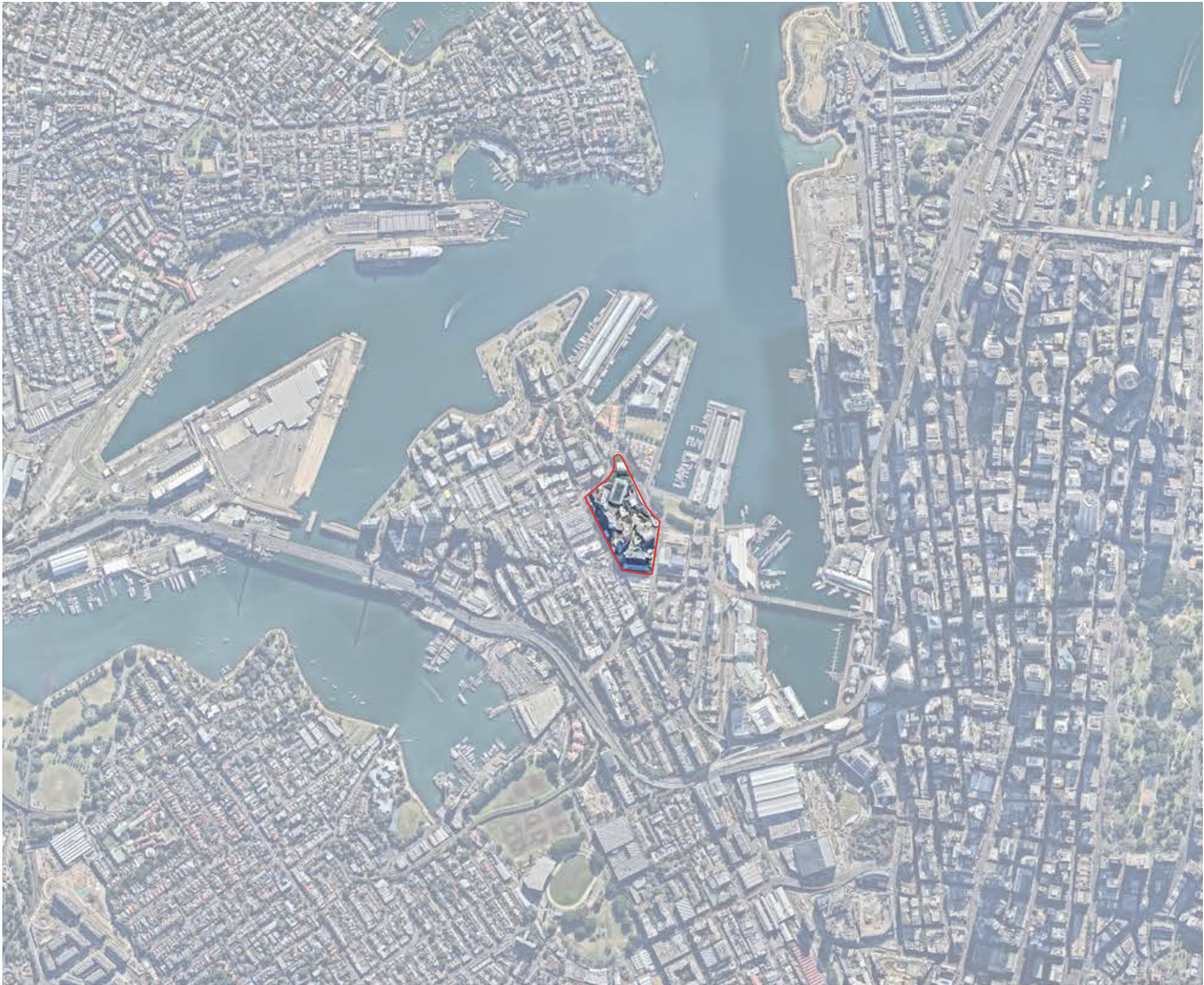
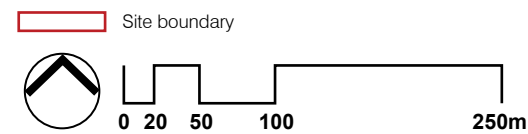


Figure 1.1.1 Site location

Modification 14 and the baseline for assessment

The proposal being assessed within this report is known as Modification 13.

