

The Sydney Morning Herald

SE Domain
HD **Rise and rise of the lower west side**
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COVER STORY

The area of Surry Hills near Central Station, traditionally not as popular with buyers, is enjoying a renaissance thanks to a plethora of hip bars, restaurants and new apartments.

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Once tormented by madam Kate Leigh's razor gangs, Surry Hills in more recent times has been a suburb divided in two by perception.

Buyers began discovering the upper side of the suburb around Crown Street in the late 1990s but the lower, Central Station side, with its smaller houses and ad hoc **residential** and **commercial** mix, failed to attract the same interest.

Now a flood of new **apartment** developments, including the Bedford, East Central, Emiliano, the Ashlar and the Foveaux are changing the tone of lower Surry Hills and combining with a range of new amenities and impending infrastructure to make it irresistible to buyers who overlooked it before.

CPM Realty is marketing The Bedford apartments at the corner of Bedford and Elizabeth streets that will be completed at the start of September. Managing director Sam Elbanna says there has been a groundswell of activity in this part of Surry Hills in the past 12 months and that he can't see it slowing anytime soon.

BresicWhitney director Shannon Whitney, who has been a resident in these parts since the late 1990s, says the arrival of "interesting and pioneering" restaurants, bars and cafes about five years ago catering to the creative industries triggered the current surge in interest. "What we're seeing now is the natural response from the **residential** sector, which typically comes after the popularity of a lifestyle," he says.

The boldest of all of the entrants is the Foveaux, an **apartment** block that will rise on the former Legion Cabs **site** opposite a Justin Hemmes-owned pub the Excelsior.

CBRE **Residential** Projects director Caroline Fagerlund expects to sell the bulk of the apartments at the launch in September and says that buyers are likely to be locals, including a strong gay contingent, and investors wanting a piece of the action.

Further down the hill, sales executive Ryan Alfoldi of Colliers International is selling East Central apartments on Elizabeth Street. It will be completed in November and only eight apartments remain for **sale**. Among the building's attractions is a seven-level void with a giant bamboo garden. The same **group** will build more apartments next door, called Botanik, which they will start selling in October. The City of Sydney Council has applications for a further two **residential** developments along Elizabeth Street, and Alfoldi predicts that the street will become increasingly attractive to retailers and restaurateurs.

New recreational facilities to open nearby include the pool, tennis and basketball courts at Prince Alfred **Park**, and cyclists will soon have a separated bike path along Campbell Street connecting Taylor Square to the city. Residents will also gain a new pedestrian link to Darling Harbour when the Goods Line walkway - which will connect to the Devonshire Street tunnel - opens next year.

But the new light rail line, which will cross Elizabeth Street at Devonshire Street, will be the biggest change to the suburb when it opens in 2019/2020.

While the construction period is going to cause frustration, the Domain **Group's** senior economist Dr Andrew Wilson says the infrastructure can only make the suburb - which experienced **property** price growth of 18.5 per cent in the past year - even more in-demand.

While this all points to a resurgence in lower Surry Hills, Wilson warns that government planners must match developers' enthusiasm with an equal amount of zeal to maintain its liveability and unique character.

ATTRACTIONS ON THE LOWER WEST SIDE

Get a culture fix at the Belvoir Street Theatre and The Old 505 Theatre, or step back in time at the Golden Age Cinema on Commonwealth Street, or the Hollywood **Hotel** on Foster Street.

Try the hot dogs at Brooklyn Social on Randle Street, and don't pass up a burger from Chur Burger on Albion Street. The foil-wrapped sandwiches at Malibu on Foster Street, are among the best in Sydney. Have a tippie at Tipple Bar on Chalmers Street, or Vini on Devonshire Street, 121BC on Holt Street, or Li'l Darlin on Elizabeth Street. Drink with the locals at the Strawberry Hills **Hotel**, the Shakespeare, the Royal Albert or the KB **Hotel**. For a Latin vibe, check out Bodega, El Loco, or Tio's.

'IT'S THE CENTRE OF INNER CITY LIVING'

CASE STUDY

Architect Joko Tandijono bought his top floor, one-bedroom **apartment** in the Icon building above the Evening Star **Hotel** six years ago.

Tandijono lived in Zetland previously and says he enjoyed watching lower Surry Hills emerge into a drinking and dining hotspot - especially the arrival of Melbourne's Movida restaurant just around the corner on Holt Street.

