

# **APPENDIX E**

## **HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT - URBIS**



# Heritage Impact Statement

505-523 George Street, Sydney

September 2014



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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Executive Summary</b> .....	<b>i</b>
1.1 Background .....	2
1.2 Site Location .....	2
1.3 Methodology .....	3
1.4 Author Identification .....	4
1.5 The Proposal .....	4
<b>2 Site Description</b> .....	<b>5</b>
2.1 The Subject Site .....	5
2.2 Streetscape and Heritage Items in the Vicinity .....	7
<b>3 History</b> .....	<b>10</b>
3.1 Site History .....	10
3.1.1 Early Site History .....	10
3.1.2 Meet Me At 'The Troc' .....	14
3.1.3 The Hoyts Cinema Complex.....	16
<b>4 Significance</b> .....	<b>19</b>
4.1 What is Heritage Significance? .....	19
4.2 Significance Assessment.....	19
4.3 Statement of Significance .....	21
<b>5 Impact Assessment</b> .....	<b>22</b>
5.1 Heritage Listings .....	22
5.2 Statutory Controls .....	23
5.2.1 Sydney Local Environmental Plan 2012.....	23
5.2.2 Sydney Development Control Plan 2012 .....	24
5.3 Heritage Office Guidelines.....	26
<b>6 Conclusion and Recommendations</b> .....	<b>28</b>
<b>7 Bibliography and References</b> .....	<b>29</b>
7.1 Bibliography.....	29
7.2 References .....	29
<b>Appendix A View Analysis</b> .....	<b>31</b>

### FIGURES:

Figure 1 – Location of the subject site .....	2
Figure 2 – Aerial view of the subject site .....	3
Figure 3 – George Street elevation indicating the extent of the proposed site.....	4
Figure 4 – The subject Event cinema site at 505 George Street .....	5
Figure 5 – The subject site – the George Street entry .....	6
Figure 6 – The subject Event cinema site at 505 Goerge Street .....	6
Figure 7 – Streetscape views and Heritage items in the vicinity .....	8
Figure 8 – Plan of George street with the Meriton and Lumiere towers .....	9
Figure 9 – 19 <sup>th</sup> century survey, map and site PLANS - 1833 survey plan.....	10
Figure 10 – 19 <sup>th</sup> century survey, map and site plans - 1844 plan of Sydney.....	11
Figure 11 – 19 <sup>th</sup> century survey, map and site plans – 1855-1865 plan of Sydney.....	12
Figure 12 – 19 <sup>th</sup> century survey, map and site plans - 1880 plan of Sydney.....	12
Figure 13 – 19 <sup>th</sup> century survey, map and site plans - 1887 plan of Sydney.....	13
Figure 14 – Historic views of George and Kent Streets .....	13



Figure 15 – Views of The Trocadero .....	14
Figure 16 – Fire Underwriters Plan with the approximate site boundary indicated .....	15
Figure 17 – 1954 view of George Street, with the Trocadero at right .....	16
Figure 18 – Views of the Hoyts Cinema 1976 .....	17
Figure 19 – The former Hoyts Ground floor plan 0 .....	18
Figure 20 – Late 20 <sup>th</sup> century views of the site prior to façade modifications and consolidation of the cinema complex.....	18
Figure 21 – Heritage Map showing the site (indicated) and items in the vicinity .....	22

## PICTURES:

Picture 1 – Location of the subject site.....	2
Picture 2 – Aerial view of the subject site with the approximate site boundary indicated .....	3
Picture 3 – View northwest to the subject site at 505-523 George Street. The cinema tenancy extends to the neighbouring property at 525 George St, which is approximately demarcated by the lower street awning (Approximate site boundary indicated).....	5
Picture 4 – View south along George Street to the cinema entry .....	6
Picture 5 – View of the George Street entry showing the cinema lobby and mall with retail outlets .....	6
Picture 6 – View south to the subject site at 505-523 George Street. The cinema tenancy extends to the neighbouring property at 525 George St although this does not form part of this proposal.....	6
Picture 7 – The vehicle entry (loading Dock) and fire stair egress .....	7
Picture 8 – The Kent Street frontage of the building known as 525 George Street which forms part of the subject complex but not part of the proposed redevelopment. ....	7
Picture 9 – The Albion Hotel – the Former ‘Vine House’ - 531–535 George Street - Item #1795. the Meriton residential tower is visible behind.....	8
Picture 10 – View of the heritage listed former warehouse group within the heritage listed Albion Place (#1658 and #1659) to the south of the site.....	8
Picture 11 – The Former warehouse façade - 533–539 Kent Street - Item #1836 .....	8
Picture 12 – The state heritage listed former Judge’s House, opposite the site on the western side of Kent Street Item #1835.....	8
Picture 13 – The Former Plaza Theatre building opposite the site on George Street (#1800) .....	9
Picture 14 – The former Bank of NSW on the corner of George and Bathurst Streets (Item #1794. the Lumiere tower is visible behind. ....	9
Picture 15 – 1833 survey plan. the subject site would have been primarily within lot 14.....	10
Picture 16 – 1844 map of Sydney showing development along the George Street frontage of the subject site (Kent Street is shown as vacant). St Andrews Cathedral and the former burial ground (present day Town Hall) are shown to the north. ....	11
Picture 17 – 1855-1865 survey (part Plan only) showing the block bound by George, BATHURST, Kent and Liverpool Streets. Numerous brick and stone structures are shown across the subject site. ....	12
Picture 18 – 1880 plan of the site showing 1-2 storey development on Kent Street (likely dwellings) with a timber yard and stores in the centre of the site. Development along George Street is 2-3 storey and predominantly commercial .....	12
Picture 19 – 1887 plan showing similar to the 1880 plan above, but indicating the redevelopment along Kent Street (for stores). ....	13
Picture 20 – View south along George street from the Bathurst Street intersection (undated).....	13
Picture 21 – The newly opened Trocadero on the occasion of the Radio station 2CH's Children's Christmas party, 22/12/1936 .....	14
Picture 22 – Fire underwriters plan of the site showing the newly built Trocadero and stores fronting Kent Street. the (now demolished) Regent theatre is shown adjacent (present Lumiere site). ....	15
Picture 23 – 1954 view south along George Street showing the tram, with the Trocadero Dance hall (503-523 George St) shown on the subject site (at right) and the Plaza Theatre opposite (600-612 George St). ....	16
Picture 24 – View northwest along George Street to the cinema .....	17
Picture 25 – View southwest along George Street to the theatre complex and showing the adjacent Paramount pictures .....	17
Picture 26 – Hoyts Cinema Centre, Front of House foyer, George Street, Sydney, 26 December 1976 (prior to the gala opening) .....	17
Picture 27 – Hoyts Cinema Centre, Front of House foyer and mural.....	17
Picture 28 – Sir Harry’s Bar on the ground floor at the rear.....	17

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Picture 29 – View of the stage delicatessen on the ground floor at the rear .....	17
Picture 30 – Original architects' plan of ground floor with entry from George Street at left.....	18
Picture 31 – George Street's Greater Union and Hoyts cinemas, 1992.....	18
Picture 32 – 1996 View south from the SE corner of Bathurst & George Streets showing the entrance to the Hoyts & Greater Union Cinema Complexes at 505-523 George Street.....	18

## TABLES:

Table 1 – Relevant LEP Clauses.....	23
Table 2 – Development Control Plan.....	24
Table 3 – Relevant Questions .....	26





# Executive Summary

The following Heritage Impact Statement (HIS) was prepared to assess the heritage impacts of the proposed increase in the permissible height and the potential tower development at 505 -523 George Street, Sydney.

