

St Aloysius' College Kirribilli

St Aloysius' College Character Assessment Report
August 2018



Title: St Aloysius' College Character Assessment

Prepared for: St Aloysius' College

Reference: BLO STA

Date: August 2018

Prepared by: RobertsDay Sydney

Approved by: Angela Koepp

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Roberts Day

Level 4, 17 Randle Street Surry Hills NSW 2010

T: +612 8202 8000 www.robertsday.com.au

ABN 53 667 373 703 ACN 008 892 135

PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

RobertsDay was engaged by Government to prepare the first Local Character Statement in accordance with the recently released Planning Circular “Stepping up planning and designing for better places: respecting and enhancing local character”.

Using our place led design expertise and knowledge of Government policy, this report provides an independent and informed assessment of the impact of the future refurbishment of St Aloysius’ College on the character of the local area.

It should be noted that part of the package including planning documents, statutory planning, community use and landscaping have analysed the programmatic requirements of the school and it is not part of this report.

To inform our understanding of local character and identify local community values we have researched:

- Draft North Sydney Development Control Plan 2010, Section 8, Area Character Statements
- Better Placed, Government Architect NSW
- Design Quality Principles (SEPP 65)
- Media reports
- Community Group Statements
- Tourism reports

The character and local community values have been distilled into a series of criteria and used to assess the

impact of the proposed development from 13 key vantage points.

The criteria have been grouped under the following categories of:

- Place
- User Groups
- Built Form
- Environmental Values

St Aloysius’ College is unique with its prominent harbourside location and breathtaking views to significant landmarks, harbour and nearby Sydney CBD. The College has a long associated presence and identity in the Kirribilli Neighbourhood local area with its cultural and historical significance.

The 4 different sub character areas adjoining the site requires a response that not only ensures that the existing local character is respected but, takes into consideration the interface transition through design consideration, material choice and overall composition.

Reviewing the proposal indicates that the changes to the existing College infrastructure is limited to the roof, Upper Pitt Street facade and Craiglea House facade. The existing height datum line has not been increased with the exception of the entry point on Upper Pitt St.



Character is understood to be distinct from heritage and conservation. Compatibility is different from sameness, as it allows for many different features to coexist together harmoniously.



- DPE Planning Circular, 2018

WHAT IS LOCAL CHARACTER?

DPE PLANNING CIRCULAR

The Department of Planning and Environment has prepared a 'Planning Circular' titled 'stepping up planning and designing for better places', each providing advice on how the NSW planning system will ensure the delivery of development that both meets the growing needs of NSW and is contextual, local and of its place, to make better places for everyone.

"Character is what makes one neighbourhood distinctive from another. It is the way a place 'looks and feels'. It is created by the way built and natural elements in both the public realm and private domain interrelate with one another, including the interplay between buildings, architectural style, subdivision patterns, activity, topography and vegetation."

Local character considerations can be included by Councils in DCP provisions to guide the future development of certain zones.

DESIGN QUALITY PRINCIPLES (SEPP 65)

CONTEXT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD CHARACTER

Context is the key natural and built features of an area, their relationship and the character they create when combined. It also includes social, economic, health and environmental conditions. Responding to context involves identifying the desirable elements of an area's existing or future character.

Good design responds to and enhances the qualities and identity of the area including the adjacent sites, streetscape and neighbourhood.

BUILT FORM AND SCALE

Good design achieves a scale, bulk and height appropriate to the existing or desired future character of the street and surrounding buildings.

Good design achieves an appropriate built form in terms of building alignment, proportions, building type, articulation and the manipulation of building elements.

KIRRIBILLI SNAPSHOT



① View to Harbour Bridge

③ Kirribilli Village Centre

② View to CBD

④ Jeffreys St Wharf

KIRRIBILLI SNAPSHOT

“Despite the high office of its most famous residents, the suburb has a district village feeling to it with local delis, boutique stores and a thriving cafe and restaurant scene. There are markets twice a month with eclectic arts, vintage clothes and fashion to browse and barter.”

