North Sydney Council is undertaking a planning study of the St Leonards / Crows Nest area. The planning study aims to develop new strategies and initiatives that will provide for the following:

- New open space in St Leonards / Crows Nest.
- Increased investment in St Leonards and decreased commercial vacancy rates, with particular focus on the rejuvenation of the Pacific Highway between St Leonards train station and the intersection of Pacific Highway and Willoughby Road.
- Improved connectivity, particularly between St Leonards / Pacific Highway and Willoughby Road.
- Improved urban design and street level amenity particularly in St Leonards and along the Pacific Highway.
- Improved building design and residential amenity in St Leonards.

This document gives a general analysis of the study area and its context and provides a more focused analysis and specific recommendations relating to a smaller planning study precinct (Precinct 1) which stretches along the eastern side of the Pacific Highway between Albany Street and Hume Street and extends eastward towards Willoughby Road.

A study area analysis, strategy review and consideration of opportunities and constraints are used to establish principles and priorities of the study relevant to Precinct 1. Those principles and priorities are then used to inform the development of options for open space, pedestrian circulation and amenity, and built form. Built form options are accompanied by feasibility studies. A preferred option, that meets the study objectives, is then presented with recommendations regarding its implementation.

The preferred option for Precinct 1 includes the following main features:

- An expanded Hume Street Park;
- New ground level setbacks on the Pacific Highway redevelopment strip; and
- The introduction of high amenity towers above podium elements on the Pacific Highway redevelopment strip.

An expanded Hume Street Park is consistent with Council’s Open Space Provision Strategy and would extend the potential functions of the park so as to better cater for the needs of new populations coming into the St Leonards / Crows Nest area. A new area of open space is proposed for the eastern side of Hume Street with a pedestrian link to Willoughby Road. This would effectively further enlarge Hume Street Park but also provide an important connection within a broader pedestrian network linking St Leonards and Willoughby Road via Hume Street Park.

The introduction of ground level setbacks in combination with the use of continuous glazed awnings aims to promote pedestrian circulation and improve pedestrian amenity. Setbacks provide for greater footpath widths thus aiding pedestrian movement, distancing pedestrians from fast moving and noisy traffic and allowing for ground level activation and outdoor dining where appropriate. The setbacks also aim to encourage more prosperous street tree growth thus further improving amenity and reducing the perceived bulk and scale of buildings.

The proposed high-amenity towers on the Pacific Highway aim to improve the feasibility of redevelopment while still achieving a built form which ‘steps down’ from the Forum to Hume Street. The incorporation of podium elements aims to achieve a strong street wall that frames the public domain and reduces the visual impact of tower elements. The proposed built form is designed to ensure that a ‘trade-off’ between development feasibility and public benefit is included in the planning controls for the redevelopment strip.

Implementation of the preferred option requires Council to change local planning provisions so as to achieve the desired built form on the Pacific Highway, which includes the ground level setbacks. Facilitation of the open space component of the preferred option requires further detailed planning study work to be undertaken.
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1. BACKGROUND AND PLANNING STUDY OBJECTIVES

Recent consideration of development applications in the St Leonards/Crows Nest area by the Sydney Region East Joint Regional Planning Panel and the Minister for Planning indicate a pressing need to re-evaluate the existing statutory planning framework, particularly Council’s height controls and the relationship between density and the provision of open space and amenity.

North Sydney Council is therefore undertaking a planning study of the St Leonards/Crows Nest area. The planning study aims to develop new strategies and initiatives that will provide for the following:

• New open space in St Leonards/Crows Nest.
• Increased investment in St Leonards and decreased commercial vacancy rates, with particular focus on the rejuvenation of the Pacific Highway between St Leonards train station and the intersection of Pacific Highway and Willoughby Road.
• Improved connectivity, particularly between St Leonards/Pacific Highway and Willoughby Road.
• Improved urban design and street level amenity particularly in St Leonards and along the Pacific Highway.
• Improved building design and residential amenity in St Leonards.

The broader study area incorporates all of North Sydney’s jurisdiction in St Leonards and its interaction and connections with Crows Nest and the Pacific Highway (see Figure 1).

The planning study area, being greater than 21ha in size and stretching along the Pacific Highway for more than a kilometre, is too large to consider fine grain planning problems and solutions. While it is important to analyse the entire study area and its surrounds, Council has adopted a precinct-based approach to ensure focused analysis and recommendations.

This document therefore gives a general analysis of the study area and its context and provides a more focused analysis and specific recommendations relating to a smaller planning study precinct (Precinct 1) which stretches along the eastern side of the Pacific Highway between Albany Street and Hume Street and extends eastward towards Willoughby Road (see Figure 1).

This smaller portion of the study area is leading the planning study process for the following reasons:

• A planning proposal has been lodged for 521 Pacific Highway, St Leonards requesting an increase in the height control. This is indicative of the pressures faced in this precinct and highlights the need to prioritise it.
• A number of other owners in the strip along the eastern side of the highway between Albany and Hume Streets have indicated a desire to redevelop in the near future. The identification of this strip as a future ‘redevelopment strip’ represents an opportunity to extend any public benefit gained from a review of the controls applying to 521 Pacific Highway along the highway in both directions.
• There is an opportunity to tie the redevelopment of this strip to improvements in the usability of Hume Street Park and/or the provision of new areas of open space within close proximity to, and benefiting, the ‘redevelopment strip’.
• There is an opportunity to establish the principle of a far trade-off between an increase in development feasibility and the provision of open space. This principle can be used as a precedent and extended to the revision of the planning framework for the remainder of the broader study area.

An overview of the planning study process is shown at Figure 2. A study area analysis, strategy review and consideration of opportunities and constraints are used to establish principles and priorities of the study relevant to Precinct 1. Those principles and priorities are then used to inform the development of options for open space, pedestrian circulation and amenity, and built form. Built form options are accompanied by feasibility studies. A preferred option is then presented with recommendations regarding its implementation.

Figure 1 – Planning study area map

Figure 2 – Planning study overview
2. CONTEXT ANALYSIS

STUDY AREA LOCATION AND SETTING

The study area occupies the northwest portion of the North Sydney Local Government Area and shares boundaries with Willoughby City Council to the north and Lane Cove Council to the west.

The study area is located in Sydney’s Global Economic Arc some five kilometres north of Sydney’s Central Business District.

The commercial centres of North Sydney and Chatswood are one kilometre and three kilometres to the south and north of the study area respectively.

St Leonards Railway Station and Forum development about the north-western portion of the study area.

The high amenity café and dining strip of Willoughby Road lies immediately to the east and is the focus of the Crows Nest town centre. Further to the east lies the Holtermann Estate Conservation Area.

Immediately to the north, on the northern side of Chandos Street lies a strip of aging commercial building stock. Beyond that lies the Naremburn Residential Conservation Area.

The Royal North Shore Hospital site is to the northwest but is somewhat disconnected from the study area due to the location of the North Shore Railway Line. Further to the northwest lies the Northern Sydney Institute of TAFE and the former ABC studios. Beyond that lies the Artarmon industrial area which is characterised by light industrial land uses and bulky goods retail outlets.

The western side of the railway line, south of the Pacific Highway, is characterised by the low scale residential uses of Greenwich North with some aging commercial building stock fronting the highway.

The northern part of the portion of land to the west of the study area, between the Pacific Highway and the North Shore Railway Line, contains aging commercial building stock with some newer residential apartment complexes facing the railway line.

The residential suburb of Wollstonecraft occupies the southern part of the portion of land to the west of the study area, between the Pacific Highway and the North Shore Railway Line. A mix of single dwellings and residential apartment buildings characterise this area.
2. CONTEXT ANALYSIS

TRANSPORT
St Leonards is well serviced by rail, bus and active transport.

RAIL
St Leonards Railway Station, which lies immediately north west of study area, is on the North Shore Railway Line. The railway line connects the study area with the residential stations of Wollstonecraft and Waverton to the south before continuing on to the major employment areas of Global Sydney, accessed via the stations of North Sydney, Milsons Point, Wynyard, Town Hall and Central.

To the north the railway line connects the study area to the stations of Artarmon and the employment and residential centre of Chatswood. From Chatswood, connections to the town centres of the upper north shore as well as to Macquarie Park and Epping provide additional access to employment centres.

BUS
Sydney Buses provides services to the North Sydney and Sydney CBDs to the south as well as north to Chatswood. In addition, services are also available that connect the study area to the Military Road corridor and beyond to the Northern Beaches.

ACTIVE TRANSPORT
The study area is able to be accessed by bicycle using a number of marked on-road cycle routes that connect to nearby residential areas. While some links provide bicycle access for origins and destinations further afield, there is no comprehensive regional cycling network serving the study area. The yet to be commenced Naremburn to Harbour Bridge cycleway project has the potential to greatly enhance regional scale active transport opportunities to and from the study area.

PRIVATE VEHICLE
The Pacific Highway is the principal means of vehicular access to and from the study area. It connects the study area to the North Sydney CBD to the south and beyond to the Harbour Bridge and Sydney CBD. To the north, the Highway connects the study area to Chatswood and beyond to the F3.

In addition to the Pacific Highway, Falcon Street acts as connector to the Warringah Freeway to the east. The Freeway leads to the Harbour Bridge in the south and the Lane Cove Tunnel and M2 to the northwest. River Road via Shirley Road provides access west to the Lane Cove Council area and beyond.
2. CONTEXT ANALYSIS

OPEN SPACE – REGIONAL

The distribution of open space on the lower north shore is relatively uneven with many foreshore locations enjoying the provision of large areas of open space while areas along the ridge lines, such as those surrounding the study area, suffering a relatively low provision of open space, despite having some of the highest residential densities. Figure 9 shows the location of significant areas of open space and walking tracks in the suburbs surrounding the study area.

There are four significant areas of open space that could be considered as within walking distance from some parts of the study area (see box opposite).

- Gore Hill Park containing Gore Hill Oval is located in Willoughby LGA some 300m west from the nearest point of the study area along the Pacific Highway. The oval is primarily set up for formal sporting activities with some surrounding informal open space. Areas most easily accessed from the study area suffer from noise generated by the Pacific Highway.

- Newlands Park is located in Lane Cove LGA some 400m walk south east from the nearest point of the study area. The park is accessed from the study area via a poorly maintained and relatively steep pedestrian link which begins at the Pacific Highway where it crosses over the North Shore Railway Line. Once there however, the park provides a relatively quiet and attractive informal piece of open space allowing for passive recreation. The park also contains children’s play facilities. The existence of the railway line greatly restricts access from some parts of the study area.

- St Thomas Rest Park, located in North Sydney LGA, is some 500m east from the nearest point of the study area. It is an informal piece of open space and contains children’s play facilities.