Urbis has been engaged by Mirvac in conjunction with Coombes Property Group to prepare the following HIS. Mirvac and Coombes Property Group are lodging a Planning Proposal for an increase in the permitted height limit from 150m to 260m. The site currently houses the 6 storey Events cinema complex and is proposed to be redeveloped with a retail podium and multistorey residential tower.

The subject cinema complex has been assessed and is not considered to meet the threshold for heritage listing. The site does not include any heritage items as listed under the Sydney Local Environment Plan (SLEP2012) however is in the vicinity of numerous heritage items as outlined in section 5.1 of this report.

This heritage impact statement (HIS) is required to consider the proposal in relation to potential impacts to heritage items in the vicinity. The subject proposal has been assessed in relation to the relevant controls and provisions contained within the Sydney Local Environmental Plan 2012 and the Sydney Development Control Plan 2012.

It is considered that the proposal will have no further impact on the heritage items in the vicinity as the streetscape context is already considerably varied and incorporates high-rise development. The proposal has no further impact on the extant curtilage of the items in the vicinity and does not impact on any identified significant views.

The proposed height adjustment to 260m is supported. Although exceeding permissible heights, the single tower is proposed to mitigate potential amenity impacts associated with a more traditional dual tower development. It is considered that the additional height will have no further impact on the heritage items which are located within an area of multistorey development. The retention of a consistent streetscape podium further mitigates impacts and presents a more relatable scale for the heritage items.

The proposal is recommended to the City of Sydney for approval subject to the following recommendation:

- It is noted that the subject proposal is indicative only and the final design and outcome will be subject to the stage 2 DA and competitive design processes. Stage 2 design development proposals should therefore be subject to further heritage impact assessment.



## 1.1 BACKGROUND

Urbis has been engaged by Mirvac in conjunction with Coombes Property Group to prepare the following Heritage Impact Statement.

Mirvac and Coombes Property Group (the Client) are lodging a Planning Proposal to increase the permissible height limit from 150m to 260m for a proposed future redevelopment of 505-523 George Street, Sydney. The site currently houses the 6 storey Events cinema complex and is proposed to be redeveloped with a retail podium and multistorey residential tower.

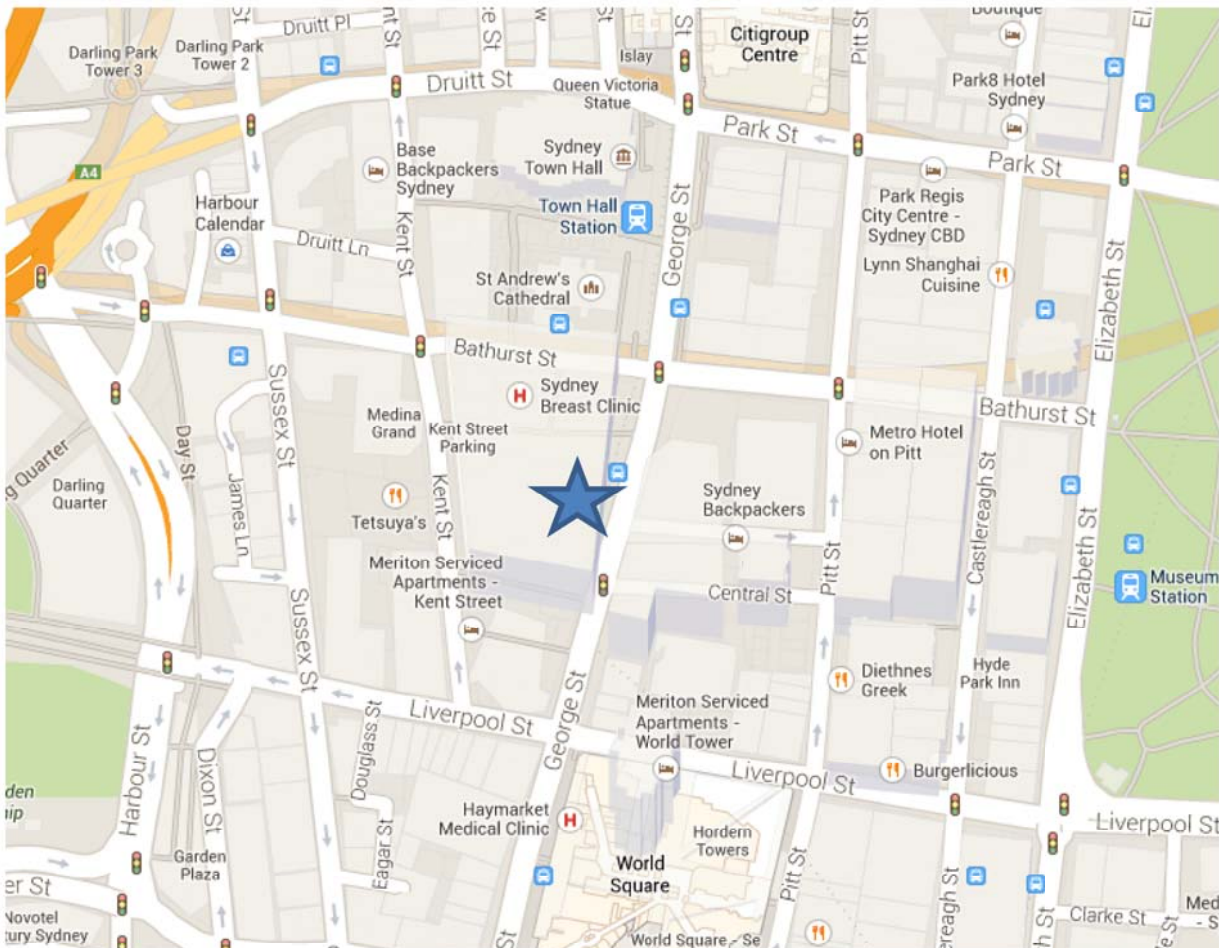
The site does not include any heritage items as listed under the Sydney Local Environment Plan (SLEP2012) however is in the vicinity of numerous heritage items as outlined in section 5.1 of this report.

This heritage impact statement (HIS) is required to consider the proposal in relation to potential impacts to heritage items in the vicinity.

## 1.2 SITE LOCATION

The site is located at 505-523 George Street, Sydney (refer Figure 1) on the western side of George Street, within the block bound by George, Bathurst, Kent and Liverpool Streets. The site has a rear frontage to Kent Street to the west. Located in the central precinct of the city, 505 George Street sits amongst a mix of retail, commercial and residential developments.

FIGURE 1 – LOCATION OF THE SUBJECT SITE



PICTURE 1 – LOCATION OF THE SUBJECT SITE

SOURCE: GOOGLE MAPS 2014



FIGURE 2 – AERIAL VIEW OF THE SUBJECT SITE



PICTURE 2 – AERIAL VIEW OF THE SUBJECT SITE WITH THE APPROXIMATE SITE BOUNDARY INDICATED  
SOURCE: GOOGLE MAPS 2014

Located in the central precinct of the city, 505 George Street sits amongst a mix of retail, commercial and residential developments. With the recent addition of the Lumiere apartments to the north, the Meriton serviced apartments to the south, and the proposed Greenland Centre to the east on Bathurst Street, 505 George St has the potential to add to this vernacular and enhance the local precinct's urban and social character.

### 1.3 METHODOLOGY

This Heritage Impact Statement has been prepared in accordance with the NSW Heritage Manual 'Statements of Heritage Impact' (2002) and 'Assessing Heritage Significance' (2001) guidelines. The philosophy and process adopted is that guided by the *Australia ICOMOS Burra Charter* 2013.

