



# **Community Consultation Report**

Prepared to support the rezoning of the  
Summer Hill Flour Mill Site

Prepared on behalf of  
**EG Funds Management**

For submission to  
**Marrickville Council**  
**Ashfield Council**

Prepared by  
**Urban Concepts**

July 2010



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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The report has been prepared by Urban Concepts on behalf of EG Funds Management, the owners of the Summer Hill Flour Mill Site. The Summer Hill Flour Mill (formerly known as the Allied Mills Site) lies within the Local Government Areas of Ashfield and Marrickville and is bounded by Smith Street, Edward Street, Old Canterbury Road and the disused freight rail corridor. With a site area of 2.47 hectares, the site is a significant landholding in single ownership and an iconic landmark of considerable local and broader community interest.

EG Funds Management purchased the former Allied Mills Site in September 2007 realising that it was a significant urban renewal opportunity for the Inner West. Allied Mills ceased its flour milling operations on the site following the opening of its new state of the art flour mill in Picton in March 2009.

Since that time, EG Funds Management and its multi disciplinary consultancy team has undertaken urban design, architecture and heritage investigations to better understand the redevelopment opportunities that the site presents. These investigations culminated in the preparation of two strategic documents:

- An Urban Design and Master Plan Report prepared by Hassell; and
- A Planning Proposal Report prepared by SJB Planning Consultants providing justification for a change in the land use zoning for the site.

Both of these documents were presented to Ashfield and Marrickville Council's in December 2009 to ascertain their support for advancing the rezoning of the site through the appropriate statutory planning process at the State and Local Government level. To facilitate this process, EG Funds Management undertook to carry out preliminary community consultation to ascertain community attitudes to a change in land use on the site. Urban Concepts was engaged to assist EG Funds Management with the community consultation process. The purpose of this report is to present the findings arising from the consultation that has been undertaken to date.

The results of the community consultation indicate that there is community support for advancing the rezoning of the Summer Hill Flour Mill Site. While it is acknowledged that there will be issues that will need to be addressed in any redevelopment proposal, the consultation confirms that there is overwhelming support for changing the industrial use of the site to facilitate a redevelopment of the Summer Hill Flour Mill Site into a mixed use development.

### 1.1 The Community Consultation Approach

The community consultation approach sought to test community attitudes to a change in the land use of the site. The consultation initiatives were undertaken over a three month timeframe between March and May 2010. It was high level consultation that focused on ascertaining whether residents and interested stakeholders viewed the relocation of Allied Mills and the subsequent closure of the flour mills as a redevelopment opportunity for the Local Government Areas of Ashfield and Marrickville. In this respect the consultation process did not seek comment or community attitudes to a specific master plan or architectural scheme as the project is not at this stage of advancement.

The consultation informed the community that EG Funds Management had lodged a Planning Proposal with Ashfield and Marrickville Councils requesting that consideration be given to rezoning the Summer Hill Flour Mill Site from its current industrial zoning to a mixed use zone. It was explained that the lodgement of the Planning Proposal marked the commencement of the rezoning process.



The consultation was undertaken to gauge community and stakeholder attitudes to the proposed rezoning. The underlying intent being that the results of the consultation would be reported to both Ashfield and Marrickville Council's to assist their decision making process in determining whether to support a change in the land use zoning of the site.

Experience shows that it is difficult to engage a community on consultation that centres around strategic plan making. Communities are usually more forthcoming in becoming involved in consultation processes that focus on a particular development plan for a site. Consultation surrounding land use zoning and decision making requires participants to conceptualise broad planning principles and to consider long term development scenarios. To facilitate participation, the information that was placed into the public arena was given a high quality graphic design look that incorporated specially commissioned black and white photography to showcase the unique heritage fabric of the site. This was considered desirable and appropriate given EG Funds Management's intent to utilise and adaptively reuse many existing heritage structures on the site.

In addition to its high quality look and branding, the consultation asked the community the question 'Is It Time For A Change?' In answering this question the information presented to the community established:

- the land use vision that EG Funds Management has for the site;
- why it is desirable to change the zoning of the site; and
- the benefits of change.

The information presented under each of these areas is detailed below as it establishes the context in which the consultation was undertaken.

