

# **ATTACHMENT A**

**DRAFT GEORGE STREET 2020: A PUBLIC  
DOMAIN ACTIVATION STRATEGY**





CITY OF SYDNEY  

# George Street 2020

## A Public Domain Activation Strategy





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Figure 1 George Street spine and connecting spaces

# 1 Revitalising George Street

## 1.1 Our vision for George Street

By 2020 George Street will be transformed into Sydney's new civic spine as part of the CBD light rail project. It will be a high quality pedestrian boulevard, linking Sydney's future squares and key public spaces.

This transformation is a unique opportunity for the City to maximise people's enjoyment of the street, add vibrancy to the area and support retail and the local economy. This strategy plans for elements in the public domain as well as building edges and building uses to contribute to the success of George Street.

New activities may include outdoor dining, vending, creative or cultural activities or simply improving the comfort of pedestrians encouraging people to walk, stroll or linger and enjoy George Street.

Public domain elements include fixed items such as public seating, lighting and street trees, and temporary elements such as moveable furniture, outdoor dining, and street vending. This strategy does not program temporary uses or activities, but sets the stage for coordinated and high-quality outcomes.

Building uses, particularly those associated with the street level, help activate the street by including public amenities and a fine grain, diverse offering of goods, services and attractions.

Building elements including awnings, signage and materiality contribute to the pedestrian experience of George Street.

This strategy identifies principles and opportunities relating to these elements, and makes recommendations for the design of George Street as well as policy and projects to contribute to the ongoing use and experience of the street.

The City's investment in the light rail project

is supported by long-term commitments to upgrading the connecting public domain. Sustainable Sydney 2030 outlines a vision for three linked squares and vibrant city laneways. Existing spaces such as Barrack and Regimental Square, and Martin Place, also provide important opportunities to support activity along George Street. These spaces will be the subject of future analysis and concept development.



Figure 2 Illustrative view - George Street at Martin Place

# 1 Revitalising George Street

## 1.2 The Concept Design

Our concept for George Street is guided by the following principles:

- 01 An efficient transport spine
- 02 A pedestrian focused boulevard
- 03 A legible spine
- 04 An iconic street
- 05 A 24 hour street
- 06 Linking the city to the harbour
- 07 Connecting three great squares

In September 2013, Council endorsed the George Street Concept Design, which details public domain improvements along George Street and its adjacent spaces. This concept has been conceived alongside the NSW State Government's light rail project. This identifies George Street as the north-south route through the city centre.

In December 2013 the City entered into an agreement with the NSW State Government to deliver the George Street light rail project. The City continues to work with Transport for NSW to ensure the best possible outcome, with a focus on a high quality public domain for George Street.

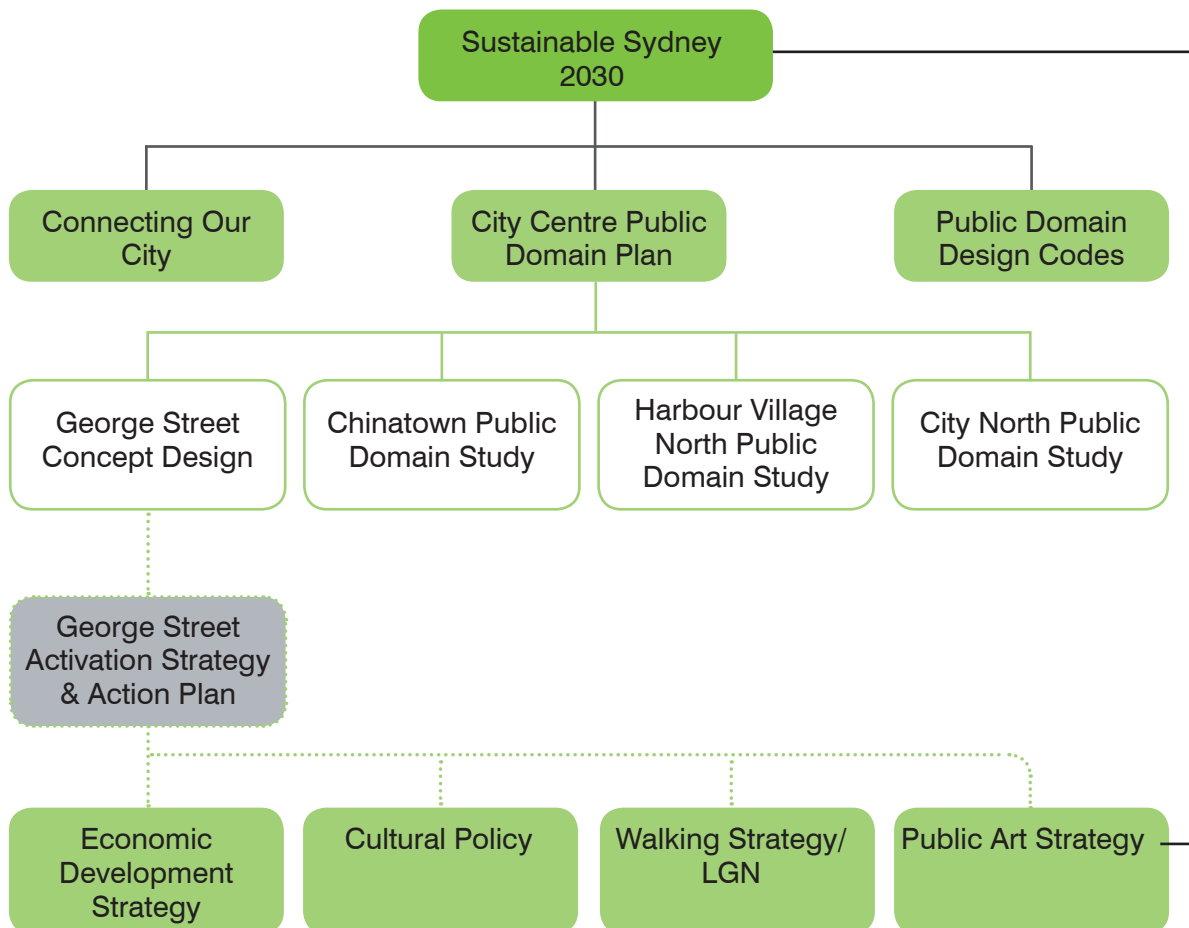


Figure 3 Strategy context

# 1 Revitalising George Street

## 1.3 Related strategies

This study supports the George Street Concept Design, which forms part of the overall City Centre Public Domain Plan. Using a precinct based approach, the Public Domain Plan delivers on Sustainable Sydney 2030 Strategic Directions:

- 1 A Globally competitive and innovative City;
- 4 A City for pedestrians and cyclists;
- 5 A lively and engaging city centre;
- 6 Vibrant local communities and economies; and
- 7 A cultural and creative city.

Detailed public domain improvement proposals will be developed over time for each precinct within the City. To date the City has done studies for Chinatown, Harbour Village North and George Street.

The character and function of George Street will also be shaped by a range of City policies and strategies. These include the Economic Development Strategy and Retail Action Plan, Cultural Policy, Walking Strategy and Public Art Strategy.

Key: City Centre Public Domain Plan precincts

- George Street Spine
- Harbour Village North
- Western Corridor
- Northern Commercial Precinct
- Retail Core
- Town Hall Precinct
- Chinatown
- Park South Precinct

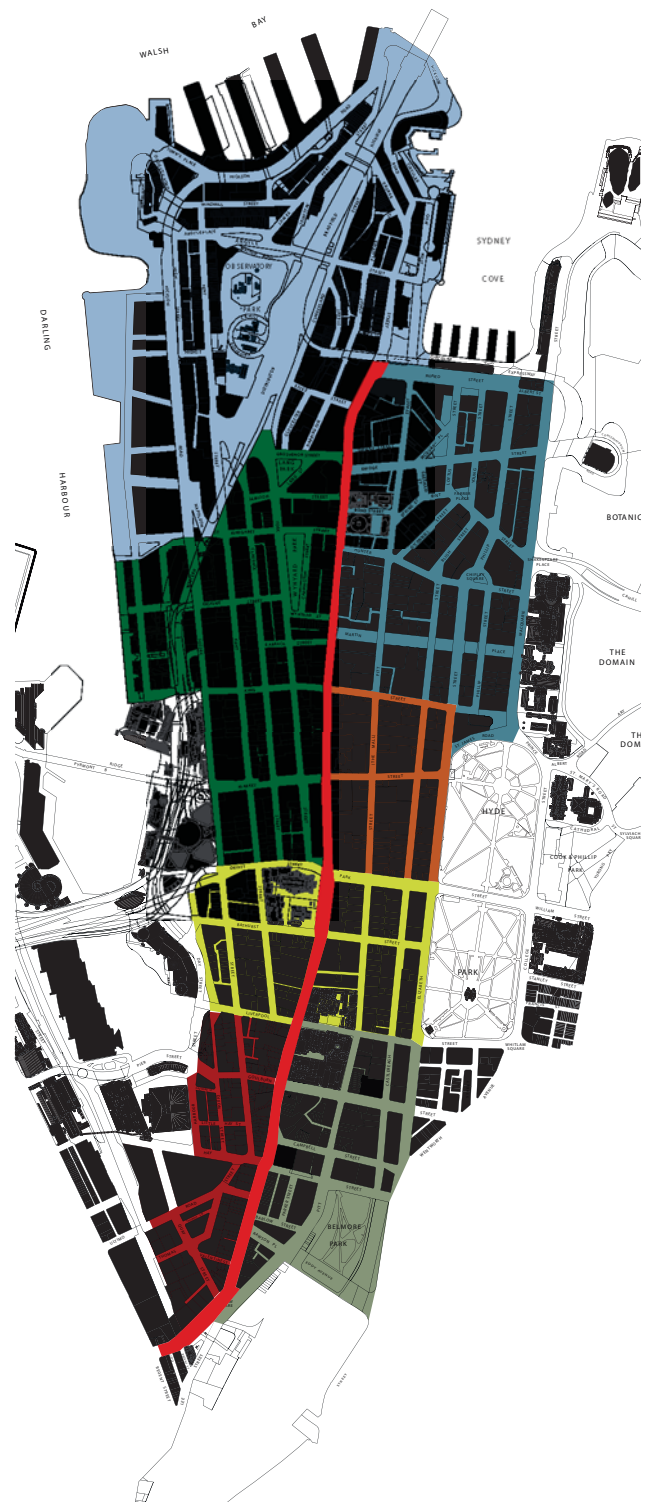


Figure 4 City Centre Public Domain Plan study areas





Figure 5 George Street 1930



Figure 6 George Street today



# 1 Revitalising George Street

## 1.4 George Street past and present

George Street is one of Australia's oldest streets. Originally a track for Eora clans that later connected convict encampments at The Rocks to the brickpit near today's Central Station, the route evolved to become Sydney's original high street. The construction of Central Station in 1855, The GPO in the 1860s and Sydney Town Hall in the 1880s, cemented the civic importance of George Street. It was a centre for commerce and trade as well as connecting to the emerging financial area around today's Martin Place.