The subject proposal has been assessed in relation to the relevant controls and provisions contained within the Sydney Local Environmental Plan 2012 and the Sydney Development Control Plan 2012.



## 1.4 AUTHOR IDENTIFICATION

The following report has been prepared by Fiona Binns (Senior Heritage Consultant). Stephen Davies (Director) has reviewed and endorsed its content.

Unless otherwise stated, all drawings, illustrations and photographs are the work of Urbis.

## 1.5 THE PROPOSAL

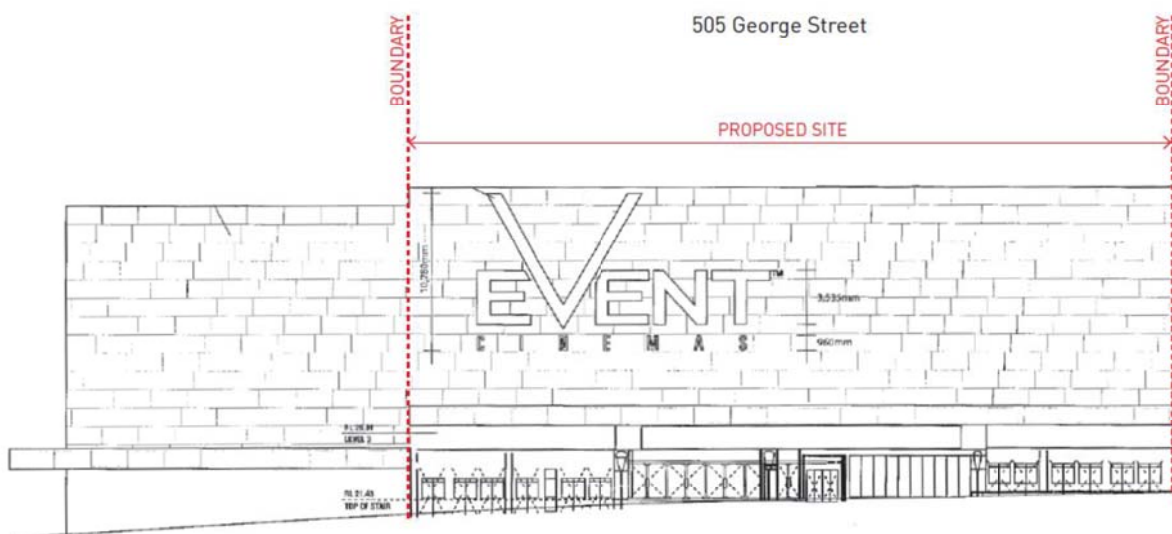
Proposed works include:

- Demolition of the cinema complex known as 505-523 George Street and construction of a retail podium and multistorey residential tower, with a single consolidated tall tower, with its volume set back towards the Kent St portion of the site. The proposal includes a height adjustment to 260m in keeping with other neighbouring high rise developments such as 115 Bathurst St (Greenland), and World Square Tower. The envelope proposal has been developed in order to maximise flexibility and encourage innovation during the competitive design process and stage 2 DA. It also takes into consideration existing surrounding amenity and attempts to improve the potential development outcome that would occur under current applicable controls. The proposed podium will reinforce existing alignments and strengthen the public domain by providing a permeable facade to encourage maximum social interaction and streetscape activation to both the George and Kent Street frontages.

This report was written with reference to *505-523 George Street, Sydney, Planning Proposal May 2014\_V1* prepared by Mirvac, CPG and Crone Partners as well as Massing Envelope drawings and view analysis prepared by Crone Partners. It is noted that the indicative scheme aims to prove that a tower can fit within the proposed massing envelope and comply with the relevant LEP / DCP controls and SEPP 65 guidelines. It is indicative only and the final design and outcome will be subject to the stage 2 DA and competitive design processes.

505 George St is currently occupied by a cinema operator with its main entrance and frontage off George St. It is noted that the cinema tenancy extends to the neighbouring property at 525 George St, however this site is on a separate title, is owned by a third party and does not form part of the proposed development (refer Figure 3).

FIGURE 3 – GEORGE STREET ELEVATION INDICATING THE EXTENT OF THE PROPOSED SITE



SOURCE: MIRVAC, CPG AND CRONE PARTNERS, 505-523 GEORGE STREET, SYDNEY, PLANNING PROPOSAL MAY 2014\_V1

## 2 Site Description

### 2.1 THE SUBJECT SITE

The cinema was constructed in 1976 as the Hoyts Cinema and incorporates a contemporary façade.

505 George St contains a 22m high structure that extends to all sides of the property boundary. It is currently occupied by a cinema operator with its main entrance and frontage off George St and secondary frontage to Kent Street. The cinema tenancy extends to the neighbouring property at 525 George St and the two sites share a continuous clad façade however this site is on a separate title, is owned by a third party and does not form part of the proposed development (refer Figure 4).

The cinema complex is 6 storeys (with basement) with lobby and entry off George Street at the ground floor and incorporating 17 multi-level cinemas of varying size (across the subject and neighbouring site). The multiplex features digital 3D, Vmax (massive screen, stadium-style seating) and luxury Gold Class theatres. The George Street frontage and lobby includes several retail tenancies, being predominantly food outlets, with additional retail tenancies in the basement and accessed via stairs from Kent Street or within the lobby area. Above street level, the building presents as a large blank solid façade, incorporating 'Event' cinema signage.

FIGURE 4 – THE SUBJECT EVENT CINEMA SITE AT 505 GEORGE STREET



PICTURE 3 – VIEW NORTHWEST TO THE SUBJECT SITE AT 505-523 GEORGE STREET. THE CINEMA TENANCY EXTENDS TO THE NEIGHBOURING PROPERTY AT 525 GEORGE ST, WHICH IS APPROXIMATELY DEMARCATED BY THE LOWER STREET AWNING (APPROXIMATE SITE BOUNDARY INDICATED).



FIGURE 5 – THE SUBJECT SITE – THE GEORGE STREET ENTRY



PICTURE 4 – VIEW SOUTH ALONG GEORGE STREET TO THE CINEMA ENTRY



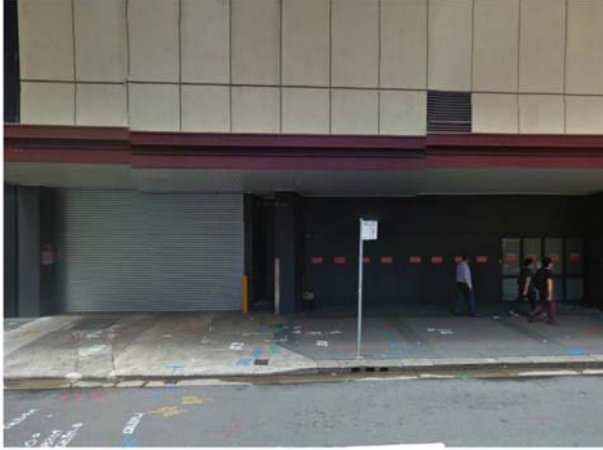
PICTURE 5 – VIEW OF THE GEORGE STREET ENTRY SHOWING THE CINEMA LOBBY AND MALL WITH RETAIL OUTLETS

The Kent Street frontage is more utilitarian and comprises a masonry clad façade with a vehicle entry to the loading dock at the northern end of the site, plus a private pedestrian entry/ fire stair egress. The façade treatment is largely original (1976) and is consistent with the former George Street façade before the recent renovation (refer Figure 20). Similar to the George Street, frontage, the building presents a solid façade above street level and does not contribute to streetscape activation.