- Talus Reserve and Naremburn Park are located close enough to the study area to provide some respite for workers during the lunch time break. St Thomas Rest Park as well as Talus Reserve and Naremburn Park are well utilised by local residents but are either too far away or too difficult to access for workers and residents based closer to the station.

Further afield, St Leonards Park lies some 800m to the south east of the nearest point in the study area. It is some 15ha in size and provides regional scale sporting fields, a bowling club, a music bowl as well as a large amount of informal open space.

On the southern side of River Road from Newlands Park is the start of a walking track that meanders its way through remnant bushland to Gore Cove Reserve. This trail provides access to the harbour and many of its foreshore reserves.

There are also walking tracks to the Lane Cove River from within Lane Cove LGA and to Long Bay via Hallstrom Reserve and Munro Park within Willoughby LGA. However, the trail heads for these tracks are some distance away and are not directly accessible from the study area.

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2. CONTEXT ANALYSIS

OPEN SPACE – LOCAL

The areas immediately surrounding the study area, as well as the study area itself, are devoid of significant open space. However, there are some small areas of open space in and around the study area (see Figure 15). Most are limited in their utility due to size, location, furnishings and poor solar access.

Hume Street Park is the most significant piece of open space in the study area. It consists mainly of a raised grassy area with paved pathways around the perimeter providing access to both the North Sydney Indoor Sports Centre and Kelly’s Place childcare centre. The location of these facilities cuts the park off from the surrounding area making direct access difficult. The level and gradient of the park is out of step with the surrounding area due to its function as a forecourt to the Indoor Sports Centre. This further isolates the park and decreases its utility.

Christie Street Reserve is a small area of open space with a grassed area and paving around the perimeter with somewhat dated furnishings. However its location adjacent to the railway station in combination with good solar access ensures that it is a popular lunchtime retreat for office workers.

Friedlander Place on the western side of the Pacific Highway and Ernest Place in Crows Nest are both the result of road closures. Friedlander Place contains some mature vegetation but is a tired and underutilised space with outdated paving and street furniture. Ernest Place is a popular space in the heart of Crows Nest with adjacent cafes and good solar access.

Other smaller paved areas of open space are located on private property. Most of these areas lack the amenity necessary for frequent use and enjoyment.
2. CONTEXT ANALYSIS

BUILDING HEIGHT

The skyline of the lower north shore is dominated by three nodes of high rise buildings located at North Sydney, Chatwood and St Leonards. The North Sydney CBD to the south of the study area, being the biggest, contains buildings as high as 130m. In North Sydney and to a lesser degree in Chatwood, taller buildings are located towards the centre of the high rise cluster with the heights of buildings reducing towards the periphery of the centre.

Between North Sydney CBD and Chatwood lies the less expansive ridge top high rise cluster of St Leonards (see figure 27).

This cluster is dominated by the Forum development which contains two towers, the tallest being 109 metres high. The Forum development is located above the St Leonards train station, immediately abutting the northwest corner of the study area.

The next two tallest buildings in St Leonards are located within the study area; the IBM building (65m) and the Abode apartment building (60m).

The remainder of the building stock surrounding the Forum are generally 8-12 storey aging commercial stock or relatively new 10-15 storey mixed use developments.

Building heights drop dramatically to the north, east and south west of the study area as the built form changes to the lower scale residential areas of Naremburn, Crows Nest and Greenwich North (see Figures 30 & 31).
Precinct 1, located within the study area, is bounded by Albany Street to the north, Willoughby Lane to the east, Clarke and Oxley Streets to the south and the Pacific Highway to the west, although it incorporates the properties on the western side of the highway between Oxley and Hume Streets (see Figure 32).

The strip of land along the eastern side of the Pacific Highway is experiencing development pressure and has been identified as the likely location for new development in the near future for a number of reasons:

- Generally poor quality of existing buildings and run-down feeling.
- The overall undeveloped feel of the strip.
- Loss of commercial tenants to Artarmon Supa Centre.
- A number of owners have indicated a desire to redevelop in the near future.
- The JRPP has given consent to a non-complying development (545 Pacific Highway).
- A Planning Proposal has been lodged with Council proposing an increase in the height limit (521 Pacific Highway).

This ‘redevelopment strip’ is therefore the subject of more detailed investigation and consideration regarding redevelopment objectives and outcomes (see Section 4).

The precinct is generally characterised by aging commercial stock particularly along the highway, although some underutilised sites with commercial premises are also located in the ‘back streets’ on Albany, Oxley, Clarke and Hume Streets.
3. PRECINCT 1 ANALYSIS

NEW DEVELOPMENTS
There are four relatively new strata titled mixed use developments in the precinct that are largely residential in nature with commercial uses mostly restricted to the ground floor (refer to Figure 32 for locations). These developments have been approved under existing controls, however concerns have been expressed by Council staff regarding the resultant design and residential amenity outcomes.

HERITAGE
The precinct contains three heritage items: the Old Marco Building; the St Leonards Centre; and the Electricity Substation building on the corner of Oxley and Albany Streets. According to Council’s heritage data sheet, the Old Marco Building, which is located on the corner of Albany Street and the Pacific Highway, is a:

‘three storey triangular building with curved facade to the street corner and rectangular projecting tower bay asymmetric on one side. Projecting cornice lines to parapets and short flat continuous cantilevered rain hoods over continuous lines of steel-framed windows are features. This building is designed in the Inter-War Functionalist style’.

The data sheet adds that the building is an ‘excellent and attractive example of the Interwar Functionalist style on a prominent corner site’. The building currently accommodates a ‘Sleep City’ retail outlet.

Council’s heritage data sheet on the St Leonards Centre describes the item, which is located on the corner of Oxley and Clarke Streets, as a:

‘dramatically assertive building marked by curvilinear plan bastion tower elements of textured off form reinforced concrete. Between these the storeys step outwards towards the top, bestowing upon the structure a character of great and not totally pleasant strength. It is a well-made and crafted building designed in the late twentieth century brutalist style’.

The data sheet adds that the building’s ‘domineering presence and intrusive character is barely balanced by its intrinsic architectural interest’. The building contains private commercial tenancies.

The third heritage item is the electricity substation building on the corner of Albany and Oxley Streets. Council’s heritage data sheet on the item describes the building as a:

‘two storey cement rendered substation building with hipped gable terracotta tiled roof above a face brick foundation course. Facade to Albany Street is articulated with five recessed, semi-circular arched panels containing large twelve pane windows to each level, between projecting end bays having half-hipped gable ends at the roof line and with the same semi-circular recessed panel. Oxley Street facade is similar but asymmetric with projecting bay to one side only. This building was designed in the Inter-War Georgian Revival style’.

The data sheet adds that the building is an ‘important original element in urban infrastructure which is a substantial and impressive building exhibiting careful and well balanced Georgian detailing. Evidence of a period design ethic now absent from public utilities’. The substation is still in use and has recently undergone an upgrade and expansion.
3. PRECINCT 1 ANALYSIS

OTHER NOTABLE LAND USES

The North Sydney indoor sports centre is located in the centre of Precinct 1. The lower four floors accommodate the Council owned and operated Hume Street Car Park with the sports centre on the upper floor.

Hume Street Park, as described in Section 2, is the only piece of open space in Precinct 1 and is of limited utility to the community.

Located on the wedge of land between Clarke and Hume Streets, adjacent to Hume Street Park, is the Council owned Kelly’s Place childcare centre. Access to the childcare centre is via Hume Street Park. The childcare centre is located partially underground with a publicly accessible grassed area on a portion of its roof. This grassed area is, however, rarely used and is not physically or visually connected with the adjacent Hume Street Park.

TRAFFIC

The Pacific Highway accommodates very high traffic volumes. However, the streets to the east, between the redevelopment strip and Willoughby Road, generally carry much less traffic. Some streets and lanes, including Hume Street, carry a very low volume of traffic.

Figure 46 – North Sydney Indoor Sports Centre

Figure 47 – Kelly’s Place childcare centre

Figure 48 – Average daily traffic volumes in Precinct 1

Legend

- Very high (>20,000)
- High (<20,000)
- Medium (<10,000)
- Low (<4,000)
- Very low (<2,000)
4. REDEVELOPMENT STRIP ANALYSIS

The area to which this section relates stretches along the eastern side of the Pacific Highway between Albany Street and Hume Street.

DIMENSIONS

The northern block in the redevelopment strip is bound by the Pacific Highway, Albany Street, Clarke Lane and Oxley Street. Dimensions of the northern block are shown in Figure 49. It is only 26 metres wide at its narrowest point.

The southern block in the redevelopment strip is bound by the Pacific Highway, Oxley Street, Clarke Lane and Hume Street. Dimensions of the southern block are shown in Figure 50.

TOPOGRAPHY

The redevelopment strip is relatively flat along its Pacific Highway frontage but rises gently towards its northern and southern ends from a low point at Oxley Street. The land falls away from the highway towards Clarke Lane with a gradient of around 7% at its steepest point at Oxley Street.

SURROUNDING DEVELOPMENT

As shown in the previous section, the area surrounding the redevelopment strip is characterised by 4-5 storey commercial stock that is slowly being replaced by relatively high density residential development.

There are a number of relatively new residential apartment buildings that could be impacted by any redevelopment of the subject strip. The main impact is likely to be view loss.
4. REDEVELOPMENT STRIP ANALYSIS

STREET VIEWS

Due to the geometry and alignment of the Pacific Highway and bounding streets there are limited street views that terminate at the redevelopment strip. The main views of the strip are from the heavily trafficked Pacific Highway. The footpath along the Pacific Highway is of a standard width. The strip is largely devoid of awnings (see Figure 57) and street trees are often under stress and in poor condition. Pedestrians tend to spend as little time as possible on the strip due to the proximity of the heavily trafficked highway. When the T3 clearway is not operational parked cars in the curb side lane provide a buffer to the moving traffic. In some places the existence of street trees, power poles, street signage and bus stops result in an overly cluttered environment.

PEDESTRIAN ENVIRONMENT

Looking north towards the redevelopment strip, if one can ignore the heavy traffic, the eye is drawn towards the taller buildings beyond the study area, the Forum, IBM and Abode buildings. Views of the redevelopment strip are likely to become more prominent should redevelopment occur.

Looking towards the redevelopment strip from the north (near the IBM building) views are again dominated by traffic but also by the larger buildings in the foreground including the Abode building and the commercial building stock on the Lane Cove side of the highway. Greenery in the form of street trees and vegetation in Friedlander Place provides some relief, depending on the time of year.

Views of the redevelopment strip are likely to become more prominent should redevelopment occur.
4. REDEVELOPMENT STRIP ANALYSIS

St Leonards train station and the Willoughby Road retail/restaurant strip are the two main sources of pedestrian movement in the immediate surrounds of the redevelopment strip. The long unbroken street block on the western side of Willoughby Road between Clarke Street and Albany Street prevents more direct movement between St Leonards, including the redevelopment strip, and the Willoughby Road / Ernest Place restaurant and retail precinct. A desire line therefore exists directly between Hume Street Park and Willoughby Road.