Local resident

“Kirribilli has everything for the modern, busy lifestyle. It’s a 5 minute train ride across the bridge to the heart of the CBD and a short walk to the North Sydney commercial precinct. There are prestigious schools including Loreto, St Aloysius and Shore SCEGS.”

Local resident

“Squeezed between the Harbour Bridge and the politicians, the diminutive Dr Mary Booth Reserve Foreshore Walkway offers great views of the opera house and the city skyline.”

Kirribilli, Lonely Planet

“Today, more than 80 percent of the postcode is apartments and multi-storey dwellings, mainly in Art Deco, mid-century and modern style. A few highly-valued Victorian terraces remain, with a price tag to match their vintage.”

Kirribilli, Realstate

KIRRIBILLI LOCAL CHARACTERS



PICTORIAL STREET

TOURISM VICTORIAN TERRACES
IRREGULAR SUBDIVISION
WATERFRONT INDUSTRIAL



LOCAL SHOPS

MARKET CAFE
OPEN SPACE ACTIVE FRONTAGE
WIDE PAVED FOOTPATHS

ROOFTOP TERRACE
NARROW STREETS WITH LIMITED LANDSCAPING
MINIMUM STREET SETBACK

EDUCATIONAL

MULTI RESIDENTIAL ESTABLISHMENTS



HARBOUR FRONT

TOURISM OPEN SPACE
VICTORIAN VILLAS
GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS



DEFINE CRITERIA

PLACE

The beating heart of Kirribilli is its pictorial scenery with breathtaking district views to the city harbour for residents, employees and visitors to enjoy. Kirribilli neighbourhood local area offers narrow streets with limited landscaping resulting in an intimate streetscape. St Aloysius' College, as one of the iconic buildings sitting at its prestigious site, contributes to the identity of Kirribilli in terms of its cultural and identifiable significance, representing the aesthetics and historical values that people associate with Kirribilli as a place.

Future developments should maintain community's sense of place and have an ongoing focus to ensure existing attractors are valued by:

- Maintaining the iconic features of St Aloysius' College contributing to an attractive residential environment.
- No visual disturbance from and around Kirribilli neighbourhood.
- Maintaining the streetscape character.

BUILT FORM

Kirribilli has dense and compact built forms with a mix of low to medium density developments including some high rise apartments capturing views to the harbour. The Kirribilli Village centre is the focal point of the neighbourhood with local shops, community centre and outdoor cafes and transport hubs. The village is surrounded by Kirribilli Neighbourhood local area which is predominantly a residential area with some other uses including education.

In Kirribilli Neighbourhood local area, the materials are predominantly masonry and face brick. Buildings are generally setback a minimum from the boundary with a skewed alignment to respective street frontages. A common roofscape feature in the area is rooftop terraces to maximise the view to the harbour. Streets are generally narrow with limited landscaping opportunities.

Future development should respect and enhance the built form environment and character by:

- Carefully considering the interface with proposed development and adjoining land use.
- Compatible bulk and scale to create consistent built form rhythm.
- Consistent roofscape character that is aligned with the scenic qualities visible from surroundings.
- The use of compatible materials to form a consistent streetscape.
- Consistent and/or established street setbacks.

USER GROUPS

Being a world class destination, tourism and hospitality are key industries and major contributors to Kirribilli's economy. The site will mostly be experienced by visitors touring around several lookouts along the foreshore, travellers passing through the Harbour Bridge or arriving at the Jefferys Street Wharf nearby and Bradfield Park. Therefore, it is critical that any proposed changes in the local area be designed from the perspective of the public users to ensure that the overall user experience at Kirribilli is not compromised.

Future development should support this by:

- Maintaining and reinforcing the mid century and modern architectural style through proposed built form.
- Maintaining existing building height to protect pre-existing scenic features of Kirribilli.

ENVIRONMENTAL VALUES

Kirribilli is a photogenic north shore neighbourhood with picturesque views of Sydney Opera House, Harbour Bridge and central Sydney. This glamorous harbourside neighbourhood claims top spot for location and views.

