

## **Attachment A16**

**Heritage Assessment - 51-59 Roslyn  
Gardens, Rushcutters Bay - The Tor**

Name		The Tor	
Address	51–59 Roslyn Gardens, Elizabeth Bay	Lot number	Lot 2 DP 224773, Lots 1–120 SP 2130
Architect	Hugo Stossel & Associates	Construction date	1966
Builder	Parkes Developments		
Listings	Sydney Local Environmental Plan 2012: located within the Elizabeth and Rushcutters Bays Heritage Conservation Area (HCA) (C20). Noted as 'detracting' within the Sydney Development Control Plan 2012 building contribution map.		

## Historical overview

The Cadigal people of the Eora nation have lived in the Sydney area for thousands of years and have shaped its landscape and nurtured its plants and animals. Before the arrival of the European settlers the Potts Point area was known as Kurrajeen (or Curageen) and Yarrandabbi. Governor Lachlan Macquarie set aside land near Elizabeth Bay, Potts Point and Woolloomooloo as a 'model fishing village' for Aboriginal people in 1820. At this settlement, known as Elizabeth Town, several huts were built, a patch of land was cleared for a garden, and boats were provided for use by the Aboriginal people who lived there. John Palmer's estate at nearby Woolloomooloo Bay was also an important gathering place for local Aboriginal people, and was the location of a corroboree in 1831 attended by Bungaree's son, Young Bungaree.<sup>1</sup>

The subject site formed part of the original 54-acre property granted to Alexander Macleay, Colonial Secretary of New South Wales, by Crown grant in 1831. In 1839 Macleay constructed a stone mansion named Elizabeth Bay House on the property, as well as extensive stables, museums, and a large garden of interesting plants featuring specimen trees, an orchard and an orangery. Financial trouble forced Alexander Macleay to submit to the foreclosure of his mortgage to his son William Sharp Macleay in 1845. When William died in 1865, the property passed to his brother George. George arranged for the subdivision of the property and sold leaseholds of portions of the estate between 1865 and 1882.

51–59 Roslyn Gardens was formerly the site of three of a set of nine 2-storey terrace houses erected in the Federation era.

In November 1964 architects Hugo Stossel & Associates, on behalf of Parkes Developments Pty Ltd, lodged a successful building application to the City of Sydney to erect an 11-storey building comprising 70 flats with ground floor parking, with an estimated cost of £160,000. The Council approved the plans in February the following year.

In August 1965, Parkes Developments Pty Ltd advertised the sale at pre-development prices of strata title home units in 'The Tor', an 'imposing 10-storey building now under construction' comprising one bedroom and bachelor flats.<sup>2</sup> The Tor was completed by February 1966.

### Hugo Stossel & Associates

Hugo Stossel (1905–2002) was born in Hungary, moving when young with his family to the Hungarian capital, Budapest. From 1928 to 1932 he studied architecture at the Technische Hochschule in Vienna, graduating with a diploma of Engineering in Architecture. From 1933 to 1938 Stossel worked as an architect in Bucharest, designing theatre interiors, apartment blocks and commercial buildings. Stossel left Europe on the eve of World War II, arriving in Sydney in 1939.

During the war Stossel continued to design, completing a number of buildings in Sydney in the 1940s. Once he was naturalised as an Australian citizen in 1948, he registered as an architect, aged 43.

<sup>1</sup> City of Sydney 2013, 'Aboriginal People and Place'.

<sup>2</sup> *Sydney Morning Herald*, 16 December 1965, p 12.

## Historical overview

His early projects included a house in Warrawee for Polish steel manufacturer and developer Moses Eisner (1947) and a house for renowned Viennese furniture-maker Paul Kafka in Lindfield (1948), both of which were published in *Australian House and Garden*. Stossel's focus later moved to apartment design, beginning with the innovative, steel-framed St Ursula building in Elizabeth Bay, an 'ultra-modern' home-unit block with a curved wall of floor to ceiling steel-framed windows.