George Street has also evolved as an important transport route through central Sydney. In 1899 an electric tramway was opened along George Street to Harris Street. Trams were replaced by diesel buses in 1959.

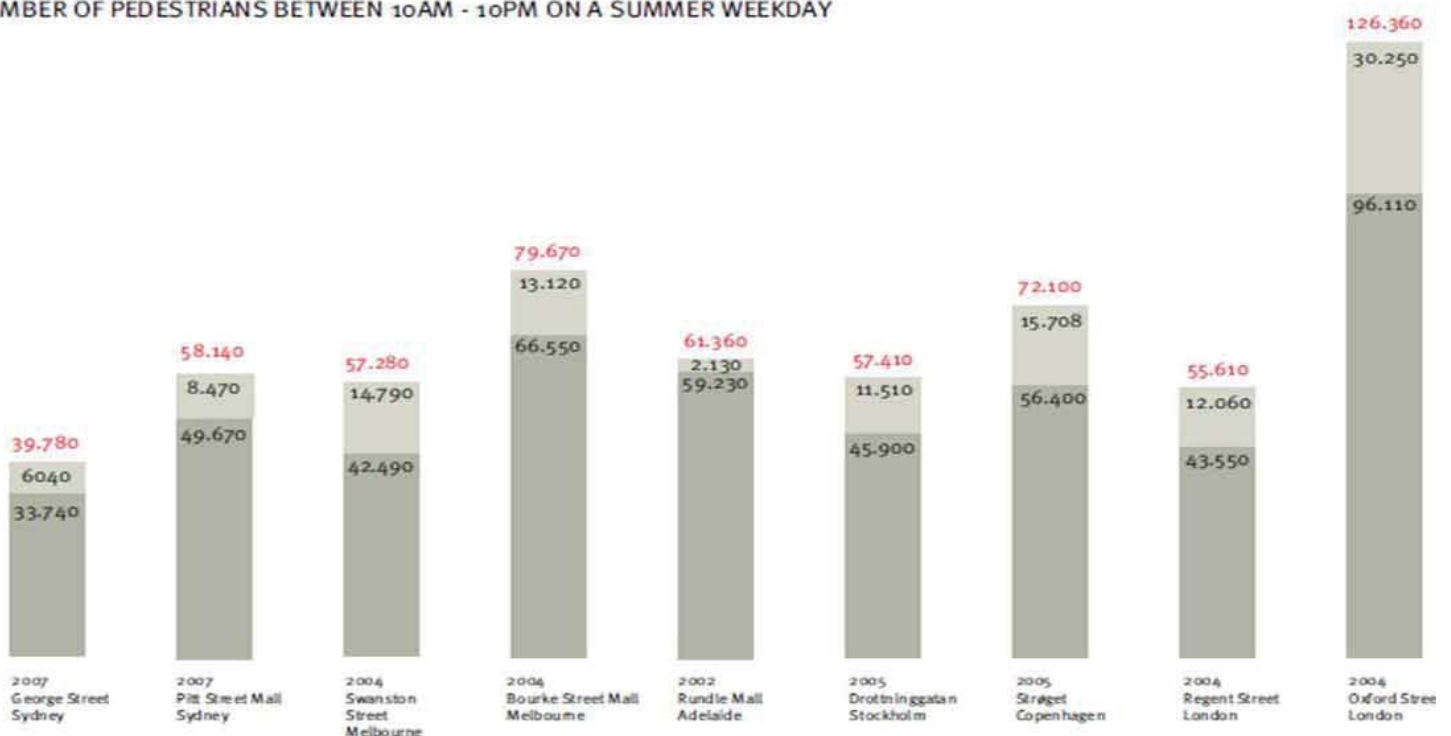
Today George Street is dominated by vehicle traffic. Buses have the greatest visual and acoustic impact on the experience of the street. The result is a street which no longer functions efficiently for pedestrians or vehicles.

George Street is characterised by:

- Low pedestrian priority;
- An overload of buses;
- Poor pedestrian amenity;
- Noise;
- Closed frontages and facades; and
- No cycling facilities.

The poor performance of George Street for pedestrians has significant impacts for the retail vibrancy of the street. It also detracts from the walkability of Central Sydney as a whole.

NUMBER OF PEDESTRIANS BETWEEN 10AM - 10PM ON A SUMMER WEEKDAY



## TRANSFORMING GEORGE STREET

### DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Seven design principles have guided the development of City of Sydney's Concept Design for George Street's transformation.

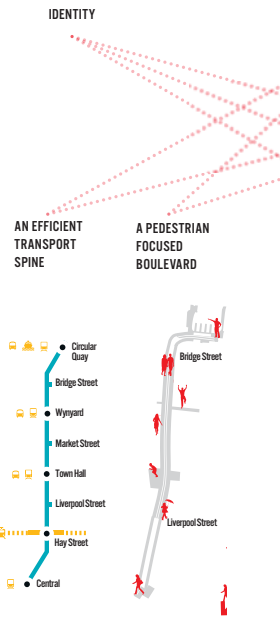
The overall targets of the design principles are to deliver a strengthened identity, an improved mobility, an invigorated public life, and a more resilient economy. Through achieving these four overarching goals George Street will experience an improved business economy that will benefit the entire city centre as more visitors are attracted and people are invited to stay longer.

The links between the overall targets and the design principles are shown on this page.

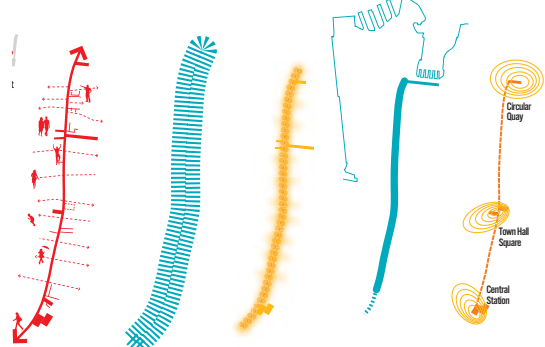
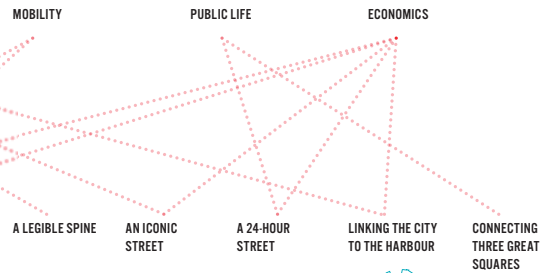
### KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The following pages describe central key performance indicators which can be used for measuring the transformation process of George St. They have been selected based on their ability to deliver the above targets and principles. Based on these indicators four success criteria are suggested. In the coming years other indicators and success criteria could be added to the list.

The report continues to present the data collected for this report. This data has been organized in four chapters, Identity, Mobility, Public Life and Economics. The first three chapters focus on conditions and impacts on George St., whereas the Economics chapter also considers the transformation of George St. in relation to the whole of Sydney's central business district.



4 DATA COLLECTION GEORGE STREET SYDNEY 2014



5 DATA COLLECTION GEORGE STREET SYDNEY 2014

Figure 7 Excerpt - Draft Work in Progress - George Street Benchmarking Study (Gehl Architects)

# 1 Revitalising George Street

## Public Spaces/Public Life

In 2007 the City of Sydney commissioned Gehl Architects to create a blueprint to turn Sydney into a people-friendly, public transport-oriented and green city. The study provided Sydney a comprehensive set of ideas and recommendations to transform the city. The Public Spaces/Public Life study provided the genesis for the George Street light rail concept, informed the Strategic Directions of Sustainable Sydney 2030 and generated the Light Rail Concept Design.

This strategy is informed by the recommendations of Public Spaces/Public Life.

## George Street 2014 Benchmarking Study

The City has engaged Gehl Architects to undertake a benchmarking study of George Street. This will collate a range of data on George Street today to measure:

- Mobility;
- Public life;
- Experience;
- Identity;
- Economics; and
- Environmental impacts.

The City will use this data to measure the performance of George Street as it transforms to a pedestrian and light rail corridor. This will allow better comparisons to be drawn between George Street and other Sydney streets, as well as great streets in other cities and countries.

The benchmarking data will be useful in assessing the pedestrianised area of George Street. It will determine the degree to which we can further activate the street to encourage pedestrian movement.