FIGURE 6 – THE SUBJECT EVENT CINEMA SITE AT 505 GEORGE STREET



PICTURE 6 – VIEW SOUTH TO THE SUBJECT SITE AT 505-523 GEORGE STREET. THE CINEMA TENANCY EXTENDS TO THE NEIGHBOURING PROPERTY AT 525 GEORGE ST ALTHOUGH THIS DOES NOT FORM PART OF THIS PROPOSAL



PICTURE 7 – THE VEHICLE ENTRY (LOADING DOCK) AND FIRE STAIR EGRESS



PICTURE 8 – THE KENT STREET FRONTAGE OF THE BUILDING KNOWN AS 525 GEORGE STREET WHICH FORMS PART OF THE SUBJECT COMPLEX BUT NOT PART OF THE PROPOSED REDEVELOPMENT.

## 2.2 STREETScape AND HERITAGE ITEMS IN THE VICINITY

505 George Street is located on the western boundary of George Street. The site is in the vicinity of numerous heritage items including the following:

- Albion Place - Item #1658 (local)
- Former warehouse group including interiors, hoist machinery (Nos 1 and 5), chimney and catheads - 1–7 Albion Place - Item #1659 (local)
- Commercial building including interior – 93 Bathurst Street - Item #1670 (local)
- Former “Bible House” – 95 Bathurst Street - Item #1671 (local)
- Former Bank of NSW - 485 George Street - Item #1794 (local)
- Former ‘Vine House’ - 531–535 George Street - Item #1795 (local)
- Former warehouse facade (8 Central Street) - 600–612 George Street (and 343–357 Pitt Street) - Item #1799 (local)
- Former Plaza Theatre building including facade, external walls, foyer and roof - 600–612 George Street - Item #1800 (local)
- Former warehouse including former cart dock and interiors - 484 Kent Street - Item #1833 (local)
- Former “Judge’s House” including interiors and garden - 531 Kent Street – Item #1835 (state)
- Former warehouse façade - 533–539 Kent Street - Item #1836 (local)

Refer Figure 7 below for selected images of the heritage items.

The heritage items are varied in their periods of construction and architectural styles. The items reflect the various stages of development of the precinct and more recent contemporary adaptation for more commercial, entertainment and retail uses.



FIGURE 7 – STREETScape VIEWS AND HERITAGE ITEMS IN THE VICINITY



PICTURE 9 – THE ALBION HOTEL – THE FORMER 'VINE HOUSE' - 531-535 GEORGE STREET - ITEM #1795. THE MERITON RESIDENTIAL TOWER IS VISIBLE BEHIND



PICTURE 10 – VIEW OF THE HERITAGE LISTED FORMER WAREHOUSE GROUP WITHIN THE HERITAGE LISTED ALBION PLACE (#1658 AND #1659) TO THE SOUTH OF THE SITE



PICTURE 11 – THE FORMER WAREHOUSE FAÇADE - 533-539 KENT STREET - ITEM #1836



PICTURE 12 – THE STATE HERITAGE LISTED FORMER JUDGE'S HOUSE, OPPOSITE THE SITE ON THE WESTERN SIDE OF KENT STREET ITEM #1835



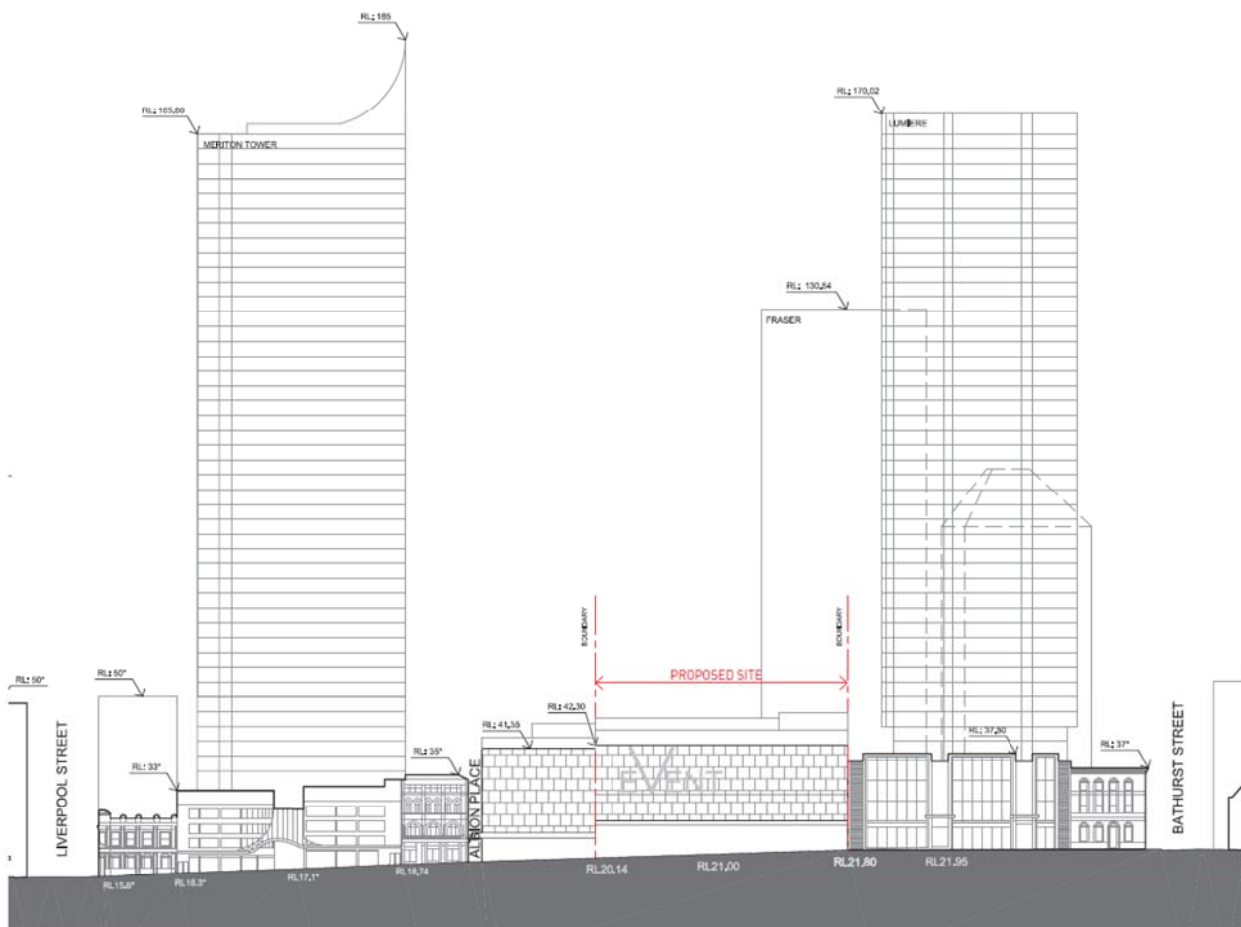
PICTURE 13 – THE FORMER PLAZA THEATRE BUILDING OPPOSITE THE SITE ON GEORGE STREET (#11800)



PICTURE 14 – THE FORMER BANK OF NSW ON THE CORNER OF GEORGE AND BATHURST STREETS (ITEM #1794). THE LUMIERE TOWER IS VISIBLE BEHIND.