The consultation approach also involved the commissioning of a statistically relevant household and pedestrian survey. The survey was undertaken by DAEMON MRA, a specialist market research company who were selected through a competitive tender process. The survey instrument is detailed in Appendix A and summarised in Section 3 of this report. The survey findings are important as they provide a meaningful and accurate insight about community attitudes to a change in land use on the Summer Hill Flour Mill Site.

## 1.2 The Vision for the Site

The community consultation process communicated EG Funds Management's vision for the Summer Hill Flour Mill Site as being:

*To create a livable and sustainable precinct that combines housing choice with open space and some local retail, cultural, commercial and employment generating uses to complement the Summer Hill village.*

*A precinct that is diverse, sustainable and authentic. A place that is not themed or contrived but attracts locals and visitors through its design excellence, connectivity of open space and public transport linkages.*

It was not possible to provide the community with architectural designs of a development proposal. Accordingly, the consultation process explained that the vision was supported by a set of design principles and that these principles would be used to inform and guide the preparation of a master plan



and development controls for the site in the event that the site was successfully rezoned to mixed use. The design principles are detailed below:

- *New buildings lower along Edward Street opposite existing houses and increase in height towards the freight rail line. The existing silos will remain the highest buildings on the site.*
- *The most significant heritage buildings such as the former Mungo Scott building will be retained and adapted for new uses. The concrete silos will also be retained and converted for residential use.*
- *New vehicle and pedestrian access points into the site will be provided to minimise traffic impacts on existing roads and surrounding residential areas.*
- *The creation of publicly accessible open space areas within the site and pedestrian connections through the site to the future light rail and Greenway corridor.*
- *Future development of the site will incorporate best practice sustainable development initiatives to reduce water and energy use.*
- *To create a place that will complement the local businesses within Summer Hill rather than compete with them.*

### 1.3 The Need for Change

The community consultation canvassed community attitudes to the proposed rezoning of the Summer Hill Flour Mill Site by asking the community to consider the benefits that could be derived from moving away from the site's industrial past. In asking this question the consultation specifically addressed the changes that would need to be made to the planning framework at both Local and State Government levels if this was to occur. It was essential to explain this aspect of the project because under NSW planning legislation the rezoning of land can only be progressed with the support of regulatory authorities.

The explanation that was provided to the community in support of the need to change the existing planning framework that applies to the site at both a State and Local Government level is detailed below.

*The vision to transform the Summer Hill Flour Mill Site into a vital mixed use precinct will require EG Funds Management to initiate a change to the existing planning framework that applies to the site at both the state and local government level. This is essential as the existing planning controls reflect the site's industrial past and do not allow for a mixed use development. Specifically:*

- *The Summer Hill Flour Mill Site is currently zoned Industrial under the planning controls of Ashfield and Marrickville Councils. The Industrial zoning does not permit the range of uses associated with a mixed use development.*
- *The Industrial zoning is not consistent with the proposed rezoning of the adjacent McGill Street Precinct in the Marrickville Council area to Mixed Use.*
- *The majority of the site is presently identified by the NSW Department of Planning as Category 1 employment land under the Draft Inner West Subregional Strategy. Under a Category 1 classification the site can only be developed for an industrial related use. The adjoining McGill Street precinct is identified as Category 3 employment lands, which enables rezoning to facilitate mixed use development.*



- *To enable the site to be developed for mixed uses it is necessary to change the zoning of the Summer Hill Flour Mill Site. It is the zoning of land that establishes the possible purposes for which land may or may not be used and developed. EG Funds Management is seeking to change the land use zoning of the site to a Mixed Use zone to enable the site to be developed with council consent for residential, retail and commercial uses.*

## 1.4 The Benefits of Change

The key benefits that were defined by EG Funds Management from rezoning the site to a Mixed Use Zone and which were communicated through the consultation process are described below:

