

***MAJOR PROJECT ASSESSMENT:***

***Albert Avenue & Thomas Street, Chatswood – Thomas Street Car Park***

***CONSTRUCTION OF MIXED USE, COMMERCIAL AND RESIDENTIAL TOWERS WITH, BASEMENT CAR PARKING & THROUGH SITE LINK***

***Proposed by: Welles Thomas  
MP09\_0066***



Director-General's  
Environmental Assessment Report  
Section 75I of the  
*Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*  
September 2010

## ABBREVIATIONS

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CIV	Capital Investment Value
Department	Department of Planning
DGRs	Director-General's Requirements
Director-General	Director-General of the Department of Planning
EA	Environmental Assessment
EP&A Act	<i>Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979</i>
EP&A Regulation	Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2000
EPI	Environmental Planning Instrument
MD SEPP	State Environmental Planning Policy (Major Development) 2005
Minister	Minister for Planning
PAC	Planning Assessment Commission
Part 3A	Part 3A of the <i>Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979</i>
PEA	Preliminary Environmental Assessment
PFM	Planning Focus Meeting
PPR	Preferred Project Report
Proponent	Welles Thomas Pty Ltd
RtS	Response to Submissions

Cover Photograph: Perspective view of the proposed development from the south.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The proponent, Welles Thomas Pty Ltd propose a mixed use residential, commercial and retail development at a site commonly known as the Thomas Street Car Park. This site is located within 150 metres from Chatswood Railway Station and is situated toward the south western corner of the Chatswood CBD which is a Major Centre in the inner north metropolitan area.

The proposal is for a mixed use development which comprises separate residential and commercial buildings having height of 29 and 21 storeys respectively, with ground floor retail uses, pedestrian plaza and basement car parking including 250 public parking spaces. This project has a CIV of \$147,000,000 and will generate approximately 200 construction based jobs and will facilitate up to 1000 operational jobs.

The proposal is a major project under Part 3A of the EP&A Act, being development for the purpose of a residential, commercial or retail project with a capital investment of more than \$100 million under clause 13 of Schedule 1 of State Environmental Planning Policy (Major Development) 2005. Therefore the Minister for Planning is the approval authority.

The Department exhibited the proposal between 13 January and 26 February 2010 and received 40 submissions. These submissions raised a number of concerns centered upon the appropriateness of the built form, environmental and residential amenity impacts such as overshadowing and view loss, and impacts on the local road network as a result of additional traffic and road closure.

The Department has considered the merits of the proposal in accordance with the objects of the EP&A Act and ecologically sustainable development, also taking into consideration the issues raised in all submissions. The Department has determined that the proposed development is appropriate and fits within the context of the Chatswood CBD. The main amenity impacts that arise from the proposal are overshadowing and the loss of views enjoyed by nearby residences. However, the complete preservation of the solar access and views is unsustainable having regard to the targets set for future economic and employment growth in the Chatswood CBD. In addition the closure of Fleet Lane will result in changes to access arrangements for those properties backing onto the eastern end of the lane way. This can however be effectively managed with the imposition of appropriate conditions.

It is considered that the impacts have been addressed in the PPR, the Revised Statement of Commitments and recommended conditions and that the impacts can be suitably mitigated and/or managed to ensure a satisfactory level of environmental performance.

The development will contribute to the broader planning objectives set out by the Sydney Metropolitan Strategy and the Inner North draft Subregional Strategy in terms of growth in employment capacity for Chatswood as a Major Centre and the supply of housing close to public transport and services. The development will also deliver more specific public benefits including a new 250 space public car park, public domain improvements in the form of a pedestrian through site link and affordable housing units within the development. For these reasons the project is, on balance, considered to be in the public interest and is recommended for approval subject to conditions.