Other origins/destinations include Atchison Street, the commercial building stock in Lane Cove LGA on the western side of the highway, the Hume Street car park and the restaurants on the Pacific Highway in Crows Nest. The predicted increase in residential population both within the subject strip and in the surrounding area means that the anticipated Mixed Use developments will likely be a major source of future increases in pedestrian trips.

The redevelopment strip comprises nine ownerships, four in the northern block and five in the southern block. Owner 6, as shown in Figure 66, is strata plan with 12 lots.
4. REDEVELOPMENT STRIP ANALYSIS

DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS AND PLANNING PROPOSALS

545 Pacific Hwy, St Leonards – Development Application

A Development Application was lodged for this site in April 2010 seeking demolition of existing buildings and the construction of a mixed use development containing three levels of commercial and retail use, 59 residential apartments and basement car parking for 78 vehicles.

Due to the cost of works, the application was determined by the Joint Regional Planning Panel (JRPP).

The primary issue with this development was its significant breach of the height controls mandated by LEP 2001 and the associated impacts.

A height of 26 meters is permitted, however the proposed development significantly exceeded this control at 42 meters. It was the Reporting Officer’s view that it was inappropriate to consider such a variation by way of a SEPP1 objection and that if the proposal was to succeed it was more appropriate to proceed via the planning proposal mechanism.

The Panel considered the matter at its meeting of 8 August 2010. In summary the Panel deferred the application and called for amended plans which delete the top two floors of the building. Car parking provision was also reduced to reflect the reduced yield. The height of the amended building is 33.9 metres from existing ground level on the Pacific Hwy (or approximately 2 storeys over the existing height limit) and 37.2 metres from existing ground level on Clarke Lane (or approximately 3 storeys over the existing height control).

Only a small amount of publicly accessible ground level space was provided in exchange for the significant breach of the height control.

521 Pacific Highway, Crows Nest – Planning Proposal

A Planning Proposal was lodged for this site in December 2010 seeking an increase in the maximum allowable height to 42m so as to allow an 11 storey mixed use building, comprising:

- 3 levels of basement car parking
- 2 levels of retail (2,754sqm), and
- 9 levels of residential (72 apartments of 1,23 bedrooms).

The maximum height limit is 20m under both LEP 2001 and draft LEP 2009.

An initial assessment of the Planning Proposal was undertaken by Council staff. Council staff did not raise objection to an increase in height as long as commensurate public benefit could be provided, however concern was raised about the resulting density from a development on the site.

As such, Council requested that the Planning Proposal incorporate an FSR provision to control the density on the site. The FSR control would ensure that any development on the site would not be of a density greater than that of a development that complied with the existing development controls.

In addition, it was requested that the Planning Proposal include setbacks at ground level with a 3m building setback on the Pacific Highway frontage, and a 6m building setback on the Oxley Street frontage.

The objective of these setbacks is to provide greater footpath widths, street level amenity and reduce the perceived bulk and scale of the building envelope through more prosperous street tree growth as well as to facilitate outdoor dining on the Oxley Street frontage. The provision of public benefit in the form of setbacks would also provide some justification for Council to increase the maximum allowable height.

Council informed the applicant that more work needed to be undertaken on the planning study to establish a clearer strategic direction for this area. As such, progress on the Planning Proposal has been deferred until work on the St Leonards/ Crows Nest Planning Study is further progressed.
5. STRATEGY REVIEW

The redevelopment strip on the eastern side of the Pacific Highway has been identified as the most likely, and most appropriate, location for new development and therefore the strip presents the most immediate opportunity to influence development outcomes so as to achieve the aims of the study. For this reason, this strategy review focuses on strategies applicable to the whole of St Leonards / Crows Nest but pays particular attention to their applicability to the subject redevelopment strip.

METROPOLITAN STRATEGY AND DRAFT INNER NORTH SUBREGIONAL STRATEGY

Under the current Sydney Metropolitan Strategy for Sydney 2036, as well as the Draft Inner North Subregional Strategy, St Leonards is located within the Global Arc. This arc forms the global economic corridor, connecting Macquarie Park, Chatswood, St Leonards, North Sydney, Sydney City, Pyrmont-Ultimo, Sydney Airport and Port Botany. This corridor is the favoured location for higher order global and regional corporations.

These strategies identify St Leonards as being a ‘specialised centre’ performing vital economic and employment roles centred around the Royal North Shore Hospital and associated medical and research activities. Specialised Centres typically have a stronger employment or economic function than other centres, with a reduced focus for housing.

The 2036 Strategy sets a target of 5,000 additional jobs to be created in St Leonards between 2006 and 2036. One key aim of the abovementioned strategies is to allow for mixed use development in key centres, including St Leonards, to retain and increase both the number of jobs and dwellings.

ST LEONARDS STRATEGY

The 2006 St Leonards Strategy is a strategy for the future of St Leonards. It was commissioned by North Sydney, Lane Cove and Willoughby Councils in conjunction with the Department of Planning.

The Strategy states that: “Improvements in the amenity and identity of the centre are critical to its attraction as a place to live and work” (p28) and that streetscape improvements can help to create a unified identity (p76).

The creation of a stronger and more legible network of attractive, green, safe and direct pedestrian routes is seen as pivotal to the success of St Leonards (p66, 69).

The Strategy states that: “Improvements are ... required to the linkages between various precincts, particularly between the core of the centre (around the station) and key destinations such as ... Crows Nest in the east” (p29).

It further states that:

Links with the shops and cafes of Crows Nest are critical in order to capitalise on their value as an attraction for workers and residents. In general, better linkages are required throughout the centre... to maximise the convenience of the public transport, shops and services provided in the core of the centre (p29).

The Strategy acknowledges the lack of space for car parking and that this means: “... that the centre will have to depend on commuting by public transport and, one might add, on pedestrian commuting from nearby housing” (p16).

And that the reliance on public transport increases the importance of: “... making the walking component of public transport trips safe and pleasant” (p35).

The Strategy identifies the “eastern gateway”:

A mixed retail and office precinct, with the potential for hotels. In particular, this precinct will provide for the continuation of small-medium scale showrooms for household goods at ground floor level with offices above, or hotels, capitalising on the high profile location (p31).

The Strategy identifies the “eastern gateway” as ideal for houses and household goods showrooms due to its prominent location (p53, 58). In addition to these uses, childcare, convenience & small-scale specialty shops, retail services, cafes, bars & restaurants are seen as desirable (p59).

The Strategy identifies the redevelopment strip as being “underdeveloped for such a prime location” (p17).

The Strategy recommends “filling in the gaps” in the tree planting along the highway so as to create a unified ‘avenue feel’ (p77) and strengthening the tree planting at the intersection of the Pacific Highway and Oxley Street, to create a recognisable ‘gateway’ to the centre (p77).

Further, Oxley Street in particular is identified as a pedestrian link that requires improvement (p78).

Of note is the recommendation that any new development on the Pacific Highway be required to incorporate a colonnade to mitigate the unpleasant traffic-dominated environment of the footpath itself (p72). The colonnade forming part of the development at 207 Pacific Highway, west of the Forum in the Lane Cove LGA, is noted as providing an enhanced environment for pedestrians. A photo of the colonnade at 207 Pacific Highway is provided at Figure 99.

The recommendations for the eastern gateway are reproduced at Figure 73.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4.4 Eastern Gateway</th>
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<tr>
<td>Concept</td>
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<td>More jobs</td>
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<td>More homes</td>
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<td>More supporting services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Getting around</td>
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<td>One identity</td>
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Figure 72 – St Leonards Strategy Precincts

Figure 73 – Extract from St Leonards Strategy – ‘Detailed Recommendations’
5. **STRATEGY REVIEW**

### NORTH SYDNEY LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL PLAN 2001 (LEP 2001)

**Zoning**

The redevelopment strip is zoned Mixed Use. The particular objectives of this zone are to:

(a) encourage a diverse range of living, employment, recreational and social opportunities, which do not adversely affect the amenity of residential areas, and
(b) create interesting and vibrant neighbourhood centres with safe, high quality urban environments with residential amenity, and
(c) maintain existing commercial space and allow for residential development in mixed use buildings with non-residential uses at the lower levels and residential above, and
(d) promote affordable housing.

**Height**

The redevelopment strip has a height control of 26 metres on the northern block and 20 metres on the southern block.

**Non-residential FSR**

The subject land has a non-residential floor space control of 1:1-2:1 (northern block) and 0.6:1-2:1 (southern block).

(a) the building contains both residential and non-residential uses, and
(b) the non-residential component of the building is provided at the lower levels of the building and the ground level is not used for residential purposes, except access, and
(c) the residential component of the building is provided with an entrance separate from the entrances to the remainder of the building, and
(d) the building is set back above a podium.

### NORTH SYDNEY DEVELOPMENT CONTROL PLAN 2002 (DCP 2002)

Sections of DCP 2002 relevant to this study include:

- Section 6 – Mixed Use Development, St Leonards Centre character statement.
- Section 9 – Car Parking, and

Relevant provisions include a requirement that a range of outdoor spaces be provided, including seating or outdoor café space for the public (s6.1(b)) and s6.2(b)). The DCP states that larger spaces and wider footpaths provide more opportunities for a range of activities (s6.2(b)).

The prioritisation of public transport, including walking, as well as the need for additional open space in areas of increased residential population, is reinforced in the character statement for the St Leonards / Crows Nest planning area.

A 1.5 metre setback is required on laneways (St Leonards Centre Character Statement s2.1(m)(ii)). Further, a 3 metre above podium setback is required except on laneway frontages where a 1.5m setback is to be provided.

Podiums are to be 13 metres (4 storeys) at the street frontage and 10 metres (3 storeys) on a laneway frontage.

Awnings are required to be provided so as to ensure weather protection for people in streets and other public spaces (s6.2(b)). However, the character statement for St Leonards Centre states that where additional ground floor setbacks are required full frontage awnings are not required but canopy style awnings between the kerb and building entrance should be provided.

