

Doubling down on a Bay boom

With developments worth \$600m in the pipeline, the heart of Double Bay is set to beat again

◆ Kate Bastians

DDOUBLE Bay is about to be jump-started by \$600 million of development which will see 277 new apartments built on eight key sites in the suburb's heart.

While dozens of businesses are set to be made homeless by the building bonanza, most feel the influx of new residents will cement the suburb's resurgence.

Cross St will soon become a construction site and about 30 businesses have or will be displaced by the redevelopment of three neighbouring retail and commercial precincts into six storey mixed use developments.

TOGA will begin demolition in the next three months to transform the Hunters Arcade into a 13-unit development.

SJD Property Group's 30-unit redevelopment of 20-26 Cross St next door into 1788 Residences is not far behind.

The Chinese-backed developer recently bought neighbouring Bay Village for \$45 million and will soon lodge a development application to build about 21 apartments on the site, where the Frances Keevil Gallery has been located for nine years.

Frances Keevil said she wanted to stay in Double Bay but would have to compete for space with other displaced businesses.

"It's very unsettling for local businesses and from a personal point of view it is going to be very difficult," she said.

"But from an altruistic point of view, I think the development will be positive for Double Bay, which will become more like a European village.

"There will be short term pain for long term gain."

Down the road, a proposal has been submitted to redevelop Angela House on the corner of Bay St and Guilfoyle Ave into 39 units over seven storeys.

It is opposite Café Perons — one of the few businesses that has stood the test of time through many dark days, including the opening of Westfield Bondi Junction in 2004 and the resultant closure of Double Bay's only cinema.

Then came the closure of the Ritz Carlton, now the InterContinental, in 2007 and the GFC.

Perons owner Greg Kelly



Pictures: Darryl Aarons and John Appleyard

Greg Kelly and son Charlie outside Cafe Perons which has been operating for 36 years.

Address/site name/ developer	What's been built	Status
1 16-18 Cross St The Hunter TOGA	13 apartments (7X3 bed, 4X2 bed, 2X1 bed) 6 storeys	Construction starting by February 2018 with completion due by mid 2019
2 20-26 Cross St, 1788 Residences SJD Property	30 apartments (6X1 bed, 12X 2 bed, 11X 3 bed, 1X 4 bed) 6 storeys	Demolition starting by early 2018 and completion by early 2020
3 28-34 Cross St, Bay Village, SJD Property	21 apartments (mainly two and three bedders) 6 storeys	DA to be lodged in coming months
4 30-36 Bay St, Angela House, Anka	39 apartments (5X studios, 12X1 bed, 18X 2 bed, 4X 3 bed) 7 storeys	DA lodged in August. Under assessment.
5 292-296 New South Head Rd & 2-10 Bay St Loftex Property	55 apartments (mix and height to be determined)	DA to be submitted in coming months
6 374 & 376-382 New South Head Rd, Fivex	11 apartments (3X studio, 7X1 bed, 1X 2 bed) 6 storeys	Approved planning proposal to proceed to DA
7 384 New South Head Rd Former NAB Bank Berakio Design	8 apartments (5X1 bed, 3X 2 bed) 4 storeys	Demolition to start 2nd half 2018. Completion due mid 2019
8 Cross St carpark Council/Axdom, Built & Palace Cinemas	100 apartments (mix of 1, 2 & 3 bed), 10 screen cinema & 492 car spaces	DA to be submitted late 2017/ early 2018



Development sites — Angela House in Bay St (top) and 20-26 Cross St.

374-382 NSHR near the corner of Knox St into mixed use, six storey building.

Mr Berger said they were in fact boosting the amount of retail and commercial space while the intention was for the diverse mix of existing businesses to remain.

The eight sites being redeveloped all include a retail and/or commercial component.

Woollahra Mayor Peter Cavanagh said the council had a strategy in place to facilitate a wide range of shops, restaurants, cafes, commercial businesses and parking.

“This is an exciting time for Double Bay with a number of projects coming up which will help revitalise Sydney’s best bayside village,” he said.

A council spokeswoman said a DA for the cinema would be submitted by early next year.

“As part of the lighting strategy, we have installed new lights on Bay St along the route from the ferry wharf towards the shops, new bud lighting in trees along Knox St, upgraded the lighting surrounding the Cenotaph in Steyne Park and installed new uplights on a significant Morton Bay Fig tree near the waterfront,” she said.

The Marathon Rd staircase is next and discussions are underway with landowners to see if facade lighting can be installed on private properties.

The Double Bay Street Fair will be held on November 5 and the chamber will also host a Family Night Out early next year.

said the suburb had “waxed and waned” since they opened 36 years ago but felt there had been a “gradual but steady improvement”.

Like many businesses, he felt the redevelopment of the Cross St carpark into a cinema and 100 new apartments would help revitalise the precinct, as would Woollahra Council’s lighting and public domain upgrades.

The lockdown laws in Kings Cross have already helped revive the bay’s night-life.

But while Mr Kelly agreed Double Bay was on the edge of a resurgence, he didn’t hold back when outlining the myriad challenges ahead if the suburb wanted to return to its heyday of the 70s and 80s.

“We have been looking forward to a lot of things in Double Bay that seem to be taking a ridiculous amount of time,” he said.

“Take the street lighting for example — there’s been



Frances Keevil believes the bay will become like a European village.

committee after subcommittee after focus group — they spend more time and money talking about it than just putting the damn lights in.”

He called for the introduction of one-hour free parking on the north side of NSHR to help businesses who suffered a drop in trade when the Kiaora Lane development kickstarted the south side of the bay.

“It’s also really important

that the feel and nature of the village is retained and not overwhelmed with high rise, which would sound the death knell for Double Bay where sunlight is really important.”

Perons will one day be taken over by son Charlie, who represents the next generation of business owners. He has already harnessed cutting-edge marketing tools and social media to “take the

business to the next level” and draw a younger crowd.

CBRE senior director Ben Stewart, who has been handling the sales and marketing for several major residential projects, said that reflected the younger demographic moving into the area.

“There’s a real demand to live in the village due to its connectivity to the city, improved shopping and the n (Kiaora) precinct — it’s really coming of age,” he said.

“Double Bay is back.” Mr Stewart said there was a plan to redevelop the commercial/office suites on the corner of NSHR and Bay St into about 55 apartments.

Ray White’s Craig Pontey said: “It’s time for Double Bay to get with the program. “There’s a lot of developers picking over Double Bay looking for opportunities to develop sites. I think it will change the look of the suburb for the better, bring it into this century and create

more buzz and activity.”

Double Bay and Districts Business Chamber chair Katherine O’Regan was meeting with developers to see if their construction could be staggered to minimise the impact on traders.

She encouraged developers and the council to pursue one and two bedroom units rather than large luxury apartments.

“Big three bedroom apartments with two people living in them won’t drive the economy and social amenity as much as smaller apartments,” she said.

“I welcome an element of residential development but there really needs to be a good mix of retail and business — not just the amount but also the type.”

Fivex managing director Lesli Berger said they had made a conscious effort to ensure businesses were not being pushed out by their proposed redevelopment of