<b>Enhance open space and public access</b>	A mixed use development enables the incorporation of open space, pedestrian and cycle routes to be accommodated across the site to reinforce the Greenway master plan initiatives.
<b>Generate employment opportunities</b>	The mixed use zoning does not result in a lower employment level on the site. A mixed use development will generate employment through the incorporation of commercial and retail activities on the site.
<b>Heritage conservation and adaptive reuse</b>	The scale of the purpose-built mill structures physically define this site as a landmark. Unfortunately, they do not lend themselves to modern industrial occupation. The site is recognised as being of historical importance and many of the buildings on the site should be retained. A mixed use development scenario allows for the preservation and regeneration of many of these buildings for commercial or residential conversion more readily than an industrial use.
<b>Increased housing choice and affordability</b>	A mixed use zone will enable a range of housing to be accommodated on the site and assist the councils meet housing targets for the Inner West.
<b>Support for the light rail expansion</b>	The site was purpose built as a flour mill in 1922. The location of the freight rail line was a determining factor in the construction of a flour mill on the site at that time. With the relocation of Allied Mills to Picton, the freight line has become redundant and no freight trains will operate on the line. A section of the original freight line between Darling Harbour and Rozelle was converted to a Light Rail System in 2000. The Allied Mills freight corridor provides the opportunity for the further expansion of the light rail network to Summer Hill with a station terminus being located on the Summer Hill Mills Site.
<b>Support for local villages and rail infrastructure</b>	The site is within walking distance of the villages of Lewisham and Summer Hill and their respective City Rail Stations.



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**Consistency with the  
planning framework for the  
McGill Street Precinct**

A rezoning to mixed use is consistent with the planning direction being adopted for the McGill Street Precinct. The planning of both precincts simultaneously will lead to a better urban outcome and will enable complimentary development scenarios to be implemented. This will facilitate the revitalisation of what has become a declining industrial precinct.

**Removing existing and  
potential land use conflicts**

Industrial reuse of the Summer Hill Flour Mill Precinct is likely to generate and exacerbate the undesirable amenity impacts and conflicts with its low density residential surrounds, designated as a heritage conservation area. Further, there is no main road frontage to the precinct, with vehicle access via local residential streets and constrained intersections. In addition to the amenity conflicts, industrial use is constrained due to the heritage value of a number of items on the former flour mill site. The purpose-specific nature of the existing flour mill infrastructure precludes economic reuse of the mill for industrial uses and demolition of buildings and structures to facilitate redevelopment of the site for alternative industrial uses would be constrained due to the heritage values. An industrial redevelopment of the site would be a lost opportunity to retain and promote the heritage values of the site through adaptive reuse of existing buildings and structures. Finally, industrial reuse fails to recognise the transition of employment demand away from a traditional manufacturing role. The incorporation of local commercial and retail employment uses in conjunction with residential uses has the clear capacity to provide greater employment generation than industrial development of the land.



## 2.0 THE CONSULTATION METHODOLOGY

The Consultation Methodology implemented for this project is detailed below. It is described in terms of the information lines that were established for the project and the consultation initiatives that were undertaken to ascertain resident and stakeholder attitudes to changing the land use zoning of the site.

### 2.1 Established Information Lines

#### 2.1.1 Contact Details

The following information lines were established for the project. EG Funds Management was the community contact point for this communication. To facilitate communication by the local community a 1800 freecall number, project email address and website were established. These contact points will remain in place for the entirety of the project and, pending the successful rezoning of the site, through the development application and construction process.

The published contact details for the project are detailed below:

- **A freecall 1800 number 1800 075 008.** We have been advised by EG Funds Management that a total of 7 calls have been taken on the freecall 1800 number at the time of writing. A summary of the feedback provided by the phone calls is detailed in Table 2.1
- **A project email address [information@summerhillflourmill.com.au](mailto:information@summerhillflourmill.com.au).** We have been advised by EG Funds Management that a total of 18 emails have been received at the time of writing through the project email address. A summary of the feedback received is provided in Table 2.1.
- **A project website [www.summerhillflourmill.com.au](http://www.summerhillflourmill.com.au).**
- **Postal address**  
Summer Hill Flour Mill Project Community Consultation  
Level 14, 345 George Street  
Sydney NSW 2000

These contact details appeared on all information prepared about the project. These contact details will remain in place for the duration of the project.

#### 2.1.2 A Project Website

A project website was established for the project to facilitate community understanding about the proposal, provide background information on EG Funds Management as the new owners of the site, detail their future vision for its use and to explain the way forward through the rezoning process.

The project email address was linked to the website to enable visitors to the site to provide feedback on the rezoning proposal.

A copy of the website pages have been reproduced in Appendix B.



### 2.1.3 Community Consultation Newsletter

A community newsletter was prepared for the project and is detailed in Appendix C. As detailed in Section 1.1 the Newsletter posed the question 'Is It Time For A Change?'