Kirribilli has a stylish casual vibe with foreshore walks and parklands to picnic. Bradfield Park, at the base of Sydney harbour provides the transition from dense built form to the harbour and the Harbour Bridge.

Future developments should preserve the existing significant views of the harbour and ensure key ecology is respected and protected by:

- Retaining views to the Sydney Harbour.
- Retaining existing vegetation.
- Maintaining cohesiveness through landscaping that complements the built form.

NEIGHBOURING INTERFACE

Sub Character 1



The Upper Pitt Street Interface:
3 storey existing College building
+ 8 storey apartment complex
(Decorative fencing along property
boundary with narrow footpath)

Sub Character 2



The immediate east-side
neighbouring Interface:
2-5 storey apartment complex
(High sandstone retaining wall and
large vegetation screening at site
boundary)
Roof landscaping



Sub Character 3

The Jeffreys Street Interface:
2 storey terraces + 3 storey
renovated apartment blocks
(nil setback and narrow footpath
forming an intimate streetscape)



Sub Character 4

The Kirribilli Avenue Interface:
2-4 storey apartment complex
with 1-7m setback. The street has
pedestrian footpath and street
planting area.



SUB CHARACTER STATEMENT

SUB CHARACTER 1

Sub character 1 refers to the land to the north of the site, fronting Upper Pitt Street. Depicted by a mixture of medium scale buildings and 8+ storey multi-residential buildings as the dominant skyline. Buildings are generally in brick with concrete and feature roof landscaping. Most properties have high fences or sandstone retaining walls along the property line defining a narrow pedestrian zone with limited landscaping. Upper level apartment units have picturesque views to the harbour.

SUB CHARACTER 2

Immediately adjoining the site to the east is primarily characterised by 2-5 storey apartment buildings. Two multi-residential buildings are adjacent to the property boundaries, with one fronting Upper Pitt St and the other fronting Kirribilli Ave. The residential buildings have dense landscaping along their western boundaries and feature rooftop with landscaping. The units facing south and south west have views to the harbour and Harbour Bridge. The heritage listed Craiglea House units enjoy expansive views of the harbour which sublimate the visual dominance and awareness of the surrounding residential fabric.

SUB CHARACTER 3

Sub character 3 refers to the areas to the west of the site, fronting Jeffreys Street. It is characterised by 2 storey terraces and an apartment block with zero setback to the street. The alignment of the street acts as a view corridor to the iconic Opera House in the harbour. Jeffreys street is one of the main streets connecting the Neighbourhood centre to the Wharf and is experienced by local residents, employees and travellers passing through the neighbourhood.

SUB CHARACTER 4

To the south of the site is 2-4 storey multi unit apartment buildings facing the harbour. The development sits on the fringe of harbour and provides a transition from higher density apartments to the harbour. St Aloysius' College, as one of the many iconic buildings in the local area, will be experienced by a high number of local residents and visitors travelling through the harbour or arriving at the Jeffreys Street Wharf.