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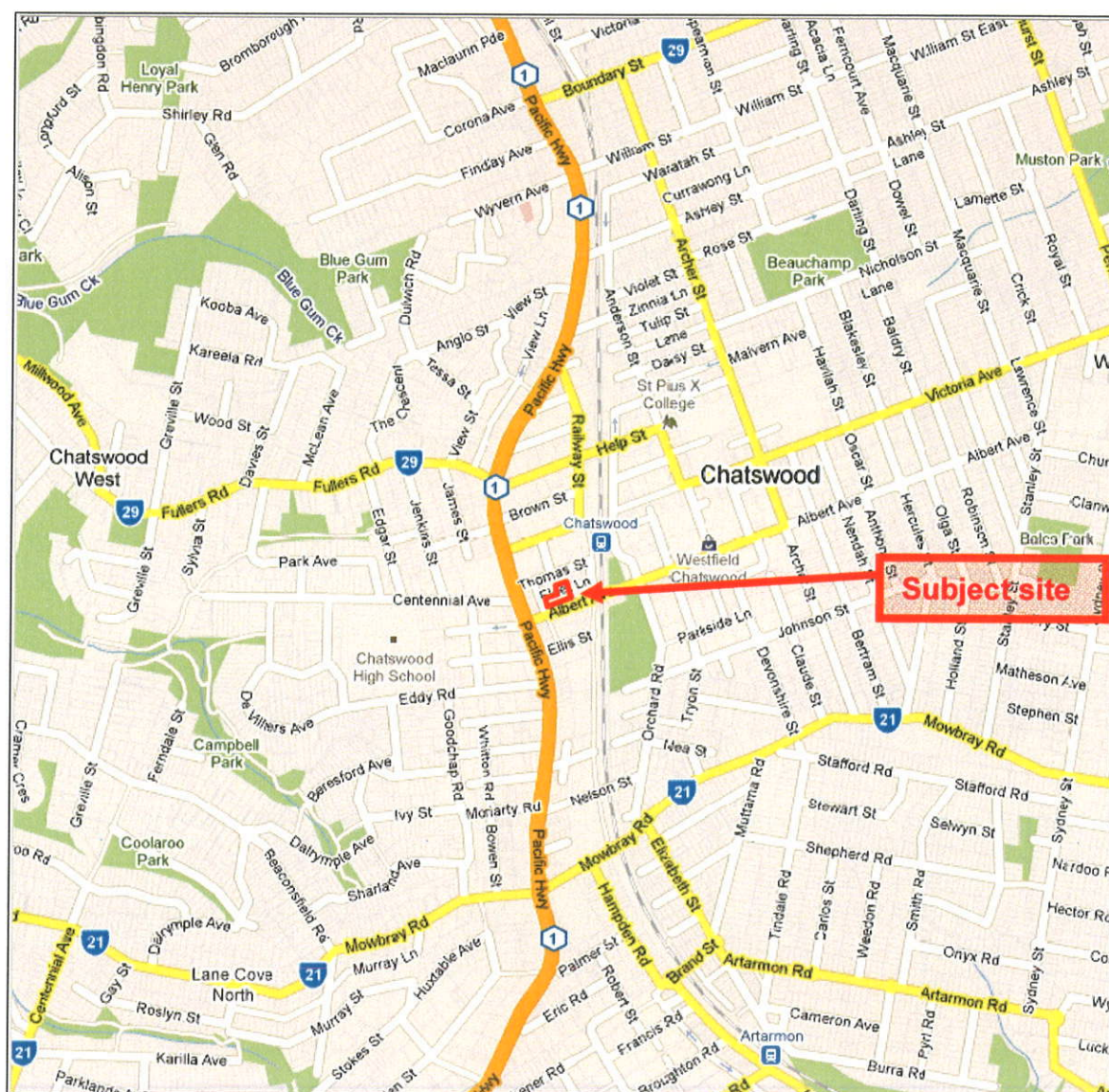
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# 1. BACKGROUND

## The Site Context and Location

The proposal is a mixed use residential, commercial and retail development at a site commonly known as the Thomas Street Car Park. The site comprises eleven properties (Lots 13, 23-30 in DP 2983 and Lots A & B in DP 381223) and is located between Albert Avenue and Thomas Street, Chatswood. The Pacific Highway is to the west of the site and the North Shore rail line is to the east of the site. It is situated within the south western corner of the Chatswood CBD (within the Willoughby Local Government Area) which is a Major Regional Centre in the inner north metropolitan area.