The newsletter contained detailed information about the project under the following headings:

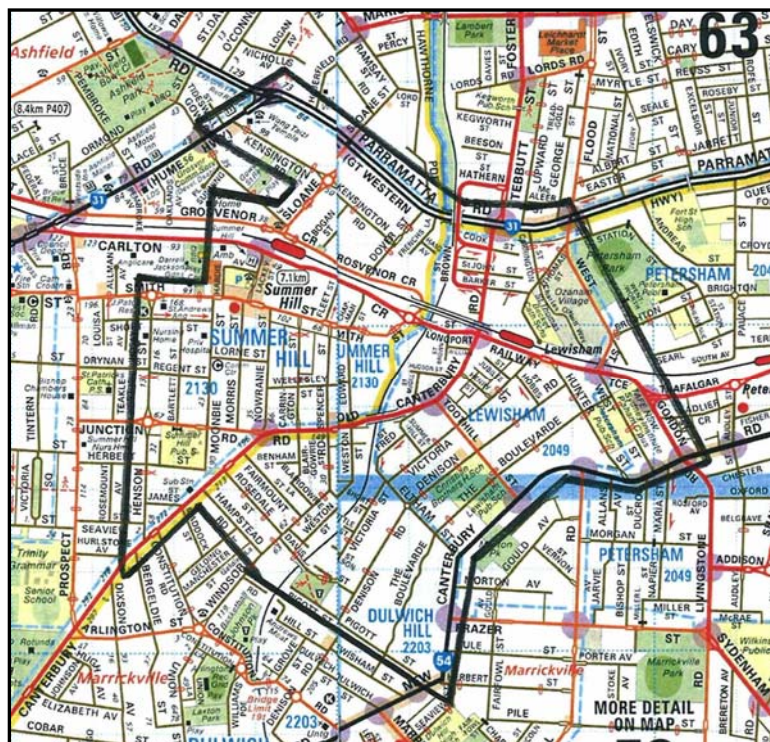
- Introducing EG Funds Management
- A word from our Chairman
- Share our vision
- The need for change
- The benefits of change
- Introducing our team
- The way forward
- How you can become involved

The newsletter also carried information about the household and pedestrian survey that was being commissioned.

It was prepared as A3 double sided colour format folded to DL. In total, 2,400 newsletters were distributed to both owners and occupiers in the resident catchment notification area defined by Figure 2.1. The notification area was determined in conjunction with the planning officers at both Ashfield and Marrickville Councils.

The newsletters were distributed with the assistance of both Ashfield and Marrickville Council's using their respective resident data bases. Newsletters were sent by the Australia Post addressed postage paid mail service on 15 March 2010.

**FIGURE 2.1 –RESIDENT NOTIFICATION CATCHMENT**





## 2.1.4 Media

The decision was made by EG Funds Management not to undertake media display advertising about the consultation process at this time as no consultation events were being held that required publication in the local media.

Over the three month period that the project was being actively communicated in the community only one media article appeared in the Inner West Courier, the week commencing Monday 22 February 2010. The article reproduced in Appendix D is titled '*Huge Plans for Summer Hill*' and appeared following a presentation by EG Funds Management to the Strategic Planning and Economic Development Committee of Ashfield Council held on 16 February 2010.

The article preceded the community consultation process which commenced in March. It is relevant that since undertaking the consultation no subsequent media has appeared in the same local newspaper.

## 2.1.5 Feedback from Information Lines

The feedback that has been received by EG Funds Management from the information lines established for this phase of the project is detailed below in Table 2.1