The baseline for assessment within the planning framework is the existing site and Modification 14 which has been approved however is yet to commence construction.

The EIS prepared by Urbis for Mod 13 describes the scope of Mod 14 and is provided below.

“Mod 14 to Project Approval MP08_0098 (Mod 14) proposed changes and upgrades predominantly related to infill works including existing terrace and roof spaces. The works are contained internally to the site and result in minimal changes to existing building façades. The proposed works will generally improve functioning, circulation and amenity of The Star and contribute to the redevelopment of The Star to satisfy obligations to the NSW Government to maintain the site to a first-class international standard for casinos and casino complex in general. The works are generally constrained to Level 00 to Level 05. Mod 14 seeks to simplify and consolidate the terms of the planning approvals applying to The Star and to produce a consolidated set of drawings that documents the approved and constructed works on site.”

The most significant external changes to the site within Modification 14 are shown in the photomontage adjacent. They are minor in impact terms as compared to Modification 13. Mod 14 did not provide an individual visual impact assessment though its Environmental Assessment Report described that “the works will not have an impact on the streetscape, will not incur a visual impact and will fit within the existing built form” and further that “the proposed additions will not be obvious from street level or in the context of the existing development”.

The consideration of Mod 14, being approved but not constructed, and thus not evident in existing photos of the site, is further described in Section 4.1 of this document.



Figure 1.1.2 Photomontage comparison of existing site (above) and Modification 14 (below) describing extent of visual change (focus of changed circled in lower image)

1.2 The design competition process

A design competition has been held for this project, as requested by the SEARs (Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements) for the project.

Prior this competition the location of the tower within the site had already been selected after options were considered, primarily for the dual purposes of operational issues associated with the site's continuing operation and also to minimise any overshadowing impact of the proposal.

The design competition included three leading architectural firms (Grimshaw, BVN and FJMT) and was overseen by a Design Review Panel including the following members:

- Peter Poulet - NSW Government Architect and Executive Director, Office of State Architect
- Lisa-Maree Carrigan - Director, Group GSA
- Craig Allchin - Adjunct Professor of Architecture, University of Technology Sydney (UTS) and Director Six Degrees Urban Pty Ltd
- James Doolan - Regional Vice-President Hotel Development – Asia Pacific, Marriott International
- Greg Hawkins - Managing Director, The Star Sydney

Based on an initial photographic review of the site and its context, and a contextual analysis of the context (see Section 1.2 of this document), the following key principles were developed by Architectus and communicated through an initial briefing to the design team:

- Tower should be visually slender
- Tower should address a variety of skyline views (designed to be seen in the round)
- Address streetscape and entrance
- Address private view impacts (upper podium/lower tower)



Grimshaw



FJMT



BVN

Figure 1.2.1 Design competition (Stage 2) schemes

1.3 The proposal

The subject application seeks approval for the modification of MP08_0098 under section 75W of the EP&A Act.

It seeks approval for the following works and activities:

- Ritz-Carlton Hotel and Residential Tower: Part demolition of the existing development at the corner of Pirrama and Jones Bay Road and the construction of a 237-m tower comprising 204 residential apartments and 220 hotel rooms, residential and hotel lobbies, a hotel club lounge, a neighbourhood centre within the tower podium, a food and drink outlet fronting Jones Bay Road, and a car-parking stacker system and associated development;
- The Ribbon: A new ‘ribbon’ element at Level 07 connecting the new tower to The Star along the Pirrama Road frontage, comprising two pools (one for new hotel, one for The Star), associated pool decks and food & drink premises with associated store rooms and facilities, residential communal open space, separate gymnasiums and associated facilities for the residents and hotel guests, and landscape treatment;
- Level 05 Sky Terrace: New Level 05 Sky Terrace incorporating food & drink premises with external areas, landscaping treatment, pool and pool deck upgrades for Astral Hotel and Residences, day spa and completion of the Vertical Transportation drum to connect Level 05 to the levels below;
- Façade Integration Works: Upgrades to the facades at Pirrama Road and Jones Bay Road to integrate the new Ritz-Carlton Hotel and Residential Tower with the existing building;
- Infrastructure Upgrades: Upgrades including new plant rooms, relocation of cooling towers and main switchboards, new capstone microturbine units and associated flues, relocation of diesel generator flues, and upgrades to the Jones Bay Road Loading Dock and the Event Centre Loading Dock;
- Level B02 Transport Interchange: Integration of the new Ritz-Carlton Hotel and Residential drop-off/pick-up arrangements, new commuter bike parking and bike-hire system, upgrade of finishes to light rail station surrounds including removal of existing walls adjacent to the Pirrama Road frontage, upgrades to taxi rank arrangements, new coach parking, and line-marking/realignment of kerbs;