Car parking is required to be provided underground and accessed from laneways at the following maximum rates:

- Residential component
  - Studio, 1 bedroom = 0.5 space
  - 2 bedroom + = 1 space
- Non-residential component
  - 1 space / 400m²

The St Leonards Town Centre Character Statement dictates that buildings be ‘scaled down significantly from the Forum towards surrounding areas and the lower scale development on Chandos Street, Willoughby Road, Crows Nest Village, the Upper Slopes and Crows Nest Neighbourhood.’
5. STRATEGY REVIEW

ST LEONARDS PUBLIC DOMAIN STRATEGY

The St Leonards Public Domain Strategy comprises three stages based on timeframe, cost, and the degree to which they serve to achieve the desired future character for St Leonards. The Public Domain Strategy does not involve major interventions that affect the redevelopment strip although proposed paving and street tree improvements as well as an upgrade of Clarke Lane would have a positive impact on the amenity of the strip and its surrounds. The three stages, and their implications for the redevelopment strip, are outlined below:

- **Stage 1:** Minimum Intervention (a low-scale public domain strategy that suggests minor works that can be implemented in the short-term). This would involve some infill street tree planting adjacent to the study area on Albany, Oxley and Hume Streets.
- **Stage 2:** Medium Intervention (a strategy that suggests some significant works that can be implemented over the medium term). In addition to Stage 1, this would involve:
  - An upgrade to paving north of, and including, Oxley Street.
  - Erection of directional signage at intersection of Pacific Highway with Hume Street and Oxley Street to facilitate pedestrian movement between St Leonards Station and Willoughby Road.
  - New lighting on Clarke Lane.
  - Smart poles on Albany and Oxley Streets including opportunities for banners.
- **Stage 3:** Maximum Intervention (a significant strategy that suggests major works, some of significant cost, over the short to long-term). In addition to Stages 1 & 2, this would involve:
  - Burying powerlines.
  - Extending upgraded paving south to Hume Street.
  - A street lighting upgrade.
  - Enhancement of the role and visual attractiveness of Clarke Lane with landscaping and a pedestrian crossing at Albany Street.

NORTH SYDNEY OPEN SPACE PROVISION STRATEGY

The Open Space Provision Strategy (2009) is Council’s key policy document regarding the provision of additional open space in North Sydney. The strategy acknowledges the deficiency of open space in St Leonards / Crows Nest (see Figure 77) and identifies the area as a Priority 1 area for the provision of new areas of open space (see Figure 78). Other points of note contained in the strategy are as follows:

- To meet the current and future recreational needs of the community additional open space is required in some areas of high and increasing population density, particularly Crows Nest / St Leonards.
- Planned or opportunistic acquisition of properties for open space purposes is recommended.
- Provision of hard open spaces or civic spaces is recommended for areas of high commercial or population density as they can accommodate a large number of users.
- The Strategy provides a site assessment framework to facilitate the identification of the most appropriate properties for acquisition.

NORTH SYDNEY RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2009 (RDS)

A review of North Sydney’s Residential Development Strategy (RDS) has been undertaken to establish the strategic framework for housing in North Sydney over the next 23 years to 2031. The RDS forms the basis for residential zonings and development standards under the new comprehensive North Sydney Local Environmental Plan (DLEP 2009). The RDS estimates the planned residential capacity in North Sydney’s portion of St Leonards and Crows Nest under LEP 2001 to be 1,453 additional dwellings. The RDS assumes that the subject redevelopment strip is capable of accommodating 225 new dwellings if developed in accordance with existing or Draft LEP controls. This figure may well prove conservative if sites at 583 and 511 Pacific Hwy, which are currently excluded from calculations due to a heritage listing and the existence of a strata plan, are actually redeveloped. The above figures indicate a substantial increase in population in and around the redevelopment strip and the broader study area.
5. STRATEGY REVIEW

DRAFT NORTH SYDNEY LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL PLAN 2009 (DLEP 2009)

Zoning

The redevelopment strip is proposed to be zoned Mixed Use under DLEP 2009. The objectives of this particular zone are:

- To provide a mixture of compatible land uses.
- To integrate suitable business, office, residential, retail and other development in accessible locations so as to maximise public transport patronage and encourage walking and cycling.
- To create interesting and vibrant mixed use centres with safe, high quality urban environments with residential amenity.
- To maintain existing commercial space and allow for residential development in mixed use buildings with non-residential uses at the lower levels and residential above.

Non-residential FSR

The subject land is proposed to have a non-residential floor space control of 2:1(min) on the northern block and 1.5:1(min) on the southern block. This increase in the minimum non-residential FSR represents a compromise position between the Department of Planning, which would like to see the land rezoned to commercial in accordance with the St Leonards Strategy, and Council, which does not wish to see the strip sterilised with an unfeasible zoning and further stagnation to occur.

Height

A height control of 26 metres is proposed for the northern block and a height control of 20 metres is proposed for the southern block. The proposed height controls are therefore the same as under LEP2001.

Heritage

The Old Marco building at the northern end of the subject land remains a heritage item under DLEP 2009.

DRAFT NORTH SYDNEY DEVELOPMENT CONTROL PLAN 2010 (DDCP 2010)

Sections of DDCP 2010 relevant to this discussion paper include:

- Section 2 – Commercial and Mixed Use Development,
- Section 10 – Car Parking and Transport,
- St Leonards Centre character statement.

While there have been minor changes in format, DDCP 2010 essentially contains the same provisions for Mixed Use developments in the St Leonards area as DCP 2002.
6. OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

OPPORTUNITIES

If appropriately redeveloped, the subject strip along the Pacific Highway could help achieve the following aims of the broader planning study:

- Increased investment in St Leonards and decreased commercial vacancy rates, with particular focus on the rejuvenation of the Pacific Highway between St Leonards train station and the intersection of Pacific Highway and Willoughby Road.
- Improved connectivity, particularly between St Leonards / Pacific Highway and Willoughby Road.
- Improved urban design and street level amenity particularly in St Leonards and along the Pacific Highway.
- Improved building design and residential amenity in St Leonards.

Opportunities can be broadly grouped into three categories:

- Improved pedestrian circulation and amenity
- New open space
- Development feasibility through increased building height

Improved pedestrian circulation and amenity

Redevelopment presents an ideal opportunity to improve pedestrian flow and amenity.

New open space

An opportunity exists to tie the redevelopment of the subject strip to the provision of new areas of open space. To this end, the area between the redevelopment strip and Willoughby Road was identified as an area for open space investigation for the following reasons:

- There is an opportunity to improve the usability of Hume Street Park which lies at the centre of the open space investigation area.
- There are a number of underutilised sites that could potentially be the location of a new park.
- The area is relatively quiet and does not suffer the same traffic volumes as the Pacific Highway and is therefore well suited to the provision of family-friendly open space.
- The provision of new or improved open space in this area would benefit any new residents in the redevelopment strip, thus meeting any nexus.
- There is an opportunity through the provision of new open space to provide improved pedestrian linkages between St Leonards/Pacific Highway and Willoughby Road.

New open space in this area could therefore meet the following objectives of the broader planning study:

- New open space in St Leonards / Crows Nest.
- Improved connectivity, particularly between St Leonards / Pacific Highway and Willoughby Road.
- Improved urban design and street level amenity.
- Improved residential amenity in St Leonards.

The open space investigation revealed 5 potential locations for future open space due to either the underdeveloped nature or strategic location of the site. These opportunities are explored in Section 8 – Options Development.

Development feasibility through increased height

An opportunity exists to increase the height of buildings along the redevelopment strip without unduly impacting upon the views and solar access of existing and future residential dwellings. The incorporation of tower elements which exhibit design excellence can also contribute positively to both the streetscape and skyline views of St Leonards. This can also be done while respecting the stepping down concept as articulated in the St Leonards / Crows Nest Area Character Statement contained in both DCP 2002 and DDCP 2010.
6. OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

CONSTRAINTS

Constraints can be broadly grouped into three categories:

- Maintenance of views and solar access
- Observing the stepping down principle
- Ownership

Maintaining views and solar access

The location and height of revised building envelopes on the redevelopment strip are constrained by the need to maintain adequate solar access to existing and future residential developments and the need to maintain, as far as practicable, views that would not be lost if the strip were developed in accordance with existing controls. The mixed use development on the south-western corner of Oxley Street and the Pacific Highway contains dwellings whose solar access is most likely to be impacted by an increase in height on the redevelopment strip.

It is generally considered that appropriate solar access is better achieved through the provision of narrow tower elements with fast moving shadows than through squat developments that result in some areas being in shade for most of the day.

The views enjoyed by dwellings in the upper half of the Abode building tower are considered to be high priority views that should, if practicable, be maintained. The maintenance of all other views enjoyed across the redevelopment strip from dwellings that are located on the tenth floor or lower of adjacent mixed use developments are considered to be of lower priority. This is because the redevelopment strip, if developed in accordance with existing controls, would be highly likely to impact upon such views. This information would have been available to all dwelling owners at the time of purchase.

The ‘stepping down’ principle

The St Leonards / Crows Nest Area Character Statement contained in both DCP 2002 and DDCP 2010 contains the following principle:

… buildings are scaled down significantly from the Forum development landmark towards Willoughby Road, Hume Street and Chandos Street, to fit in with lower scale development and to reduce adverse affects on those lower scale areas.

This ‘stepping down’ principle is considered to be an important constraint on development in St Leonards. It is accepted by the community as a means of shaping an attractive skyline view of St Leonards as well as protecting the amenity of surrounding areas from intrusion of tall buildings.

The St Leonards / Crows Nest Area Character Statement also states that:

… High rise development is generally contained by Pacific Highway to the west, Oxley Street to the east and south and Chandos Street to the north.

However, this principle is considered problematic due to S21 Pacific Highway being an ‘opportunity site’ which, if developed with tangible public benefits provided, could benefit both St Leonards as a strategic centre as well as the areas which the provision aims to protect.

Ownership

The fragmented ownership of the redevelopment strip is a significant, although not insurmountable, constraint on development. It is likely that the most beneficial outcomes from a public benefit point of view will be achieved if substantial amalgamations can occur. Minimum site area requirements or additional development potential in the form of an FSR bonus may be required on the redevelopment strip to encourage cooperation between owners.

Figure 86 – Views and solar access
7. PRINCIPLES AND PRIORITIES

PRINCIPLES

Principle 1 – Development Opportunities and Public Benefit

The driving principle behind the broader St Leonards / Crows Nest Planning Study, of which this smaller study is a component, is that any additional development opportunities are matched by public benefits of commensurate value. These benefits must be in addition to what would normally be required by a new development, such as design excellence. The two main public benefits that would meet the aims of the planning study, and which are desperately needed in St Leonards, are:

- An expanded public domain where appropriate, and a qualitative improvement in the public domain on, and immediately surrounding, the redevelopment strip; and
- New areas of significant open space in appropriate locations in close proximity to the redevelopment strip.

These ‘tradeoffs’ could be built into mandated planning controls or could occur via bonus mechanisms whereby development opportunities beyond those available under existing controls can only be pursued if predetermined public benefits are provided.

Principle 2 – Shifting Existing Development Capacity

Relocating existing development potential allows some sites to become new open space while others increase their development potential.

Principle 3 – Pedestrian Circulation

Strengthening pedestrian routes, particularly those between St Leonards and Willoughby Road, is a priority of the study.

Principle 4 – Activities and Uses

Redevelopment should allow for ground level activation with uses appropriate to the location and consistent with the strategic vision for the area.