**TABLE 2.1**  
**SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION FEEDBACK FROM INFORMATION LINES**

FEEDBACK	ISSUES/COMMENTS RAISED
<b>EMAILS - 18 emails received</b>	
13 emails	Registered interest in being kept informed of future events and receiving newsletters.
1 email	<p>Dear project coordinators</p> <p><i>'Firstly, congratulations on taking a consultative approach to this important development. If only the developers of the McGill St precinct had taken a similar tack.</i></p> <p><i>We have a particular interest in the site because we live nearby in Barker St and because my family were millers in Bathurst for more than 100 years until the 1980s.</i></p> <p><i>Generally we are excited by the prospect of this wonderful old site becoming open to the public but anticipate some vexing challenges.</i></p> <p><i>We would like to make some quick preliminary points that we would like to make.</i></p> <p><i>Opportunities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>- to develop a master plan for Summer Hill and Lewisham to assess cumulative effects of multiple developments, i.e., the McGill St development, the mill development and transport planning and other infrastructure issues</i></li> <li><i>- to create new parkland linked to the proposed Greenway and to retain the many specimen trees and palms on the site, especially the Chinese elm tree on Smith St</i></li> <li><i>- to create a mix of housing to cater for people of all income levels - social equity is very important</i></li> <li><i>- to create public spaces for the creation and display of visual art</i></li> <li><i>- to create public spaces for rehearsal and performance of music and theatre</i></li> <li><i>- to create community spaces for formal and informal gatherings</i></li> </ul>



FEEDBACK	ISSUES/COMMENTS RAISED
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- to provide spaces for childcare and aged care services</li> <li>- to create community gardens, including vegetable patches, etc</li> <li>- to retain and enhance the aesthetic values of the old mill buildings</li> <li>- to create better linkages with Lewisham and the train station</li> <li>- to create a development powered by carbon neutral electricity</li> <li>- to protect and enhance local biodiversity</li> </ul> <p><i>Threats</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- managing the volumes and flows of traffic in the area will be a significant challenge. It is difficult to image how this issue can be adequately addressed without major road infrastructure investment. It is difficult to envisage major road infrastructure changes that would not substantially alter the character of the area.</li> <li>- managing the environmental impacts of the development, from construction to full life-cycle</li> <li>- adverse impacts on the character and businesses of the Summer Hill shopping precinct</li> <li>- overcrowding at train stations</li> <li>- pressure to increase heights and density of development at Summer Hill shopping village</li> </ul> <p><i>Other</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- there should be no above-ground car parks, like those proposed for the McGill St precinct</li> <li>- include something for teenagers - not sure what</li> </ul> <p><i>Please keep us informed about this development. We would love to participate in any workshops you are planning to hold.'</i></p>
1 email	<p><i>'Thank you for your brochure which was in my home letter box last night. Would you mind letting me know if this proposal is the 14 storey residential proposal please? Thank you.'</i></p>
1 email	<p><i>'I am a local resident living in Summer Hill.</i></p> <p><i>I am excited by the opportunities that a development of this nature will bring to the precinct of Summer Hill. Indeed if the appropriate style of apartment (Warehouse / New York Loft Style) was constructed from the existing fabric, my wife and I would be keen to invest.</i></p> <p><i>Please include me in your mailing list for future correspondence and notices of community meetings, I would be keen to offer my support to the project.</i></p> <p><i>Please contact me if you require further information'</i></p>
1 email	<p><i>'I write to register my interest in the Summer Hill Flour Mill Project. Thank you for the opportunity to be consulted and I appreciate your desire to create a sensitive and appropriate development.</i></p> <p><i>I was particularly pleased to read on the EG Funds Management website that the company adheres to principles for responsible investment. I would be most interested in receiving any reports on activities or progress towards implementing the principles. I invest in EG Funds Management through my Superfund</i></p>



FEEDBACK	ISSUES/COMMENTS RAISED
	<p><i>From your literature I understand you have purchased the site prior to it being rezoned. My limited understanding of property development leads me to believe that the property would have been bought at a significantly 'undervalued price'. Although EG Funds Management will incur significant costs and risks during the life of the project, they also stand to gain 'super' profits. I would encourage the plans to include social and affordable housing in the mix of redevelopment and green environmental standards in the design. This would be in line with the principles for responsible development.</i></p> <p><i>My other concern at this stage is for the site not to be overdeveloped, primarily for two reasons - the road infrastructure can barely cope at the moment heading into the city along the railway line. [based on 2006 ABS data we can expect 40% of the population in the redevelopment to travel to work by car]. Secondly, the change to the character and livability of the area - I am not against increasing density but huge high rise towers can cause social problems and many may not be let or sold. There is currently anecdotal evidence that this is the case in Ashfield.</i></p> <p><i>Once again thank you for your willingness to engage with the community.</i></p>
1 email	<p><i>'Just wondering if someone can please trim the overhanging branches that hang over the flour mill fence onto the footpath on the corner near the roundabout. My daughter rides her bike to school, and these branches have become impossible to get past without having to get off the bike and go onto the road.'</i></p>
<b>1800 PHONE CALLS – 7 calls received</b>	Registered interest in being kept informed of future events and receiving newsletters