- Transport improvements – local road works: Median strip works and line-marking on Jones Bay Road and Pyrmont Street to enable a new right-hand turning lane into the Astral porte-cochere, new Pyrmont Street carpark entry/exit and associated works, and relocation of the existing taxi-rank from Jones Bay Road to the Level B02 transport interchange;
- Site-wide Landscape and Public Domain Upgrades: Upgrade to street frontages along Pirrama Road, Jones Bay Road, and Pyrmont Street, as well as entrance upgrade to the SELS building at Jones Bay Road and Pyrmont Street;
- Road signage works (Pyrmont Parking Guidance System): Additional signage upgrades to the Pyrmont Parking Guidance System to support Mod 13;
- Level 00 - Restaurant Street: Creation of a new destination restaurant street incorporating existing retail spaces and food & drink premises on Level 00;
- Food and Beverage – other locations: Reconfiguration of Harvest Buffet and refurbishment of Bistro 80;
- Darling Hotel Corner: Upgrade of the corner plaza at the Edward/Union Street and Union/Pyrmont Street property entries including a new food & drink premises located at the Edward/Union Street entry on Level 01 and Level 02, a new awning enclosure for the existing café at the Union/Pyrmont Street entry, and two luxury display cases at the Darling Hotel carpark entry;
- Special Lighting Events: Approval for fifty-three (53) Special Lighting Events per year for the use of permanent installation of moving projector lights on the rooftop of the Astral Hotel.
- Special Noise Events: Maximum of 12 special noise events in one calendar year to be held at either Level 05 Outdoor or Indoor Event Space or Level 07 Ribbon Pool Deck.
- Site Wide Acoustic Strategy: A site-wide acoustic strategy comprising of twelve (12) special acoustic events to be held at either Level 05 Sky Terrace or the Level 07 Ribbon Pool deck for up to 1,900 people based on GFA and dependent on other factors such as fire egress and traffic management.
- Site Wide Lighting Strategy: A site-wide lighting strategy comprising

lighting works to the proposed Ritz-Carlton Hotel and Residential Tower, and modernisation of the existing lighting across the site;

- Signage Upgrades: Installation of new signage works including building identification (on existing buildings and the Ritz-Carlton Tower), business identification (including food & drink premises), and way-finding signage;
- Stormwater Upgrades: Stormwater upgrade works including increased pit inlets and pipe capacities in order to decrease potential flood risk to the site, adjacent existing properties and the general public;
- Modifications of conditions as may be required



Figure 1.3.1 Photomontage view looking south (FJMT)

Topography

The peninsula of Ultimo Pymont is oriented northwest-southeast with a main ridgeline running through the centre of the peninsula. The subject site is located on the eastern slopes of Pymont adjacent to the foreshore. It is separated from the Sydney CBD by Pymont Bay and Darling Harbour, and on the west lies Blackwattle Bay and Johnstons Bay. The eastern slope is clearly visible to the western edge of the City, Millers Point and Barangaroo and from Darling Harbour. The orientation of the peninsula also exposes the eastern slope to distant views from McMahons Point and Balls Head in the north, as well as views from Balmain and White Bay on the northwest. In addition to the above, the existing built form (particularly around and facing Central Sydney) limits available views.