ASSESSMENT VIEWS



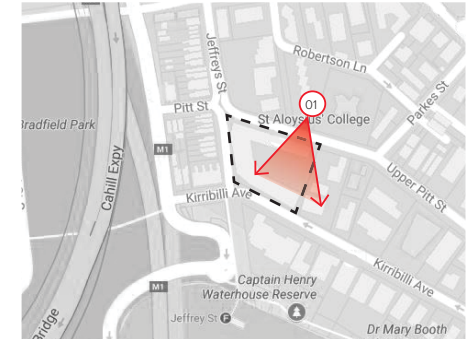
ASSESSMENT VIEW 1

Upper Pitt Street - Street Level

INCONSISTENT WITH
CHARACTER OBJECTIVES

MEETS CHARACTER
OBJECTIVES

ENHANCES CHARACTER
OBJECTIVES



DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES	CRITERIA	ASSESSMENT		
Place	Maintain the architectural features of St Aloysius' College contributing to an attractive residential environment.		●	
	No visual disturbance from and around Kirribilli neighbourhood.		●	
	Maintain the streetscape character.		●	
User Groups	Maintaining and reinforcing the built form of its mid-century and modern architectural style.		●	
	Maintain existing building height to protect pre-existing scenic features of Kirribilli.		●	
Built Form	Carefully considering the interface with proposed development and adjoining land use.		●	
	Compatible bulk and scale to create consistent built form rhythm.		●	
	Consistent roofscape character that is aligned with the scenic qualities visible from surroundings.		●	
	The use of compatible materials to form a consistent streetscape.			●
	Consistent street setback.		●	
Environmental Values	Retaining views to the Sydney Harbour.		●	
	Retaining existing vegetation.		●	
	Maintaining cohesiveness through landscaping that complements the built form.		●	

EXISTING VIEW



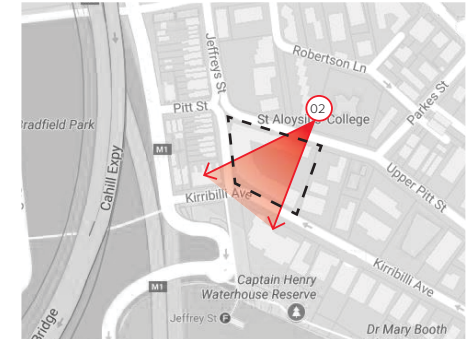
PROPOSED VIEW



ASSESSMENT VIEW 2

48 Upper Pitt Street - Unit 27 Upper Level

INCONSISTENT WITH
CHARACTER OBJECTIVES
MEETS CHARACTER
OBJECTIVES
ENHANCES CHARACTER
OBJECTIVES



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Environmental Values	Retaining views to the Sydney Harbour.			●
	Retaining existing vegetation.		●	
	Maintaining cohesiveness through landscaping that complements the built form.			●

EXISTING VIEW



PROPOSED VIEW



ASSESSMENT VIEW 3

50-58 Upper Pitt Street - Outdoor Area

INCONSISTENT WITH
CHARACTER OBJECTIVES

MEETS CHARACTER
OBJECTIVES

ENHANCES CHARACTER
OBJECTIVES



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Environmental Values	Retaining views to the Sydney Harbour.			●
	Retaining existing vegetation.		●	
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EXISTING VIEW



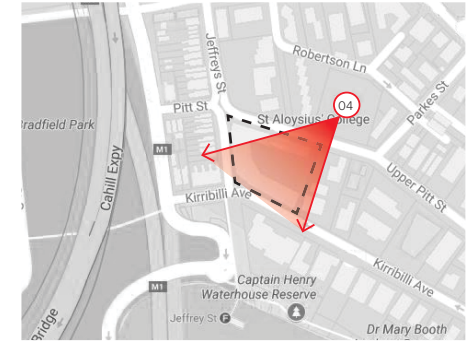
PROPOSED VIEW



ASSESSMENT VIEW 4

50-58 Upper Pitt Street - Unit 22 Upper Level

INCONSISTENT WITH
CHARACTER OBJECTIVES
MEETS CHARACTER
OBJECTIVES
ENHANCES CHARACTER
OBJECTIVES



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Environmental Values	Retaining views to the Sydney Harbour.		●	
	Retaining existing vegetation.		●	
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EXISTING VIEW



PROPOSED VIEW



ASSESSMENT VIEW 5

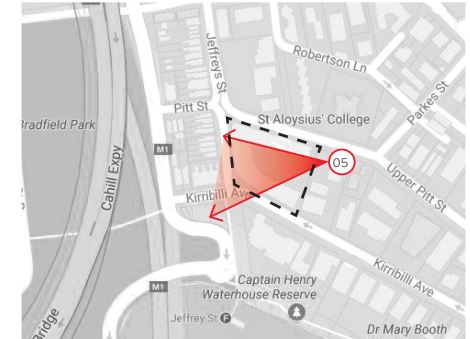
Craiglea House - Top of Garage

INCONSISTENT WITH
CHARACTER OBJECTIVES

MEETS CHARACTER
OBJECTIVES

ENHANCES CHARACTER
OBJECTIVES

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Environmental Values	Retaining views to the Sydney Harbour.		●	
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EXISTING VIEW