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## 2.2 Community Consultation Initiatives

During the three month consultation period EG Funds Management undertook a number of briefings to integral stakeholders. A list of the briefings is detailed below:

- Tuesday 16 February 2010 - Ashfield Council
- Tuesday 23 February 2010 - Marrickville Council
- Tuesday 16 March 2010 - Ashfield Business Chamber
- Saturday 20 March 2010 – Ashfield & District Historical Society site tour
- Tuesday 23 March 2010 - McGill Street Precinct Committee
- Thursday 25 March 2010 - Friends of the Greenway
- Wednesday 28 April 2010 - Linda Burney MP (State Member for Canterbury)

The same project information was consistently used for these briefings, including the presentation detailed in Appendix E. The briefings took the form of a presentation on the project and its current status followed by questions and answers.



## 3.0 COMMUNITY ATTITUDES SURVEY

EG Funds Management engaged DAEMON MRA Market Research to undertake a community survey to determine the level of community support to changing the use of the Summer Hill Flour Mill Site from Industrial to mixed use and the development issues that would be important to the local community if the site was to be redeveloped. The results of the community survey are detailed in the report prepared by DAEMON MRA Market Research that is reproduced in Appendix F. A summary of the key findings arising from the survey are presented in this section.

### 3.1 Survey Methodology

The brief that was given to DAEMON MRA was to survey a representative sample of the local community residing in the Ashfield and Marrickville Council areas. Specifically residents living in close proximity to the Summer Hill Flour Mill Site were targeted as were those that received copies of the community newsletter that is detailed in Appendix C.

The survey questionnaire is reproduced in Appendix A. The survey was a 12 minute face to face survey with a total of 580 respondents, of which 203 interviews were held with Ashfield Residents (at home), 176 with Marrickville residents (at home) and the remaining 201 surveys being with the broader community in the Summer Hill village.

A face to face survey methodology was deemed to be preferable to a telephone survey given the need to confirm with respondents their residential location in connection to the Summer Hill Flour Mill Site. This was also to avoid confusion with the nearby Lewisham Towers development.

The interviews were carried out by experienced and fully briefed DAEMON 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 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 within 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.

The market research aimed to determine:

- community attitudes to changing the land use of the site away from industrial to a mixed use zone
- the importance of retaining the heritage buildings on the site
- attitudes to improving public access to the site
- support for use of the freight corridor for light rail
- specific facilities and services the community would like to see incorporated onto the site through its redevelopment
- community concerns arising from the redevelopment of the site



- the magnitude of the proposed redevelopment as a local issue
- the level of community interest in being kept informed of the redevelopment of the site and the best method for providing a flow of information to the community through a consultation process.

**Table 3.1**  
**Profile of Survey Participants**

<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.

Source: DAEMON MRA Market Research

Of note, the survey also determined how long residents had 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 had 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%.

## **3.2 Key Research Findings**

### **3.2.1 Support for a Change in Zoning**

***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.

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.

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.

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 3.4.

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).

**Table 3.2**  
**Attitudes Towards a Change in Zoning and a Mixed Use Redevelopment**

<b>82%</b> prefer the site is not retained for industrial use only
<b>72%</b> agree the mixed use redevelopment of the site would make a positive contribution to their local areas
<b>63%</b> agree the mixed use redevelopment of the site would make their area a more attractive place to live in

Source: DAEMON MRA Market Research





### 3.2.2 Support for Light Rail

*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%).

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+).

**Table 3.3**  
**Support For Light Rail Extension**

<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

Source: DAEMON MRA Market Research

### 3.2.3 Support for Providing Public Access to the Site

A mixed use redevelopment of the site will enable the public to access it for community use, open space and pedestrian and cycle way routes. It will 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%).

### 3.2.4 Facilities the Community would like to see on the Site

The local community is keen to see several important community based facilities and services incorporated within the Summer Hill Flour Mill Site.

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.

**Table 3.4**  
**Main Facilities / Services People Would Like Incorporated in Redeveloped Site**  
(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

Source: DAEMON MRA Market Research

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.



### 3.2.5 Key Concerns

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. The concerns are summarised in Table 3.4

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.*

**Table 3.4**  
**Main Concerns People have Relating to the Proposed Redevelopment of the Site**

<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

Source: DAEMON MRA Market Research

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.*

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.