He later undertook significant commissions for the new development company Civil & Civic (later Lendlease), including Broadwaters (1958) in Darling Point. These were followed by numerous other apartment and commercial developments completed over the next decade, with seven in the Elizabeth Bay area alone. The 20-storey Eastbourne Tower (1968), Darling Point, cemented the position of Hugo Stossel & Associates as one of the major contributors to Sydney's burgeoning apartment scene.

In 1953 Eugene Goossens, conductor of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, commissioned Stossel to design a speculative opera house on a site at Wynyard. The design was published on the front page of *The Sydney Morning Herald* on 31 March 1954. When the NSW Government endorsed a future opera house and designated Bennelong Point as its location, Stossel was one of many local and international architects to make a submission to the 1957 architectural competition.

Stossel formed Hugo Stossel & Associates and was joined by fellow Hungarian George Buda, who became a partner in 1960. The firm designed numerous high-rise buildings in the inner city of Sydney including the 22-storey Wynyard Travelodge (1969) and the Sydney Police Headquarters in College Street and the BMA Tower in Chatswood (1970–1972), which featured an external lift shaft. By 1970 Stossel retained only a remote involvement in the firm, which continued under Buda's and the other partner's leadership. In his later years Stossel lived in Vienna, as well as Italy and England. He died at Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, in February 2002, aged 96.

### **Parkes Developments Pty Ltd**

Parkes Developments was established by Paul Strasser in the late 1950s. Strasser was born in Budapest, Hungary, where he studied law and practised as a commercial lawyer. Hungary allied with Germany during World War II and was invaded by the Soviet Union in 1943; Strasser was deported as a forced labourer by the Soviets.

After the war, Strasser attempted to resume his legal career in Budapest but migrated to Australia in 1948 with his wife and son. In Sydney Strasser abandoned the law, starting various businesses including, notably, Parkes Developments Pty Ltd. Parkes built many apartments, aimed at different levels of the market. At the lower end was the suburb of Eastlakes, where new streets of low-rise walk-ups were built from 1961 onwards on a disused racecourse site.

However, Parkes also left a legacy of quality apartments, a significant number designed by Hugo Stossel.

By 1970 Parkes was one of Australia's largest private companies, with the largest Sydney land holdings. Strasser's 1973 knighthood provoked controversy regarding his association with the NSW government of Robert Askin; Strasser was described as one of the 'Askin knights' or the 'Hungarian mafia'. Parkes Developments collapsed into liquidation in 1977, the largest corporate victim of the 1970s property crash.

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## Description

GML undertook a site inspection of The Tor in September 2024 that was limited to common areas internally and externally. No individual apartments were inspected. The physical assessment is based on that and other publicly available documentation of the site.

### **Setting and context**

The Tor is located on the western side of Roslyn Gardens. The land slopes upwards gently to the north along Roslyn Gardens and downwards to Rushcutters Bay Park at the northeast.

The western side of the site backs into a vertical sandstone cliff face with mature fig trees along the rock face.

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## Description

The building is located within the Elizabeth and Rushcutters Bays HCA. The HCA within the immediate vicinity of the site is characterised by Victorian terraces of a small scale, interwar flat buildings and multistorey postwar and contemporary apartments that are comparable in design and scale to The Tor. The Tor is set back from the street and fronted by garages with a prominent streetscape presence within the HCA due to its scale.

### Physical description

The Tor is an 11-storey flat building with garages at the ground floor and studio or one-bedroom flats to the upper 10 storeys, originally comprising a total of 70 units. The building form is largely rectangular with small projecting window bays to the side elevations. It is constructed of a reinforced concrete frame and slab, and blond face brickwork external walls and spandrels. The concrete frame to the corners and the floor slab is exposed. The bay window units run vertically up the side elevations and consist of aluminium-framed windows with a solid spandrel panel below. The ground level is lined with lock-up garages with steel roller or tilt up doors.

The eastern (front), northern and southern elevations are largely consistent in their presentation. The external façades comprise a consistent fenestration pattern.