Figure 87 – Relocating existing development potential to free up land for open space

Figure 88 – Pedestrian circulation

Figure 89 – Ground level activities and uses
7. PRINCIPLES AND PRIORITIES

Principle 5 – Vehicular Circulation, Servicing and Access
Vehicular servicing and access points should be consolidated to ensure that frontages can accommodate active uses.

Figure 90 – Vehicular circulation, servicing and access

Principle 6 – Views
The appropriate management of views, particularly existing views, is crucial to gaining public support for any amendment to planning controls.

Figure 91 – Views

Principle 7 – Microclimate
The provision of a microclimate conducive to pedestrian comfort and amenity is a priority of the study.

Figure 92 – Microclimate

Legend
- Red development strip
- Mixed use development
- Maintain iconic views from upper levels of Abode building
- Maintain district views if possible
- Improve street views of redevelopment strip through design excellence
- Potential location of new tower elements
- Improve views from redevelopment strip

Legend
- Utilise north facing frontages with good solar access
- Protect public domain from wind and rain
- Improve street tree coverage and growth
7. PRINCIPLES AND PRIORITIES

Principle 8 – Built Form
Adopt a street wall and tower building typology consistent with other mixed use developments in North Sydney.

Principle 9 – Heritage
The appropriate management of heritage is a priority of the study.

Principle 10 – Open Space Network
Pursuing a network of small but high capacity areas of open space in an area of high population density is consistent with Council’s Open Space Provision Strategy. It also acknowledges the difficulty in pursuing a large unbroken expanse of open space in an area characterised by relatively small land holdings.

The network approach also acknowledges that not all sites identified as potential locations for open space will come to fruition. Should one site be ‘lost’ to development, there will still be other sites that can be pursued for open space purposes.

Figure 93 – Built form

Figure 94 – Heritage
The Old Marco Building at the northern end of the redevelopment strip was recently assessed by Council’s heritage consultant who recommended that its heritage status be retained. When considering the future of the building in any redevelopment of the strip, Council’s Design Excellence Panel did not consider its retention would hinder the achievement of the study’s objectives. Indeed, it was considered that the retention of the building should actually enhance the built form outcome should redevelopment occur.

Figure 95 – Open space network

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8. OPTIONS DEVELOPMENT

NEW OPEN SPACE

An open space investigation was undertaken to identify sites that could potentially be the location of new open space due to their underdeveloped nature or strategic location. The investigation revealed 5 sites of varying size and shape. A preliminary assessment of all sites was undertaken in accordance with Council’s 2009 Open Space Provision Strategy so as to determine their suitability for acquisition for public open space. All sites scored highly and were identified as Priority A sites.

OPEN SPACE OPTION 1 – 11-19 ALBANY STREET

The site at 11-19 Albany Street was identified as a potential location for open space, due to its size, location, good solar access and the underdeveloped nature of the existing use. The site is approximately 1373m² in size with frontages to Albany Street (40m), Oxley Street (34m) and Pole Lane (40m). Its proximity to the centre of St Leonards, along with the potential for it to form an important link in any open space/pedestrian network connecting St Leonards Station with Willoughby Road, makes it a good location for open space. The site enjoys good solar access which is likely to persist due to the relatively low scale (6 storeys) of the new mixed use developments on the other (north) side of Albany Street. The site currently accommodates a 4 story building, comprising 6 commercial units, with a total lettable area of 2325m². The eastern portion of the site, fronting Oxley St, accommodates an associated car park for the commercial building.

Development of the site to incorporate an income producing asset for Council in conjunction with open space could be investigated. Its size and three street frontages would make it a good site for a below ground car park, with open space at ground level.

The adjacent site at 7-9 Albany Street shares similar characteristics as the site at 11-19 Albany, however it was excluded from the option on the basis that a high quality mixed use development at this location with a positive interface with a new park at 11-19 Albany Street would be a good urban design outcome.
8. **OPTIONS DEVELOPMENT**

**NEW OPEN SPACE**

**OPEN SPACE OPTION 2 – 28-34 CLARKE STREET (THE ST LEONARDS CENTRE)**

The St Leonards Centre site was identified as a potential location for new open space due to its close proximity to Hume Street Park, thus potentially allowing for an expansion of the park. The site also has good solar access and is visually prominent. Although the current building is heritage listed and contains a substantial amount of commercial floorspace, its domineering nature, aging materials and appearance as well as the heritage listing indicates that it may not be a viable long term prospect for commercial land owners. The future of the site, beyond its current built form, should therefore be considered.

![Figure 100 – Open space option 2 – Location plan](image1)

![Figure 101 – Open space option 2 – Existing land use](image2)

**OPEN SPACE OPTION 3 – 49-53 HUME STREET**

The combined sites of 49, 51 and 53 Hume Street were identified as a potential location for new open space due to their proximity to Hume Street Park, thus potentially allowing for an expansion of the park. A second reason was the possibility of establishing a direct pedestrian link from an expanded Hume Street Park to Willoughby Road. Each of the three sites contains a commercial premise.

![Figure 102 – Open space option 2 – Potential uses](image3)

![Figure 103 – Open space option 3 – Location plan](image4)

![Figure 104 – Open space option 3 – Existing land use](image5)

![Figure 105 – Open space option 3 – Potential uses](image6)
8. OPTIONS DEVELOPMENT

NEW OPEN SPACE

OPEN SPACE OPTION 4 – 36 HUME STREET (KELLY’S PLACE)

Kelly’s Place childcare is the obvious location for new open space due to its location directly adjacent to Hume Street Park thus potentially allowing for increased utility and expansion of the existing open space. It is owned by Council. Should a nearby development incorporate a childcare centre, Kelly’s Place may be able to relocate thus freeing up the site for open space purposes.

OPEN SPACE OPTION 5 – 20 CLARKE STREET (southern portion)

The Beauxrepaires site, occupying the southern portion of 20 Clarke Street, was identified as the possible location for future open space primarily because of the underdeveloped nature of its existing use and its three street frontages.
This agenda item was brought before the Design Excellence Panel (the Panel) in order to gain feedback regarding the proposed locations for new areas of open space. Points of consensus regarding the open space options included:

- Closing Hume Street and relocating Kelly’s Place childcare centre would enable Hume Street Park to be expanded and would be a very desirable urban form outcome.
- Kelly’s Place childcare centre in its current location and form is not desirable from an urban design perspective. It isolates Hume Street Park. It is not level with surrounding footpaths.
- A childcare centre incorporated into a new development as a public benefit would allow the relocation of Kelly’s Place childcare centre.
- Open space where childcare centre is currently located would benefit if Hume Street could be closed thus remedying overly acute angle of parcel.
- Hume Street properties with access from Hume Lane would become desirable sites for mixed use developments with high amenity ground level cafes immediately facing the expanded park.

- Closing Clarke Street or introducing a shared zone would further add to the utility and amenity of the expanded park.
- There is potential for a future refurbishment of the Hume Street car park and sports centre to incorporate a child care centre and cafes so as to activate interface with Hume Street Park.
- Other options for open space are generally supported as long as they serve different functions to, and complement, an expanded Hume St Park.
- Proposed site on corner of Albany and Oxley is possibly too close to heavily trafficked Albany Street to be a well utilised park.
- Beaufurries site (southern portion of 20 Clarke Street) is not an ideal site for open space and a high quality development may be a better outcome.

Figure 112 – Design Excellence Panel Input - Open space options
8. OPTIONS DEVELOPMENT
PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION AND AMENITY

A number of options exist that would provide public benefit in the form of improved publically accessible space at ground level. A variation of one of the below options, or a combination of options, may provide the best outcome in the context of the subject land. Consideration may be different for the different frontages of the redevelopment strip, that is, along the Pacific Highway as opposed to on the side streets.

PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION AND AMENITY OPTION 1 – SETBACKS

Setbacks provide greater footpath widths, street level amenity and help reduce the perceived bulk and scale of buildings through more prosperous street tree growth. Setbacks along the Pacific Highway would not adversely affect the high visibility of the ground floor retail component of new developments.

Wider setbacks should be considered for the side streets (Albany, Oxley and Hume), acknowledging their increasingly important role as a means for pedestrians to escape the highly trafficked highway and retreat to the higher amenity backstreets and beyond to areas of open space as well as Willoughby road. Generous setbacks in these locations would also facilitate outdoor dining.

Figure 113 – Setbacks

PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION AND AMENITY OPTION 2 – COLONNADES

The St Leonards Strategy recommends that any new development on the Pacific Highway be required to incorporate a colonnade. The colonnade forming part of the development at 207 Pacific Highway, west of the Forum in the Lane Cove LGA, is noted as providing an enhanced environment for pedestrians (see Figure 114).

Colonnades would allow an increase in publicly accessible ground floor area while providing protection for pedestrian from the elements without compromising the floor area of podium elements at levels 1-3. Colonnades in isolation of additional interventions, such as setbacks, are considered a poor design solution for the subject strip of land on the eastern side of the Pacific Highway for the following reasons:

- Colonnades are likely to produce a cold and shaded pedestrian environment along the Pacific Highway, especially given that the main south-western facing frontage on the Pacific Highway does not receive much direct sunlight.
- Colonnades ‘hide away’ and obscure ground level retail which is at odds with the strips nominated role as a high visibility household goods showroom cluster.
- The colonnades at 207 Pacific Highway are somewhat successful however the widening of the adjacent footpath plays an important role in their success by distancing traffic from pedestrians utilising the colonnade.
- It is noted that the ground level café at 207 Pacific Highway does not have outdoor seating despite the ‘success’ of the colonnade. Indeed the columns and planter boxes at 207 Pacific Highway arguably impede the provision of outdoor seating by making the footpath too narrow.

PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION AND AMENITY OPTION 3 – CANTILEVERS

Cantilevers, like colonnades but without the potentially intrusive supporting columns, can provide increased publicly accessible ground floor areas without compromising the floor area of podium elements at levels 1-3. However, the lack of supporting columns constrains the achievable width of the cantilever.
8. OPTIONS DEVELOPMENT
PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION AND AMENITY

PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION AND AMENITY OPTION 4 – THROUGH-SITE LINKS
In the right location, through-site links can provide a public benefit by allowing pedestrian linkages between origins and destinations, and avoiding the ‘long way around’. However, through-site links arguably do not fit neatly within the existing pedestrian desire lines network, especially relative to the existing streets of Albany, Oxley and Hume where an improved pedestrian environment would provide obvious and immediate benefits.

PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION AND AMENITY OPTION 5 – AWNINGS
Awnings can provide various levels of protection for pedestrians depending on their design. In built up areas such as St Leonards, awnings can be an effective way of offsetting the adverse effects of wind and rain. Awnings can also provide shade from the midday sun.

PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION AND AMENITY OPTION 6 – COMBINATIONS
Different combinations of these options may be a good design solution for different frontages. For example the southern side of Oxley Street has better solar access than the northern side and a different design solution for each side may be appropriate.

Also, the nature of some options may lend themselves to partnering with other options. For example, due to the physical constraints on the maximum depth of a cantilever, there may be some merit in incorporating a cantilever in addition to a setback. Alternatively, as used with some success at 207 Pacific Highway, a colonnade used in conjunction with an awning may be an appropriate design solution.

DESIGN EXCELLENCE PANEL INPUT – PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION AND AMENITY
The issue of pedestrian circulation and amenity on the redevelopment strip was brought before the North Sydney Design Excellence Panel (the Panel) in order to gain feedback regarding the above options. Ground level setbacks were presented as the preferred option by Council staff. The main question to be answered was whether the setbacks are the best means of achieving improved pedestrian circulation and amenity.

The panel reached the following points of consensus:
- Colonnades would not be a desirable design outcome for ground level retail.
- The retention of the Old Marco Building heritage item would not create a significant bottle neck problem should setbacks from the Pacific Highway be pursued. It may well be an attractive design outcome.
- A 4 metre setback from the Pacific Highway may be too much. A 3 metre setback with a continuous glazed awning would be a better outcome that still provides for prosperous street tree growth.
- The 3m setback should be a requirement for all development and not dependant on what height is achieved. The setback must be continuous on all sites.
- The 3m setback combined with the 3.5m street verge is adequate to allow street trees to be planted so as to provide a buffer from the highway while not conflicting with provision of glazed awnings.
- Powerlines need to be put underground to allow for unimpeded street tree growth.
- All setback areas should be provided at grade. An exception to this rule may be permitted on the south side of Oxley Street so as to facilitate outdoor dining but that such level changes should be specified by Council so as to ensure the setback area adequately provides for a widened footpath.
- The Panel raised questions about whether the setback areas would be dedicated to Council or would remain in private ownership. One implication of this issue relates to under ground car parking and whether it would be permitted under the setback area. The Panel considered that if car parks were permitted under the setback area that this should not compromise the provision of the setback area at grade.
- The 6 metre setback on the southern side of Oxley Street is supported to provide for improved pedestrian amenity and flow as well as outdoor dining. The Oxley Street linkage to Crows Nest is an important one and the proposed northern facing location for the setback is well suited to outdoor dining.
- Cafes can also be successful on south facing frontages.
- A 6 metre setback on the northern side of Oxley Street and the northern side of Hume Street may be too much. A 3 metre setback with a continuous glazed awning would be a better outcome that provides for improved pedestrian amenity and flow, some outdoor dining if desired, but is not large enough to create a potentially underutilised south facing public space.
The redevelopment strip has been divided into 3 redevelopment sites. The built form options were influenced by the analysis of the redevelopment strip in Section 4 and the principles and priorities established in Section 7. The heritage listed Old Marco Building at the northern end of the strip forms part of the northern redevelopment site but is to be retained. The strata titled commercial building at 511 Pacific Highway has been excluded from redevelopment options on the assumption that it is unlikely to be redeveloped.

**BUILT FORM OPTION 1 – STATUS QUO**

Built form option 1 is to maintain the existing controls governing built form on the redevelopment strip. As evidenced in the Strategy Review, compliant built forms under existing planning controls are largely governed by an overall height control and a podium height control.

Built forms on the redevelopment strip that are compliant with existing planning controls are represented in Figures 119, 120 and 121.

The retention of the existing planning framework is not considered to be a viable option for the future of the redevelopment strip. Indeed the recognised inadequacy of the planning framework in St Leonards was a key driver in the push for this planning study to be undertaken. The built forms shown in Figures 119, 120 and 121 are unlikely to eventuate due to the poor quality of development that would result and the unfeasible return for developers who comply with the controls.

As indicated in the background to this planning study, any redevelopment under the existing planning framework is likely to exceed the existing planning controls, particularly the height control, due to the existence of alternate assessment routes, particularly the Joint Regional Planning Panel, and the resultant non-compliant approvals, such as that at 545 Pacific Highway, which set a precedent for the area.

Therefore retention of the existing planning framework would result in either: 1) No redevelopment being undertaken; or 2) The development of non-compliant development schemes that exceed Council’s planning controls without any significant public benefit. Both these possible scenarios are in conflict with the aims of the study.

Feasibility – Council engaged property consultants to undertake a feasibility study of built form option 1 to see whether the project would be economically feasible. A profit/risk margin of 20% was assumed to result in a high likelihood of redevelopment occurring. It was found that option 1 had a negative profit/risk margin which would be very unlikely to result in redevelopment. This is consistent with the above analysis.
8. OPTIONS DEVELOPMENT

BUILT FORM

BUILT FORM OPTION 2 – SETBACKS AND INCREASED HEIGHT

Built form option 2 builds on the proposed ground level setbacks, which have been established as the preferred means of improving pedestrian amenity and circulation, and proposes to increase height without increasing overall floor space. This aims to ensure a ‘trade off’ between height and public benefit is included in the planning framework thus enabling the increase in height to ‘pay’ for the provision of public benefit in the form of ground level setbacks.

Site ABC
FSR = 5:1
Height – 47m (northern tower) and 38m (southern tower)
Ground level setbacks – 3m on Pacific Highway and Oxley Street frontages
4 storey podium

Site D
FSR = 4.3:1
Height – 32m
Ground level setbacks – 3m on Pacific Highway frontage, 6m on Oxley Street frontage
3 storey podium

Site F
FSR = 3.75:1
Height – 26m
Ground level setbacks – 3m on Pacific Highway and Hume Street frontages
3 storey podium

Figure 122 – Built form option 2

Council engaged architectural consultants to assist in establishing compliant FSRs for the redevelopment sites. For the purposes of this study it is assumed that compliant FSRs are as follows:

- Redevelopment site ABC – FSR 5:1
- Redevelopment site D – FSR 4.3:1
- Redevelopment site F – FSR 3.75:1

Option 2 utilises a podium and tower built form typology. Incorporation of strong podium elements aims to achieve a strong street wall that frames the public domain and reduces the visual impact of tower elements. The reduction in the podium height for sites D and F from 4 storeys to 3 storeys aims to lessen the perceived intensity of development further away from the centre of St Leonards.

A reduced podium also acknowledges the reality that the market is delivering minimal commercial floor space in mixed use developments and therefore aims to reduce the amount of residential floor space contained in podium elements. It is considered that dwellings in the above podium tower element will have greater amenity than those in the podium which are in closer proximity to the traffic on the Pacific Highway.

It is considered that four high amenity towers increasing in height from the south near Hume Street to the north closer to Albany Street would improve the feasibility of development while still achieving a built form which ‘steps down’ from the Forum. Option 2 heights are shown in Figure 123.

This option therefore attempts to provide an increase in height that:

- ‘pays’ for the provision of the ground level setbacks; and
- respects the stepping down principle.

Consideration of this option by Council staff identified that Site D could potentially be given a greater development incentive than the other sites due to the larger ground level setback sought for that particular site.

Feasibility – Council engaged property consultants to undertake a feasibility study of built form option 2 to see whether the project would be economically feasible. A profit/risk margin of 20% was assumed to result in a high likelihood of redevelopment occurring. It was found that development site ABC contained a sufficient profit/risk margin to make redevelopment viable (21%). Development sites D (19%) and F (18%) fell slightly short of the threshold considered to be a viable profit/risk margin, however it is noted that such margins may vary depending on the circumstances of individual property owners and developers.

It is worth noting that the JRPP approval at 545 Pacific Highway exceeds the existing height control by 10 metres thus, via precedent, setting a new pseudo height control for the strip. This means that a new height control, particularly as it applies to 545 Pacific Highway, would need to exceed the precedent set by the JRPP approval so as to ensure that a new development application for the site is lodged and that development occurs in accordance with new controls that incorporate the provision of public benefit. Using this logic, it is unlikely that the proposed height under this option will be sufficient to encourage the owners of 545 Pacific Highway to lodge a new development application.

Figure 123 – Built form option 2
8. **OPTIONS DEVELOPMENT**

**BUILT FORM**

**BUILT FORM OPTION 2 – SETBACKS AND INCREASED HEIGHT**

Figure 124 – Built form option 2 – Indicative elevation

Figure 125 – Built form option 2 block modelling

Figure 126 – Built form option 2 block modelling

Figure 127 – Built form option 2 block modelling
8. OPTIONS DEVELOPMENT

BUILT FORM

BUILT FORM OPTION 3 – SETBACKS, INCREASED HEIGHT AND FLOOR SPACE TRANSFERS

Drawing upon the principle of shifting existing development capacity so as to facilitate new areas of open space, built form option 3 involves transferring floor space from sites identified as potential locations for open space to the redevelopment strip.

Of the 5 sites identified as potential locations for open space, the St Leonards Centre site (Option 2) and the Kelly’s Place site (Option 4) have been excluded from the modelling for built form option 3 for the following reasons:

- The St Leonards Centre: While this site is a good location for open space, the heritage listing of the existing building provides some added challenges to redevelopment as open space. If Council determines that it should still be pursued as open space, it is considered that this site should instead be acquired through the use of section 94 funds and be held as a commercial asset until appropriate arrangements are in place for its redevelopment.

- Kelly’s Place: While this site is the Design Excellence Panel’s preferred location for new open space, it is considered that this can occur independently of any trade-off resulting from redevelopment of the strip on the Pacific Highway. This is mainly because the site is already under Council ownership. Council may wish to develop a new childcare centre in the area, or alternatively, Council may grant a development bonus to a nearby site that incorporates a childcare centre. Both these options would allow Kelly’s Place to be relocated for redevelopment as open space.

Open space options 1, 3 and 5 are considered representative of the type of public benefit that should be gained from a further increase in development feasibility beyond built form option 2. Open space options 1, 3 and 5 are arguably suitable as viable sites for open space in their own right which, if appropriately embellished, could complement Hume Park. These three sites would also form valuable links in a broader open space network consistent with the Open Space Network principle established in Section 7. While ownership may prove to be a hindrance to acquisition, these sites are free from heritage constraints and do not accommodate highly valued community facilities such as childcare.

Council has had compliant development schemes drawn up by architectural consultants for open space options 1, 3 and 5. This was done to ascertain the correct amounts of floor space to be transferred to the identified sites on the redevelopment strip.

