



# DAEMON **MRA**

Summer Hill Flour Mill Project  
Community Attitudes Survey  
Summary Report

27 May 2010





## **Table of Contents**

### Summary Report

1. Background and What we Did
2. Key Research Findings
3. In Conclusion

### Appendices

- A. Summer Hill Community Survey
- B. Summer Hill Community Survey Data Tables (see separate document)

This Summary Report presents the key findings of the Summer Hill Community Attitudes Survey conducted on behalf of EG Funds Management. The research findings reported on determine the level of community support for a change in use of the Summer Hill Flour Mill site from industrial to mixed use, and development issues important to the local community. Research outcomes are intended to form part of the EG Fund Management's rezoning application to Ashfield and Marrickville Councils.

## **1. Background and What we Did**

EG Funds Management, current owners of the Summer Hill Flour Mill site, is seeking to change the current use from industrial to mixed use. As part of the ongoing community consultation process, independent market research is required to determine the level of community support for a change in use on the site, as well as development issues important to the local community. More than 3,000 local households were recently sent a community newsletter informing them of the proposed land use change project.

Daemon MRA was commissioned to survey a representative sample of the local community residing in Ashfield and Marrickville Council areas; specifically, residents who lived closest to the Summer Hill Flour Mill site and targeting those who were sent the abovementioned community newsletter. A survey of the broader community was also sought.

A 12 minute face-to-face survey was undertaken with a total of 580 respondents, of which 203 interviews were with Ashfield residents (at home), 176 with Marrickville residents (at home) and the remaining 201 with the broader community in the Summer Hill Village. A face-to-face survey approach was deemed most appropriate, given the need to confirm with respondents visually the exact location of the proposed Summer Hill Flour Mill site. This was also to avoid confusion with the nearby so-called "Lewisham Towers" development.

Interviews were carried out by experienced and fully briefed MRA interviewers between April 16 and April 30, 2010. Initially, every fifth home was randomly selected to be interviewed in the Ashfield and Marrickville areas. Upon completion, homes that were approached previously where no-one was at home were revisited. Only one person per household was interviewed. The survey was designed to ensure that local residents interviewed at home could not also participate in the broader community survey at the Summer Hill Village.

The market research also aimed to determine the importance of retaining the heritage buildings on the site, improving public access to the site, support for use of the freight corridor, specific facilities and services the community would like see incorporated in the site, as well as highlighting any concerns and the magnitude of the proposed redevelopment as a local issue. Community interest in being kept informed of the redevelopment of the site and how was also established.

The survey gauged the opinions and attitudes of a good cross-section of the local and broader community. The proportion of Ashfield and Marrickville residents surveyed was fairly representative of the profile of communities living with each of these two Local Government Areas. That is, the survey ensured residents interviewed were well represented across genders, age groups, employment status and ethnicity.

Profile of the 580 people surveyed
<b>Gender:</b> 45% males, 55% females
<b>Age:</b> 27% 18-34 year olds, 57% 35 to 59, 16% aged 60+ years
<b>Employment Status:</b> 71% currently work full or part-time
<b>Ethnicity:</b> 30% speak another language at home, other than English

Of note, the survey also determined how long residents have lived in the Summer Hill (or surrounding) area. The survey was well represented by people living in their locality for less than 5 years (33%), 5 to 14 years (31%) and 15 or more years (36%).

The survey even asked respondents if they have ever contacted their local council to express their views or concerns relating to a proposed development. A high 40% of all people interviewed answered 'yes' to this question. This was highest among Ashfield residents surveyed when compared to Marrickville respondents (49% versus 38%), while the proportion among the broader community surveyed was 33%.

*The key research findings for all the survey questions asked are reported overleaf. Note that, any differences in survey results among residents interviewed by location, gender, age, ethnicity, employment status, period of residency and previous Council contact are included only if deemed statistically significant.*

## 2. Key Research Findings

***Two in three people surveyed support the industrial site being transformed into a mixed used development, with only a small proportion opposing it...***

Survey respondents were initially asked if they supported a change in use of the Summer Hill Flour Mill site from industrial to mixed use. This was asked within the context of the site only being able to be used for industrial purposes under the existing planning controls.

A clear majority (67%) of respondents support the change in use for this site, with only 18% opposing it and the remaining 15% claiming to be unsure, the latter due in part to a perceived lack of information about the mixed use development and potential associated benefits.