**Figure 1:** Context of the subject site. Chatswood is a major centre in Sydney's inner north subregion.

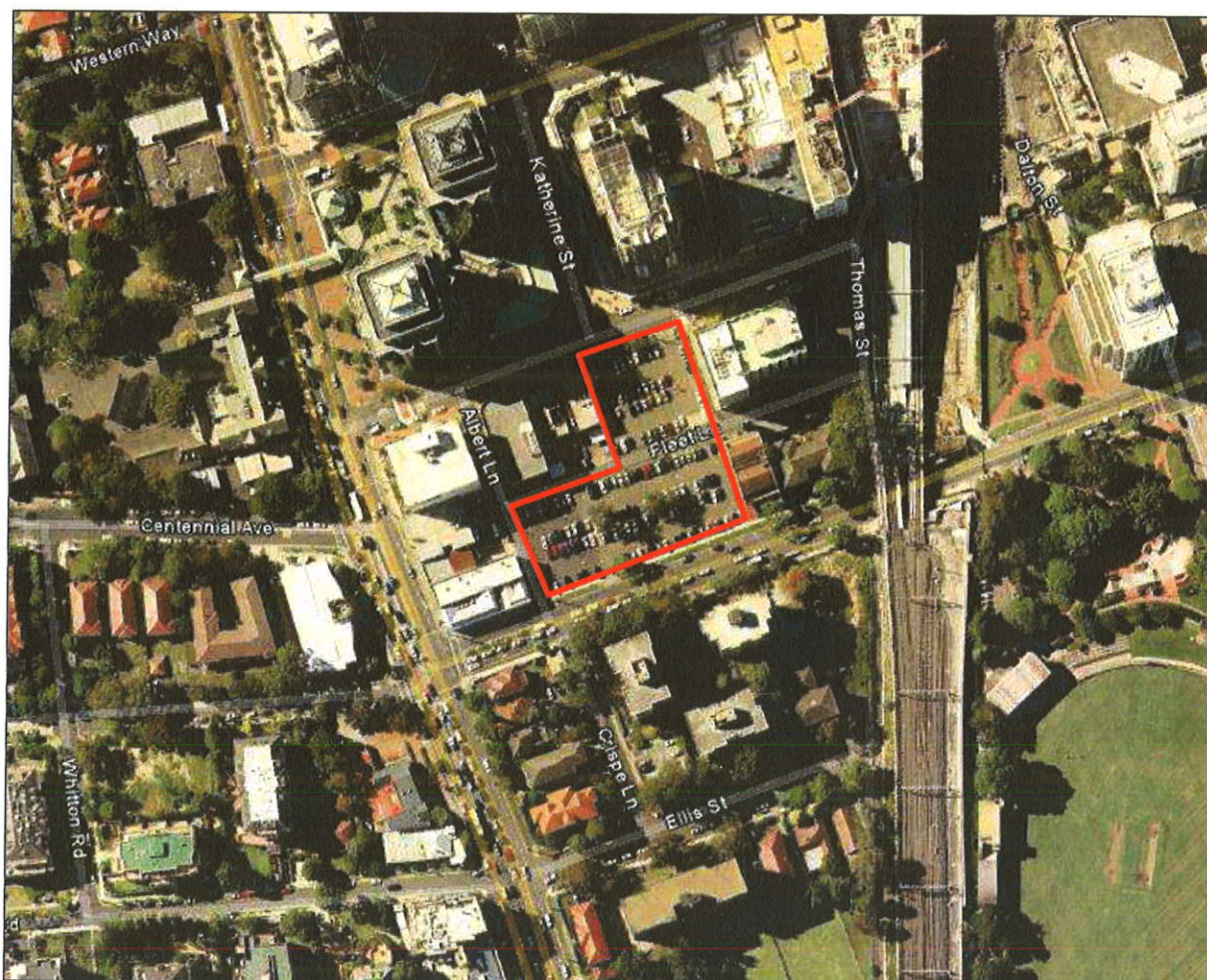
The site is within 150 metres from Chatswood railway station which is an interchange of both the North Shore rail line and the Epping – Chatswood rail line. The close proximity of these public transport facilities affords the site a good connectivity to a wide range of public transport services. The Retail Precinct is located on the eastern side of the rail line to the north east of the site, and open space uses are provided to the south west in the form of Chatswood Park and Chatswood Oval.



## Existing Site Features

The site is an L-shaped block bounded by Thomas Street to the north, Albert Lane to the west, Albert Avenue to the south and low rise commercial buildings to the east. The site has an area of 4,323m<sup>2</sup> and is currently used as at-grade, off street public car park for 156 vehicles in metered parking bays, currently owned by Willoughby City Council. It is divided into two car parking areas which are separated by Fleet Lane (also forming part of the subject site) running east-west through the middle of the site.

The southern portion of the car park is accessed from both Albert Avenue and Fleet Lane. The northern portion of the site is accessed from Thomas Street. There are no substantial improvements on the site.



**Figure 2:** The subject site (outlined in red) is an at grade car park. The local context of the site is the Chatswood CBD to the north and north east, rail line and Pacific Highway to the east and west and residential area to the south and further south west.