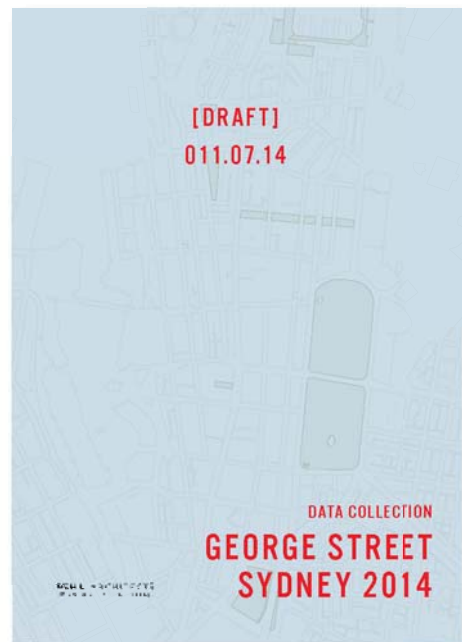




Figure 8 Illustrative view - George Street Concept Design



## 2 The George Street public domain



### 2.1 Activation principles

The City's vision for George Street is guided by the following principles:

- Maximisation of space for pedestrians
- Minimisation of clutter in the streetscape
- A balance between public and private occupation of space
- A 24-hour street offering diversity of use beyond traditional business hours
- A dedicated flex-zone to contain all furnishings and free standing elements
- A co-ordinated suite of elements
- Universal accessibility
- High quality design and materiality

The implications of these principles for the public domain and building edges of George Street will be developed in this strategy.

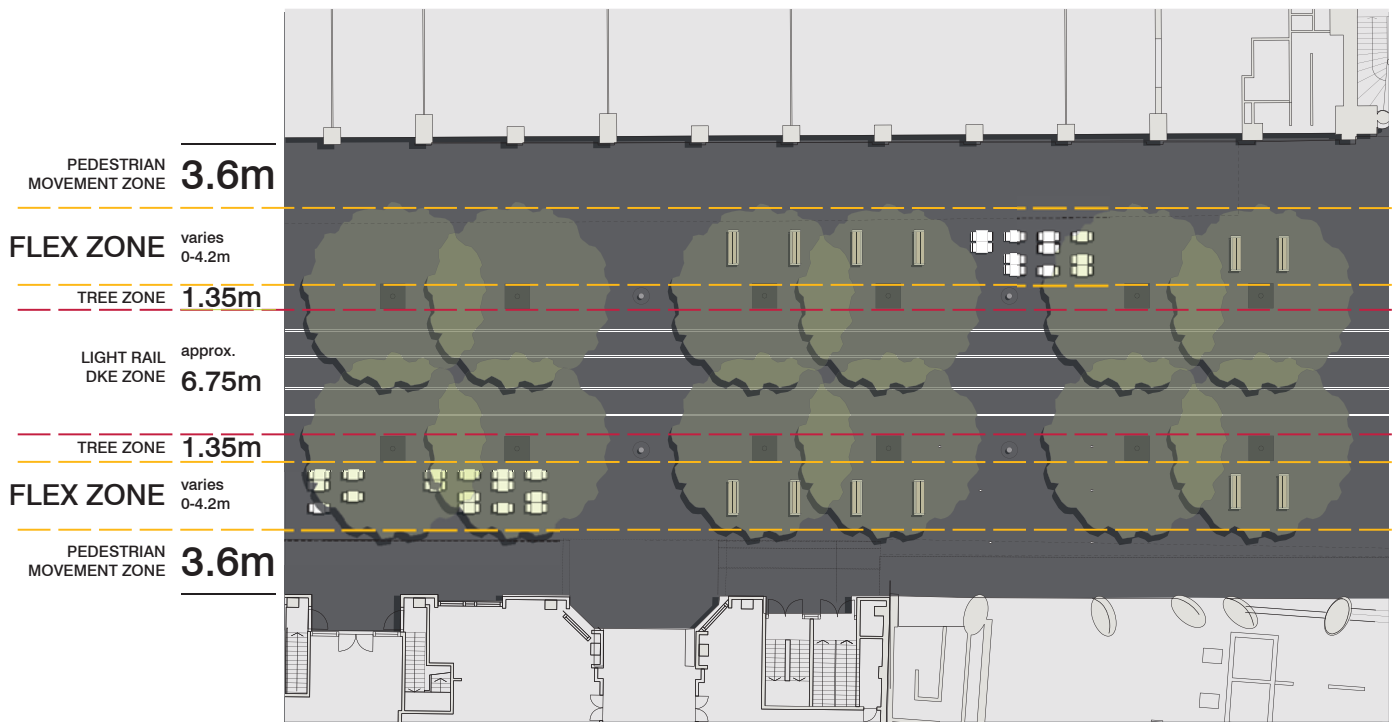


Figure 9 Pedestrianised area - spatial requirement

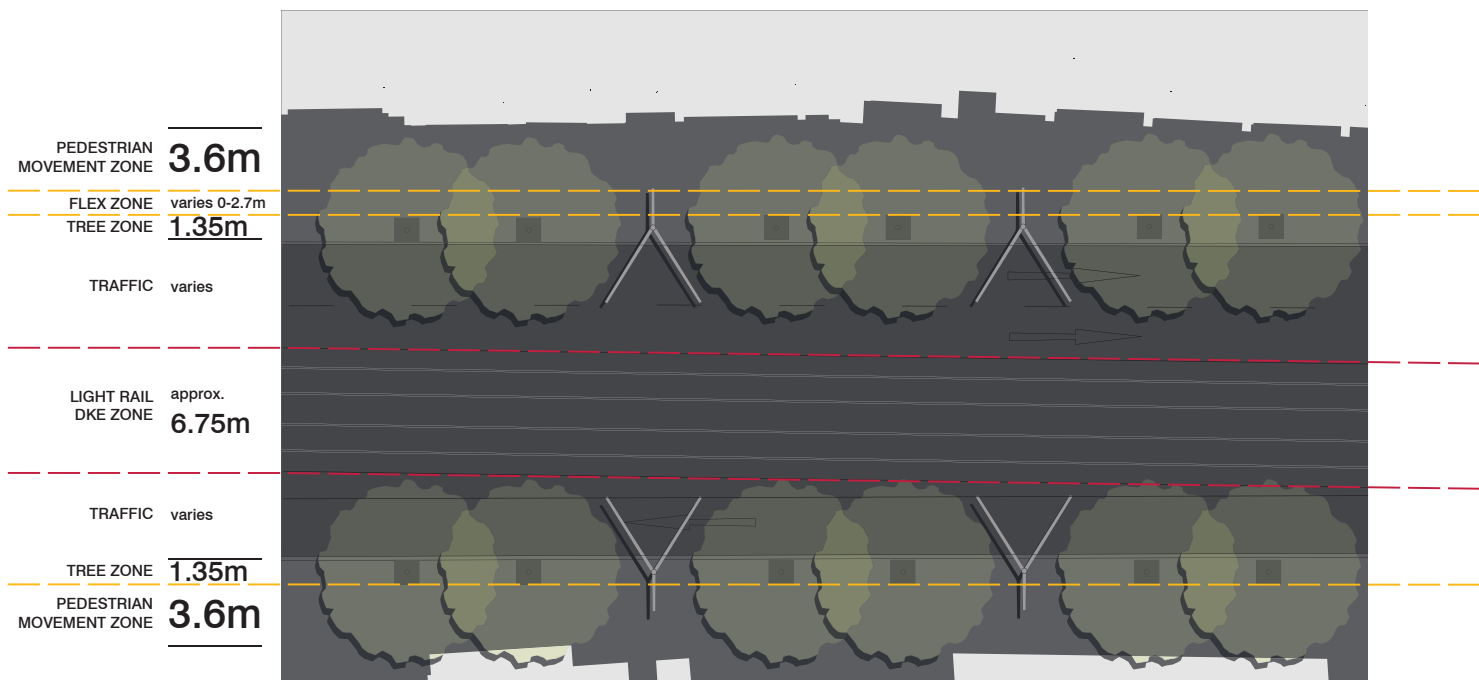


Figure 10 Non-pedestrianised area - spatial requirements

## 2 The George Street public domain

### 2.2 Organising principles

#### Universal access

George Street will be the primary north-south corridor for pedestrian movement in Central Sydney. Safe and comfortable movement for all is an important part of a high-quality public domain.

The transformation of George Street, including pedestrianisation of about 1km of the street, is an unprecedented opportunity to improve universal access. A continuous shore line is an important tool for mobility impaired pedestrians to find their way along the street and use the north-south spine of the city.

Providing a clear, uncluttered path of travel is a priority. To achieve this, a 3.6m minimum width pedestrian movement zone will be provided along the building edge on each side of the street.

#### Tram movement and infrastructure

The light rail has allowed for increased pedestrian space along George Street. In both pedestrianised and non-pedestrianised areas, a safe light rail corridor and adequate clear space for pedestrian movement are priorities. To accommodate tram movement and infrastructure these principles will be adopted.

- A 6.75m wide corridor for light rail movement (referred to as the Light Rail Developed Kinematic Envelope or DKE) will be provided down the centre of the street.\*
- A 1.35m tree zone will be provided along each side of the light rail DKE to contain street trees and smart poles.

\*NOTE: The DKE varies according to track geometry and final vehicle configuration.

#### The flex-zone

The remaining space between the pedestrian movement zone and either the kerb (in non pedestrianised areas) or the tree zone (in pedestrianised areas) is referred to as the 'flex-zone'. It contains all the permanent and temporary public domain elements required along the length of the street.

Fixed furniture such as seating, bins and bubblers will be located in the flex-zone. Where the width of the street allows, the wider flex-zone can accommodate activity such as transient seating, outdoor dining or trading. The pedestrianised area of George Street presents the primary opportunity for utilising the flex-zone. Outside the pedestrianised area the width of the flex-zone is limited, or non-existent.

The flex-zone is indicated on the block-by-block plans in Part 5 of this document.

#### Design recommendations

- Provide a minimum 3.6m clear corridor for pedestrian movement along the building face on each side of George Street.
- Provide an approximately 6.75m wide corridor for light rail, clear of any fixtures or intrusions (the light rail DKE).
- Provide a 1.35m zone along each side of the light rail DKE to accommodate street tree planting and smart poles.
- The flex-zone occupies the remainder of the footpath area, and contains all fixed and temporary public domain elements.
- Where conditions have been satisfied and the remaining flex-zone has a useable width of at least 3m, activity such as transient seating, outdoor dining or trading can be considered.