The main window units are floor-to-ceiling in height with sliding windows to the top and fixed windows to the bottom. These were originally timber framed, and the original configurations remain on the western elevation to the stair well. In all other locations the main window units have been replaced by aluminium frames. Each has been fitted with an external narrow glass balustrade to comply with current standards. The smaller windows, typically to kitchen areas, remain timber and have fixed windows to the top and awning windows below, with blond face brickwork spandrels and brickwork sills.

The western elevation features an external open reinforced concrete stairwell with a simple metal balustrade. The stair connects to a concrete bridge linking to Amos Lane to the west at the seventh floor of the apartment building.

The roof is sealed with bituminous membrane and houses a lift room and incinerator flue of blond face brickwork with aluminium louvred windows.

The entrance lobby is located at the mid-point of the northern elevation and is marked by a cantilevered reinforced concrete hood. The lobby is finished in polished terrazzo with recessed mirror and bronze lighting features that appear original. An internal stair is located adjacent, on the western side of the building.

The building is planned with seven units (five studios and two single-bedroom units) distributed among each of the 10 residential floors. It is unknown whether any of the units have been combined internally. The corridors are double sided with the studios distributed to the north and south and the single-bedroom units at the eastern end, with filtered views to Rushcutters Bay and Sydney Harbour beyond.

Although the interiors of the units were not inspected, original plans show that the living rooms extend from the corridor to the perimeter of the floor plate and have floor-to-ceiling windows to maximise views, lighting and ventilation. The bathroom and kitchens are located along the external elevations.

### Landscaping

There is minimal landscaping on the site. The open space around the building consists of hard paved areas used for carparking. The sandstone cliff face at the western boundary has a fig tree growing on it and is surrounded by low-lying plantings.

### Modifications/integrity

Council records from 2004 do not indicate any major works or development applications apart from minor additions in 2008 for new boom gates to the carpark.

Bay windows and large window elements have been replaced with new aluminium-framed units.

### Condition

The building appears to be in reasonable condition.

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## Comparative analysis

This section compares the subject building with other works designed by Hugo Stossel, and apartment buildings in the Elizabeth Bay area of the same period, in order to determine whether the subject site has rarity and/or representative value.

The Tor features design elements including reinforced concrete frame and slab construction, face brickwork, and consistent presentation of the façades and fenestration pattern that can be seen as typical of apartment buildings of its period. The planning has been designed to provide compact, functional apartments with light and ventilation, but does not demonstrate any particular innovation.

Dating from 1966, The Tor came late in Hugo Stossel's career and at a time when the firm Hugo Stossel & Associates was designing multiple apartment buildings in the Elizabeth Bay and Potts Point area. In its rectangular tower form The Tor is comparable with the firm's other similar designs from this period including The Chimes, Potts Point (1963), and Denison, Potts Point (1965).

Other designs of this period, such as Macleay Gardens in Potts Point (1966), Bayview in Elizabeth Bay (1966), and Eastbourne Tower in Darling Point (1968–1970), have T-shape or Y-shape plans and more modulated façades with projecting slabs providing shade to large window openings.

The Tor demonstrates very little façade modulation or sun shading and hence provides less amenity to its units. Denison is also similarly unmodulated, but in a smaller built form, while The Chimes utilises projecting downturn slabs and vertical fins to provide a highly modulated façade treatment. Although The Tor utilises bay window elements not seen in other Hugo Stossel & Associates projects, it can be seen as an unexceptional example of the firm's work in this period.

The Tor is not well integrated with its site. The requirement for provision of carparking has meant all landscaping is given over to parking. This detracts from its context. In comparison, the recessed entrance areas of Macleay Gardens and Bayview create a more dramatic streetscape presence than seen at The Tor. While many of the comparable buildings of this period are also set above a podium of carparking (for example, Eastbourne Tower) the entry sequence of The Tor is less resolved. The external stair on the rear elevation is a sculptural element that makes a dramatic statement but is not seen as exceptional.

