



Visual Impact Assessment

Proposed Expansion of Jones Bay Wharf Marina

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1 Introduction

This report is a visual impact assessment prepared in line with Appendix D of the Sydney Harbour Foreshores & Waterways Area Development Control Plan as part the Environmental Assessment prepared for the proposed expansion of Jones Bay Wharf Marina at Pirrama Road Pyrmont.

The primary objective of the visual assessment was to determine the visual impacts of the proposed development on the surrounding public domain, waterway, and residential and commercial developments.

2 Description of the Proposal

The proposed development consists of a series of new pontoons connected to the existing pontoons on each side of Jones Bay Wharf. The proposal will increase the number of berths within the marina by thirty three (33) so that the marina will have the capacity to accommodate up to a total of 73 commercial vessels of various sizes.

The marina currently comprises concrete pontoons and floating walkways along the eastern and western sides of the wharf. All of the pontoons on the eastern side are parallel to the wharf, whereas the pontoons on the western side are both parallel and at right angles. The floating pontoons, which are structurally independent, are connected to the wharf by a series of ramps or gangways and landings. They are located some 3.5 metres below the deck level of Jones Bay Wharf at low tide.

The marina is attached to Jones Bay Wharf which comprises two large two storey wharf buildings, upper and lower level roadways, upper and lower level perimeter decks with travelling gantries (that are now permanently fixed in position), shore buildings and a marina. A 10 wide public walkway is located around the edges of the wharf.

A detailed description of the proposal is included in the Environmental Assessment.

3 Visibility of the Proposal

Site visibility is the extent to which the expanded marina would be visible from surrounding areas. As an extension to an existing marina in front of a foreshore promenade the indicative potential visual impact of the proposal is in the higher range of impacts as defined in the Sydney Harbour Foreshores & Waterways Area Development Control Plan (DCP).

The viewers most likely to be affected by the proposal are as follows:

Commercial developments:

- Tenancies located within Jones Bay Wharf, and
- located on Darling Island to the east (Revy building and DSTO buildings)

Public domain elements:

- from the Harbour
- James Watkinson Reserve and public parks on Mill Street and Point Street above Pirrama Road to the south
- Pirrama Road to the south
- Pyrmont Point Park to the west, and
- pedestrian promenade around the edge of Jones Bay Wharf, Pyrmont Point Park and the Harbour

Residential developments:

- above Pirrama Road, namely Mill Street to the south
- along Pirrama Road to the south of the site, adjacent to Jones Bay Wharf, and
- at the north western end of Darling Island

Distant views of the site are possible from Balmain East to the north and Barrangaroo to the north east.

The expansion of the marina does not block views from residential and public domain areas located on the ridge above Pirrama Road although the marina will be visible to them.

Existing views to the Harbour from residences and the public domain located along Pirrama Road adjacent to the site will be altered due to the expansion of the area of water to be used by boats. Impacts on views from the western side of the wharf will be less significant given that the private marina, not subject of the proposal, provides berths perpendicular to the wharf.

The marina will be directly visible to and from residences and the foreshore promenade located on the western side of Darling Island.

Views from the Harbour to the land will also be altered by the development, by additional boats.

4 Magnitude of proposed change

The magnitude of the proposed change is assessed through a comparison of the level of contrast between the existing visual character of the area and the proposal in terms of the visual characteristics of form, scale and line.

5 Existing Visual Elements

There are a number of elements on, adjacent to and surrounding the site that determine the existing visual character of the area.

- (1) the Harbour
- (2) North Sydney CBD and Sydney CBD skylines
- (3) Sydney Harbour Bridge
- (4) Balmain East
- (5) Barrangaroo
- (6) Landscaped edge and sandstone cliffs along Pirrama Road
- (7) Residential developments above Pirrama Road on Mill Street
- (8) Residential and commercial developments on Darling Island
- (9) Residential developments on southern side of Pirrama Road
- (10) Jones Bay Wharf and the existing marina

In terms of scale, Jones Bay Wharf and the existing marina, the Harbour, Darling Island, the residences above Pirrama Road, Sydney Harbour Bridge and Pyrmont Point Park are the dominant existing visual elements. Other elements listed above are generally small to medium scale in comparison to these larger elements due to either their physical size, location behind other objects, or their geographical distance.