The level of support is almost identical among local residents and the broader community surveyed, although slightly higher among males (71% versus 65% for females), 18-34 year olds (72% versus 63% for those aged 60+) and those living in the area for less than 5 years (72% compared to 66% if resident for 15+ years). It is worth noting that, 61% of people surveyed considering the Summer Hill Flour Mill site development to be a 'major issue' (question asked later on) actually support the change in use for the site.

Although outright opposition is limited to 18% of people surveyed, this result is highest among Marrickville residents (22% versus 16% among Ashfield residents), the older age group (22% of those 60+ years old) and those currently not in the workforce (24%). The 15% of the people surveyed claiming to be unsure is consistent across all population profiles.

People's attitudes towards the mixed use redevelopment of the site were also gauged. When asked outright, a very high 82% of people surveyed prefer that the site is not retained for industrial use only. In fact, only 13% want it to remain an industrial site, with 5% unsure.

### Attitudes Towards a Mixed Use Redevelopment of the Site

**82%** prefer the site is not retained for industrial use only

**72%** agree the mixed use redevelopment of the site would make a positive contribution to their local area

**63%** agree the mixed use redevelopment of the site would make their area a more attractive place to live in

Of note, 75% of people surveyed considering the Summer Hill Flour Mill site development to be a 'major issue' do not want the site to remain for industrial use only.

A high 72% agree the mixed use redevelopment of the site would make a positive contribution to their local area, highest at 81% among the younger population (aged 18 to 34 years versus 67% of those aged 60+). Males were also more inclined than females to agree (78% compared to 68%). The broader community surveyed also agreed more so than local residents (81% versus 67%). Twenty percent of all people surveyed disagree, while 8% are unsure.

When asked, 63% of people surveyed believe the mixed use redevelopment of the site would actually make their local area a more attractive place to live in. This result peaks at 75% among 18 to 34 year olds, but is lowest among the older population at 56%. However, overall 29% of respondents disagree with this notion, while the remaining 9% are unsure. As many as 35% of Marrickville residents surveyed do not believe the liveability of their local area will be enhanced (compared to 28% of Ashfield residents). A considerable proportion of residents expressed concerns relating to the potential loss of amenity and appeal of their local area due to increased traffic, overcrowding and any development not being in character with the surrounding environment. *A list of concerns raised by residents unaided can be found in the table on page 7 of this report.*

Of note, more than half (54%) of the people surveyed considering the Summer Hill Flour Mill site development to be a 'major issue' agree the mixed use redevelopment will make their local area more attractive to live in.

Survey respondents were also asked whether or not they feel it is important to retain the existing heritage buildings or reuse them as part of the mixed use development on the site. A very high 83% of people interviewed consider this to be important, while 10% not so and the remaining 7% unsure. Females were more inclined to agree (87% answering yes, compared to 78% of males).

### ***There is very strong support for the extension of the light rail system to Summer Hill...***

The freight rail corridor running past the Flour Mill site is no longer in use and the NSW Government propose to expand the light rail system to Dulwich Hill along the rail corridor. The mixed use redevelopment of the site would support the light rail expansion. Within this context, people surveyed were asked if they would support the use of the freight corridor for this purpose.



A very high 85% of survey respondents would support such a move, with results ranging from 78% to 88% across different population profiles. Of note, 76% of residents consider the extension of the light rail system to Summer Hill to be an important consideration in any land use change decision on the site from industrial to mixed use. Marrickville residents agree more so, when compared to those living in Ashfield (78% to 70%).

Support for Extension of Light Rail System
<b>85%</b> support the use of the freight corridor for extension of light rail system
<b>76%</b> consider extension of light rail system to Summer Hill important consideration
<b>81%</b> would use light rail service if extended to Summer Hill

People interviewed were asked whether anyone in their household would use the light rail service, if it was extended to Summer Hill. Eight in ten (81%) respondents answered yes, which was highest among Marrickville residents (84% compared to 76% living in Ashfield). Although 19% of all respondents said they would not use it, this was considerably higher among the older population surveyed (30% of people aged 60+).

### ***Opening up the site to the public is considered important to most...***

A mixed use redevelopment of the site is said to enable the public to access it for community use, open space and pedestrian and cycle way routes. It would also apparently result in housing, shops and offices being built. The site would also supposedly be opened up and connected to the surrounding area.

Eight in ten (79%) residents surveyed consider opening the site up to the public as an important consideration in any decision involving a change in use from industrial to mixed use. This result is highest among the 35-59 age group (83%), but lowest among the older population (69%).