The street alignment is dominated by buildings of between 15m – 20m in height containing a mix of retail and entertainment venues. The dominant towers in the vicinity of the site on George St are Lumiere to the north, Meriton to the south, and HSBC Tower to the east. These predominantly residential towers incorporate retail offerings in the ground floor/ podium to activate the streetscape (refer Figure 8).

FIGURE 8 – PLAN OF GEORGE STREET WITH THE MERITON AND LUMIERE TOWERS



SOURCE: MIRVAC, CPG AND CRONE PARTNERS, 505-523 GEORGE STREET, SYDNEY, PLANNING PROPOSAL MAY 2014\_V1



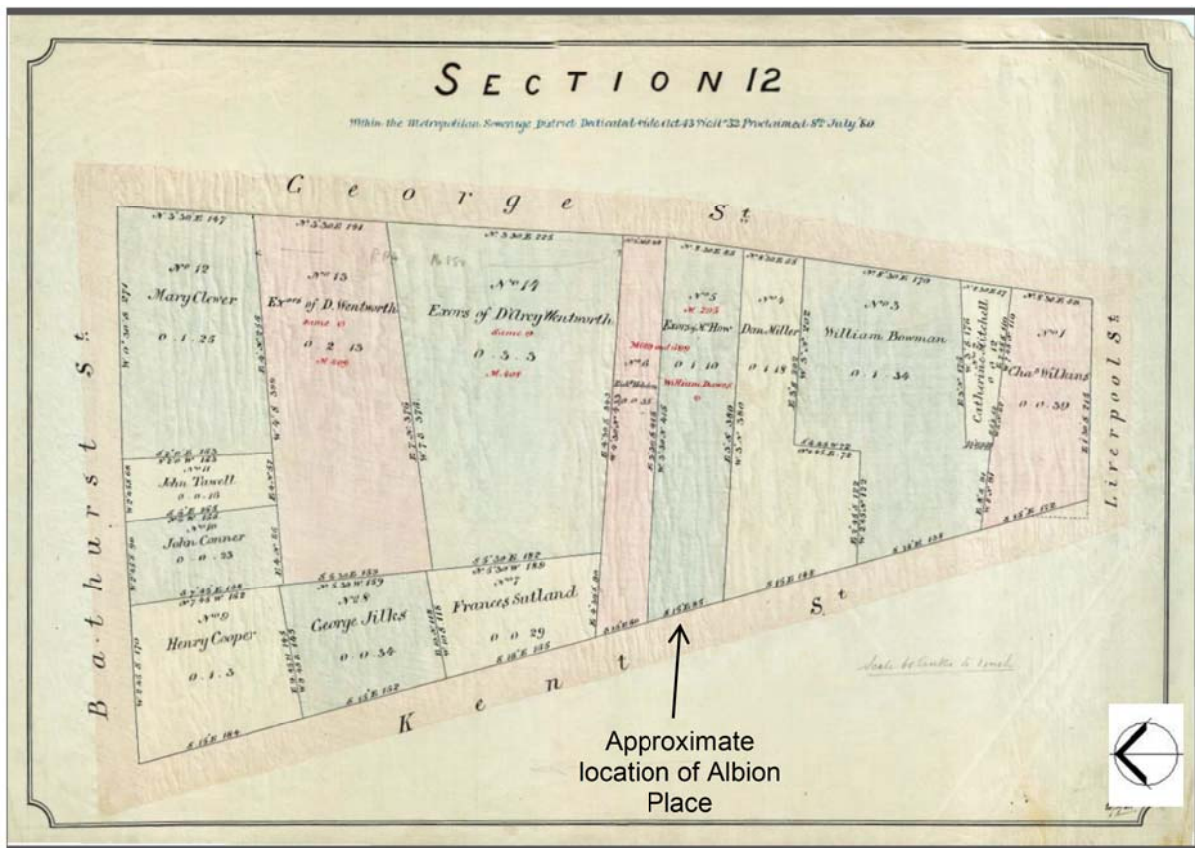
# 3 History

## 3.1 SITE HISTORY

### 3.1.1 EARLY SITE HISTORY

The subject site is shown in the 1833 survey plan as being part of Lot 14, Section 12, then owned by the Executors of the Estate of Mr D'arcy Wentworth (refer Figure 9).

FIGURE 9 – 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY SURVEY, MAP AND SITE PLANS - 1833 SURVEY PLAN



PICTURE 15 – 1833 SURVEY PLAN. THE SUBJECT SITE WOULD HAVE BEEN PRIMARILY WITHIN LOT 14.  
SOURCE: CITY OF SYDNEY ARCHIVES, HISTORICAL ATLAS OF SYDNEY: CITY SECTION SURVEY PLANS 1833- SECTION 12

Though trained as a surgeon, D'Arcy Wentworth had been charged with and acquitted of highway robbery four times and, in 1790, he decided to go to Sydney with the Second Fleet as a free man. The Irish born Wentworth had arrived at Port Jackson in the transport *Neptune* on 28 June 1790.

On 1 August he sailed in the *Surprize* for Norfolk Island where he began his Australian career as an assistant in the hospital. He was appointed superintendent of convicts at Norfolk Island from 10 September 1791. He returned to Sydney in February 1796 and was appointed one of the assistant surgeons of the colony from 7 April. Thereafter Wentworth served in different grades and with differing responsibilities at the three medical centres at Norfolk Island, Sydney and Parramatta, until his appointment as principal surgeon of the Civil Medical Department, first made in February 1809, was approved in July 1811. In 1810 Wentworth, in conjunction with Alexander Riley and Garnham Blaxcell, contracted to build for Macquarie the so-called 'Rum Hospital', the predecessor of the Sydney Hospital.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Australian Dictionary of Biography: D'arcy Wentworth: <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/wentworth-darcy-1545>



Wentworth had relinquished his convict superintendency when leaving Norfolk Island, but during his active career he held many non-medical posts. He was put in charge of Governor Lachlan Macquarie's newly reformed police force, which he controlled for nearly a decade and in this position he became the chief police magistrate in Sydney. He was Governor Macquarie's personal physician as well as being on very friendly terms with him and his successor, Sir Thomas Brisbane. Wentworth was also instrumental in establishing the Bank of New South Wales, and his name appears second among the founders in the charter of 12 February 1817.<sup>2</sup>

The 1844 plan of Sydney illustrates that the George Street frontage of the site was developed while the Kent Street frontage remained vacant (refer Figure 10). Review of the City of Sydney Assessment Books suggests that these premises were likely shops.

FIGURE 10 – 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY SURVEY, MAP AND SITE PLANS - 1844 PLAN OF SYDNEY



PICTURE 16 – 1844 MAP OF SYDNEY SHOWING DEVELOPMENT ALONG THE GEORGE STREET FRONTAGE OF THE SUBJECT SITE (KENT STREET IS SHOWN AS VACANT). ST ANDREWS CATHEDRAL AND THE FORMER BURIAL GROUND (PRESENT DAY TOWN HALL) ARE SHOWN TO THE NORTH.

SOURCE: CITY OF SYDNEY ARCHIVES, HISTORICAL ATLAS OF SYDNEY: FRANCIS WEBB SHEILDS MAP OF SYDNEY, 1844

The 1855-1865 Trigonometrical survey plan illustrates extensive development of the subject site, with new 1-2 storey brick and stone structures constructed on the Kent Street frontage in the 1860s. These were primarily dwellings and included a group of small cottages known as the Jilks Buildings, setback behind the dwellings on Kent Street.