The form of the existing elements is generally rectangular with strong horizontal lines formed by Jones Bay Wharf and the existing marina structures, Pyrmont Point Park and the jetty. This is contrasted with some minor vertical elements formed by yacht masts within the existing marina, buildings on Darling Island, and the buildings above Pirrama Road.

The Sydney Harbour Foreshores & Waterways Area DCP does not define a surrounding Landscape Character Type for the area but it is clearly a highly urban built environment which is typified by Jones Bay Wharf and existing marina, existing large commercial and residential developments. The proposed expansion of the existing marina is of a scale and number of vessels that is consistent with such an urban and built landscape and therefore provides an appropriate level of visual harmony for the area.

6 Visual Impact of the Proposal

To illustrate the proposal and to analyse the visual impact, a series of photomontages were prepared to determine potential views from a number of locations. Figure 1 documents the locations.

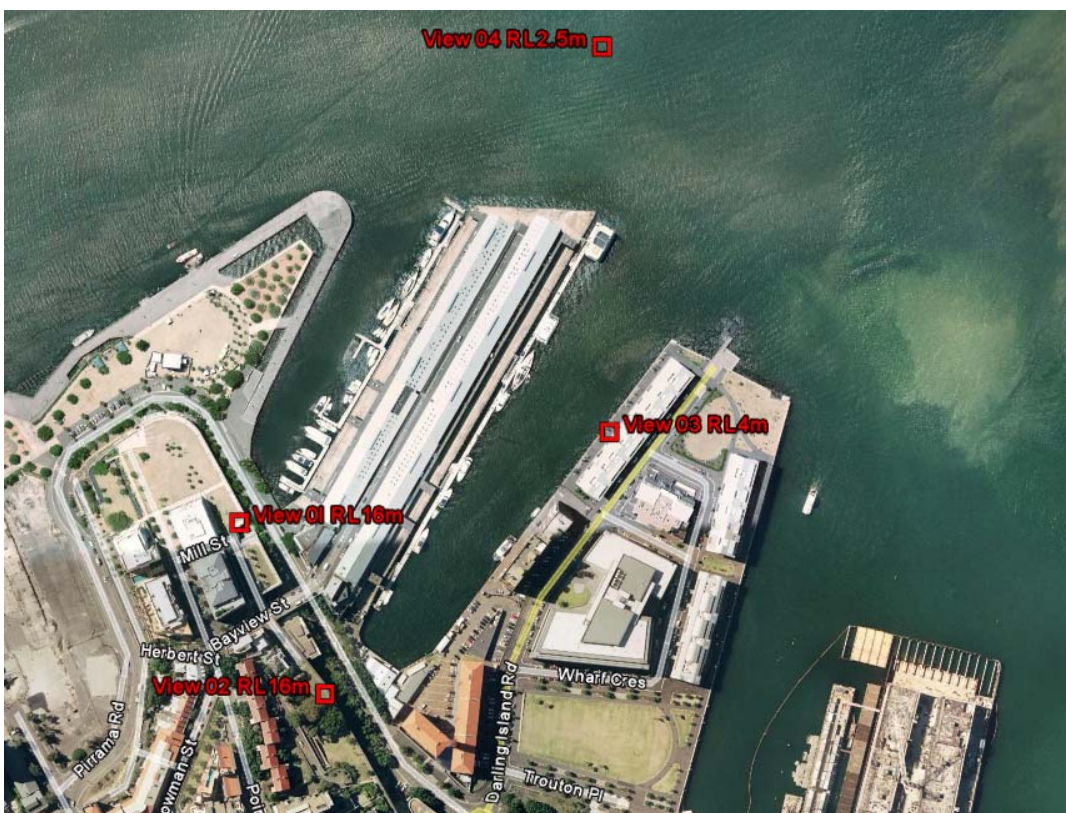


Figure 1 - View locations

6.1 View 01

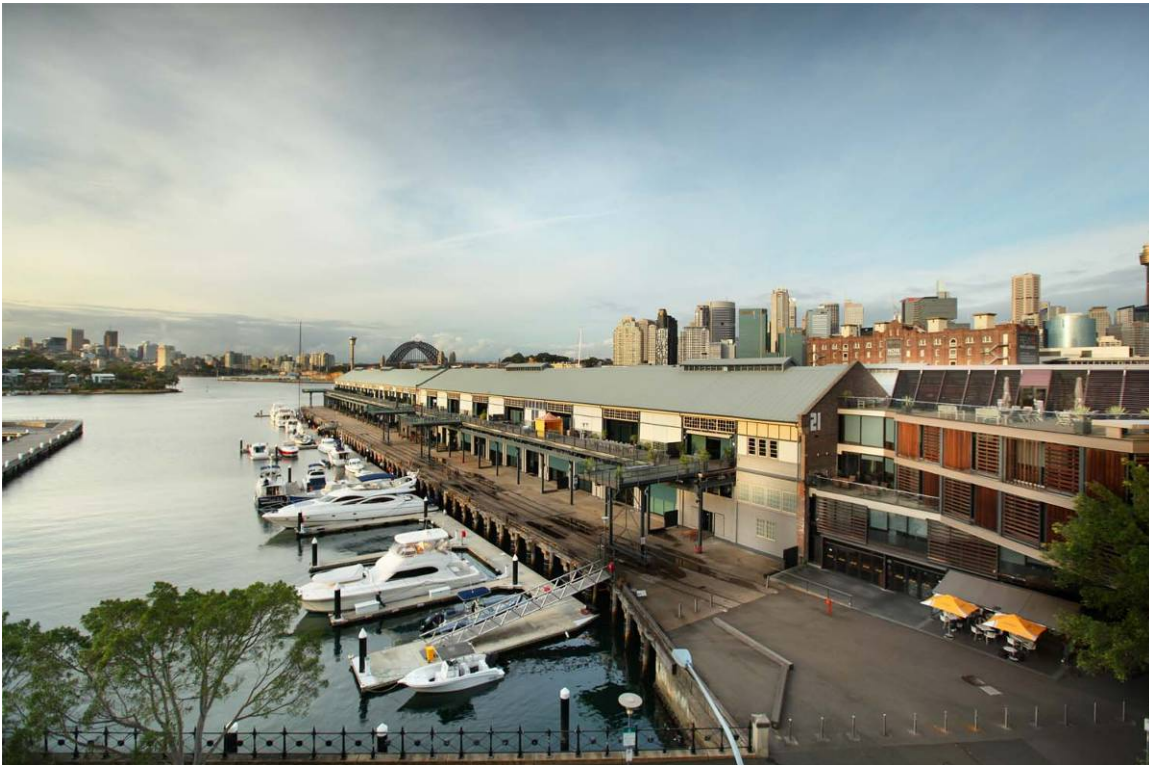


Figure 2 - View 01 from cliff above Pirrama Road (existing)