The local community is keen to see several important community based facilities and services incorporated within the Summer Hill Flour Mill site, some of which are listed in the table on page 8 of this report.

***The redevelopment of the site is regarded a 'major issue' for half the residents, with concerns relating to traffic congestion most on people's minds...***

In the context of everything else going on or being proposed in their local council area, survey respondents were asked how 'big of an issue' the redevelopment of the Summer Hill Flour Mill site was.

Over half (53%) the people surveyed consider this to be a 'major issue', while 29% of respondents see it as a 'minor issue' only, while the remaining 18% do not see it as an issue at all. Of note, fewer 18 to 34 year olds regard the redevelopment of the site as a 'major issue', but more 35 to 59 year old residents do (61%).

Survey respondents were asked what, if any, concerns they have relating to a proposed redevelopment of the Summer Hill Flour Mill site from industrial to mixed use. On average, people interviewed highlighted four areas of concern.

At the top of the list were unaided concerns relating to traffic congestion, mentioned by 40% of all respondents; namely, *increased traffic, road closures, poor access for residents, longer travel times to and from home and shops and quality of life disruptions*.

**Main Concerns People Have Relating to the Proposed Redevelopment of Site**  
(Total Net Unaided Mentions)

<b>40%</b> Traffic congestion
<b>29%</b> Development size / type / design
<b>20%</b> Loss of living amenity / appeal
<b>16%</b> Insufficient parking
<b>15%</b> Overcrowding of area
<b>13%</b> Negative impact on local business
<b>11%</b> Noise / air pollution

The scale and design of the development concerns 29% of residents surveyed; specifically related to *building height, size, amount of commercial space and building design not keeping in character with surrounding area*. This apparent concern is compounded by the proposed nearby "Lewisham Towers" development which is anecdotally opposed by some residents in surrounding areas due to its scale and design.

One in five (20%) people surveyed are worried about the potential loss of living amenity and appeal of their local area; namely, *loss of privacy and quietness, loss of village / neighbourhood feel, charm of area, fewer green and open spaces*. There is a fear that any redevelopment of the Summer Hill Flour Mill site will come at a cost to the local community.

Parking is a concern raised by one in seven people, as is the potential overcrowding of the area and public transport in particular, with an influx of new residents. Some people are also worried about the potential negative impact of more retail uses on existing local businesses in the area such as the *advent of more restaurants and cafes, large supermarkets and retail franchises, as well as the introduction of large food chains*. Other concerns raised by a very small proportion of residents relate to noise and air pollution (11% mentioning) and a perceived lack of infrastructure to cater for more people (9% mentioning).

It is worth noting that, almost three in ten people surveyed (29%) did not express any concerns with the proposed redevelopment of the site. This result was higher among Marrickville residents when compared to those living in Ashfield (36% versus 21%) and 44% of all 18 to 34 year olds interviewed.

***Residents want to see a number of community based facilities and services incorporated to enhance the area's appeal and liveability...***

The vast majority (88%) of survey respondents suggested a facility or service that should form part of the redevelopment of the Summer Hill Flour Mill site. On average, people interviewed made four suggestions.

When asked, 40% of all people surveyed want to see more open space and parks incorporated in the redevelopment of the site, which could include *green areas, nature reserves and/or a community garden* (see table opposite). A further 34% mentioned the need for local and speciality shops that complement what already exists, such as a *bakery, butcher, green grocer, convenience store, banking facilities, small fashion boutiques, and music and book store*.

One in four people interviewed would like to see more residential housing incorporated in the form of *apartments, townhouses and units* that is both affordable and sympathetic to the character of the surrounding area.

<b>Main Facilities / Services People Would Like Incorporated in Redeveloped Site</b> (Total Net Unaided Mentions)
<b>40%</b> More open space / parks / garden areas
<b>34%</b> Local shops / speciality shops
<b>25%</b> More residential housing
<b>19%</b> Places to eat / drink
<b>18%</b> Facilities for children
<b>14%</b> Community centre / facility for public use
<b>12%</b> Better public transport
<b>9%</b> Community space / square / place to relax
<b>8%</b> More parking / car park
<b>8%</b> Bicycle paths / lanes / extensions
<b>7%</b> Artistic places
<b>6%</b> Gym / fitness centre
<b>5%</b> Swimming pool / aquatic centre

Places to eat were mentioned by one in five respondents, namely *restaurants and eateries and cafes*. A similar number of residents mentioned the need for facilities for children, specifically a playground for children and a child care centre.