The Tor can be seen as a representative example of the work of Hugo Stossel & Associates in this period but is not considered to be of high aesthetic, creative or technical achievement in its own right.

## Comparative analysis

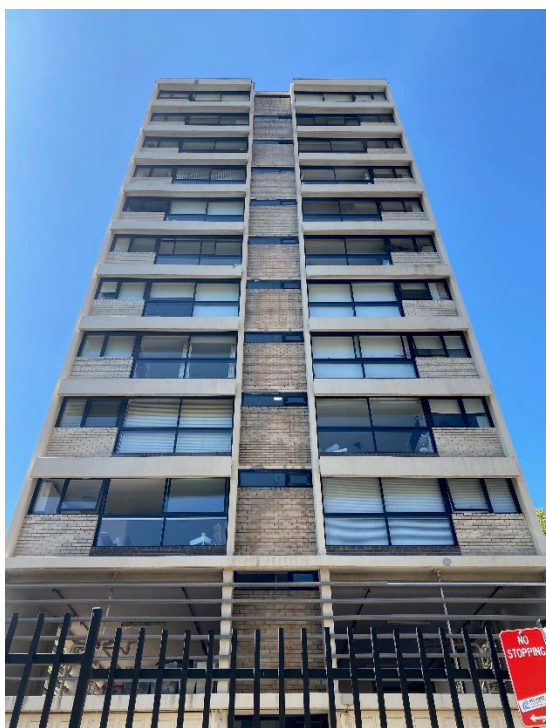


Figure 1 The Chimes on Macleay Street, Potts Point (1963), by Hugo Stossel & Associates, with its expressed structure and sun shading, is a more refined design than The Tor. (Source: GML)



Figure 2 Denison on Wylde Street, Potts Point (1965), by Hugo Stossel & Associates, is a similar rectangular tower-form building with studio apartments off a central corridor. (Source: GML)

## Assessment of significance

Criterion A (Historic significance)

The Tor is an example of a modern mid-rise residential flat building that reflects the changing development, built environment and demographic of the Potts Point and Elizabeth Bay areas through the mid-twentieth century along with others of its type in the area. However, independently, the building is not a key example of these changes.

The Tor does not have cultural significance at a local or state level under this criterion.

Criterion B (Historical association)

The Tor is a representative example of the work of architect Hugo Stossel, whose firm Hugo Stossel & Associates designed many residential apartment buildings in the Elizabeth Bay and Potts Point area. Hugo Stossel can be seen to have made a notable contribution to the development of Sydney's built environment.

However, Stossel was prolific in this period and The Tor is not considered to have strong, unusual or extraordinary associations with the architect for this reason.

The Tor does not have cultural significance at a local or state level under this criterion.

Criterion C (Aesthetic/creative/technical achievement)

The Tor features common design elements including reinforced concrete frame and slab construction, face brickwork, and consistent presentation of the façades and fenestration pattern. The planning has been designed to provide compact, functional

## Assessment of significance

apartments with light and ventilation. These are typical characteristics of modern residential flat buildings of this period, and The Tor does not display innovation or creative/technical achievement.

The Tor does not have cultural significance at a local or state level under this criterion.

### Criterion D (Social, cultural and spiritual significance)

The Tor is not known to have special associations with a particular group or to have contemporary esteem within the local community beyond housing amenity.

The Tor does not have cultural significance at a local or state level under this criterion.

### Criterion E (Research potential)

The Tor is not considered to have the potential to yield significant further or new information related to the work of Hugo Stossel & Associates not available elsewhere.

The Tor does not have cultural significance at a local or state level under this criterion.

### Criterion F (Rare)

The Tor is not considered a rare example of its type in Sydney or a rare example of the work of Hugo Stossel & Associates, who were prolific in this period.

The Tor does not have cultural significance at a local or state level under this criterion.

### Criterion G (Representative)

The Tor is not considered to have representative significance as an example of the work of architectural firm Hugo Stossel & Associates. Other buildings within the local area are considered better able to demonstrate the key characteristics of the firm's work.