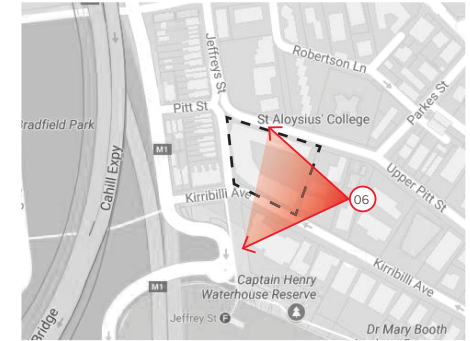
PROPOSED VIEW



ASSESSMENT VIEW 6

East Boundary - From Entry 49&49B Upper Pitt St

INCONSISTENT WITH
CHARACTER OBJECTIVES
MEETS CHARACTER
OBJECTIVES
ENHANCES CHARACTER
OBJECTIVES



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EXISTING VIEW



PROPOSED VIEW



ASSESSMENT VIEW 7

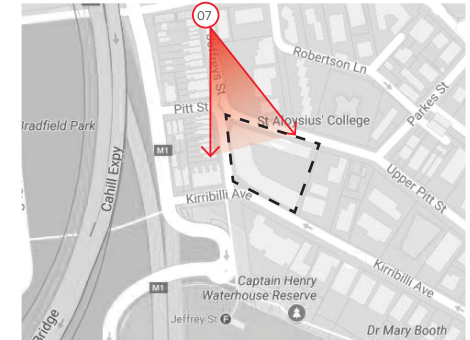
Jefferys St - Street Level

INCONSISTENT WITH
CHARACTER OBJECTIVES

MEETS CHARACTER
OBJECTIVES

ENHANCES CHARACTER
OBJECTIVES

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EXISTING VIEW



PROPOSED VIEW



ASSESSMENT VIEW 8

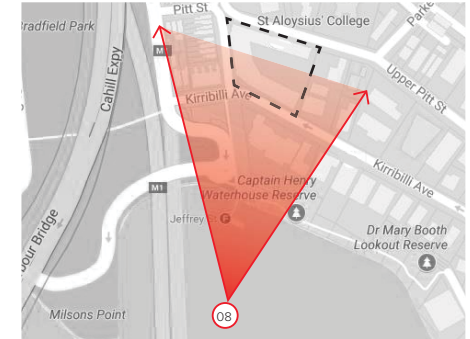
Water View

INCONSISTENT WITH
CHARACTER OBJECTIVES

MEETS CHARACTER
OBJECTIVES

ENHANCES CHARACTER
OBJECTIVES

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EXISTING VIEW



PROPOSED VIEW



ASSESSMENT VIEW 9

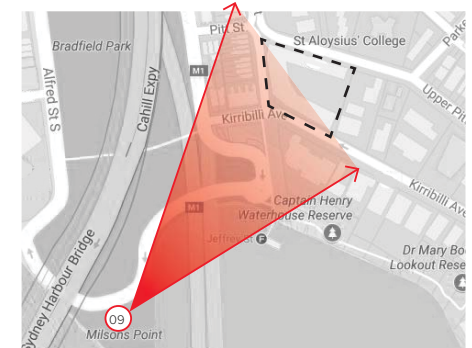
Milsons Point - Foreshore Walk

INCONSISTENT WITH
CHARACTER OBJECTIVES

MEETS CHARACTER
OBJECTIVES

ENHANCES CHARACTER
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EXISTING VIEW