**flex-zone activation ideas**

moveable seating

outdoor trading

food trucks

pop-up gardens

temporary art

outdoor dining

performances

curated displays

event information

street music

evening markets

busking

wi-fi hotspots

and more>



Figure 11



Figure 12



Figure 13



Figure 14



Figure 15



## 2 The George Street public domain

### case study

#### Market Street, San Francisco USA

Market Street is San Francisco's premier street and most important destination. It is set to become a more attractive place for people to visit, promenade and linger. With issues similar to George Street, Market Street is an important transport corridor as well as a pedestrian spine through the city. The project aims to improve the street and adjacent public plazas so that they support a greater number, and a more diverse range of social, cultural, and economic activities.

The design proposes introducing 'streetlife hubs', areas for street furnishings, sidewalk greening, stormwater infiltration zones and cultural activities where the width of the street permits.

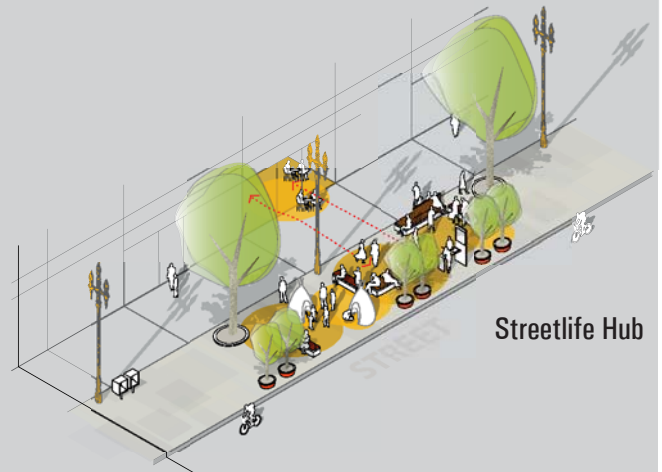


Figure 16

## case study

### La Rambla, Barcelona, Spain

La Rambla is an iconic pedestrianised street in Barcelona. Stretching for 1.2km, it changes character along its length. It has open-air cafes lining its sides, market stalls along the centre of the street, and pedestrian seating.

Although the street meanders and changes width, consistent elements including the avenue of plane trees, street wall buildings

of relatively consistent height, and paving patterns, create a strong sense of continuity.

The street is closed to vehicular traffic and is well used by pedestrians. A metro line runs beneath La Rambla providing public transport connections along its length.



Figure 17



## 2 The George Street public domain

### case study

#### Bordeaux, France

Light rail runs through the centre of Bordeaux, along both pedestrianised and vehicular streets. The system is wire-free with the power source underground, resulting in an uncluttered public domain strongly defined by its built edges.

High quality detailing defines this system. Both paving and stop design present a streamlined, minimal approach, allowing the architecture and pedestrian activities to dominate.



Figure 18



Figure 19 Barcelona

## 2 The George Street public domain

### 2.3 Fixed elements

To provide a high level of pedestrian amenity a range of fixed elements will be located in the George Street public domain. These elements include trees, seating, bins, bubblers, and smartpoles incorporating lighting, signs (regulatory and wayfinding), and tram infrastructure.

The George Street Concept Design outlines the strategy for fixed elements, and the City's preferred design layout is included in the Development Agreement between the City and NSW Government.

The principles that underpin the design layout for fixed elements within George Street are outlined below, as they relate to:

- Trees;
- Furniture; and
- Smartpoles.

### Trees

The George Street Tree Species Investigation Report (Arterra, October 2012) provides the background to the selection of *Zelkova serrata* 'Green Vase' as the recommended street tree for George Street. This species meets the spatial requirements for planting in the confined space of the street corridor. It is unique in the CBD and will help create and define this iconic street.

The design envisages a regular spacing of trees along the length of George Street. As investigations have continued, underground constraints such as services and transport as well as ground level constraints including light rail stops, building entries and driveway crossings have required a change in approach to street tree layout.

To provide maximum pedestrian amenity it is proposed to plant trees in tightly spaced pairs wherever possible. This will provide concentrated shade and maximise canopy spread along a street with limited planting opportunities. The location of trees within the street section also responds to the clearance zone required for light rail movement.

### Design recommendations

- *Zelkova serrata* 'green vase' street trees are to be used along George Street.
- Trees are to be planted in a consistent alignment, with tree pits centred in the 1.35m tree zone on either side of the light rail DKE.
- Trees are to be planted in tightly spaced pairs (6.75m spacing), located generally as shown in the City of Sydney layout attached to the George Street Development Agreement.
- In the pedestrianised area, trees are to be located clear of pedestrian desire-lines such as through-site links and major building entries.