The Tor displays typical elements of residential flat buildings and is not considered to be important in demonstrating this building type in this period.

The Tor does not have cultural significance at a local or state level under this criterion.

## Statement of significance

The Tor is not considered to have heritage significance. It is seen as a representative example of the work of Hugo Stossel & Associates in this period, of which a number of other examples exist in the local area. The Tor is not considered to demonstrate aesthetic significance through technical or creative achievement.

## Recommendations

The Tor **does not meet** the threshold for local heritage significance and is **not recommended** for heritage listing on the Sydney Local Environmental Plan.

## Information sources

Type	Author	Title	Year	Repository
Site inspection (external)	GML		2024	GML

Information sources				
Written	City Building Surveyor's Department	Building Application File Year 1964 No. 2859 51/59 Roslyn Garden, Elizabeth Bay	1964	City of Sydney Archives
Written	<i>Sydney Morning Herald</i>	Home Units Elizabeth Bay	21 Aug 1965	Sydney Morning Herald Archives 1955-1995
Archive	Hugo Stossel archive	<a href="https://mhns.w.au/whats-on/exhibitions/hugo-stossel-emigre-architect/">https://mhns.w.au/whats-on/exhibitions/hugo-stossel-emigre-architect/</a>		MHNSW



Image caption	Sale advertisement for The Tor.				
Image year	1965	Image by	<i>Sydney Morning Herald</i>	Image copyright holder	Fairfax Corporation ( <i>Sydney Morning Herald</i> )

12 The S.M.H. Women's Sect., Thursday, Dec. 16, 1965

## THE **TOR**

- 70 smart units at Elizabeth Bay.
- Your own seventh floor bridge leads direct to Macleay St.
- From £4200.

This up-to-the-minute 10-storey block is right on the doorstep of Australia's most cosmopolitan area. An automatic lift speeds you to the seventh floor bridge leading to Macleay Street. Excellent panoramic views . . . a few units with harbour views still available. Each unit self-contained, with lounge-bedroom, or separate bedroom and lounge, big kitchen and polished wood servery. Luxury bathroom with full-size bath. Own lock-up garage.



STRATA TITLE



Meet Representative at 51 Roslyn Gardens, Elizabeth Bay.  
OPEN FOR INSPECTION 7 DAYS A WEEK.

**"THE TOR" SALES OFFICE. PHONE 35-4858 or 28-0931**  
**AFTER HOURS, 92-5514, 35-1035**

PARKES DEVELOPMENTS PTY. LTD.

147<sup>a</sup> KING ST.,  
SYDNEY

Image caption	Ground floor and first floor plan.				
Image year	1964	Image by	Hugh Stossel	Image copyright holder	In copyright