Development along George Street was also intensified, typically of 1-2 storeys, including single storey timber dwellings, timber, brick and stone shops and stores<sup>3</sup>. The 1858 Assessment Book lists many of these properties as part of the leases of D'Arcy Wentworth. The centre of the site is dominated by a store, later identified in Doves plan as the Goodlet and Smith timber yard (refer Figure 12). Goodlet and Smith were timber merchants (formerly of Melbourne) and also produced bricks, pottery and earthenware in Riley Street.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> City of Sydney Rates and Assessment Books: 1855



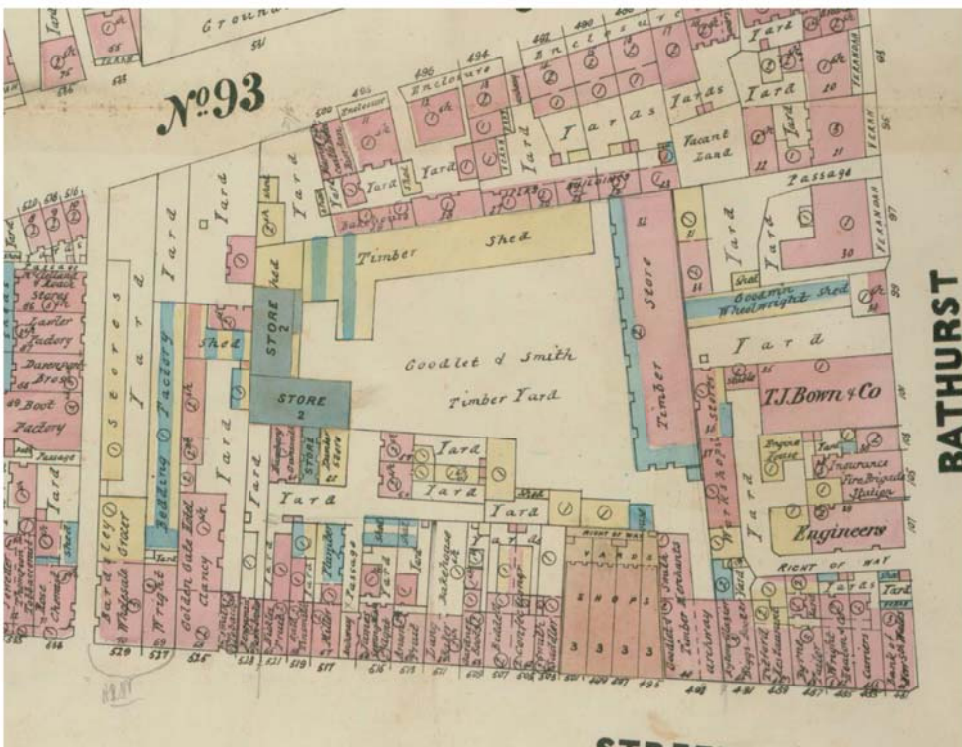
FIGURE 11 – 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY SURVEY, MAP AND SITE PLANS – 1855-1865 PLAN OF SYDNEY



PICTURE 17 – 1855-1865 SURVEY (PART PLAN ONLY) SHOWING THE BLOCK BOUND BY GEORGE, BATHURST, KENT AND LIVERPOOL STREETS. NUMEROUS BRICK AND STONE STRUCTURES ARE SHOWN ACROSS THE SUBJECT SITE.

SOURCE: CITY OF SYDNEY ARCHIVES, HISTORICAL ATLAS OF SYDNEY: TRIGONOMETRICAL SURVEY OF SYDNEY 1855-1865 BLOCK E1

FIGURE 12 – 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY SURVEY, MAP AND SITE PLANS - 1880 PLAN OF SYDNEY



PICTURE 18 – 1880 PLAN OF THE SITE SHOWING 1-2 STOREY DEVELOPMENT ON KENT STREET (LIKELY DWELLINGS) WITH A TIMBER YARD AND STORES IN THE CENTRE OF THE SITE. DEVELOPMENT ALONG GEORGE STREET IS 2-3 STOREY AND PREDOMINANTLY COMMERCIAL

SOURCE: CITY OF SYDNEY ARCHIVES, HISTORICAL ATLAS OF SYDNEY: DOVES PLANS OF SYDNEY, 1880 - BLOCK\_92\_93

The 1880 plan (refer Figure 12) notes that the commercial premises fronting George Street on and in the vicinity of the subject site included a shop front for the timber yards, a confectioner, two fruit shops, a miller, tinsmith, tobacconist, saddler, baker (with bakehouse), boot maker, and pawn broker, among others. A gunsmith and lumber store are also shown. The Kent Street frontage incorporated primarily houses, with the Castle Hotel towards the southern side of the site.

FIGURE 13 – 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY SURVEY, MAP AND SITE PLANS - 1887 PLAN OF SYDNEY



PICTURE 19 – 1887 PLAN SHOWING SIMILAR TO THE 1880 PLAN ABOVE, BUT INDICATING THE REDEVELOPMENT ALONG KENT STREET (FOR STORES).

SOURCE: STATE LIBRARY OF NSW: METROPOLITAN DETAIL SERIES PLAN: CITY OF SYDNEY, SECTIONS 9, 11 & 12, 1887

In the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, some of the George Street premises were redeveloped with 3 storey commercial premises while redevelopment along the Kent Street frontage was more utilitarian in character, incorporating warehouse and stores (refer to the Fire Underwriters Plan at Figure 16).

FIGURE 14 – HISTORIC VIEWS OF GEORGE AND KENT STREETS



PICTURE 20 – VIEW SOUTH ALONG GEORGE STREET FROM THE BATHURST STREET INTERSECTION (UNDATED).

SOURCE: STATE LIBRARY OF NSW : GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE 1 - 08092

The majority of the subject site was demolished and redeveloped in 1937 for the new Trocadero.



### 3.1.2 MEET ME AT 'THE TROC'

The Trocadero opened on 3 April 1936 and operated until 1967. The building was demolished in 1971.

The Sydney Trocadero was a large dance and concert hall that operated between 1936 and 1971. It was the main venue of Big Band jazz orchestras, with the resident Trocadero Orchestra under the baton of Frank Coughlan, and the All Girl Trocadero Band. Often referred to as "The Troc", it was once regarded as the most glamorous dance palace in Sydney and accommodated up to 2,000 people. It was the favoured venue for university and school 'formals', and hosted many important local rock and pop concerts during the 1960s and on Friday and Saturday nights; it was 'dance central'. Those who graced its interior included a Queen and other royalty including princes and princesses, sundry governors, field marshals, presidents, radio and television personalities, actors and actresses, and the grand dames of Sydney society. There were also average Sydneysiders who were addicted to whichever dance was fashionable.

The venue opened with a full-dress gala on 3 April 1936. It was one of a number of venues in Sydney for balls. Others included the Palais Royale, the David Jones Auditorium and the Blaxland Galleries. Art Students' Balls and Artists' Balls continued to be held at the Trocadero through the 1950s and up till the early 1960s over a period when dance music encompassed a wide range of styles including Swing and Australian jazz in the early years, to Foxtrot, Waltz and Tango in the later ones.