# fixed furniture palette

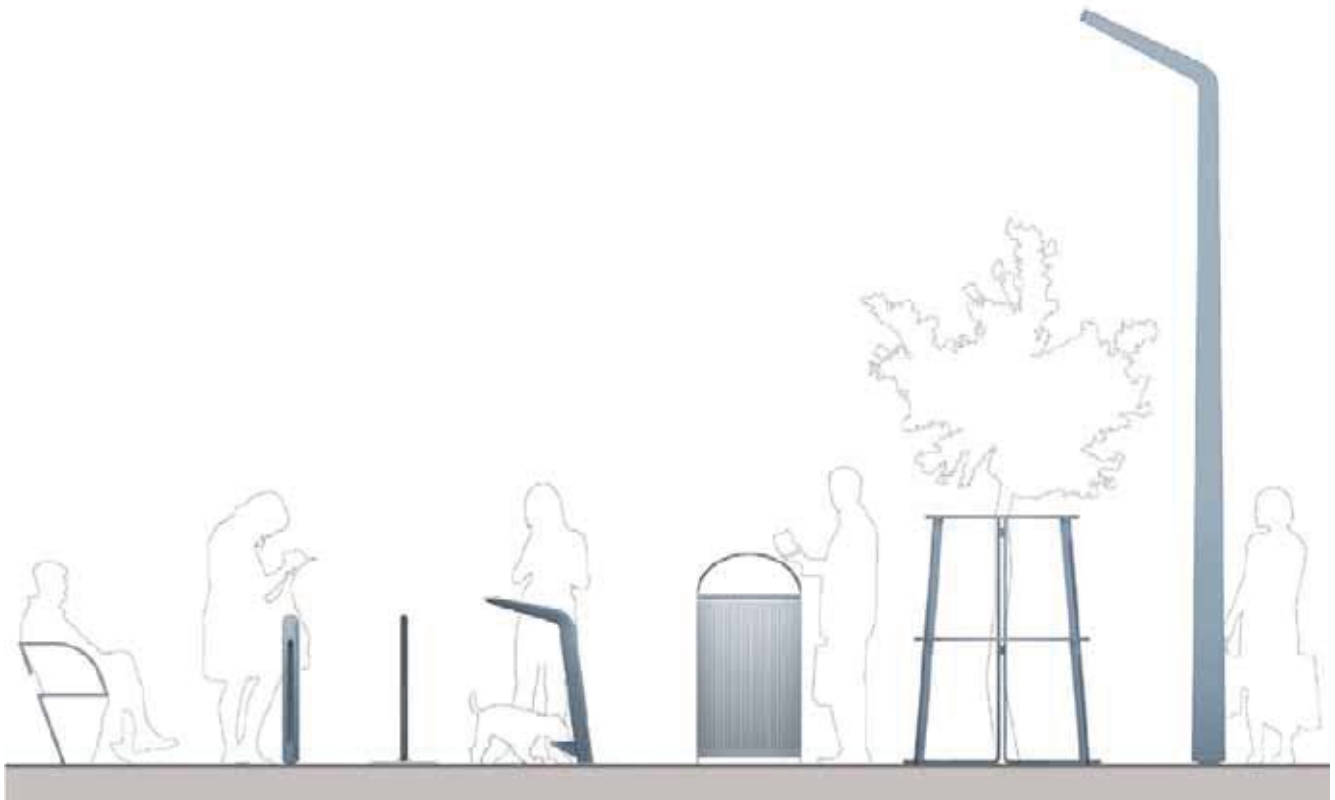


Figure 20 City of Sydney Public Domain furniture

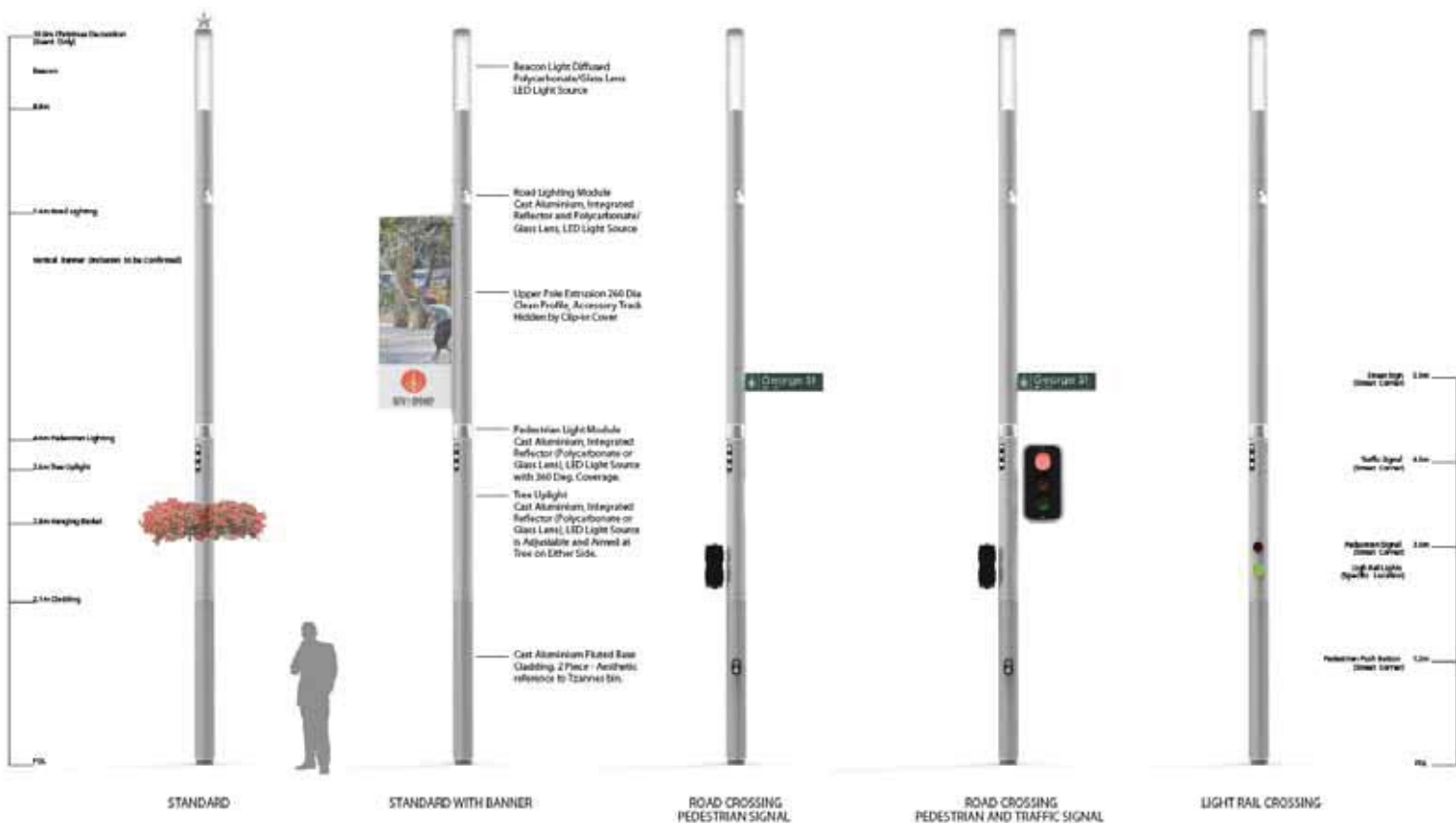


Figure 21 George Street Smartpoles

## 2 The George Street public domain

### Furniture

High quality, elegant street furniture will add to the pedestrian experience of George Street and create a public domain that will stand the test of time. The City of Sydney has adopted a new range of public domain furniture to improve the functionality of city streets and spaces. George Street will be the one of the first installations of the City's new suite of public domain furniture, included in the 2013 Sydney Streets Code.

For maximum useability, public domain furniture needs to be sensitively located in the flex-zone. This will ensure adequate space is available for pedestrians to stop and rest and will provide pedestrian safety and equitable access.

Fixed furniture elements include:

- Seats;
- Bins;
- Bubblers;
- Bollards; and
- Tree guards.

### Design recommendations

- Locate furniture within the flex-zone, clear of the pedestrian movement corridor, light rail DKE and tree zone, see layout attached to the George Street Development Agreement.
- Seating should be oriented to face north and south (if single sided), allowing people to gather in the flex-zone clear of light rail and pedestrian movement.
- Furniture is to be located clear of pedestrian desire-lines such as through-site links and major building entries.

### Smartpoles

Smartpoles provide the opportunity to integrate many necessary functions into the one element, greatly reducing clutter in the public domain.

In George Street, there is a requirement for:

- street lighting;
- pedestrian lighting;
- light rail catenary support;
- signage; and
- fixings for banners, floral displays, event lighting and decorations.

A new smartpole 'kit of parts' has been designed for George Street to ensure that the one pole can do all that is required of it.

To minimise clutter within the public domain, smartpoles will be aligned with street trees to create a consistent corridor of vertical elements along the length of the street, visually reinforcing the edge of the light rail movement corridor.

### Design recommendations

- Smartpoles are to be consistently aligned with the centre of tree pits and located within the 1.35m tree zone on either side of the light rail DKE.
- A curated and selective approach to elements such as banners and floral displays is recommended.
- Event lighting and other special lighting is to be consistent with the George Street Lighting Masterplan.



Figure 22 Movable public furniture



Figure 23 High quality outdoor vending/displays



## 2 The George Street public domain

### 2.4 Temporary elements

To create a great street, George Street needs to provide a legible and functional transport route for light rail. It also needs to be a generous and pleasant space for pedestrian movement. To ensure that these aims are able to successfully co-exist and not compete, a level of flexibility is required in the public domain design.

Temporary elements can provide opportunities for people to stop, linger and spend time in the street, where space allows.

Temporary public domain elements may include:

- Moveable public furniture;
- Licenced outdoor dining;
- Street vending and display;
- Creative opportunities e.g. temporary art; and
- Entertainment and event infrastructure.

Designing for a high level of programmed active uses is not considered appropriate in the first instance following the completion of light rail. Rather, this strategy identifies locations where temporary elements could be sited to facilitate activity at particular times of day, subject to pedestrian numbers.

Pedestrian numbers in Central Sydney have seen a high level of growth over time. With the transformation of George Street we expect the new public domain will be well used by pedestrians. Pedestrian movement in George Street will be continuously monitored over time to evaluate the use of the space and identify further activation opportunities.

### Design recommendations

Temporary elements in the activation zone in the block-by-block plans in Part 5 of this report may be considered if:

- The flex-zone has a minimum width of 3m;
- They are clear of vehicular crossings and intersections;
- There is no conflict with pedestrian movement flows such as major building entries and through-site links;
- They complement surrounding building uses; or
- They provide desirable activation beyond business hours, such as street vending.

Storage is required for movable furniture elements. Refer to Part 4 of this report for recommendations.

Moveable public furniture



Figure 24



Figure 25



Figure 26

## 2 The George Street public domain

### Temporary public furniture

Moveable chairs and tables create a casual opportunity for people to stop and rest, with unlimited flexibility to move around creating social arrangements or in response to shade, sunlight and events.

Outdoor chairs and tables in Sydney are traditionally provided by cafes and restaurants as private areas for use by paying patrons. Recently the City has located City owned temporary furniture in several key public spaces (Sydney Square, Barrack Street) and made these available for use by all.

In George Street, moveable public furniture will provide the benefit of providing outdoor seating opportunities to activate the street unconstrained by the cost or operating hours of private business. It also allows the street to be activated outside times of peak pedestrian flows, such as during the evening or at weekends, with the ability to pack away to create additional space at peak times. The flexibility of moveable temporary furniture complements the strategy for temporary street trading. Food trucks or coffee carts can be located at moveable furniture sites providing additional activation and amenity.

Temporary furniture requires storage space as well as management to ensure it is set up and packed away at appropriate times. Storage space for temporary public furniture is addressed in Part 5.4 of this report.

The selection of temporary furniture is critical to the success of its use. Furniture in George Street should make a positive contribution to the street environment and be compatible in design to the fixed furniture elements.

### Design recommendations

Movable furniture may be located as shown in the block-by-block plans in Part 5 of this document.

- Chairs and tables are to be selected from the George Street palette shown on page 32 & 33.

### NEXT STEPS FOR THE CITY

- 2.4.1 Review the scope of the existing Chairs for Squares program to consider the provision of moveable chairs for use at specific identified locations within the George Street pedestrianised area. The chairs may be owned by Council or provided privately, for example, through a sponsorship scheme.





Figure 27 Paris



Figure 28 Ash Street, Sydney



## 2 The George Street public domain

### Outdoor dining

Outdoor dining can enliven the public domain during the day and night, allowing people to linger and spend time in George Street.

Recent community consultation for the Open Sydney strategy revealed strong demand for more opportunities for quality restaurants and cafés to open late at night. This included opportunities for outdoor dining, which at night help make the street safer by providing passive surveillance. In George Street this will complement the existing night time attractions of bars and cinemas.

Approval is required from the City of Sydney for public space to be used for outdoor dining, according to the Outdoor Cafe Policy. Generally a rental fee is payable to the City for the use of the space.

Consultation with the Retail Advisory Panel has indicated there are many regulatory and economic challenges to food and beverage operations in Central Sydney.

Strategies could be developed to encourage outdoor dining along George Street. The financial feasibility of outdoor dining on George Street could be increased by allowing operators to lease a reduced area during the winter months to reflect lower use demands.

### Design recommendations

A high level of consistency and quality is to be achieved for outdoor dining furniture elements. Outdoor dining proposals must comply with Council's Outdoor Cafe Policy as a minimum. In addition the following design criteria should be met:

- Outdoor dining applications on George Street will be assessed case by case, with regard to spatial constraints and surrounding flex-zone uses.
- A high level of design quality will be required in any application for outdoor dining on George Street.
- Chairs and tables are to be selected from the George Street palette shown on page 32 & 33.
- Market style umbrellas may be approved where shade is not available from awnings or buildings.
- No signage or branding should be permitted on outdoor dining elements.
- Demarcation of outdoor dining areas should be minimal and limited to markers within the ground plane. Planter boxes should not be used.
- Further research and design controls may be required to respond to demands for waiters stations, due to the small internal areas likely to be available for food and beverage leases on George Street.

### NEXT STEPS FOR THE CITY

- 2.4.2 Investigate specific requirements for possible outdoor dining furniture in the George Street pedestrianised area as part of the Outdoor Cafe Policy review.
- 2.4.3 Investigate the use of core trading hours and seasonal flexibility to ensure activation in the afternoon and evening, and respond to seasonal requirements.

## recommended moveable furniture palette

### tait 'jak' chair & 'jil' table

- designed and made in Australia
- chair weight 5.9kg
- stackable (up to 6)



Figure 29

### fermob 'bistro' chair & table

- designed and made in France
- chair weight 4kg
- foldable



Figure 30

### derlot 'lerod' chair & table

- designed and made in Australia
- chair weight 5kg
- stackable (up to 6)



Figure 31

## 2 The George Street public domain

### George Street temporary furniture palette

The quality of furniture in the public domain plays a key role in reinforcing George Street as the city's iconic civic spine. To maintain a high level of consistency and compatibility with permanent public domain elements, we propose a suite of temporary furniture for use along the length of George Street.