### 3.2.6 Interest In Being Kept Informed

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.

### 3.3. Survey Conclusions

Based on the survey research findings, DAEMON MRA Market Research reached the following conclusions concerning the community attitudes to changing the land use zoning of the Summer Hill Flour Mill Site:

- 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; and
- the community newsletter is considered an important communication tool for keeping people informed.



## 4.0 CONCLUSION

EG Funds Management has advanced a community consultation process to ascertain community attitudes to rezoning the Summer Hill Flour Mill Site from industrial to a mixed use zone. The consultation has involved an extensive distribution of approximately 2,400 community newsletters, the establishment of a project website, 1800 number, email address, numerous stakeholder briefing sessions and an independent community attitudes survey.

The consultation presented:

1. **The vision that EG Funds Management seeks to realise on the site** - to create a livable and sustainable precinct that combines housing choice with open space and some local retail, cultural, commercial and employment generating uses to compliment the Summer Hill Village.
2. **The benefits of rezoning** the site to a mixed use zone.
3. **Why it is necessary to rezone the site** and the requirements for both Marrickville and Ashfield Councils to support and advance the rezoning process.
4. **The lodgement by EG Funds Management of a Planning Proposal** application in December 2009 requesting that both Marrickville and Ashfield Council give consideration to rezoning the site.

The findings that have arisen from the community consultation process and specifically the Community Attitudes Survey confirm that there is an overwhelming level of community support from residents of both Ashfield and Marrickville to advancing the rezoning of the site to a mixed use zone. This finding is important given that the survey targeted a sample that is statistically relevant.

The consultation has also highlighted that local residents are very interested in the future of the iconic site and are keen to be kept informed and involved in the any subsequent design and development approval process with community newsletters being the preferred method of communication. This finding is important for both Marrickville and Ashfield Council and EG Funds Management and we would recommend that a Communication Plan be formulated and advanced to coincide with the later stages of the rezoning process and the formulation of specific planning controls for this site.

The level of interest that the community holds is also reflected in the concerns that residents have identified about the redevelopment of this site. In identifying concerns it is important to consider that the site has been closed for some time with the relocation of Allied Mills off the site in March 2009. This has established a base line scenario where local residents become used to a site that has no activity associated with its day to day operation. It is also important to recognise that no specific development proposal was presented to the community during this preliminary consultation as EG Funds Management is advancing a rezoning application. Accordingly, issues such as traffic generation, scale and bulk, architectural and urban design and impact on amenity are expected given the strategic planning focus of the consultation and the absence of technical information and plans to qualify and quantify these concerns in the public arena.

The survey in identifying these concerns enables EG Funds Management to ensure that they are specifically targeted as part of any future community consultation process. To assist with this process EG Funds Management's multi disciplinary team will undertake site analysis and design investigations to ensure that the redevelopment has regard to these important considerations.



The response to development opportunities such as the adaptive re-use of the site's heritage buildings, the opening up of public access to the site and the list of desirable community facilities and services provides valuable feedback to EG Funds Management that can be taken into account in the formulation of a preferred master plan for the site pending the outcome of the rezoning process. The list of opportunities raised by survey recipients provides an insight into how the Summer Hill Flour Mill Site can be integrated with the surrounding area and assist in enhancing the liveability of the suburb.

The same is true in respect to the positive support expressed to the conversion of the Freight Rail Corridor for the extension of the light rail network. In light of recent Government decision making concerning the light rail infrastructure the conversion of the freight corridor for this purpose is a major opportunity that can be realised through the rezoning of the Summer Hill Flour Mill Site for a mixed use zone.

In conclusion, it is our professional opinion that the findings arising from this initial phase of community consultation support the development vision that EG Funds Management has for the Summer Hill Flour Mill Site. The Community Attitudes Survey, being a statistically relevant survey provides both Ashfield and Marrickville Council the ability to consider the rezoning of the site with the knowledge that a change away from an industrial land use to a mixed use zone has a high level of community support.



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## Appendix A – Survey Instrument



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## Appendix B – Website





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## Appendix C – Newsletter



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## Appendix D – Media



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## **Appendix E – Project Briefing Presentation**



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## **Appendix F – Community Attitudes Survey Report**