PROPOSED VIEW



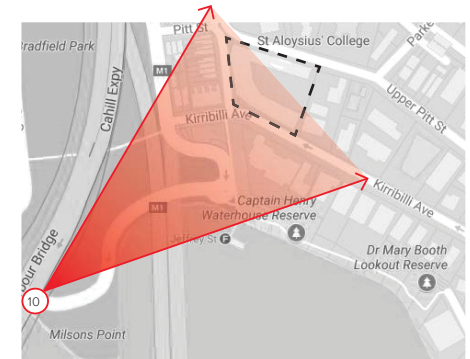
ASSESSMENT VIEW 10

Harbour Bridge View - From Bridge Walkway

INCONSISTENT WITH
CHARACTER OBJECTIVES

MEETS CHARACTER
OBJECTIVES

ENHANCES CHARACTER
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EXISTING VIEW



PROPOSED VIEW



ASSESSMENT VIEW 11

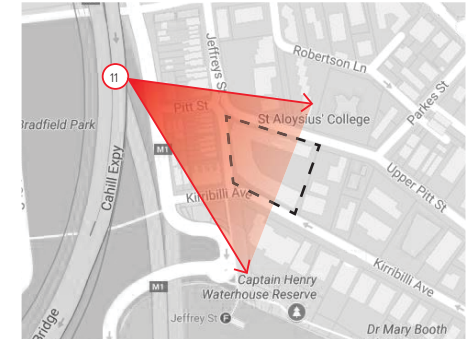
Harbour Bridge View - From Bridge Walkway

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EXISTING VIEW



PROPOSED VIEW



ASSESSMENT VIEW 12

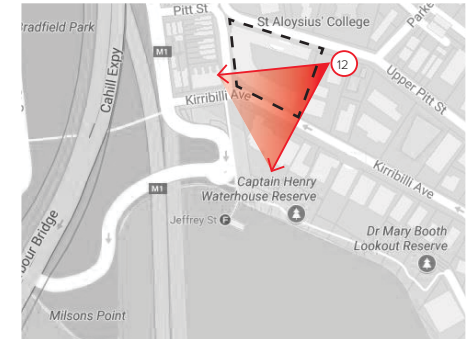
Craiglea House - Ground Level

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CHARACTER OBJECTIVES

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	Maintain existing building height to protect pre-existing scenic features of Kirribilli.		●	
Built Form	Carefully considering the interface with proposed development and adjoining land use.		●	
	Compatible bulk and scale to create consistent built form rhythm.		●	
	Consistent roofscape character that is aligned with the scenic qualities visible from surroundings.		●	
	The use of compatible materials to form a consistent streetscape.		●	
	Consistent street setback.		●	
Environmental Values	Retaining views to the Sydney Harbour.		●	
	Retaining existing vegetation.		●	
	Maintaining cohesiveness through landscaping that complements the built form.			●



EXISTING VIEW



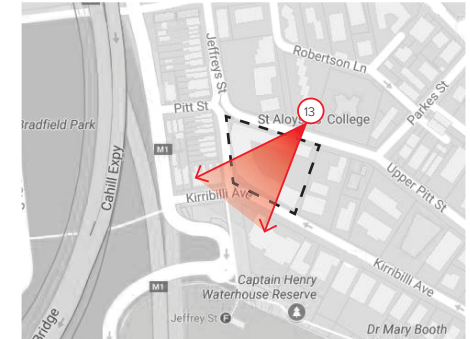
PROPOSED VIEW



ASSESSMENT VIEW 13

48 Upper Pitt Street - Unit 13, Third Floor

INCONSISTENT WITH
CHARACTER OBJECTIVES
MEETS CHARACTER
OBJECTIVES
ENHANCES CHARACTER
OBJECTIVES



DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES	CRITERIA	ASSESSMENT		
Place	Maintain the architectural features of St Aloysius' College contributing to an attractive residential environment.		●	
	No visual disturbance from and around Kirribilli neighbourhood.		●	
	Maintain the streetscape character.		●	
User Groups	Maintaining and reinforcing the built form of its mid-century and modern architectural style.		●	
	Maintain existing building height to protect pre-existing scenic features of Kirribilli.		●	
Built Form	Carefully considering the interface with proposed development and adjoining land use.		●	
	Compatible bulk and scale to create consistent built form rhythm.			●
	Consistent roofscape character that is aligned with the scenic qualities visible from surroundings.		●	
	The use of compatible materials to form a consistent streetscape.		●	
	Consistent street setback.		●	
Environmental Values	Retaining views to the Sydney Harbour.		●	
	Retaining existing vegetation.		●	
	Maintaining cohesiveness through landscaping that complements the built form.		●	