A range of temporary furniture has been selected that meets the criteria outlined in the *City of Sydney Outdoor Cafe Policy*. This which requires tables and chairs to be:

- strong, durable, waterproof and weather resistant;
- designed for commercial outdoor use. The design must not contain parts that are likely to cause damage to the pavement;
- safe and comfortable. Particular care should be taken with any sharp edges, and hinges or other moving parts to ensure that they do not present a potential hazard to their users;
- folding or stackable for storage; and
- non-reflective.

Preference has also been given to locally designed and manufactured furniture where available.

### Design recommendations

- Explore the use of colour to create an identity for temporary furniture in George Street.
- Chairs and tables are to be selected from the following palette (illustrated on the facing page):

Brand	Item	Designer
Tait	Jak chair & Jil table	Justin Hutchinson
Fermob	Bistro folding chair and table	Fermob
Derlot	Lerod chair (could team with Jil table)	Alexander Lotersztain





Figure 32



Figure 33



Figure 34



Figure 35



## 2 The George Street public domain

### Street vending

To support its function as the city's north-south pedestrian spine, we have prioritised pedestrian movement in transforming George Street.

Pedestrian numbers in George Street will be monitored following the introduction of light rail, and opportunities for permanent kiosks will be reviewed over time. Services have been allowed at key locations if kiosks are needed in the future.

In 2020, mobile/temporary street vending is the preferred approach to provide amenity and activation while retaining flexibility to accommodate peak pedestrian flows.

Currently in Sydney mobile street vending is characterised by food and beverage traders operating:

- Food trucks;
- Food vans; and
- Coffee carts.

The operation of food trucks and vans is regulated by the City's *Mobile Food Vending Vehicles Local Approvals Policy*.

Street vending in George Street could be expanded to include other types of retail trading, and a broader range of mobile street vending infrastructure could also be developed outside the current registered trucks/vans. Encouraging innovative and interesting street vending will enliven George Street and will provide attractions in the public domain outside traditional business hours.

### Design recommendations

Mobile street vendors can be located within the **activation zone** shown on block-by-block plans in Part 6 of this document.

Street vending in George Street should be of high quality, consistent with the iconic nature of the street.

### NEXT STEPS FOR THE CITY

- 2.4.4 Investigate specific locations within the George Street activation zones (refer to Part 6) for the operation of food trucks and mobile street vending as a transitional activation measure.

Figure 36



Figure 37



Figure 38



## 2 The George Street public domain

### Events and cultural opportunities

George Street has been home to many significant public events, including both celebrations and demonstrations. Increased public space through pedestrianisation opens up opportunities for more events like this. However the light rail raises a new range of constraints in hosting public gatherings.

Closing George Street for major civic parades will be subject to light rail operational constraints and require Transport for NSW approval.

The public domain infrastructure of George Street needs to provide flexibility, to accommodate a range of potential public and cultural events over the future life of the street.

The flex-zone also provides an opportunity for seasonal programming, or temporary uses (such as ticketing, information, or small installations) relating to specific cultural events such as the Festival of Sydney.

### Design recommendations

- Provide 3-phase power at key locations along the length of George Street, incorporated within Smartpoles. Preferred locations for 3-phase power are indicated on plans in Part 5.
- Install George Street Smartpoles with programmable 'beacon' lighting.
- Ensure capability for Smartpoles to support banners.

### NEXT STEPS FOR THE CITY

- 2.4.5 Develop an events strategy and supporting guidelines and procedures for Central Sydney, providing coordination and direction for a curated approach to George Street related events.





Figure 39 343 George Street - former Commercial Bank building now home to retail store Burberry



Figure 40 367 George Street - Apple Store

### 3 Building use

George Street is lined by a wide variety of building uses that traditionally vary in character along its length.

In the south between Central Station and Park/Druitt Streets uses have a finer grain. These are characterised by retail stores and a predominance of food, beverage and hospitality offerings relating to the Chinatown precinct. The area north of Town Hall to King Street is the retail core, with larger floorplate and higher-end retail tenancies, and shopping centres such as the Queen Victoria Building and the Strand Arcade. North of King Street, the historic banking and civic buildings around Martin Place transition to more commercial character, with ground level lobbies to commercial towers becoming more frequent.

Recently however, uses along George Street have undergone a subtle shift:

- Historic civic and banking buildings are turning over to retail uses (such as around Martin Place). This has created interesting relationships at ground level due to the limited transparency of these types of heritage buildings.
- Refurbished commercial buildings are now incorporating large floorplate retail tenancies at ground level.
- George Street is becoming a desirable address for international brands and flagship stores, which often demand large and double-storey frontages.
- Large-scale new development along George Street is increasingly focusing on residential rather than commercial uses.

Several factors have contributed to these changes:

- The changing spatial needs of the finance and banking sector has resulted in these tenants preferring purpose built large floorplate buildings.

- Large amounts of commercial floorspace is/will be available in the present and near future with the completion of stage 1 Barangaroo.
- The uplift to property values along George Street with the commitment to light rail and the public domain upgrade requires larger and higher-end retail tenants to meet rent demands.

These issues have several implications for the future of George Street and may indicate the need for policy intervention or incentives to achieve retail variety and diversity.

International case studies provide good examples of main streets and iconic streets where a diversity of small and large retail is balanced with food and beverage and service provision. The development/planning context, management strategies and key policies that have achieved these outcomes are discussed over the page.





### 3 Building use

#### case study

##### Regent Street, London

Regent Street is an example of a carefully curated shopping street. Under the management of The Crown Estate (on behalf of the Regent Street Partnership), retail and commercial tenants are selected to create a balance of large international brands and small-scale, local specialty shops as well as high quality offices.

The Regent Street Partnership is committed to significant ongoing investment in the public domain to ensure the street environment complements high-quality retail.



#### case study

##### Times Square Precinct, New York

Times Square in New York has undergone a transformation in terms of the quality of the public domain for pedestrians as well as the quality and range of uses lining the streets and spaces. The Times Square Alliance is a not-for-profit organisation working to improve and promote Times Square.

The alliance undertakes data collection and dissemination, tracks retail activity and encourages more diverse retail offerings through targeted marketing and promotional material. In a form of place management, the alliance works with brokers and representatives of the real estate community to meet the needs of the growing number of people who work and live in Times Square.



**Fine grain examples:**



*Figure 41* Workshop Cafe on George Street (previously a stair well)



*Figure 42* Cafe on King Street (previously a bank vault)

**Fine grain opportunities:**



*Figure 43* Telstra commercial foyer - underused space



*Figure 44* Bank ATM rooms - underused space

## 3 Building use

### 3.1 Fine grain

'Fine grain' describes the small-scale spaces which provide a vital layer of lower cost, diverse and often specialised activities within a place (City of Sydney Fine Grain Review 2012).

With buses and traffic removed from George Street, façades that are currently closed to the street with large and inwardly-focused tenancies can be transformed into engaging and lively frontages. Many small tenancies and multiple openings create diverse, stimulating and attractive streets. Along the length of George Street, they also introduce a vertical façade structure at ground level, which helps to make walking distances feel shorter. The importance of fine grain frontages for Sydney streets was articulated by Gehl Architects in their Public Spaces/Public Life study. It has been integrated into the City's Sustainable Sydney 2030 vision and underpins the Central Sydney planning controls.

Small-scale, fine grain tenancies provide an opportunity for smaller operators to trade outside traditional retail hours to create a truly 24-hour street with a range of experiences and activities on offer.

Increasing the fine grain tenancies and services within the buildings that address George Street is also critical in de-cluttering the street and delivering additional space for pedestrian movement and outdoor uses. Without fine grain active uses incorporated within buildings, kiosks and other temporary elements will be required within the public domain to enliven George Street.

Fine grain retail can be provided in new development or retrofitted into existing buildings with underused space at ground, basement or first floors. Examples of underused spaces providing opportunities for fine grain are mapped in Part 6, and include commercial lobbies, ATM rooms and colonnades.

The first levels above and below the street provide additional opportunities to activate the streetscape and accommodate fine grain uses without the rental costs associated with street level frontages.

The City's Fine Grain Review 2012 identified the opportunity for upper and lower ground floor uses to provide an additional layer of activation in Central Sydney. As well as providing additional services which do not require a street frontage, using upper level spaces also creates an opportunity for unique engagement with the public domain and passive surveillance of the street.

Along George Street there are many examples of retailers with a basement or first floor level presence. Both basement and first floor retail uses fall predominantly within the personal services sector, with food and drink operators the second most common.

To further encourage these types of tenancies, basement and first floor retail space with direct access from the street could be considered for Floor Space Ratio concessions. This would encourage specialist retailers, restaurants, bars and other uses to bring another layer of diversity and activity to the City Centre.





Figure 45 Lower level music venue



Figure 46 Lower level small bar use



Figure 47

Upper level restaurant and bar uses

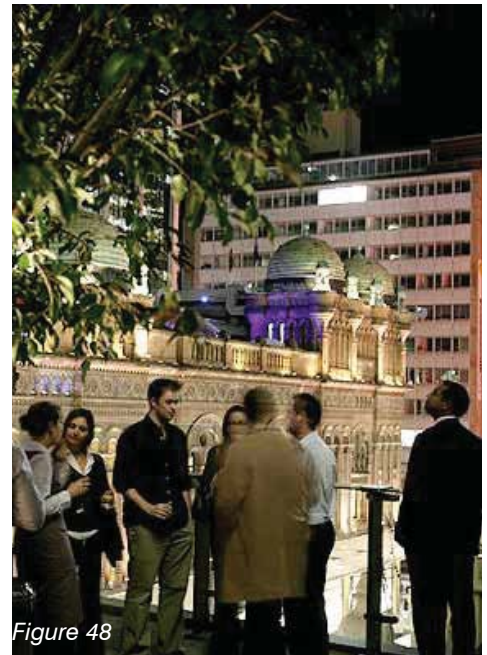


Figure 48

## 3 Building use

### Design recommendations

- Implement existing active frontage controls for new development and refurbishments. These require a fine grain of tenancy entries with 15-20 separate tenancy entries per 100m of frontage. An alternative standard is the 6m approximate frontage width to constitute fine grain under the City's Fine Grain Review 2012.