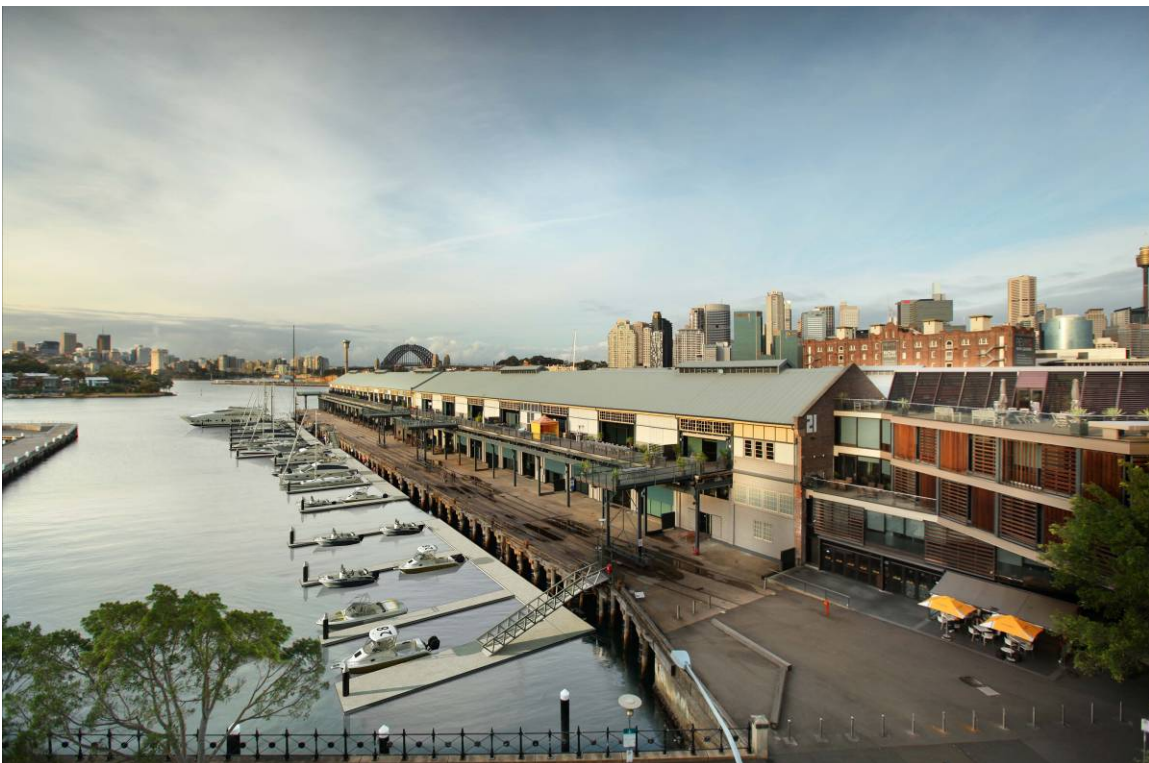


Figure 3 - View 01 from cliff above Pirrama Road (proposed)

View 01 (refer Figures 2 and 3) shows existing and proposed views from the elevated reserve (RL16m) located adjacent to Mill Street and above Pirrama Road. It is adjacent to the western side of the marina as shown in Figure I.

This photomontage shows that the view would take in the existing private marina (not subject of this proposal), existing commercial marina, Jones Bay Wharf, Balmain East, Harbour Bridge, North Sydney and the tops of Sydney CBD buildings.

The simulation shows that the visual impacts on the western side of the wharf are insignificant as follows:

- proposal results in a minor alteration to the existing view due to the changes to the orientation and size of vessels
- the orientation of the additional pontoons are perpendicular to the wharf allowing east-west orientation of vessels replacing the existing arrangement which allowed four boats abreast from the edge of the wharf
- views over the marina from the area above Pirrama Road are not interrupted
- views to Balmain East and North Sydney are unaffected
- the impact of change in the commercial marina is negligible because the private marina in foreground (not subject of proposal) has capacity for large vessels as shown in Figure 2
- views from Jones Bay Wharf between the boats to Pyrmont Point Park and Balmain will remain.

In short, the proposal would be barely discernable against the background of the buildings, Harbour and surrounding and distant landscapes.

6.2 **View 02**



Figure 4 - View 02 from James Watkinson Reserve (existing)



Figure 5 - View 02 from James Watkinson Reserve (proposed)

View 2 (refer Figures 4 and 5) shows existing and proposed views from the elevated (RL16m) park known as James Watkinson Reserve located on top of the cliff above Pirrama Road. It is adjacent to the eastern side of the marina as shown in Figure 1.