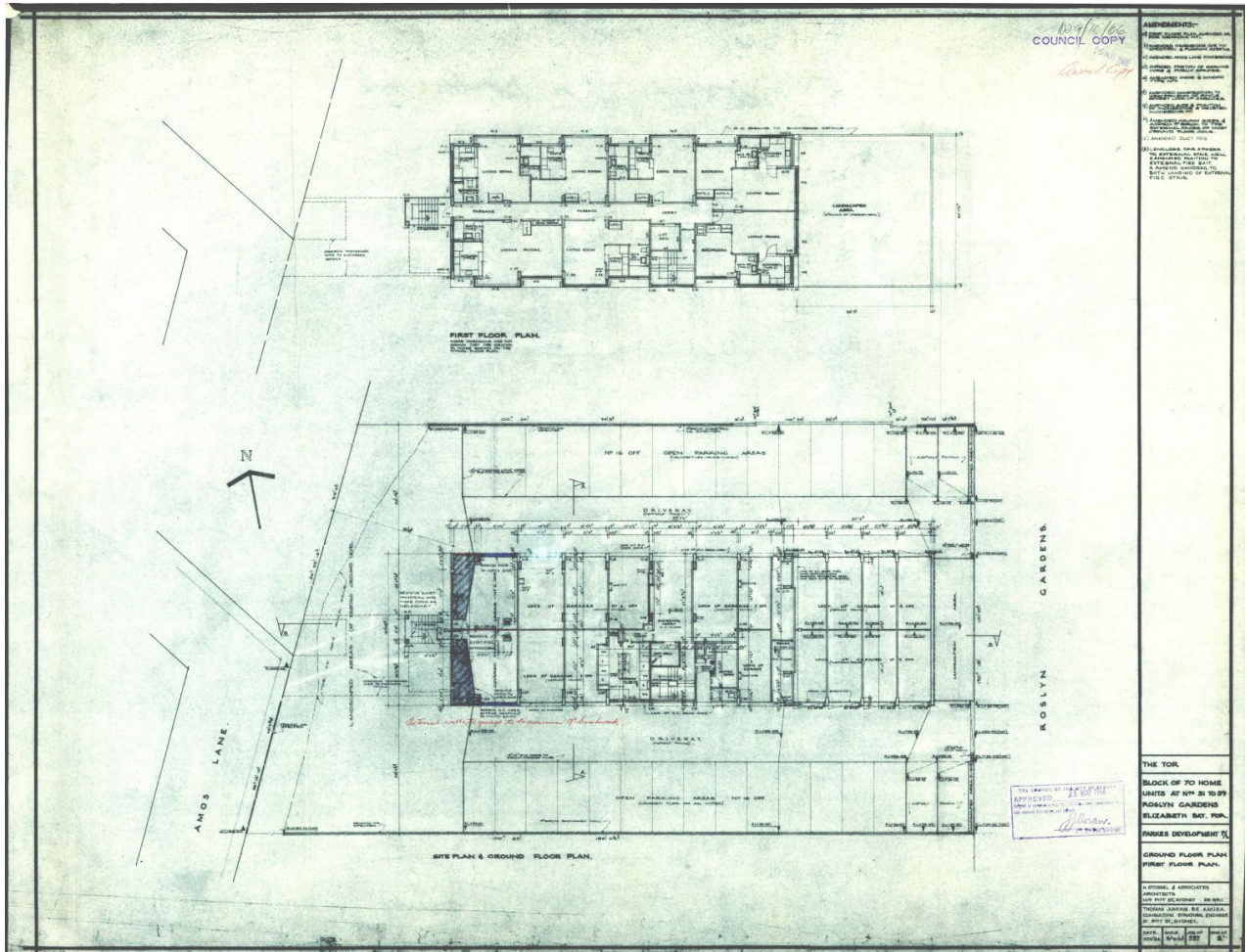


Image caption	Detail of typical floor plan.				
Image year	1964	Image by	Hugh Stossel	Image copyright holder	In copyright