### NEXT STEPS FOR THE CITY

3.1.1 Investigate excluding all new fine grain food and beverage spaces at street level, and basement/first floor (where directly accessible from George Street), up to a maximum size of 100m<sup>2</sup>, from inclusion in Floor Space Ratio (similar to the existing Local Environmental Plan Lanes development floorspace provision).

3.1.2 Investigate a place management process for George Street/Central Sydney.

A Place Manager could work with property owners and leasing agents to coordinate:

- Available space inventory and marketing;
- Landlord relations and strategic leasing strategies; and
- Active tenant recruitment.



Figure 49 Existing publicly accessible toilets on and near George Street



## 3 Building use

### 3.2 Public rest rooms and storage

#### Public rest rooms

Access to public amenities such as toilets and parents rooms is important to encourage people to visit and spend time in and around George Street. At present access to these facilities is limited, with few publicly accessible toilets available along the length of George Street. There is a particular gap in the provision of public toilets along the pedestrianised area. Many of the existing facilities have limited opening hours. Given the predicted growth in pedestrian numbers, the provision of additional public amenities accessible at all times of day is a priority.

To prioritise pedestrian movement and provide an uncluttered public domain, it is desirable to incorporate facilities such as these within buildings along the street rather than within kiosks in the public space. Redevelopment and refurbishment of existing buildings provides the only opportunity for new public amenities. It is important that the need for these facilities is recognised and communicated to developers at the earliest possible stage. Development incentives are to be provided to encourage their inclusion where possible.

#### Policy recommendations

- Universally accessible public amenities (toilets and parent rooms) should be encouraged in all development/refurbishment projects along George Street, particularly along the pedestrianised area.
- Access to public toilets should be provided beyond business opening hours.

#### Storage space

As pedestrian movement is given priority along George Street, public domain activation elements must be temporary or transient. Elements such as moveable seating, umbrellas, pop-up installations and event infrastructure may need to be packed away and stored during peak times, or seasonally. Access to proximate storage space will determine the feasibility of many of these temporary uses.

As City-owned storage space is not available along the length of George Street, including storage spaces within new/refurbished buildings is an important opportunity.

Incentives should be considered to encourage private development to make storage spaces available to the City.

#### NEXT STEPS FOR THE CITY

- 3.2.1 Investigate excluding public rest rooms directly accessible from George Street, and open to the public beyond normal business opening hours, from inclusion in FSR calculations.
- 3.2.2 Work with Transport for NSW to ensure public toilets at transport facilities continue to be accessible to the general public.
- 3.2.3 Include the provision of public rest rooms and storage space suitable for public moveable furniture in the negotiation of Voluntary Planning Agreements for development on George Street, where appropriate.

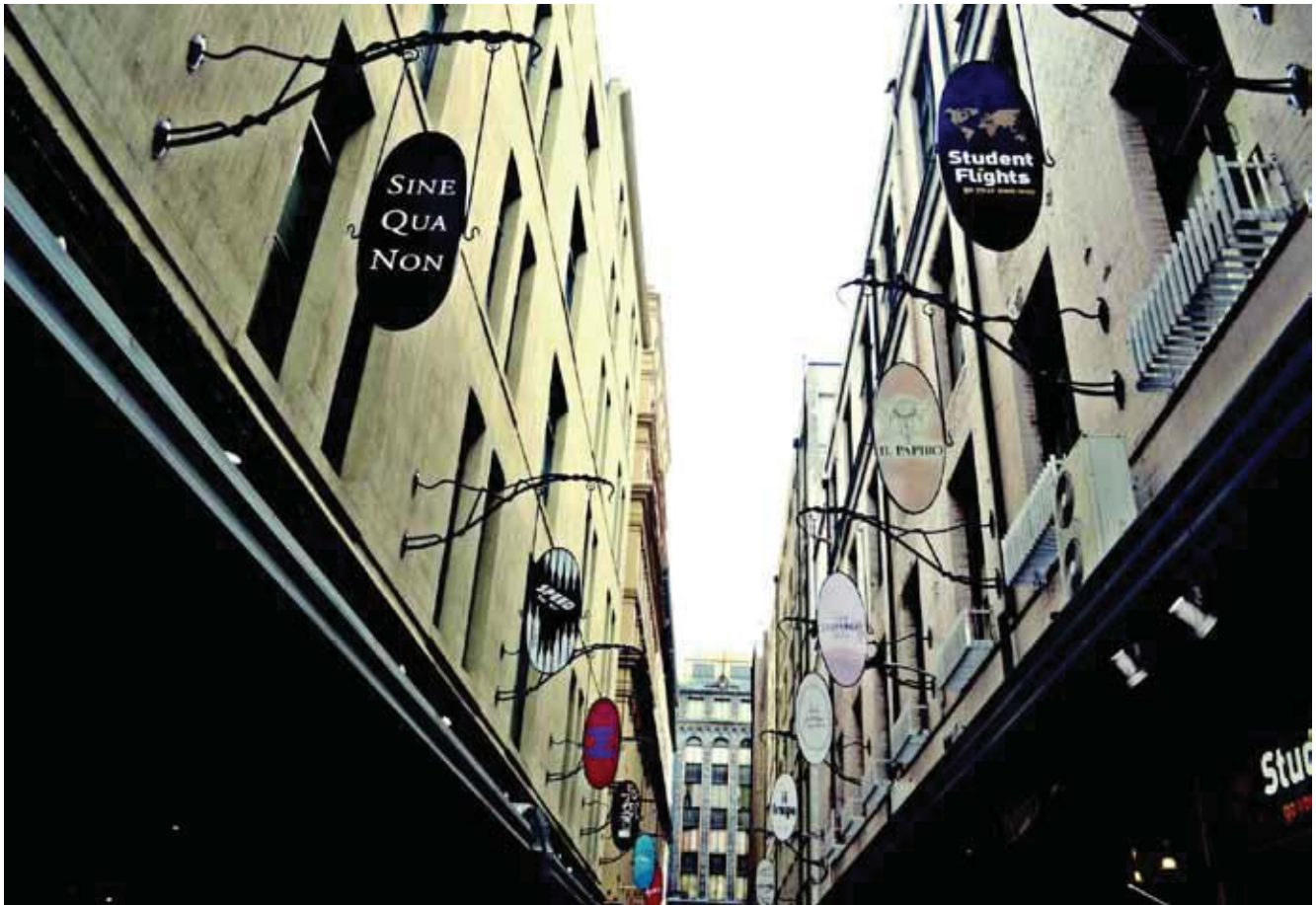


Figure 50 Signs, Degraives Street Melbourne



Figure 51 Existing signs, George Street South

## 4 Building elements

The built edge defines the visual and spatial experience of George Street. It includes building elements such as:

- Signage;
- Awnings; and
- Building materials and finish quality.

These elements are considered in this section in terms of the specific character that they can create for George Street.

The City of Sydney is reviewing the Central Sydney Development Control Plan (DCP). Policy recommendations in this section will inform that review process.

### 4.1 Signs

Signs play an important role in defining the character of George Street. The type and amount of signage clearly contributes to the experience of different character areas along the length of George Street (Chinatown, the retail core and the commercial core).

In Chinatown, where shopfronts are smaller, the proliferation of under awning signs becomes a defining characteristic. The many signs are accentuated by the stepped awnings which respond to the slope of this part of George Street. As building footprints become larger around the retail core, signs is more sparse. In some cases one building will have many signs in the same style, for example the Queen Victoria Building and the MidCity Centre.

The Central Sydney DCP controls the size and shape of signage. DCP signage provisions are being reviewed, particularly for digital signage. The quality of signs and their impact on the experience of the street, particularly at night time, is important in achieving a high-quality iconic street.

The 2013 *George Street Lighting Masterplan* outlines a strategy for buildings lining George Street to create a 'backdrop' to the public domain at night. It includes facade lighting for heritage facades, but requires other facades to be recessive. It limits lighting levels for signs and billboards to 300 candelas/square metre.

### NEXT STEPS FOR THE CITY

4.1.1 Investigate amending the Central Sydney DCP provisions to include a George Street signage precinct.

This could apply to the pedestrianised area and be similar to the controls for Pitt Street, requiring signs to:

- Limit digital and animated signage;
- Be visually interesting and respond to the significant role of George Street as the city spine, a retail area and public gathering place;
- Be integrated with the architecture of the building;
- Not be internally illuminated light boxes unless under awnings;
- Be restricted in the number of signs per building to minimise visual clutter;
- Be compatible with light rail signage and legibility along George Street; and
- Limit lighting levels to 300 candelas/square metre. Existing signage with exceeding brightness should be operated at less than maximum brightness.





Figure 52 High quality heritage awning



Figure 53 Canvas awnings



Figure 54 Contemporary awning design using mixed materials

## 4 Building elements

### 4.2 Awnings

Building awnings are an important part of the city's vernacular and contribute to a unique pedestrian experience in Sydney. They also provide important weather protection from both sun and rain, appropriate to Sydney's climate.

The pedestrian amenity provided by continuous awnings along George Street is a critical element in the delivery of a quality pedestrian environment with a high level of amenity. Awnings are required along the length of George Street under the Central Sydney DCP.

The City's awning controls have been tested against the spatial requirements of the light rail corridor to ensure adequate space for street trees and light rail infrastructure on George Street.

In addressing the objective for George Street to become a legible, iconic spine, building awnings along George Street should achieve a high level of design excellence. This is particularly important in the case of heritage buildings, where buildings originally housing banks and financial institutions are being converted to retail premises (such as in the area of George Street around Martin Place). These buildings have a history of retractable canvas awnings, as shown. The reinstatement of canvas awnings would provide an appropriate response to the changing use of these buildings.

#### Design recommendations

- Maintain the existing DCP spatial requirements for building awnings.



#### NEXT STEPS FOR THE CITY

- 4.2.1 Investigate including design excellence provisions for awnings along George Street in the Sydney DCP. These could require the use of high quality materials, finishes and detailing to contribute to an iconic street.
- 4.2.2 Investigate amending Sydney DCP Provisions to include recommendations for awnings or other weather protection for heritage building facades, such as:
  - Use of high quality retractable canvas awnings over building openings and within the geometry of building bays; and
  - A strip of clear glazing along the building edge of solid awnings to allow a continuous view of heritage facades.