"There's a lot of places around for drinks and it's close to everything," he says. "It's five minutes' walk to Central and the Prince Alfred **Park** Pool and 15 minutes' walk to **Chinatown**. It's the centre of inner-city living."

Tandijono got a job in Paris two years ago and has rented the **apartment** for \$650 a week since. He's recently taken another position that will mean 10 more years in Europe, so he's decided that it's time to part with his Australian base.

"It's got two really huge balconies. One is open air because it's on the top floor, and it's got this really wonderful view of the district," he says. "The light in the house is really quite amazing. One of the balconies is south-west facing and the other one is east facing, so you get the morning light, then you also get part of the evening light. It's quite a big **apartment** for a one bedder at 80 square metres - and the layout is great because if you want to have a party you can have it in a really separate area."

It is going to auction on September 6 through agents BresicWhitney,

0430 030 287, with a guide of more than \$700,000.

What we're seeing now is the natural response from the **residential** sector, which typically comes after the popularity of a lifestyle. BresicWhitney director Shannon Whitney

COVER **PROPERTY**

SURRY HILLS, "THE FOVEAUX", 81 Foveaux Street

PRICE GUIDE: \$700,000+

The moment that lower Surry Hills entered the main game, will be remembered as when fashion boss Danny Avidan dropped a cool \$18 million on the Legion Cabs **site** on Foveaux Street to build an **apartment** block.

The 55-**apartment**, north-facing development gets under way in October and will be unlike anything that side of the suburb has seen before, says Caroline Fagerlund, director of CBRE **Residential**. The architect, Adam Haddow from SBJ, says he made a deliberate departure from the all-too-common industrial grunge style, and opted for a brighter, far more optimistic design. "The Foveaux is a concrete building that is strong and robust with crisp white accents and natural timber screens," he says. "It's a playful reflection on the eclectic fabric of the suburb."

Iain Halliday from design **firm** BKH has designed the Foveaux's interiors and his custom joinery units incorporate built-in banquettes finished with fabric upholstery, which will allow better light and sight lines from the kitchen through to the living room.

Fagerlund says residents will also love the timber floors throughout the apartments, the coloured, high-gloss ceilings and the north-facing balconies.

Residents will also be able to enjoy an enchanting rooftop communal garden with brilliant city views. The Foveaux apartments are due for completion in 2016. The display suite opens this weekend and the official launch is on September 13. Prices start at \$700,000 for a one-bedroom **apartment**, \$995,000 for two-bedders and \$1.5 million for three-bedders.

Inspect Display apartments, 65 Foveaux Street, 11am-5pm, seven days.

Agent CBRE **Residential**,

0414 430 094

More photos: see foveauxapartments.com.au

OR TRY THESE ...

"ASHLAR"

150 COMMONWEALTH STREET

\$600,000

Designed by SJB, Ashlar is a six-storey **apartment** block that will replace a nondescript distribution warehouse that's on the **site**. On offer are 25

one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments and a penthouse, with completion set for 2016. The Calacatta Viola honed marble benchtops in the kitchen and Carrara marble tiles in the bathroom are stylish highlights. Expect classic but not conservative - this is Surry Hills, after all.

Inspect display **apartment** by appointment: Lv 7, 219 Castlereagh St, Sydney Agent TGC **Residential** Projects, 0478 166 604

More photos www.ashlarsurryhills.com.au

138 DEVONSHIRE STREET

\$1.3 million+

Just around the corner from Holt Street restaurants, this tri-level terrace is mixed zone 10, **residential** and **commercial**. It has been updated with an open-plan kitchen that flows to a courtyard - a potential urban oasis. It has timber floorboards and exposed brick walls. There is a bedroom on every floor and three of the four have balconies.

Inspect Sat, 10am-10.30am; Wed, 5.30pm-6pm

Agent Ray White Surry Hills, 0438 332 088

Auction September 6 More photos domain.com.au

8/33 RESERVOIR STREET

\$750,000+

The warehouse-and-skyline view from this open plan, 60-square-metre loft style penthouse **apartment** is the perfect urban picture. The no-fuss floor plan puts all of the living spaces, the internal laundry and the big balcony on the lower floor while the bedroom and bathroom are in the loft. A storage cage is also provided. Strata \$1351 pq

Inspect Sat, 1.20pm-2pm; Thurs, 5.15pm-5.45pm

Agent First National Spencer & Servi, 0412 485 485

Auction August 30 More photos domain.com.au

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