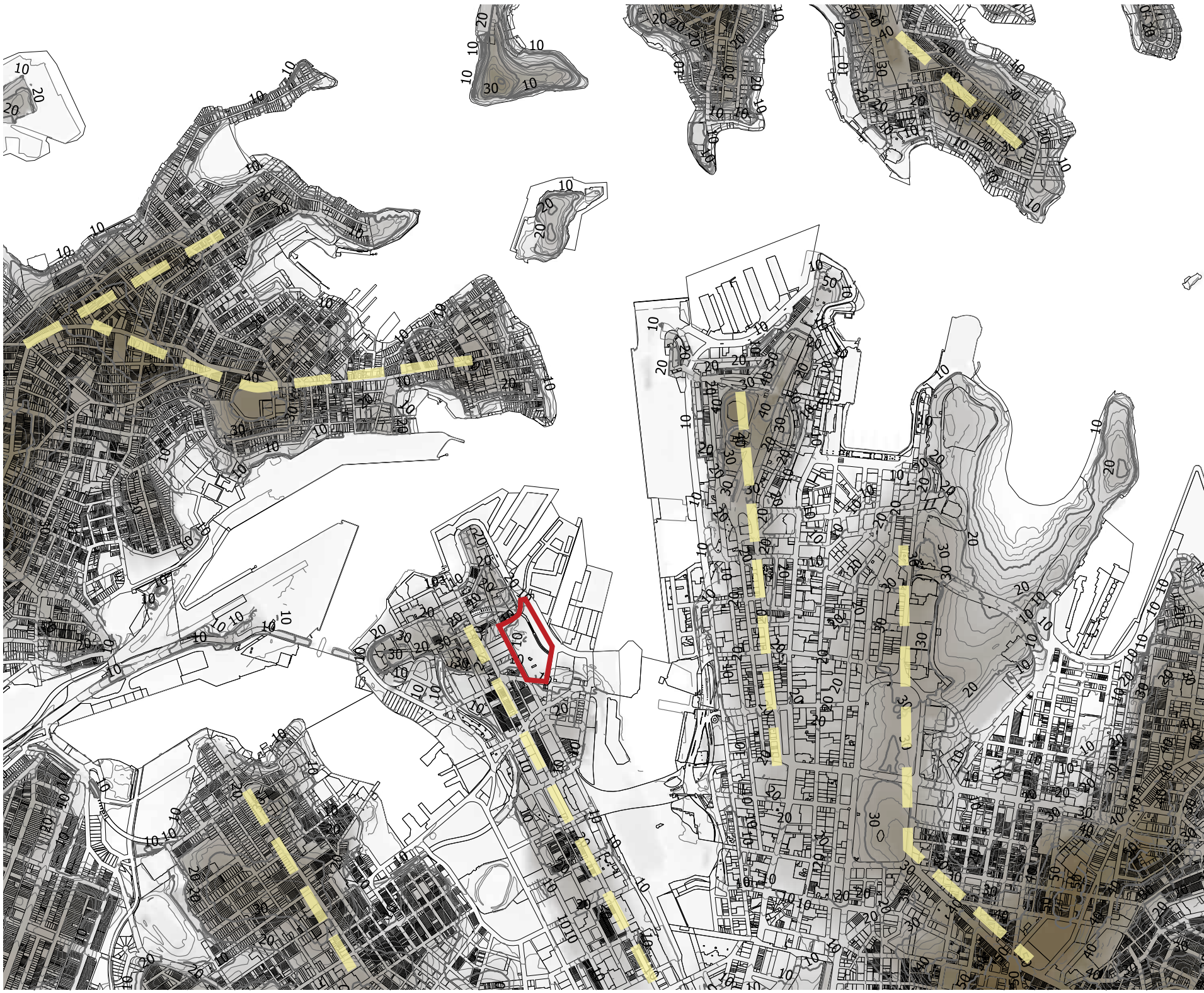
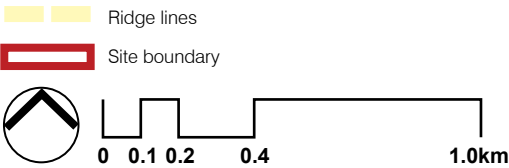


Figure 1.4.4 Local topography (10m contours highlighted, 2m contours shown)

Major developments

Major developments are under construction, approved or planned at various key sites along the foreshore and surrounds, including Darling Harbour, Barangaroo and the Bays Precinct. Some \$16 billion of investment is envisaged over the next decade. The Barangaroo South towers, ICC Hotel, Darling Harbour Live and Darling Square are all under construction. Central Barangaroo and the 'Ribbon' at IMAX are approved. Further development is proposed at Harbourside and Cockle Bay Wharf where recent SSD applications have been lodged.