Other suggestions made by a small proportion of those surveyed include a community centre / facility which could be used by the public for *recreation, leisure and performing activities*, better public transport through *light rail, more bus and rail services* and a community space for people to meet and relax.

Less than one in ten respondents would like to see more parking, bicycle paths, artistic places, a gym and swimming pool. A sports facility / ground were even mentioned by a very small number of people surveyed.

Very few residents apparently want to see a shopping centre or mall (5%), large supermarket (5%), cinema (4%) or office space / professional service suites (3%). Anecdotal comments suggest that the development of a significantly larger retail hub will actually negatively impact the liveability (and perceived charm and character) of the local area.

### ***Many residents want to stay informed about the redevelopment of the site...***

A clear majority of people surveyed (62%) want to be kept informed about the redevelopment of the Summer Hill Flour Mill site, peaking at 74% among Ashfield residents and higher among the older population (68% versus 47% among 18 to 34 year olds).

Of the residents wanting to be kept informed, 50% prefer this be done via the Community Newsletter, while 38% regard the local press and email as effective mediums. A further 17% would attend an information session to stay informed, while only 5% would rely on a telephone hotline. Accessing information via a website was a preferred medium for 23% of respondents.

The Community Newsletter is preferred more so by Ashfield residents (58% versus 51% of Marrickville residents), older population (61%) and longer term residents (15 years plus, 58%).

It is worth noting that, Ashfield residents are considerably more likely to rely on a number of different channels for staying in touch when compared to Marrickville residents, namely, email, local press and attending information sessions.

Nearly one in five (18%) of all survey respondents would be interested in nominating themselves to join a Community Reference Group, as part of the Summer Hill Flour Mill site redevelopment project; peaking at 23% among Ashfield residents. This result confirms that a proportion of the local community wants to be active in the community consultation process, although most people prefer to take a passive role.

### **3. In Conclusion**

Based on the survey research findings, the following conclusions can be made:

- A clear majority support the change in use for the Summer Hill Flour Mill site
- Most people do not want the site retained for industrial use only
- A high proportion believes the redevelopment of the site will make a positive contribution to their local area
- There is very strong support for the extension of the light rail system to Summer Hill
- Opening the site up to the public is considered important for many residents
- People are concerned about the negative impact of the redevelopment of the site in terms of traffic, overcrowding and loss of amenity / character of their local area
- Residents want to see a number of community based facilities and services incorporated to enhance the area's appeal and liveability, as well as limit any further opposition
- Many residents want to stay informed about the redevelopment of the site, but take more of a passive rather than active role in the community consultation process
- The Community Newsletter is considered an important communication tool for keeping people informed

## APPENDIX A:

### INTERVIEWER TO RECORD:

### INTERVIEW NO.:

Ashfield LGA    1            Marrickville LGA            2  
Local Resident   1            Broader Community        2

### Summer Hill Flour Mill Community Attitudes Survey (FINAL April 16 2010)

#### Introduction

Hello, my name is (insert) from MRA, the market research company.

We are conducting an important survey on behalf of the new owners of the Summer Hill Flour Mill Site to ascertain the views of local residents about its future development. We would greatly appreciate your participation in this survey which will only take 10 minutes. We are most interested in your views and they will remain confidential.

[FOR INTERVIEWERS] If refused, then thank them for their time.

[FOR SHOPPING CENTRE SURVEYS, INTERVIEWERS NEED TO CONFIRM WITH RESPONDENTS]  
Have you or anyone in your household already participated in this survey? IF YES, thank and end survey

[IF AGREED TO DO SURVEY, INTERVIEWER TO SHOW SITE PHOTOS]

Before we start the survey, here are some photos of the Summer Hill Flour Mill site, just so you are clear on which area we are talking about. This is not the Lewisham Towers development.

In 2007 the Summer Hill Flour Mill site was purchased by EG Funds Management who specialise in redeveloping large urban renewal sites. Allied Mills actually relocated from this site in 2009 to a new flour mill in Picton.

To ensure we survey a good cross-section of the local community, can you please answer the following about yourself.

Q1. RECORD GENDER

Male	1
Female	2

Q2. How long have you been a resident of Summer Hill or lived in this area?  
[DO NOT READ OUT]

Less than 12 months	1
1 to 4 years	2
5 to 9 years	3
10 to 14 years	4
15 or more years	5
Don't live in the area [Thank & End Survey]	6

Q3. Could you please tell me your age?  
[WRITE AGE IN BOX]

Q4. Are you currently in full-time or part-time employment?