FIGURE 15 – VIEWS OF THE TROCADERO



PICTURE 21 – THE NEWLY OPENED TROCADERO ON THE OCCASION OF THE RADIO STATION 2CH'S CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PARTY, 22/12/1936

SOURCE: STATE LIBRARY NSW: HOME AND AWAY - 30090

The site had a frontage of 165 feet to George Street and extended 204 feet to Kent Street. The entry was on George Street, leading into a large foyer with cloakrooms on either side, and retiring rooms on the first floor. The ballroom was the largest erected in Sydney without any supports, being 163 feet long and 100 feet wide<sup>4</sup>. The Trocadero was designed by architects Robertson and Marks in the Art Deco style and

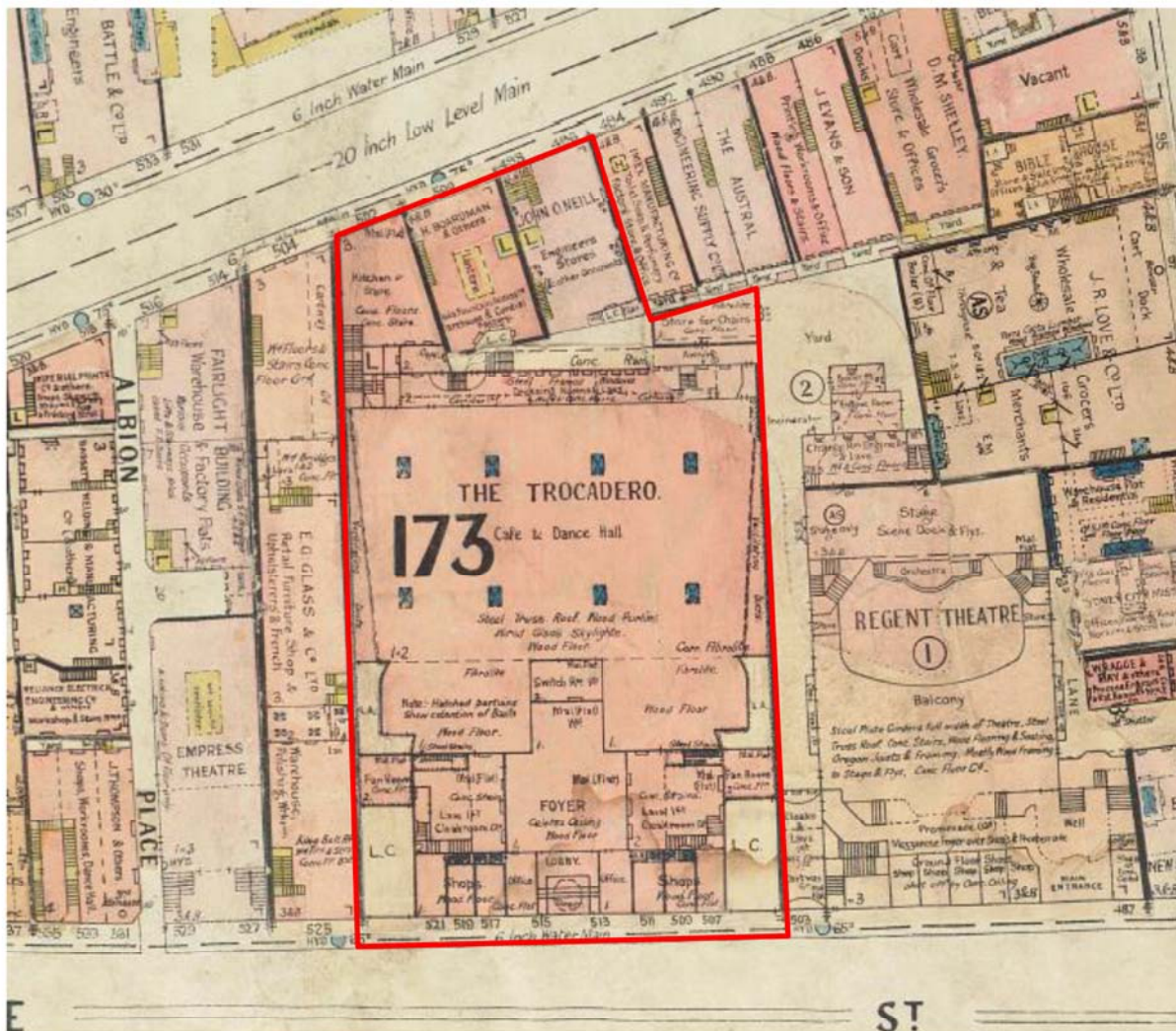
<sup>4</sup> Sydney Morning Herald, 31/03/1936: *The Trocadero*.



was the epitome of Modernism, embodying Hollywood Glamour and hope in post-Depression Sydney. It was constructed by builders John Grant and Sons at a cost of £150,000. Theo Marks (of Robertson and Marks) who had been partly responsible for the design of the interior attended the opening<sup>5</sup>.

Its furnishings included scarlet carpet covered with a pattern of *fleurs-de-lis*, picked out in cream, gold and black. This covered the foyer, the three sides of the auditorium around the dance floor, and also the bandstand stage floor. The entrance vestibule had marble floors and walls of polished granite. Flanking the three sides of the auditorium were Art Deco bas-relief murals depicting renowned dancers of all nations. The bandstand was described by the *Sydney Morning Herald* as 'shell shaped and with coloured lights presenting a constantly changing scene'<sup>6</sup>.

FIGURE 16 – FIRE UNDERWRITERS PLAN WITH THE APPROXIMATE SITE BOUNDARY INDICATED



PICTURE 22 – FIRE UNDERWRITERS PLAN OF THE SITE SHOWING THE NEWLY BUILT TROCADERO AND STORES FRONTING KENT STREET. THE (NOW DEMOLISHED) REGENT THEATRE IS SHOWN ADJACENT (PRESENT LUMIERE SITE).

SOURCE: CITY OF SYDNEY ARCHIVES, HISTORICAL ATLAS OF SYDNEY: FIRE UNDERWRITERS' PLANS, CA 1917-1939 - BLOCK173\_174

<sup>5</sup> The Australian Women's Weekly: *New Whoopee Ground for Sydney Society: Gala Opening of the Trocadero*, 11 April 1936, pg 22.

<sup>6</sup> Dictionary of Sydney: Trocadero: <http://www.dictionaryofsydney.org/entry/trocadero>



The Troc started out as a swing and jazz palace, but by the mid-1950s the leading dances were the quickstep, the foxtrot, the waltz and the tango. Crooners were in fashion. Then later came the samba. But for band leader Frank Coughlan, the rot set in during the 'shifty fifties', with the advent of rock and roll.<sup>7</sup> By the late 1960s, with the counterculture in full swing, and rock and roll ruling the airwaves, the days of the big bands and swing were passing. Crowds fell away as a new music and dance culture emerged<sup>8</sup>.

FIGURE 17 – 1954 VIEW OF GEORGE STREET, WITH THE TROCADERO AT RIGHT



PICTURE 23 – 1954 VIEW SOUTH ALONG GEORGE STREET SHOWING THE TRAM, WITH THE TROCADERO DANCE HALL (503-523 GEORGE ST) SHOWN ON THE SUBJECT SITE (AT RIGHT) AND THE PLAZA THEATRE OPPOSITE (600-612 GEORGE ST).

SOURCE: CITY OF SYDNEY ARCHIVES: SYDNEY REFERENCE COLLECTION

It finally closed its doors on 5 February 1971, and was eventually demolished to make way for the new Hoyts Theatre complex. The closure of the venue is commemorated in the song "Deep Water" by Australian singer-songwriter Richard Clapton.

### 3.1.3 THE HOYTS CINEMA COMPLEX

The Hoyts Entertainment Centre was opened in December 1976 as a 7 cinema complex (with associated services and facilities) and was the first large multiplex cinema building in Australia. It was designed by Melbourne architect, Sir Roy Grounds and partners, Romberg and Boyd<sup>9</sup>. The theatre took up the entire block and extended to the Kent Street frontage and likely included further excavation for the basement.