To the west, beyond Pyrmont, Urban Growth is planning the Bays Precinct, currently proposed as a mix of cultural, maritime, recreational, retail and commercial uses.

The NSW Government has also announced a new metro railway line linking the Parramatta and Sydney CBDs, the 'Sydney Metro West'. This will connect the Bays Precinct to the Sydney CBD and may also introduce a new stop within Pyrmont.



① Darling Harbour Live - ICC Hotel



④ Darling Harbour Live - Darling Square



⑦ Barangaroo



② Darling Harbour Live - ICC



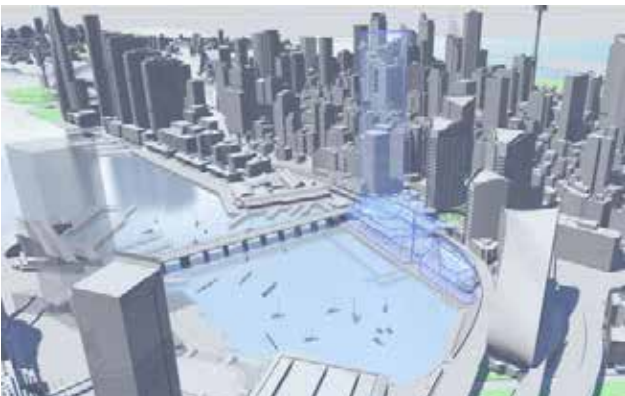
⑤ The Ribbon



⑧ Bays Precinct - Bays Market District



③ Darling Harbour Live - Exhibition Centre



⑥ Cockle Bay Wharf



⑨ Harbourside

Built form

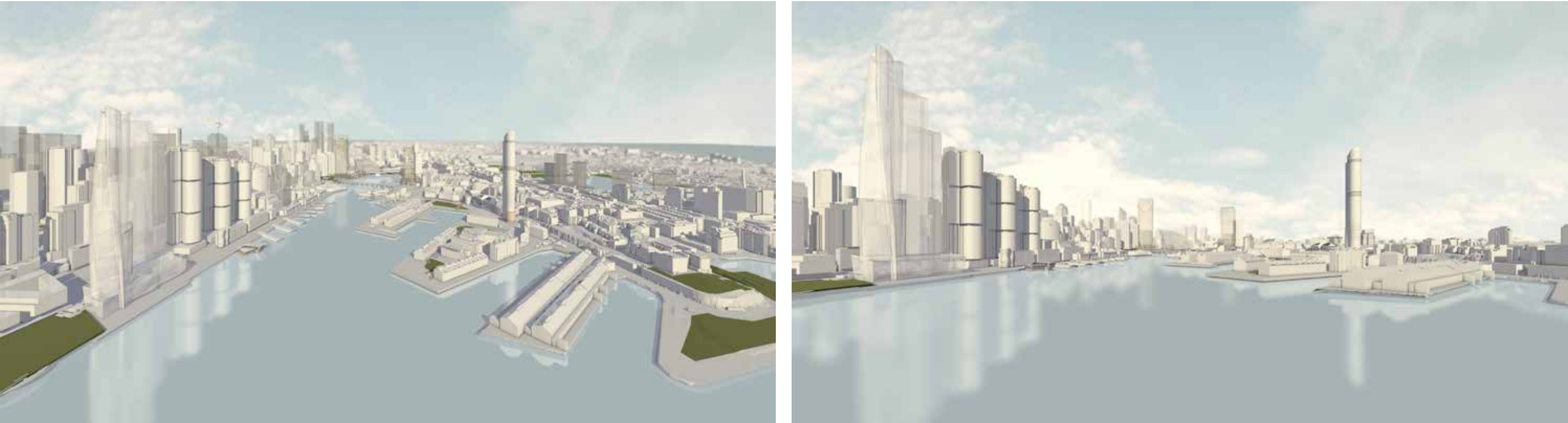


Figure 1.4.5 Key views of the proposal within context of future approved development and current proposals around Darling Harbour