

7. THE URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK

7.1 Urban Design Opportunities

From a review of the physical context of the Precinct in terms of its location within Rozelle and Inner Sydney, and of the site itself in terms of neighbouring uses and development, the following urban design opportunities are apparent: -

- There is the opportunity for “taller and slender” built form, including an iconic tower in the order of 30- 45 stories within the Rozelle Village site. This opportunity is generated by:-
 - The ridgetop which reinforces the significance of the area as the potential location of a visual signpost and ‘place-marker’ indicating the presence of intense urban activity and development that characterises the Victoria / Darling axis within the centre of Rozelle (way finding);
 - The opportunities for a landmark building/ structure to contribute to the iconic urban character that distinguishes harbourside inner Sydney (memorability);
 - The opportunity for a landmark building to be part of a symbolic gateway to inner western Sydney from the Sydney CBD improving image, attractiveness and memorability of the western pathway in inner Sydney’s movement network (image);
 - The potential establishment and enjoyment of good quality views of the harbour and beyond from upper levels of any building by Rozelle’s residents and visitors (offers views);
 - The potential to visually place and link Rozelle within Inner Sydney’s urban structure contributing to legibility (place making);
 - The presence of other tall buildings and structures along other ridgelines in inner Sydney, which ensures that tall development within the site would not be unique and would not be unreasonably visually prominent with the cityscape / skyline (townscape character); and
 - The potential to minimise local microclimatic and amenity impacts due to the size of the site and potential setbacks to neighbouring uses (low amenity impact).
- There is the opportunity for the area to accommodate a higher density of residential development than currently prevails in the area. This opportunity is generated by:-
 - The presence of convenient and extensive bus based public transport (and the potential for heavy rail access via the CBD Metro in the long term), that establish an opportunity to provide dwellings in close proximity to public transport; thereby promoting a reduction in car use and contributing to the achievement of sustainability goals (capitalises on public transport);

- The need for the Leichhardt LGA to meet government housing targets in the medium term. Development in the Precinct may relieve pressure on the established historic fabric of the LGA to accommodate new infill development demanded by Government strategies and objectives (contributes to housing targets);
- The presence of new public places, retail, commercial and entertainment activities that, through convenient access potentially offer a high level of resident amenity (new places and activities); and
- The potential amenity offered by good quality views of the harbour and beyond from upper levels of any building (resident amenity);

- The accommodation of a mix of retail, residential and club uses within the site. It provides the opportunity to establish new accommodation, entertainment and commercial opportunities for residents and visitors to Rozelle. It can also provide opportunities to address the apparent economic malaise being experienced by Darling Street south through the provision of appropriate anchor uses with linkages and connections;
- The lack of memorable public spaces presents opportunities for development to offer new places for the public’s enjoyment. The character of the public domain in Rozelle suggest the adoption of an approach to the creation of public places focussed upon intimate public laneways and passageways, rather than large ceremonial / symbolic squares or piazzas;



- The lack of any distinctive architectural style within the Victoria Road Precinct provides opportunities for the exploration of innovative, contemporary architectural styles without mimicry or the adoption of mock historic styles. Further, while the presence of neighbouring heritage places and the historic built fabric require attention to built form outcomes at the development interface, such buildings also provide cues for the adoption of materials and colours which complement the historic character of the area;
- The presence of Victoria Road provides for convenient and safe access, particularly into the site if access to the signalised intersection with Wellington Street can be achieved;
- The presence of Waterloo Street provides separation between existing neighbouring residential uses and the site. This promotes privacy and minimises overshadowing. Built form and streetscape should be sensitive to existing buildings in the street;
- The opportunity for development to offer attractive views to the harbour generates the potential for a high level of resident and visitor amenity at upper levels. Ideally this benefit should be available for public access by way of publicly accessible rooftop or midlevel sky gardens and / or commercial activities such as cafes and / or restaurants;
- The lack of established pedestrian paths across the site and the poor pedestrian environment along Victoria Road provide opportunities for the creation of new footpaths and linkage opportunities between activities to enhance pedestrian experiences. Any proposal for pedestrian bridges or tunnels across Victoria Road, however, should be avoided on account of their potential to direct pedestrian movements away from Darling Street and activity centres, their visual impact on Victoria Road's streetscape and potential safety and security issues;
- The natural gradient and fall in landform requires a sensitive response to building configuration. Building heights should step down the slope and excessive level differences, ramps and retaining walls should be avoided. There may be opportunities to nestle building bulk within cut in the slope of sites; and
- The existing ground floor commercial and retail uses and 'high street' character of Darling Street south provide the opportunity for the provision of uses within the site that activate the building frontage to this street. Activities could extend into the site, connecting with the proposed supermarket and club facilities, promoting vibrancy, vitality and interest within the street and public domain.