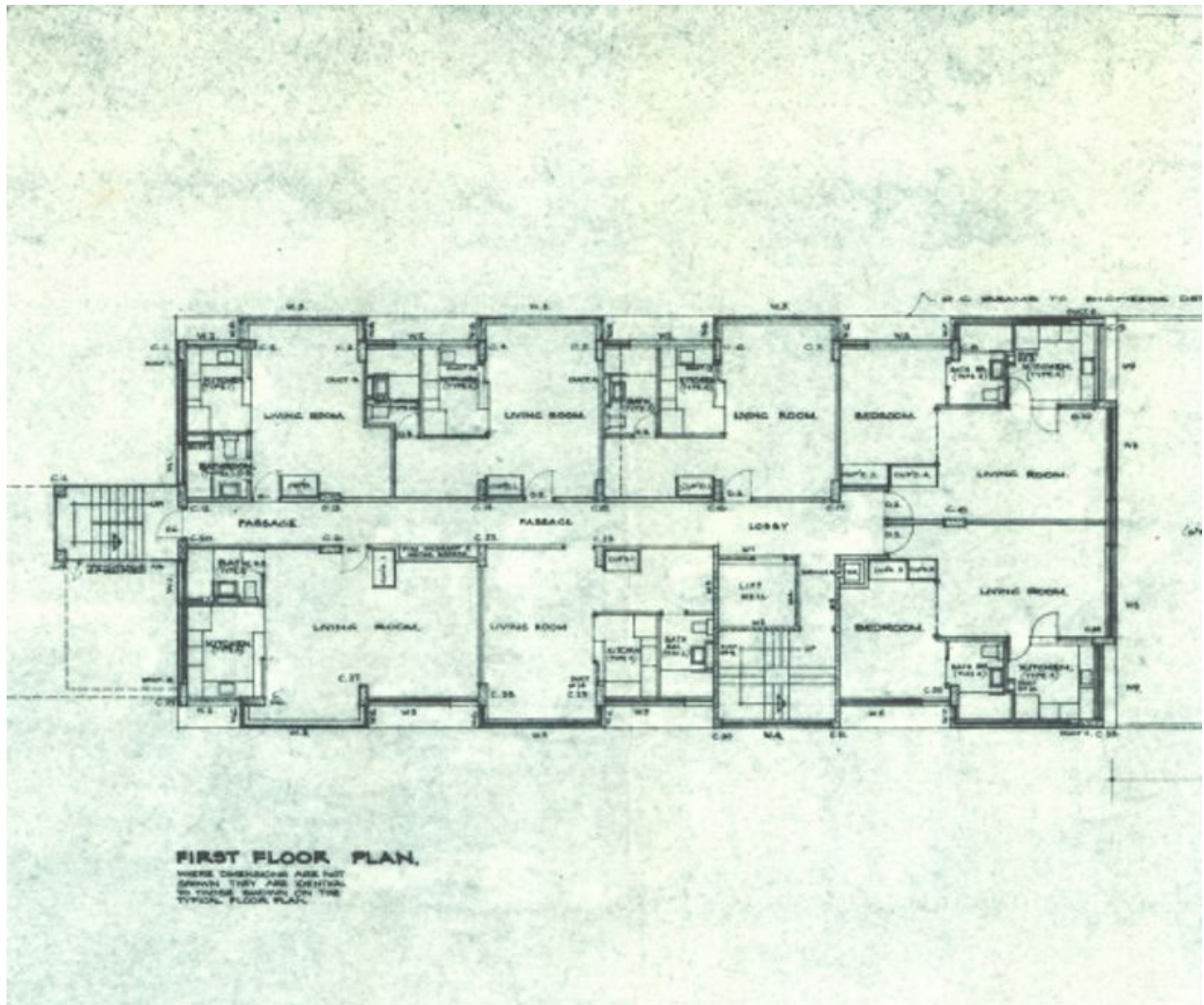
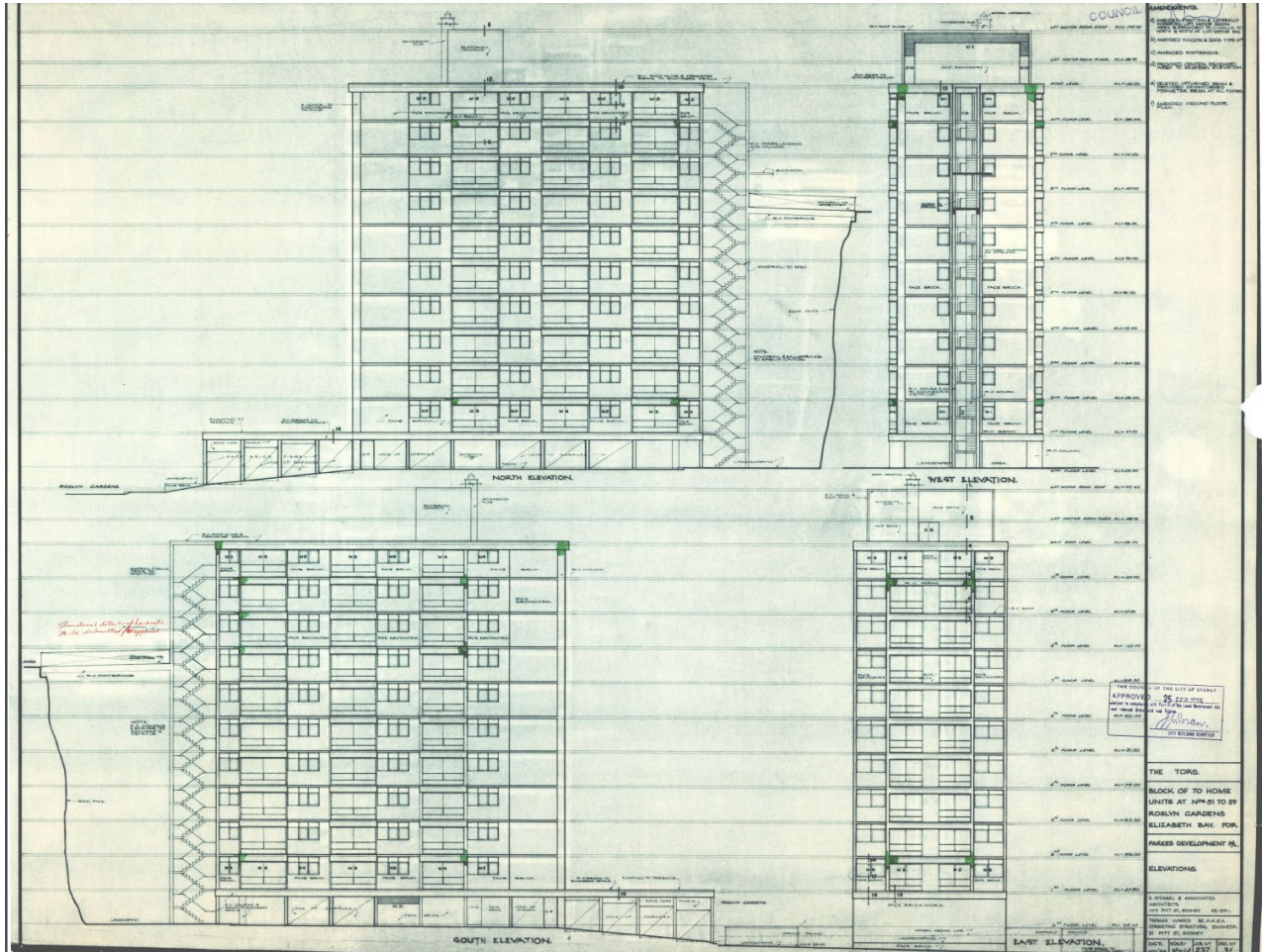


Image caption	Elevations.				
Image year	1964	Image by	Hugh Stossel	Image copyright holder	In copyright



<b>Image caption</b>	The Tor shortly after completion, viewed from Roslyn Gardens.				
<b>Image year</b>	c1965	<b>Image by</b>	Max Dupain and Associates	<b>Image copyright holder</b>	Stossel estate



<b>Image caption</b>	The Tor shortly after completion, viewed from the side elevation.				
<b>Image year</b>	c1965	<b>Image by</b>	Max Dupain and Associates	<b>Image copyright holder</b>	Stossel estate



<b>Image caption</b>	Main (eastern) and northern elevation.				
<b>Image year</b>	2024	<b>Image by</b>	GML Heritage	<b>Image copyright holder</b>	GML Heritage



Image caption	Southern and western elevation.				
Image year	2024	Image by	GML Heritage	Image copyright holder	GML Heritage





<b>Image caption</b>	View of the footbridge along the western elevation.				
<b>Image year</b>	2024	<b>Image by</b>	GML Heritage	<b>Image copyright holder</b>	GML Heritage



<b>Image caption</b>	View of the lobby.				
<b>Image year</b>	2024	<b>Image by</b>	GML Heritage	<b>Image copyright holder</b>	GML Heritage