The floor space contained in hypothetical compliant developments on the 3 chosen sites is as follows:

- Open space option 1 (11-19 Albany Street) – 6100m²
- Open space option 3 (49-53 Hume Street) – 1820m²
- Open space option 5 (20 Clarke Street - southern portion) – 1800m²

These were then added to the compliant floor space of the closest redevelopment site, as follows:

- Floor space from open space option 1 transferred to redevelopment site ABC
- Floor space from open space option 3 transferred to redevelopment site D
- Floor space from open space option 5 transferred to redevelopment site F

Site ABC
FSR – 6.7:1
Height – 62m (northern tower) and 56m (southern tower)
Ground level setbacks – 3m on Pacific Highway and Oxley Street frontages
6 storey podium

Site D
FSR – 5.4:1
Height – 40m
Ground level setbacks – 3m on Pacific Highway frontage, 6m on Oxley Street frontage
4 storey podium

Site F
FSR – 5.2:1
Height – 32m
Ground level setbacks – 3m on Pacific Highway and Hume Street frontages
4 storey podium

Figure 128 – Built form option 3

Figure 129 – Floor space transfers
8. OPTIONS DEVELOPMENT

BUILT FORM

BUILT FORM OPTION 3 – SETBACKS, INCREASED HEIGHT AND FLOOR SPACE TRANSFERS

Assuming direct transfer of floor space to development sites as shown in Figure 129, this process results in new FSRs for each development site as follows:

New FSR for redevelopment site ABC = 6.7:1

(Site area ABC x Compliant FSR ABC) + Compliant GFA 11-19 Albany St / Site area ABC = New FSR ABC

(3624.4m² x 5:1) + 6100m² / 3624.4m² = 6.68:1

Where:
- Site area ABC = 3624.4m²
- Compliant FSR ABC = 5:1
- Compliant GFA 11-19 Albany St = 6100m²

New FSR for redevelopment site D = 5.4:1

(Site area D x Compliant FSR D) + Compliant GFA 49-53 Hume St / Site area D = New FSR D

1670.7m² x 4.3:1) + 1820m² / 1670.7 = 5.39:1

Where:
- Site area D = 1670.7m²
- Compliant FSR D = 4.3:1
- Compliant GFA 49-53 Hume St = 1820m²

New FSR for redevelopment site F = 5.2:1

(Site area F x Compliant FSR F) + Compliant GFA 20 Clarke St (southern portion) / Site area F = New FSR F

(1271m² x 3.75:1) + 1800m² / 1271m² = 5.17:1

Where:
- Site area F = 1271m²
- Compliant FSR F = 3.75:1
- Compliant GFA 20 Clarke St (portion) = 1800m²

Council’s architectural consultant was asked to model built forms for the three redevelopment sites using the ground level setbacks and street wall podiums established in built form option 2 as well as the above FSRs. An increase in overall height on all development sites and an increase in podium heights beyond that envisaged in built form option 2 were seen as necessary to accommodate the increased floor space. Option 3 heights are shown in Figure 130.

This option therefore attempts to provide an increase in height and floor space that:
- ‘pays’ for the provision of the ground level setbacks; and
- ‘pays’ for the provision of new areas of open space.

It is questionable whether this option appropriately respects the ‘stepping down’ principle given that the height of the proposed northern tower (62m) is roughly the same height as the Abode apartment building to the north (60m).

Further, it is considered that the increase in podium heights is problematic given the low amount of commercial floor space currently being delivered in mixed use developments. In the current market, an enlarged podium is likely to result in a greater number of dwellings being located in the podium rather than in tower elements. This raises issues regarding the amenity of dwellings in the podium due to the proximity of the Pacific Highway.

Feasibility - Council engaged property consultants to undertake a feasibility study of built form option 3 to see whether the project would be economically feasible: A profit/risk margin of 20% was assumed to result in a high likelihood of redevelopment occurring. It was found that built from option 3 in and of itself provides a sufficient profit/risk margin to the developer so as to make it a viable development proposition (ABC 24%, D 20% and F 22%). It should be noted, however, that the feasibility does not include the purchase of sites identified as potential locations for open space. When this additional cost is included, the profit/risk margin for all three development sites is more than halved making redevelopment based on the floor space transfers concept very unlikely.

It should be noted that the unfeasibility of the floor space transfer concept relies on the assumption that sites identified as potential locations for open space (open space options 1, 3 and 5) would be purchased outright and gifted to Council. There are potentially other approaches that would enable an increase in development feasibility in exchange for new areas of open space that may prove more feasible. Such approaches include:
- Allowing development bonuses in exchange for provision of new areas of open space that meet predetermined criteria but are not explicitly identified.
- Allowing development bonuses in exchange for payment of an open space levy that is to be used within Precinct 1 for the purpose of providing new open space.
- Allowing development bonuses in exchange for provision of a new child care centre that could contribute in part to the relocation of child care services away from the current Kelly’s Place site.

While these approaches were not modelled and feasibility was not sought, it is considered that flexibility should be incorporated into the planning framework so as to allow for such trade-offs should they be in the developer’s interest to utilise. The amount of additional floor space and/or height should be dependent on project specifics, particularly the amount and location of new open space. However any bonuses should be capped to provide some certainty regarding maximum building envelopes.
8. **OPTIONS DEVELOPMENT**

**BUILT FORM**

**BUILT FORM OPTION 3 – SETBACKS, INCREASED HEIGHT AND FLOOR SPACE TRANSFERS**

Figure 131 – Built form option 3 – Indicative elevation

Figure 132 – Built form option 3 block modelling

Figure 133 – Built form option 3 block modelling

Figure 134 – Built form option 3 block modelling
8. OPTIONS DEVELOPMENT

BUILT FORM

DESIGN EXCELLENCE PANEL INPUT – BUILT FORM

Built form option 3 was brought before the Design Excellence Panel (the Panel) to obtain feedback on the following:

- A podium and tower typology
- Increased heights
- New FSRs based on transfer of floor space from three open space locations to three redevelopment sites

Comments regarding built form along the highway:

- The panel is supportive of requiring public benefit to be gained from increases in development feasibility (e.g. allowing development bonuses on redevelopment sites in exchange for new open space being provided off site).
- A strong podium at 3-5 storeys will mean that height of tower elements is less apparent.
- Design of lower levels of buildings should be the same regardless of FSR. Any FSR bonus should only result in higher tower elements.
- Bonuses could be tied to minimum site area requirements so as to encourage amalgamation.
- Council could consider a prohibition above base FSR and height unless satisfactory arrangements are in place for the provision of new open space.
- Non-active frontages to highway could be considered for residential portion of podiums as a design response to noise pollution from highway.
9. PREFERRED OPTION

The preferred option for Precinct 1 includes the following main features:
- An expanded Hume Street Park;
- New ground level setbacks on the Pacific Highway redevelopment strip; and
- The introduction of high amenity towers above podium elements on the Pacific Highway redevelopment strip.

PREFERRED OPTION – OPEN SPACE

The main component of the Preferred Option - Open Space is an enlarged Hume Street Park resulting from the relocation of Kelly’s Place childcare, the closure of Hume Street and the conversion of Clarke Street into a lower order thoroughfare.

A secondary component of the ‘Preferred Option - Open Space’ is the provision of new open space on the eastern side of Hume Street with a pedestrian link to Willoughby Road. Consideration of the open space options in Section 8, with input from the Design Excellence Panel, led to the identification of sites on the eastern side of Hume Street as the preferred location for new open space within Precinct 1.

The ‘Preferred Option - Open Space’ would be of very high value to the community for a number of reasons:
- An enlarged Hume Street Park is consistent with preferred acquisition strategies contained in Council’s Open Space Provision Strategy and would extend the potential functions of the park so as to better cater for the needs of new populations coming into the St Leonards / Crows Nest area.
- New open space on the eastern side of Hume Street with a pedestrian link to Willoughby Road would effectively further enlarge Hume Street Park but also provide improved access to the park and form an important link within a broader pedestrian network linking St Leonards and Willoughby Road.

It is therefore considered that the ‘Preferred Option – Open Space’ achieves the following aims of the planning study:
- New open space in St Leonards / Crows Nest.
- Improved connectivity, particularly between St Leonards / Pacific Highway and Willoughby Road.

Figure 135 – Preferred option - Open space
9. PREFERRED OPTION

PREFERRED OPTION – PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION AND AMENITY

To promote pedestrian circulation and improve pedestrian amenity on the redevelopment strip, the preferred option incorporates the introduction of ground level setbacks in combination with the use of continuous glazed awnings. Setbacks provide for greater footpath widths thus aiding pedestrian movement and distancing pedestrians from fast moving and noisy traffic. The setbacks also aim to improve amenity and help reduce the perceived bulk and scale of buildings by encouraging more prosperous street tree growth.

The setbacks in combination with glazed awnings would improve street level amenity thus encouraging ground level activation where appropriate. It is considered that the side streets and adjacent sections of Clarke Lane are good locations for small scale retail, cafes and restaurants while the high visibility retail function of the Pacific Highway frontages should be strengthened. The proposed setbacks would not adversely affect the high visibility ground floor retail component of new developments.

A wider setback on the southern side of Oxley Street acknowledges that particular pedestrian route as an increasingly important means for pedestrians to escape the highly trafficked highway and retreat to the higher amenity backstreets and beyond to Hume Street Park and Willoughby Road. The generous setback in this location also aims to facilitate outdoor dining taking advantage of the good solar access.

The most well known example of existing ground level setbacks in the North Sydney LGA is the Miller Street setback area in the North Sydney Centre (see Figure 141). While larger than the proposed setback, the Miller Street setback area demonstrates that setbacks can be successful in providing an increased area for pedestrian movement, space for outdoor dining as well as improved street tree growth.

The use of setbacks on the subject land is consistent with upper level strategies, particularly the emphasis in the St Leonards Strategy on the need for improved pedestrian linkages. Setbacks would also facilitate some of the outcomes envisaged in the St Leonards Public Domain Strategy such as improved street tree coverage.

It is considered that the Preferred Option – Pedestrian Circulation and Amenity achieves the following aims of the planning study:

- Improved connectivity, particularly between St Leonards / Pacific Highway and Willoughby Road.
- Improved urban design and street level amenity particularly in St Leonards and along the Pacific Highway.

The preferred option incorporates the introduction of ground level setbacks in combination with the use of continuous glazed awnings.

Figure 137 – Preferred option – Setbacks and awnings (Pacific Highway)

Figure 138 – Preferred option – Setbacks and awnings (Pacific Highway)

Figure 139 – Preferred option – Ground level activation

Figure 140 – Outdoor dining areas could form part of Oxley Street setback (drawing provided by Cronic Partners Architects)

Figure 141 – Miller Street setback area
9. PREFERRED OPTION

PREFERRED OPTION – BUILT FORM

The Preferred Option – Built Form ensures a trade-off between development feasibility and public benefit is included in the planning controls for the redevelopment strip.

**Design at lower levels** -

The Preferred Option - Built Form builds on the proposed ground level setbacks, which have been established as the preferred means of improving pedestrian amenity and circulation, and utilises a podium and tower built form typology consistent with the principles and priorities established in section 7. Incorporation of podium elements aims to achieve a strong street wall that frames the public domain and reduces the visual impact of tower elements.