7.2 Urban Design Constraints

From a review of the physical context of the Precinct in terms of its location within Rozelle and inner Sydney, and of the site itself in terms of neighbouring uses and development, there are only a limited number of urban design constraints apparent: -

- The presence of the residential environment in Waterloo Street and in adjoining sites, particularly on the southern side of Victoria Road will require consideration of shadow impacts in terms of the location of building form and scale to ensure that residential amenity is protected. However it is unrealistic not to expect some impacts by way of shadow and traffic. The aim is to minimise such impacts so that they do not unreasonably impact on resident amenity;
- The presence of traffic noise and localised pollution will require a sensitive response by development. Built form and activities must not turn their back on the public domain, nor should they expose residents to unreasonable and unnecessary levels of traffic impacts; and
- The presence of heritage conservation areas and items will require consideration in building design and siting.



Constraints Plan

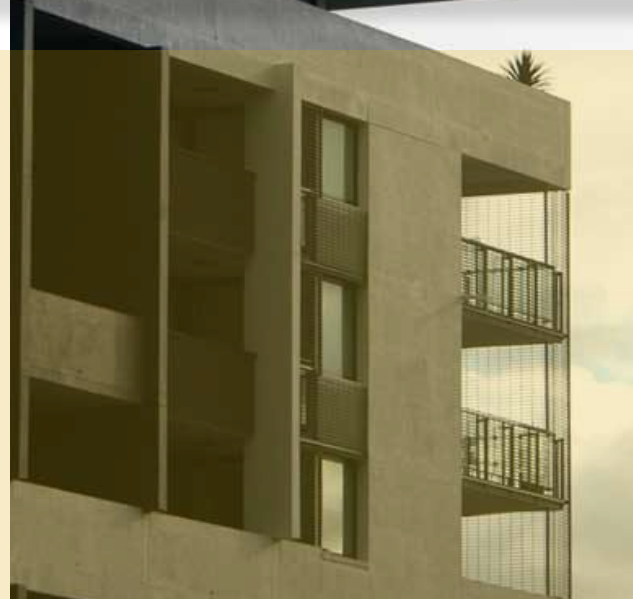
7.3 Urban Design Principles

A suite of Urban Design Principles can be developed that progress from the opportunities and constraints identified above. The Principles present performance based objectives and design qualities that development should aim to achieve, and that various scenarios for development can be judged against. They comprise:-



Built Form and Building Envelope

- i. Building setbacks at ground floor level away from Victoria Road should be minimised and should reinforce the active street front character of Darling Street and the domestic character of Waterloo Street in particular.
- ii. The building envelope should respond to noise and environmental conditions on Victoria Road by minimising exposure for internal spaces addressing the road.
- iii. Buildings should be articulated both in plan and section, along building facades addressing road frontages to reduce the impact of scale.
- iv. Envelopes should establish a harmonious relationship with neighbouring buildings, particularly those in Darling Street with recognised heritage value.
- v. Building heights should step down slope at a site's boundary to Victoria Road.
- vi. The location of building heights across a site should respect adjoining sensitive residential uses by way of minimising shadow and visual impact by adoption of slender building forms at elevated levels.
- vii. The building envelope should reinforce the potential landmark status of the Rozelle Village site by way of a concentration of building height in the site.
- viii. Maximum height should match heights found on other buildings on ridgelines surrounding Sydney Harbour to distinguish the importance of the role of the site as the heart of the Victoria/Darling axes and contribute to Sydney's image and place making.
- ix. Building envelopes should maximise residential and non-residential floor space in order that the public benefits of greater community access to new uses linked to public transport can be achieved.
- x. Building envelopes should maximise residential density in order that metropolitan housing targets can be met.