This simulation shows that the view would take in Jones Bay Wharf and the existing marina, Darling Island, Barrangaroo, tops of Sydney CBD buildings, Harbour Bridge, and North Sydney.

The simulation shows that the proposed development on the eastern side of the wharf would result in an alteration to one aspect of the expansive view over the marina from this location but would not result in more than a minor impact for the following reasons:

- the area of the waterway on the eastern side of the Jones Bay Wharf to be covered by boats is greater than the existing marina however approximately 1/3 of the bay remains open
- the dominant feature of the view is the Jones Bay Wharf buildings and promenade and the large commercial buildings on Darling Island, making the marina subservient compared to the built environment
- boats are predominately moored parallel with the wharf so there are often views through vessels, and even more so with the coming and going of vessels
- distant views to Barrangaroo, Harbour bridge and North Sydney are unaffected
- proposal would allow for vessels up to 45m to be moored although their impact on views are minimised by their siting towards the northern end of the wharf.

6.3 View 03



Figure 6 - View 03 from foreshore promenade on western side of Darling Island (existing)



Figure 7 - View 03 from foreshore promenade on western side of Darling Island (proposed)

View 3 (refer Figures 6 and 7) shows existing and proposed views from the foreshore promenade on the western side of Darling Island as shown in Figure 1.

The view from this location would take in the existing marina, Jones Bay Wharf and North Sydney. An open passage of the harbour is also visible to the north.

The proposal results in an increased amount of water taken up by boats when looking towards Jones Bay Wharf and the marina however a significant amount of open water is still visible.

As shown in Figure 6, large vessels (>45m) can currently moor predominately anywhere alongside the eastern side of Jones Bay Wharf affecting views to Jones Bay Wharf from this location. The proposed marina expansion sites large vessel berths at the north eastern end of the marina (and the wharf) and smaller vessels towards the southern end thereby reducing the potential level of impact on views to Jones Bay Wharf.

Views of the open waterway remains relatively unaffected by the proposal except for the location of berth for the 44m vessel at the north eastern end of the marina. Berths in this location do not block views to any significant elements.

The expanded marina will continue to complement the maritime character of the area without any significant visual impacts. Jones Bay Wharf will remain a dominant visual element from this location due to the scale of the buildings in contrast to the size of the vessels.

6.4 View 04



Figure 8 - View 04 from boat on Sydney Harbour (existing)



Figure 9 - View 04 from boat on Sydney Harbour (proposed)

View 4 (refer Figures 8 and 9) shows existing and proposed views from a vessel located on the harbour adjacent to the end of the wharf as shown in Figure 1. The view location is typically used by vessels travelling between the open areas of Sydney Harbour and Blackwattle and Rozelle Bays.

The view from this location would take in the harbour, residential and commercial developments located on Pirrama Road, Darling Island and on the cliff above Pirrama Road, the existing marina, Jones Bay Wharf. An open passage of the harbour is also visible to the north.

The simulation shows that the views from this location into the bay on the eastern side of the wharf would be partially blocked, predominately at water level, by the vessels located at the north eastern end of the wharf. There would also be a minor decrease to the views into the bay on the western side of the wharf. Jones Bay Wharf and the developments located on Darling Island and above Pirrama Road continue to be the dominant subjects in the landscape.

Impacts on view from this location are considered to be minor as the view would be constantly changing with the movement of the vessel. Views into the bays during the typical vessel route will be possible depending on the location of the vessel at the time.

6.5 Other Visual Impact Considerations

As a waterside marina the proposal is consistent with this character and the intent for the area.

A key outcome of the proposed development would be improved access to the waterway and improved access to the public domain as a result of the proposed continuation of the boardwalk. Additional boats will enrich the visual experience along the walkway.

There are few remaining natural elements along the foreshore and the predominant natural element is a sandstone cliff face on the southern edge of Pirrama Road. The separation distance provided by the pedestrian promenade and Pirrama Road between the marina and the cliff face as well, as the location of street trees and buildings between the cliff and the marina, minimises any visual impacts involving the cliff face when viewed from the north.