The opening was celebrated in January 1977 with a gala for 1200 guests, which was recorded in an article in the *Australian Women's Weekly* and as outlined below: The gala included a parade held outside the centre, with clowns, marching girls and vintage cars. The opening was attended by then governor Sir Arthur Roden Cutler VC, who opened the centre by cutting a strip of film and unveiling a plaque. The film 'The Omen' was shown and a dinner provided. A dance floor and band were located in the foyer and Bondi Beach was replicated in the basement, with 120 tonnes of sand and four swimming pools slot together. Potted palms, wrought iron tables and chairs, sail boats and blow up floating animals capped off the scene. The gala continued all night, with hotdogs served for breakfast the next day.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid

<sup>9</sup> Thorne, Ross, Hoyts Entertainment Centre, Sydney (undated and unpublished)

<sup>10</sup> The Australian Women's Weekly: *People and Fashion*, 26 January 1977, pg 17-18



FIGURE 18 – VIEWS OF THE HOYTS CINEMA 1976



PICTURE 24 – VIEW NORTHWEST ALONG GEORGE STREET TO THE CINEMA

SOURCE: NATIONAL LIBRARY OF AUSTRALIA – JOHN MULLIGAN PHOTOGRAPH COLLECTION - NLA.PIC-VN3083184



PICTURE 25 – VIEW SOUTHWEST ALONG GEORGE STREET TO THE THEATRE COMPLEX AND SHOWING THE ADJACENT PARAMOUNT PICTURES

SOURCE: NATIONAL LIBRARY OF AUSTRALIA – JOHN MULLIGAN PHOTOGRAPH COLLECTION - NLA.PIC-VN3083180



PICTURE 26 – HOYTS CINEMA CENTRE, FRONT OF HOUSE FOYER, GEORGE STREET, SYDNEY, 26 DECEMBER 1976 (PRIOR TO THE GALA OPENING)

SOURCE: NATIONAL LIBRARY OF AUSTRALIA – JOHN MULLIGAN PHOTOGRAPH COLLECTION - NLA.PIC-VN3083173



PICTURE 27 – HOYTS CINEMA CENTRE, FRONT OF HOUSE FOYER AND MURAL

SOURCE: THORNE, ROSS, HOYTS ENTERTAINMENT CENTRE, SYDNEY



PICTURE 28 – SIR HARRY'S BAR ON THE GROUND FLOOR AT THE REAR

SOURCE: THORNE, ROSS, HOYTS ENTERTAINMENT CENTRE, SYDNEY

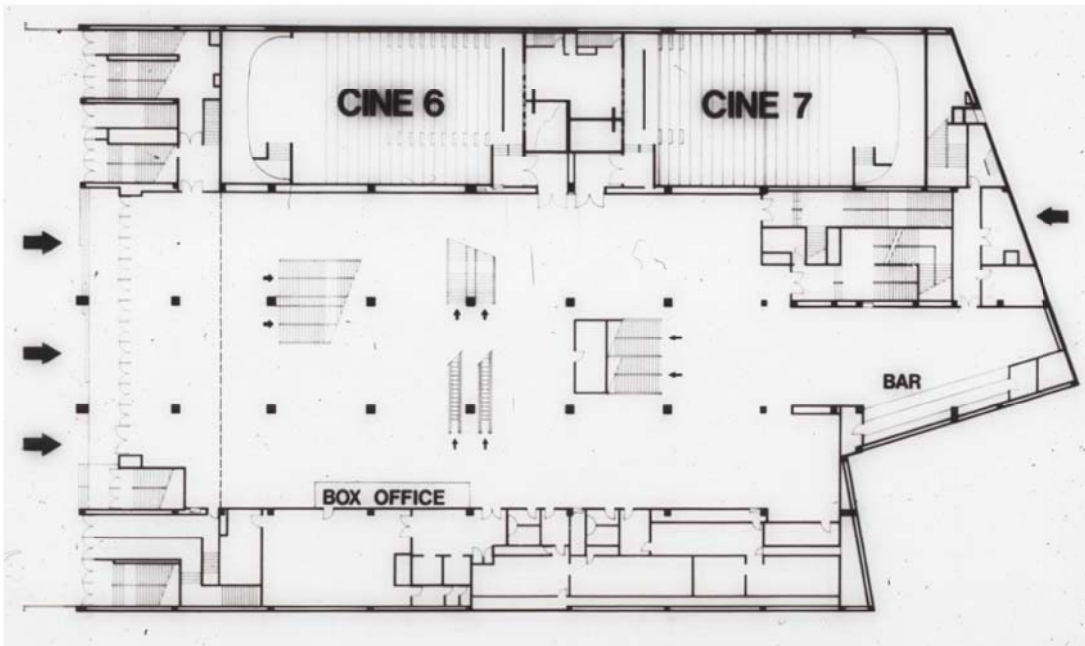


PICTURE 29 – VIEW OF THE STAGE DELICATESSEN ON THE GROUND FLOOR AT THE REAR

SOURCE: THORNE, ROSS, HOYTS ENTERTAINMENT CENTRE, SYDNEY



FIGURE 19 – THE FORMER HOYTS GROUND FLOOR PLAN 0



PICTURE 30 – ORIGINAL ARCHITECTS' PLAN OF GROUND FLOOR WITH ENTRY FROM GEORGE STREET AT LEFT.  
SOURCE: THORNE, ROSS, HOYTS ENTERTAINMENT CENTRE, SYDNEY

The adjoining site (formerly the Paramount Theatre) was converted for use as a cinema by Greater Union in the mid-1960s (c.1965) and a Village cinema operated close by on George Street south of Albion Lane. The Village cinema closed and the Greater Union and the subject site, (formerly Hoyts) amalgamated in around 1999 to form a single cinema complex known as the Event cinema, although the two sites remain on a separate title and are separately owned. Figure 20 shows the two sites prior to the amalgamation.

City of Sydney holds numerous building and development applications for alterations and additions to the Hoyts complex and the fitout and interiors have been variously altered to reflect changing taste and likely technological advancements in film presentation. Retail fitouts and shop fronts have also been variously and extensively modified since its opening in 1977 and the complex has been expanded and now houses 17 cinemas. The façade was modified with the amalgamation of the cinema sites.

The cinema is reportedly the highest grossing in Australia, with the highest number of patrons.

FIGURE 20 – LATE 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY VIEWS OF THE SITE PRIOR TO FAÇADE MODIFICATIONS AND CONSOLIDATION OF THE CINEMA COMPLEX



PICTURE 31 – GEORGE STREET'S GREATER UNION AND HOYTS CINEMAS, 1992.  
SOURCE: PAST/LIVES REVEALING TRACES OF A FORMER SYDNEY. IMAGE COURTESY SYDNEY CINEMA FLASHBACKS.  
[HTTP://PASTLIVESOFTHE NEARFUTURE.COM/2012/04/03/GREATER-UNIONEVENT-CINEMAS-GEORGE-STREET-SYDNEY-NSW/](http://pastlivesofthenearfuture.com/2012/04/03/greater-union-event-cinemas-george-street-sydney-nsw/)



PICTURE 32 – 1996 VIEW SOUTH FROM THE SE CORNER OF BATHURST & GEORGE STREETS SHOWING THE ENTRANCE TO THE HOYTS & GREATER UNION CINEMA COMPLEXES AT 505-523 GEORGE STREET.  
SOURCE: CITY OF SYDNEY ARCHIVES - SYDNEY REFERENCE COLLECTION - SRC23490