Architectural Style, Streetscape and Skyline

- i. Development should exhibit a contemporary, innovative, yet timeless architectural style that does not mimic historic themes and improves and enhances the streetscape image of Victoria Road as part of the western gateway to and from Sydney's inner west.
- ii. Development at the upper levels should contribute to inner Sydney's townscape, and the visual presence of Rozelle and its ridge from distant viewing points, by the provision of architectural features and design elements that accentuate the height of the development to establish an iconic landmark building. It should attract interest and attract photography by observers.
- iii. Roof top form should obscure building plant and roof top equipment and should be of a style that is innovative and interesting, contributing to the image of Sydney's skyline.
- iv. Development should engage with Victoria Road in a manner that addresses vehicle noise and pollution and improves streetscape character.
- v. Recessed balconies and louvered sky gardens should be provided to external galleries of apartments at upper levels to enhance function, amenity and useability.
- vi. Development should achieve a 6 star building energy rating.



Bus waiting facilities, Curitiba Brazil

Access and Transport

- i. Pedestrian and vehicular access into a site should be legible and, with regard to the site, distinguish the different uses (supermarket, retail, club and residential) within the development.
- ii. Separate and clearly identified and defined primary pedestrian access for the residential use should be provided into a site at ground level, particularly from Darling Street and/or Waterloo Street.
- iii. Primary car and service vehicle access and egress should be consolidated into a minimal number of driveways that are convenient and safe and that capitalise on the presence of the signalised intersection at Victoria Road / Wellington Street wherever possible.
- iv. Opportunities for short term vehicle lay-by for taxis and the like should be provided along building frontages.
- v. For the site, Secondary vehicle access should be provided to Waterloo Street.
- vi. All car parking and loading should be located within the building envelope, either in basement levels or above ground floor behind upper level uses.
- vii. Pedestrian bridges or tunnels across Victoria Road should be avoided.
- viii. Comprehensive public pedestrian access should be provided within ground floor external areas.
- ix. Direct entry to ground floor retail and commercial tenancies should be provided from public domain places within a site with direct and unencumbered linkages to the public domain in surrounding streets.



Architect Daniel Libeskind's proposal for a sky garden in a residential tower in New York (source: www.archicentral.com)

Public Domain

- i. Development should enhance the appearance, quality, microclimate and usability of the public domain surrounding the site.
- ii. Development should activate the footpath space at ground level with retail and commercial land uses that 'spill out' into the footpath to enhance the vibrancy and vitality of the neighbouring public domain.
- iii. Ground floor public places and pathways should be embedded in a public domain framework linked to Darling Street that is distinguished by intimate laneways and passages lined with retail activity to provoke interest, intrigue and variety within public spaces, and promote connectivity to the activities in Darling Street and the achievement of comfortable, inviting and vibrant public places.
- iv. Large piazzas and squares should be avoided.
- v. Development should contribute to the cultural identity of Rozelle by way of provision of public artworks within visible public domain areas.
- vi. Impact of landform and slope should be addressed in public spaces so that pathway connections and linkages are unencumbered by significant level changes.
- vii. Ground level public places and spaces should be protected from impacts of wind and other microclimatic effects generated by built form.
- viii. Opportunities for public access to spaces and activities at upper levels so that residents of Rozelle can experience and enjoy views and connections with Sydney Harbour should be pursued.
- ix. Density of pedestrian use should activate the public domain, providing vibrant spaces and viable businesses.