EXISTING VIEW



PROPOSED VIEW



OUTCOMES

The scorecard assessment of each individual view has been considered independently and, more importantly, within the context and their relationship to the 4 sub character interfaces. At a minimum, the individual views demonstrate that the proposal meets the character criteria. However, in many cases the proposed changes exceed the minimum standard by enhancing the views to the harbour and providing a cohesive landscaped rooftop. The rooftop terrace will be mostly experienced by private users in upper level units of residential buildings along Upper Pitt Street, and is considered to be one of the elements of local character.

This report finds that the proposal genuinely respects and responds to the Kirribilli local character and community values, the 4 sub character interfaces and that the interface between the proposed built form and adjoining character is considered appropriate. The development proposal does not change the existing streetscapes and setbacks which are compatible with the Kirribilli Neighbourhood Local character accommodating narrow streets with limited landscaping and minimum front boundary setbacks.

St Aloysius' College remains as an iconic institute of learning in Kirribilli Neighbourhood local area and does not compromise the scenic values of Kirribilli.

SUB CHARACTER 1 INTERFACE

Responds to the existing high rise residential buildings by maintaining the scale of built form along Upper Pitt Street and preserving picturesque views to the harbour. There will be no change in the streetscape including the building's setback, footpath and street landscaping. The facade along the street is predominantly constructed of brick and compatible with the sub character. The proposed facade is articulated with new openings and a vertical entry element which is consistent with

the vertical rhythm in built form of existing high rise residential buildings along Upper Pitt Street.

SUB CHARACTER 2 INTERFACE

Responds to its neighbours by maintaining the visual access to the harbour. The primary mass of the proposed building is consistent with the existing height and additional height is limited to frameless glass barriers with minimum visual impact. The proposed rooftop and landscaping is compatible with the Craiglea House rooftop landscape design. Screening and vegetation provide privacy and contribute to celebration of the harbour lifestyle. Harbour views are unaffected and minor changes to the facade do not distract or detract from primary harbour views.

SUB CHARACTER 3 INTERFACE

The only change in built form is limited to a minor addition on level 5 which has no affect on Jeffreys Street facade. The streetscape is maintained and provides an intimate view corridor to the Opera House and the harbour. Therefore, user groups including local residents, employees and travellers will not experience any changes passing through Jeffreys Street to the harbour.

SUB CHARACTER 4 INTERFACE

The proposal generally maintains the existing built form within the south along Kirribilli Avenue with no change in the setback and streetscape. The proposal not only provides transition from higher density residential units to the properties along the harbour, but also preserves building's iconic architectural style serving as landmark and identifier to the area. Tourism will continue to be a major contributor to the Kirribilli's economy and visitors will continue enjoying the foreshore walk with buildings coexisting together harmoniously.



Sub Character 1 interface- Upper Pitt Street

COMPATIBLE BRICK FACADE
COMPATIBLE RHYTHM
PRESERVED VIEWS
MAINTAINING EXISTING
BUILDING SCALE/BULK

SCREENING
ROOFTOP VEGETATION
PRESERVED VIEWS



Sub Character 2 interface- Craiglea House



Sub Character 3 and 4 interface

ICONIC BUILDING
PRESERVING EXISTING
FACADE, BUILT FORM AND
CHARACTER
NO CHANGE IN TOURISM
EXPERIENCE
SYMPATHETIC TO
RESIDENTIAL CONTEXT

TRANSITION TO HARBOUR
COHESIVE ROOFTOP TERRACE
AND LANDSCAPING
PRESERVED VIEWS



Sub Character 2 and 4 interface (Private view)