The visual impact on views to Jones Bay Wharf from the surrounding area is minimised by the location of the pontoons 3.5m (at low tide) below the wharf deck and the physical setback of the wharf building from the edge of the wharf by 10m.

The visual continuity of the foreshore is not disrupted by this proposal. There is no change to the existing access arrangements for vehicles, cyclists, or pedestrians to the wharf apron. The proposed additions are a considerable distance below the foreshore level and the wharf and no visible land based development is proposed.

The views of the expanded marina will always be dynamic, changing throughout the day, week and year with the coming and going, and the travelling speeds of vessels.

The view impacts from the proposal to Jones Bay Wharf are insignificant compared with the original use of Jones Bay Wharf which had large steamer vessels obscuring views of the wharf and buildings. The large steamer vessels would have also decreased the openness of the waterway within the bays.

The proposal continues with the existing high quality materials and finishes exhibited by the existing marina which complement the existing landscape and neighbouring buildings. The marina uses simple, clean finishes and materials that are non reflective.

Lights with motion sensors will be provided at regular intervals on the wharf structure. These include light spill devices and will be of an appropriate intensity to minimise any potential adverse impacts.

7 Visual Assessment Matrix

Table 1 summarises the degree of visual impact that the proposal will have from the view locations identified above. The matrix's criteria are in accordance with Appendix A of the Sydney Harbour Foreshore and Waterways Development Control Plan.

The visual assessment matrix identifies that there will be a moderate level of impact on views from location 03. A moderate level of impact in this location is considered acceptable due to the existing maritime character of the area, the subservience of the marina to Jones Bay Wharf and its buildings, and the dynamic nature of views with the coming and going of vessels and occupancy of the marina.

The scale and the number of boats does not affect the appreciation of the built form of Jones Bay Wharf and its architectural detail, nor does it have a significant impact on views of the harbour and beyond.

Table 1: Visual Impact Assessment Matrix

Degree of Impact (High = 3 / Medium = 2 / Low = 1)

View Situation	View 01 from cliff above Pirrama Road	View 02 from James Watkinson Reserve	View 03 from foreshore promenade on western side of Darling Island	View 04 from boat located on the harbour
Factor				
Location of Viewer	1	1	2	1
Distance of View	1	1	2	1
Approx. period of View	2	2	2	2
Scale or relative size (Boat numbers and mix of vessel types)	1	1	2	2
Boat storage types/Spatial relationship (ie private or commercial marina or swing moorings and its setting)	1	1	2	1
Overall potential visual impact (average score)	1.2	1.2	2	1.4

8 Cumulative Impact

As discussed in Sections 6 and 7, there will be a change in the views from the four view locations, however this change will result in minimal impacts to the visual character of the area and overall these impacts will not be adverse. The proposed extension of the existing marina in an urban built-up environment and in an area that is characterised by maritime uses means that the net cumulative impact of the proposal is minor and consistent with the existing environment.

9 Conclusion

The visual assessment indicates that the proposed marina expansion would have an overall low impact on the visual character of the surrounding area for the following reasons:

- proposal results in only a minor alteration to the views on the western side of Jones Bay Wharf,
- there would only be the partial blocking of view into the bays located on either side of wharf when viewed from the water.
- impacts on views on the eastern side of Jones Bay Wharf are minimised through the orientation of most of the vessels parallel with the wharf and the siting of larger vessels at the northern end of the marina,
- the change in views as a result of the proposal is consistent with the maritime character of the area and the existing use of the waterway.,
- the scale of the marina is subservient to the existing urban built environment which includes large commercial buildings previously used for maritime purposes,
- the resultant views would be dynamic, changing throughout the day, week and year with the coming and going, and the travelling speed of vessels, and
- the location of pontoons 3.5m (at low tide) below the wharf deck and the physical setback of the wharf buildings from the edge of the wharf by 10m meaning that the marina is generally overlooked from the public domain, and commercial and residential developments.