8. EVALUATION OF CONCEPT + CONCLUSION

This Urban Design Master Assessment has analysed the characteristics of the site in the Victoria Road Corridor in Rozelle, and identified its opportunities and constraints for development. The analysis indicates that the site has the potential to accommodate new development, which can make a substantial contribution to the achievement of local and broader social, economic and environmental goals.

It has translated those opportunities and constraints into a suite of Development Principles, which, it is considered, could effectively guide future development in the site.

To properly assess the potential for any development to achieve the Principles, the proposed development is assessed against the Principles.

The Proposed Development

The Plans of proposed development and accompanying explanatory diagrams reviewed comprised those prepared by PTW and Stanasic Architects dated 10 February 2012 contained in the package that forms part of the submission documentation. Of particular relevance to this review the proposed development exhibits the following key characteristics:

- A cluster of two towers (one, of which comprises two separate tower elements joined by a full height atrium), varying in height from 21 to 26 stories above a three to five storey podium including a three storey form to Darling Street;
- A mix of uses including new premises for the Balmain Leagues club (2,600 sqm), specialty retail (10,800 sqm), SOHO commercial spaces, supermarket (3,600 sqm) medical centre, child care, a gymnasium (3,600 sqm) and residential apartments (304 in mix of 1, 2 and 3 bed).
- Primary car and service vehicle access to the basement car park areas from the signalised intersection at Wellington Street and secondary residential only access to Waterloo Street;
- Comprehensive and connected pedestrian access across the site at ground level linking internal retail, other uses and supermarket tenancies with Darling Street, Waterloo Street and Victoria Road; and
- Activation of podium frontages addressing streets incorporating separate entries to uses and SOHO tenancies addressing Waterloo Street.

The plans of the proposed development adopt the 'lower height towers on a human scale podium' scenario discussed in Part 5.2. This approach has been adopted following further investigation and design evolution that has made evident that:

- Built form modelling of a tall single slender tower has indicated possible shadow impacts on Callan Park, the higher the tower, which was considered unacceptable;
- Further development and evaluation of built form massing scenarios by the architectural team (refer to Part 6 of Volume 2 of the architectural design report) indicate that the comparison of benefits and impacts between a single tall tower versus lower height towers are negligible, and where private benefits are considered lower height towers offer a slightly better outcome;

- The adoption of a bio-filtration system in the development introduces requirements for building construction efficiencies in order to be viable, which influences the need for larger floor areas; and
- Rozelle Village Pty Ltd, through the consultation undertaken since 2010 with the local community, adjoining residents and other stakeholders, has noted a strong public preference for lower building forms.

Built Form and Building Envelope

Principle	Comment
i. Building setbacks at ground floor level away from Victoria Road should be minimised and should reinforce the active street front character of Darling Street and the domestic character of Waterloo Street in particular.	Achieves. The proposal offers multiple entries at different levels and to different uses addressing all streets. Building walls respond to slope. Blank walls are obscured by cut into landform.
ii. The building envelope should respond to noise and environmental conditions on Victoria Road by minimising exposure for internal spaces addressing the road.	Achieves. Internal tenancies envelope internal spaces and, together with light wells to internal spaces providing light access, protect and enhance the character and quality of internal spaces.
iii. Buildings should be articulated both in plan and section, along building facades addressing road frontages to reduce the impact of scale.	Achieves. Articulation is provided at building entries in the podium addressing the streets and to tower configuration.
iv. Envelopes should establish a harmonious relationship with neighbouring buildings, particularly those in Darling Street with recognised heritage value.	Achieves. A two storey building (presents as three with parapet) is provided to Darling Street.
v. Building heights should step down slope at a site's boundary to Victoria Road.	Partly achieves. Design elements in façade design step down the slope to Waterloo and Victoria Roads to visually connect built form with landform character.
vi. The location of building heights across a site should respect adjoining sensitive residential uses by way of minimising shadow and visual impact by adoption of slender building forms at elevated levels.	Reasonably achieves. Configuration and siting of tower footprints and massing seek to minimise shadow and visual impact.
vii. The building envelope should reinforce the potential landmark status of the site by way of a concentration of building height in the site.	Achieves. Built form proposes a "cluster" of tall building elements on the ridgeline within the site.
viii. Maximum height should match heights found on other buildings on ridgelines surrounding Sydney Harbour to distinguish the importance of the role of the site as the heart of the Victoria/Darling axes and contribute to Sydney's image and place making.	Achieves as noted above. However, facade design and use of materials and colours could be more adventurous and daring to establish an iconic landmark development that attracts interest and appeal.
ix. Building envelopes should maximise residential and non-residential floor space in order that the public benefits of greater community access to new uses linked to public transport can be achieved.	Achieves. Development proposes a mix of retail and club facilities anchored by supermarket to reinforce role and function of southern end of Darling Street and Victoria Road.
x. Building envelopes should maximise residential density in order that metropolitan housing targets can be met.	Achieves. Dwelling yield provides efficient contribution to meeting Leichhardt LGA's housing targets with no impact on established communities and character of neighbourhoods.