## Surrounding Development

Located within the Chatswood CBD, the site lies within an established urban centre. The surrounding area accommodates a diverse range of land uses and services including commercial, residential, educational institutions and recreational and community uses. More specifically:

- To the west of the site opposite Albert Lane are the rear of commercial buildings which front onto the Pacific Highway with heights ranging between 2-7 storeys. This includes



the Former Fire Station building at 767 Pacific Highway which is a locally listed heritage item. Chatswood Public School, located across the Pacific Highway further to the west is also identified as a local heritage item.

- To the north of the site beyond Thomas Street are high rise commercial and residential towers including the 23 storey Bentleigh residential tower on the opposite side of Thomas Street. Directly north west of the site, next to the northern car park on the same block as the subject site, are three storey and two storey commercial buildings (20 & 22 Thomas Street).



**Figure 3:** Looking north across the site from Albert Avenue. These buildings immediately to the north of the subject site comprise residential and commercial towers. The 23 storey Bentleigh residential tower (far right) is the tallest of the three buildings.

- Directly to the east of the site is a group of residential and commercial buildings having a height ranging between 2-7 storeys.
- To the south of the site along the southern side of Albert Avenue is a mix of medium to high density residential development in the form of residential flat buildings up to 9 storeys in height. Further to the south is an area of green recreation space in the form of the Chatswood Bowling Club and the Chatswood Croquet and Tennis Club.



**Figure 4:** Looking south west across the site from Thomas Street. The buildings immediately to the south of the site across Albert Avenue are 8-9 storey residential fat buildings.

- Chatswood Railway Station is currently undergoing large scale redevelopment. This redevelopment is broken into two elements:
  - The Chatswood Transport Interchange (CTI) project that comprises transport and related infrastructure in and around Chatswood railway station (this development is part of the Chatswood to Parramatta Rail Link project); and
  - The Chatswood Transport Precinct Project (CTPP) that comprises the construction of three residential flat buildings, retail development associated with the Chatswood railway station concourse and bus interchange. The three residential flat buildings range in height from RL201.1 metres (25 storeys) to 246.8 metres Australian Height Datum (40 storeys). These buildings are yet to be constructed.



## 2. PROPOSED PROJECT

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### 2.1. Project Description (Original EA)

The proposal seeks approval for a mixed use development which will comprise separate residential and commercial tower with ground floor retail with pedestrian plaza and basement car parking including 250 public parking spaces. In detail the components of the development comprise the following:

**A north-south orientated residential building – 29 storeys** (with plant room above) comprising:

- A three-storey podium containing:
  - ground floor retail/café tenancies and residential lobby;
  - level 1 retail and commercial gym spaces with additional plant room, and
  - level 2 resident recreational facilities with pool and gym, etc. and building manager's apartment.
- A 26 storey tower above containing a total of 208 residential apartments.

**An east-west orientated commercial building - 21 storeys** (with plant room on the roof) comprising:

- A three-storey podium accommodating:
  - ground floor retail/café space and commercial lobby;
  - level 1 commercial space; and
  - level 2 plant room.
- An 18 storey tower above containing commercial floor space

**A five level basement spanning the entirety of the site.**

This basement accommodates a total of 506 parking spaces (192 residential/ 64 commercial/retail spaces / 250 are public spaces incorporating 40 spaces allocated as residential visitor and retail).

- Separate residential and commercial /retail waste storage bays; plant area, loading bays and substation;
- Bicycle parking and associated shower facilities;
- Security and building management offices;
- Vehicle access to the basement car park will be provided from Albert Avenue in the south-eastern part of the site which will be provided as a left -in/left-out vehicle access; and
- A lay-by is proposed at the Albert Avenue street frontage to provide a taxi set down point or loading area for large trucks (smaller loading vehicles will be accommodated within the basement car park).

**Public domain works** comprising:

- A publicly accessible open space of a total area of 1894m<sup>2</sup> (1,294m<sup>2</sup> excluding the southern street frontage) with associated landscaping including planting, outdoor furniture and public artwork;
- Provision of a north-south oriented accessible through site link running between the two buildings which connects Albert Avenue and Thomas Street;
- A right-of way providing vehicle access from Fleet Lane to Thomas Street will be provided at the site's north eastern boundary; and
- The proposal requires the closure of a section of Fleet Lane that currently runs between the northern and southern car parks.

**Figures below:** Visual analysis and perspectives of the proposed development from the nearby area:



View 2 above

View 1 above