Yes	1
No	2

Q5. Aside from English, do you speak any other languages in your household?

Yes	1
No	2

Q6. Have you ever contacted your local council to express your view or concern about a proposed development?

Yes	1
No	2

**Now I would like to obtain your views about proposed changes to the Summer Hill Mill Flour Mill Site.**

Q7. Under the existing planning controls the flour mill site is zoned for industrial use. This means that it can only be used for industrial purposes. The new owners believe that it is appropriate to develop this site for a range of uses – residential, commercial and retail. We call this a mixed use development.

Do you support this disused industrial site being transformed into a mixed use development?

Yes	1
No	2
Not sure	3

Q8. A mixed use development on the site has the benefit of being able to retain and adapt many of the existing heritage buildings for residential, office or retail use.

Is it important that these heritage buildings be retained and/or reused as part of a mixed use development?

Yes	1
No	2
Not sure	3

Q9. The use of the site for a flour mill dates back to 1922 and was considered suitable because it was serviced by a freight rail line. With the relocation of Allied Mills, freight trains will no longer service this line. A mixed use redevelopment of this site provides the opportunity for the freight rail corridor to be used for an extension of the light rail system.

Would you support the use of the freight corridor for this purpose?



Yes	1
No	2
Not sure	3

- Q10. Do you consider the extension of the light rail system to Summer Hill an important consideration in any decision involving a change of use on the site from industrial to mixed use?

Yes	1
No	2

- Q11. Would you or members of your household use the light rail service if it was extended to Summer Hill?

Yes	1
No	2

- Q12. Retaining the site for industrial use will not enable the public to access the site for security and safety reasons. A mixed use redevelopment of the site would include areas for community use, open space and pedestrian and cycle way routes. It would also mean that housing, shops and offices could be built. The site would be opened up and connected to the surrounding area.

Do you consider opening the site up to the public is an important consideration in any decision involving a change of use from industrial to mixed use?

Yes	1
No	2
Not sure	3

- Q13. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements relating to a mixed use redevelopment of the Summer Hill Flour Mill site? **[SHOWCARD 1]**

Statements	Agree	Disagree
1. It would make a positive contribution to our local area	1	2
2. It would make our local area a more attractive place to live in	1	2
3. I would prefer the site be retained for industrial use only	1	2



Q14. If the Summer Hill Flour Mill site was redeveloped to accommodate a range of uses, what type of facilities and services would you specifically like to see incorporated?  
[PROBE FULLY FOR ALL RESPONSES GIVEN]

Office

Q15. What, if any, concerns do you have relating to a proposed redevelopment of the Summer Hill Flour Mill site from industrial to mixed use? [PROBE FULLY FOR ALL RESPONSES GIVEN – Interviewers to record if mentioned ‘No concerns’]

Office

No concerns

99

Q16. In the context of everything else going on or being proposed in your local council area, do you consider the redevelopment of the Summer Hill Flour Mill site from industrial to mixed use to be a major issue, minor issue or not really an issue at all?

Major issue	1
Minor issue	2
Not really an issue at all	3



**Now just a couple of final questions...**

Q17. Do you want to be kept informed about the redevelopment of the Summer Hill Flour Mill site?

Yes	1
No	2

[IF ANSWERED YES IN Q17 ASK Q18: IF NO THANK AND END SURVEY]

Q18. How would you like to be kept informed? [**SHOWCARD 2**, MULTIPLE RESPONSES ACCEPTED]

Newsletter	1
Email	2
Website	3
Telephone hotline	4
Local press / newspaper	5
Attending information session	6
Other (write in)	7

Q19. Would you be interested in nominating yourself to join a Community Reference Group as part of this redevelopment proposal?

Yes	1
No	2

**Thank you very much for your time today. We very much appreciate your feedback.**

Just for work validation purposes, could I please have your Surname, first initial and home phone number?

**SURNAME:** \_\_\_\_\_ **INITIAL** \_\_\_\_\_

GIVEN 1 REFUSED 2

HOME PHONE: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
STD

TELEPHONE NUMBER:

GIVEN..... 1  
CLAIM SILENT NUMBER ..... 2  
REFUSED NUMBER ..... 3  
CLAIMED NO HOME PHONE ..... 4

INTERVIEWER NAME:

I certify that this is a true and accurate record of the interview.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Interviewer) Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Name & Number: \_\_\_\_\_