Architectural Style, Streetscape and Skyline

Principle	Comment
i. Development should exhibit a contemporary, innovative, yet timeless architectural style that does not mimic historic themes and improves and enhances the streetscape image of Victoria Road as part of the western gateway to and from Sydney's inner west.	Achieves. Architectural style is contemporary and improves the streetscape presentation of Victoria Road.
ii. Development at the upper levels should contribute to inner Sydney's townscape, and the visual presence of Rozelle and its ridge from distant viewing points, by the provision of architectural features and design elements that accentuate the height of the development to establish an iconic landmark building. It should attract interest and attract photography by observers.	Can achieve. Facade design and use of materials and colours could be more adventurous and daring to establish an iconic landmark development that attracts interest and appeal.
iii. Roof top form should obscure building plant and roof top equipment and should be of a style that is innovative and interesting, contributing to the image of Sydney's skyline.	Achieves. Variation in building height adds interest to built form.
iv. Development should engage with Victoria Road in a manner that addresses vehicle noise and pollution and improves streetscape character.	Achieves. The podium contains a number of entries that step down the Victoria Road footpath and podium façade design addresses noise and local pollution.
v. Recessed balconies and louvered sky gardens should be provided to external galleries of apartments at upper levels to enhance function, amenity and useability.	Partly achieves. There are opportunities for greater use of sky gardens and galleries in upper levels.
vi. Development should achieve a 6 star building energy rating.	Can achieve. The proposed development adopts a number of measures that can contribute to a low energy consumption development.

Access and Transport

Principle	Comment
i. Pedestrian and vehicular access into a site should be legible and, with regard to the site, distinguish the different uses (supermarket, retail, club and residential) within the development.	Achieves. Separate entries to the different uses and activities in the site are proposed.
ii. Separate and clearly identified and defined primary pedestrian access for the residential use should be provided into a site at ground level, particularly from Darling Street and/or Waterloo Street.	Achieves. Entry to residential component is available from all streets.
iii. Primary car and service vehicle access and egress should be consolidated into a minimal number of driveways that are convenient and safe and that capitalise on the presence of the signalised intersection at Victoria Road / Wellington Street wherever possible.	Achieves. Vehicle driveways connect to Victoria Road at the intersection. There is only one driveway to Waterloo Street to access residential use.
iv. Opportunities for short term vehicle lay-by for taxis and the like should be provided along building frontages.	Partly achieves. RMS (formerly RTA) requirements for Victoria Road preclude such activities to Victoria Road site frontage. Taxis can collect from the pick up point at the Waterloo Street building address.
v. For the site, Secondary vehicle access should be provided to Waterloo Street.	Achieves. Access to Waterloo Street is for residential only. No commercial or servicing.
vi. All car parking and loading should be located within the building envelope, either in basement levels or above ground floor behind upper level uses.	Achieves.
vii. Pedestrian bridges or tunnels across Victoria Road should be avoided.	Achieves.
viii. Comprehensive public pedestrian access should be provided within ground floor external areas.	Achieves. Development proposes a comprehensive access through the podium level linking the internal spaces and external public domain.
ix. Direct entry to ground floor retail and commercial tenancies should be provided from public domain places within a site with direct and unencumbered linkages to the public domain in surrounding streets.	Achieves. As above.