A reduction in podium height south of Oxley Street aims to lessen the perceived intensity of development further away from the centre of St Leonards. It also acknowledges the reality that the market is delivering minimal commercial floor space in mixed use developments and therefore aims to minimise the amount of residential floor space contained in podium elements. It is generally considered that dwellings located in above-podium tower elements have greater amenity than those located in podium elements which are in closer proximity to the traffic on the Pacific Highway.

The proposed ground level setbacks will ensure a degree of amenity for those few dwellings located within the podium elements. The setbacks will result in an increased distance between these dwellings and traffic and the resultant prosperous street tree growth will provide a screen of greenery for much of the year. Design solutions to further improve the amenity of dwellings within podium elements should be investigated at development application stage.

**Height** -

It is considered that four high-amenity towers increasing in height from the south near Hume Street to the north closer to Albany Street would improve the feasibility of development while still achieving a built form which steps down from the Forum to Hume Street. Proposed heights are shown in Figure 143. The larger height differential between the southern two sites acknowledges the proximity of lower scale areas of Crows Nest as well as comments made by Council’s Design Excellence Panel regarding the relatively high cost of constructing buildings of between 9 and 13 stores.

It is worth noting that the JPnP approval at 545 Pacific Highway exceeds the existing height control by 10 metres thus, via precedent, setting a new height control for the strip. This means that a new height control, particularly as it applies to 545 Pacific Highway, should exceed the precedent set by the JPnP approval to ensure that a new development application for that site is lodged and development occurs in accordance with new controls that incorporate the provision of public benefit (i.e. the ground level setbacks). It is considered that the proposed height will achieve this goal.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>FSR</th>
<th>Height</th>
<th>Ground level setbacks</th>
<th>Storey count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABC</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>6.1 m</td>
<td>3m on Pacific Highway</td>
<td>4 storey podium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>4.0 m</td>
<td>3m on Pacific Highway</td>
<td>3 storey podium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>2.8 m</td>
<td>3m on Pacific Highway</td>
<td>3 storey podium</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 142 – Preferred option – Built form

Figure 143 – Preferred option – Built form

**LEGEND**

- Location and height of towers
- Ground level setback (3 metres) with glazed awning
- Ground level setback (6 metres) with glazed awning
- Street wall (3-4 storey podiums)
- Old Marco Building retained
- Strata plan unlikely to be redeveloped
9. PREFERRED OPTION

PREFERRED OPTION – BUILT FORM

FSRs -

The use of ‘base’ and bonus FSRs has been included to allow for additional trade-offs between development feasibility and public benefit beyond the provision of ground level setbacks in exchange for height.

The base FSR control generally aims to ensure that overall floor space is not increased beyond that permitted by current controls. However, a small increase in the base FSR for site D (521 Pacific Highway) is proposed to compensate for the larger ground level setback sought for this particular site.

Proposed base FSR controls for the 3 redevelopment sites are as follows:

- Redevelopment site ABC – FSR 5:1
- Redevelopment site D – FSR 5:1 (4.3:1 compliant + 0.7:1 increase)
- Redevelopment site F – FSR 3.75:1

Two FSR bonuses are proposed that involve the awarding of additional floor space beyond the ‘base’ FSRs outlined above. ‘Bonus’ FSRs should only be awarded if arrangements are in place to deliver predetermined public benefits.

It is proposed that development site ABC be eligible for a development bonus of 1:1 (6:1 in total) if arrangements are in place to deliver the open space outcome on the eastern side of Hume Street. The process of developing built form options revealed that only development site ABC is capable of accommodating an amount of additional floor space that would ‘pay’ for the open space outcome while still providing an acceptable built form. The FSR of 6.7:1 used to model built form option 3 has been reduced to 6:1 so as to ensure criticisms of that option regarding possible non-compliance with the stepping down principle and excessive podium size can be overcome.

It is proposed that development site D be eligible for a development bonus of 0.4:1 (5.4:1 in total). The process of developing built form options showed that development site D is capable of accommodating an FSR of 5.4:1 while still providing an acceptable built form. However no off-site open space outcomes were identified that could form the basis of an appropriate and feasible trade-off. Other public benefits could be considered that achieve strategic Council objectives beyond those of this planning study, including the provision of affordable housing; or the provision of a new child care centre. If an applicant can demonstrate demand for this type of public benefit and arrangements are in place for delivery, then the development bonus should be awarded.

No development bonus is proposed for development site F. It is considered that the preferred option for that site provides for a comfortable transition to the lower scale buildings of the Crows Nest Town Centre.

The introduction of bonus provisions acknowledges the high degree of uncertainty regarding the commercial and technical feasibility of delivering the predetermined public benefits as part of redevelopment on the Pacific Highway. It is considered that property owners should be free to pursue redevelopment using the ‘base’ FSR without uncertainty regarding the provision of public benefit being built into mandatory controls. However, if property owners find that the bonus mechanism provides sufficient commercial benefit then the trade-off should be permitted.

Feasibility - Council engaged property consultants to undertake a feasibility study of the preferred option to see whether the project would be economically feasible. A profit/risk margin of 20% was assumed to result in a high likelihood of redevelopment occurring. It was found that the profit/risk margin for development site ABC was around 20%, however, that the feasibility does not include the purchase of land identified for new open space. When this additional cost is included, the profit/risk margin is reduced to around 17%.

Development sites D was found to have a profit risk margin of 21%. The preferred option for development site F closely resembles that of option 2 which was found to have a profit/risk margin of 18% however a proposed further increase in height may render redevelopment likely.

It is noted that such margins may vary depending on the circumstances of individual property owners and developers and feasibility study outcomes should be used as a guide only.

The Preferred Option – Built Form attempts to provide an increase in height and floor space that:

- ‘pays’ for the provision of the ground level setbacks;
- ‘pays’ for the provision of new open space on the eastern side of Hume Street with a pedestrian link to Willoughby Road;
- respects the stepping down principle; and
- encourages 545 Pacific Highway to lodge a new DA in accordance with new controls (regardless of whether the bonus provision is utilised).

It is considered that the ‘Preferred Option – Built Form’ in combination with the proposed ground level setbacks will achieve the following aims of the planning study:

- Increased investment in St Leonards and decreased commercial vacancy rates, with particular focus on the rejuvenation of the Pacific Highway between St Leonards train station and the intersection of Pacific Highway and Willoughby Road.
- Improved building design and residential amenity in St Leonards.

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9. PREFERRED OPTION

PREFERRED OPTION – BUILT FORM

Figure 144 – Preferred option built form – Indicative elevation

Figure 145 – Preferred option built form block modelling

Figure 146 – Preferred option built form block modelling

Figure 147 – Preferred option built form block modelling
9. PREFERRED OPTION

PREFERRED OPTION BUILT FORM – VIEWS

Figure 148 – Locations of views

Figure 149 – Preferred option built form pedestrian perspective A - From IBM Building looking south along Pacific Highway

Figure 150 – Preferred option built form pedestrian perspective B – From Crows Nest five ways intersection looking North along Pacific Highway

Figure 151 – Preferred option built form pedestrian perspective C – From Albany Street looking south down Clarke Lane

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9. PREFERRED OPTION

PREFERRED OPTION BUILT FORM – VIEWS

Figure 152 – Preferred option built form pedestrian perspective D – From Oxley Street near intersection with Nicholson Street

Figure 153 – Preferred option built form pedestrian perspective E – From intersection of Albany Street and Oxley Street

Figure 154 – Preferred option built form pedestrian perspective F – From Hume Street Park

Figure 155 – Preferred option built form view G – From the Abode Building
9. PREFERRED OPTION

PREFERRED OPTION BUILT FORM
- VISUALISATION

Figure 156 – Preferred option – 521 Pacific Highway

Figure 157 – Preferred option – 521 Pacific Highway

Figure 158 – Preferred option – 521 Pacific Highway

Figure 159 – Preferred option – 545 Pacific Highway

Figure 160 – Preferred option – 545 Pacific Highway

Figure 161 – Preferred option – 545 Pacific Highway
Implementation of the preferred option requires Council to:

- Change local planning provisions; and
- Undertake further planning study work to facilitate the open space component of the preferred option.

CHANGES TO LOCAL PLANNING PROVISIONS

A planning proposal should be prepared and submitted to the Department of Planning and Infrastructure outlining the proposed changes to North Sydney Council’s Local Environmental Plan (LEP) and Development Control Plan (DCP). Where a change is not stipulated, existing provisions are to remain unchanged (e.g. above podium setbacks). Proposed LEP and DCP changes are as follows:

LEP

Introduce the following FSR controls to the redevelopment strip:

- ABC – 5:1
- D – 5:1
- F – 3.75:1

Revise existing height controls:

- ABC – 56m (northern tower) and 50m (southern tower)
- D – 40m
- F – 28m

Insert a new local or miscellaneous provision regarding ground level setbacks on the redevelopment strip. In particular, to prohibit buildings or parts of buildings being erected above existing ground level within the specified setback areas (that is, 3m on frontages facing the Pacific Highway, on the northern side of Oxley Street and on the northern side of Hume Street, and 6m on the southern side of Oxley Street).

Introduce site specific provisions that facilitate a bonus mechanism. For example:

- ABC – FSR bonus of 1:1 may be awarded if satisfactory arrangements are in place for the provision of 920m² of new open space on the eastern side of Hume Street with a pedestrian link to Willoughby Road.
- D – FSR bonus of 0.4:1 may be awarded if satisfactory arrangements are in place for the provision of a public benefit, the demand for which is demonstrated by the applicant to the satisfaction of Council.

Site amalgamation or minimum site area controls may also be required.

DCP

Revise required podium heights in Area Character Statement:

- D – 3 storeys
- F – 3 storeys

FURTHER PLANNING STUDY WORK

The closure of Hume Street and the conversion of Clarke Street into a lower order thoroughfare involves Council owned land and their feasibility should be pursued as a priority. For example, appropriate management of local traffic and parking implications will need to be investigated. Funding sources also need to be investigated including the possibility of using current and future s94 income to expand and embellish the park.

Further planning study work within Precinct 1 will be required to investigate how a childcare centre could be established on the eastern side of Hume Street thus allowing Kelly’s Place child care to be relocated. Prior to any relocation occurring, and in order to maintain or improve the existing child care service level, any new facility will need to have similar or improved amenity and be capable of accommodating a similar or greater number of child care places.

Investigations should also consider how properties on the eastern side of Hume Street can be redeveloped so as to positively contribute to an expanded Hume Street Park.

Should the bonus FSR mechanism proposed by this study not be utilised by property owners, alternate means to achieve new open space and a pedestrian link to Willoughby Road, as envisaged by the Preferred Option – Open Space, will also need to be investigated.
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