Public Domain

Principle	Comment
i. Development should enhance the appearance, quality, microclimate and usability of the public domain surrounding its site.	Achieves. Podium façade design including entry configuration respects character and quality of public domain.
ii. Development should activate the footpath space at ground level with retail and commercial land uses that 'spill out' into the footpath to enhance the vibrancy and vitality of the neighbouring public domain.	Achieves. Building activities, uses and entries address all street frontages
iii. Ground floor public places and pathways should be embedded in a public domain framework linked to Darling Street that is distinguished by intimate laneways and passages lined with retail activity to provoke interest, intrigue and variety within public spaces, and promote connectivity to the activities in Darling Street and the achievement of comfortable, inviting and vibrant public places.	Achieves. Podium entries and configuration and connections with internal land uses and activities invite visitation by extension of public domain into the site at ground levels, particularly from Darling Street .
iv. Large piazzas and squares should be avoided.	Achieves.
v. Development should contribute to the cultural identity of Rozelle by way of provision of public artworks within visible public domain areas.	Can achieve.
vi. Impact of landform and slope should be addressed in public spaces so that pathway connections and linkages are unencumbered by significant level changes.	Achieves. Level differences addressed at building edges in podium design and internally.
vii. Ground level public places and spaces should be protected from impacts of wind and other microclimatic effects generated by built form.	Can Achieve.
viii. Opportunities for public access to spaces and activities at upper levels so that residents of Rozelle can experience and enjoy views and connections with Sydney Harbour should be pursued.	Not achieved. All upper residential levels are private to facilitate safety and security.
ix. Density of pedestrian use should activate the public domain, providing vibrant spaces and viable businesses.	Achieves. Building entries and podium uses encourage pedestrian movement in and out of the building, particularly to neighbouring commercial uses on Darling Street.
x. Development should enhance the appearance, quality, microclimate and usability of the public domain surrounding its site.	Achieves. As above.
xi. Development should activate the footpath space at ground level to enhance the vibrancy and vitality of the neighbouring public domain.	Achieves. As above.

The site is a significant asset and opportunity for redevelopment in Leichhardt's existing urban fabric to promote the achievement of objectives and strategic planning visions premised on ecological sustainability and on the reinforcement of communities, developments and uses that support and promote viable and attractive public transport systems.

The proposal highlights the dilemma confronting planning that seeks to achieve these goals. The dilemma (and challenge) rests in seeking to retrofit new development where opportunities prevail in existing, valued and loved neighbourhoods, many with respected heritage significance and high amenity.

With the site one such opportunity, where few development opportunities available within the established urban fabric of Leichhardt, it places an increased emphasis on the site to realise greater intensity of development than may be previously recognised or first apparent with an acceptable "fit" into its host area.

This urban design review demonstrates that the proposed development has the potential to achieve this aim. At the outset it can contribute to the character and quality of the public domain in surrounding streets, can minimise the amenity impacts (show, privacy and visual) on neighbouring properties and can offer new housing, retail, commercial and entertainment opportunities for the residents of Rozelle linked to public transport. There are some opportunities for improvement. There are opportunities to be more adventurous and innovative with the use of materials, colours and façade design in the development's upper levels. A bold response to the elevated nature of the site and the role that the Leichhardt peninsular ridgetop plays in Sydney's townscape character can establish an iconic landmark building that "is the subject of observers' photographs."

While many voices in the community may be confronted by the redevelopment of the site to a scale and nature that differs from that which prevails within the locality, and which differs with their expectations to date, the redevelopment of this one site presents the opportunity to, as so well stated by the Vision of Leichhardt Council's Strategic Plan 2020+, develop "a 'sustainable and liveable community' that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs."