Figure 56



Figure 57



Figure 58

Sandstone character buildings in Central Sydney



Figure 59 Heritage building - George Street South



## 4 Building elements

### 4.3 Building materials and finish quality **Design recommendations**

The age and quality of building along the length of George Street varies greatly from early 20th century sandstone and brick buildings, to modern concrete, glass and steel towers.

The quality and maintenance of building finishes tends to increase with property values, moving from south to north along George Street. There are many examples of poorly maintained buildings and shopfronts at the southern end of the street. Poor building maintenance is a particular loss in the case of heritage buildings, where rich details can be permanently lost due to inadequate maintenance.

The Sydney Development Control Plan sets out materiality requirements for all new development within Central Sydney. New building exteriors are required to be designed so that:

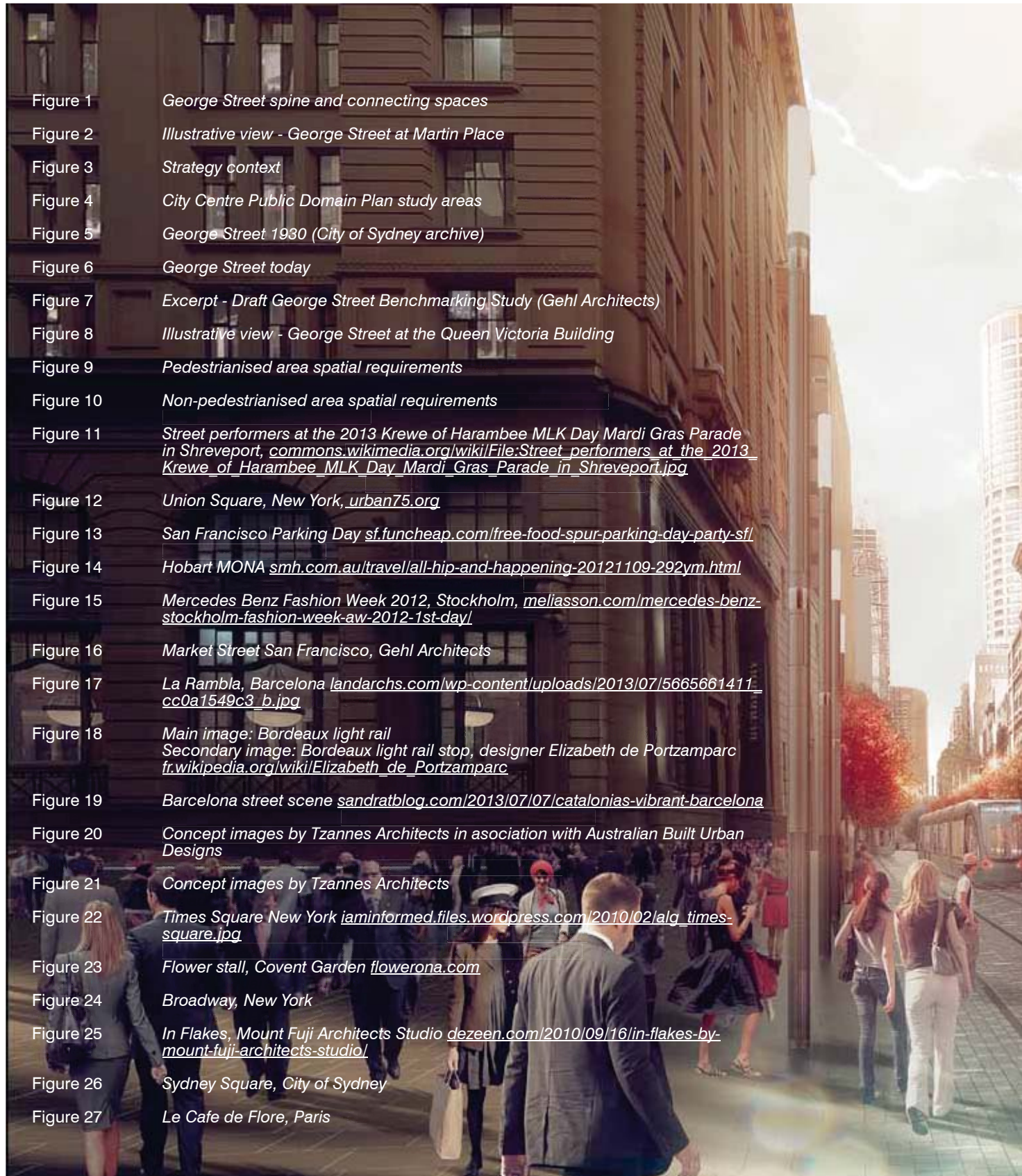
- the predominant masonry character and articulation of Central Sydney is reinforced, particularly at the lower levels of buildings; and
- the materials used, including glass, are predominantly light in colour to reflect better quality light into the streets and respond to the characteristic light colours of Central Sydney.

The DCP requires extensive expanses of blank glass or solid wall on building facades to be avoided.

Many examples throughout Central Sydney demonstrate the positive outcomes of these controls, where buildings demonstrate a particular Sydney sandstone quality and warmth within a modern design tectonic.

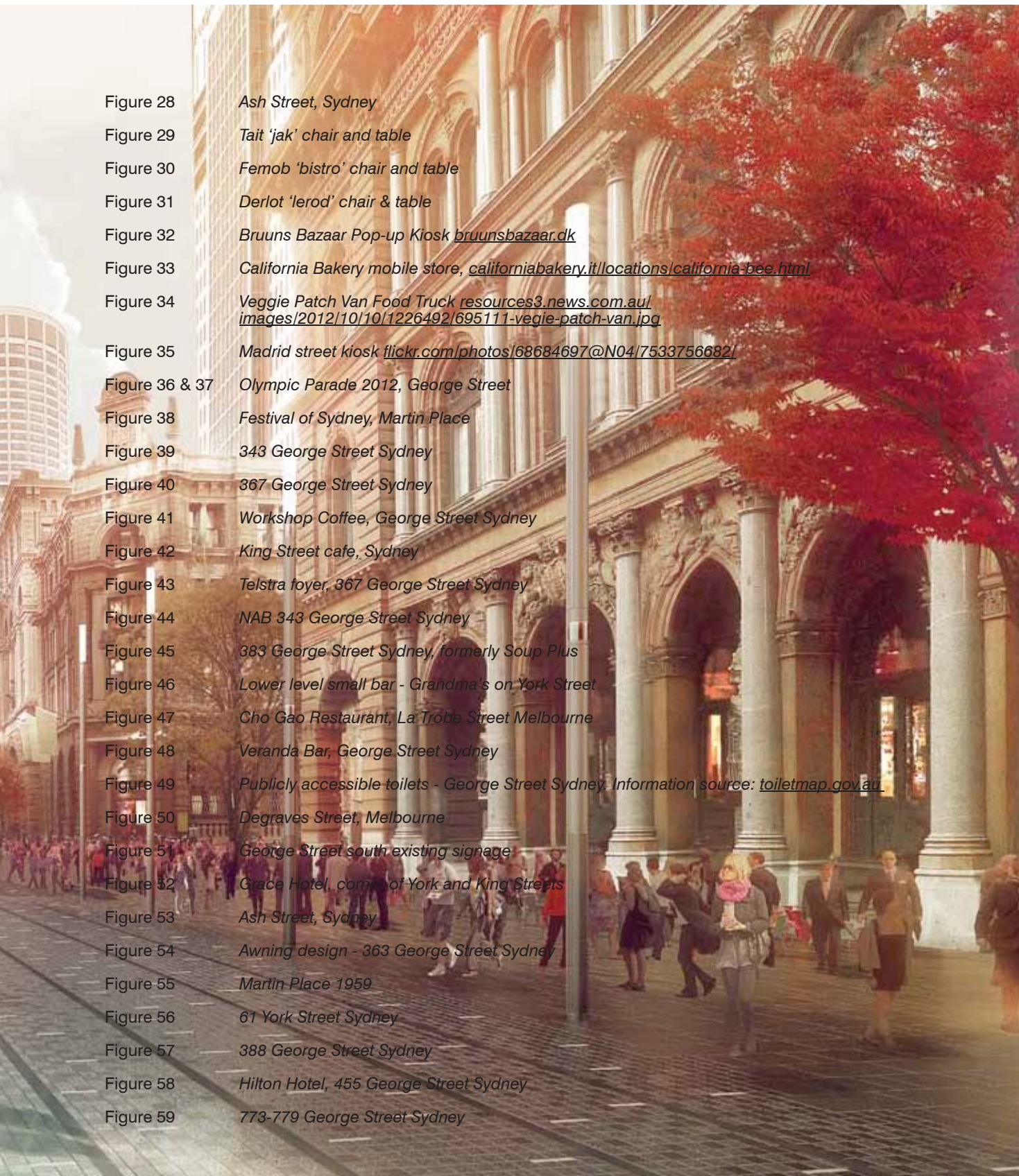
- Maintain the existing DCP requirements for building materiality and enforce the provision requiring masonry character for buildings facing George Street.

## Image references



- Figure 1 *George Street spine and connecting spaces*
- Figure 2 *Illustrative view - George Street at Martin Place*
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- Figure 8 *Illustrative view - George Street at the Queen Victoria Building*
- Figure 9 *Pedestrianised area spatial requirements*
- Figure 10 *Non-pedestrianised area spatial requirements*
- Figure 11 *Street performers at the 2013 Krewe of Harambee MLK Day Mardi Gras Parade in Shreveport, [commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Street\\_performers\\_at\\_the\\_2013\\_Krewe\\_of\\_Harambee\\_MLK\\_Day\\_Mardi\\_Gras\\_Parade\\_in\\_Shreveport.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Street_performers_at_the_2013_Krewe_of_Harambee_MLK_Day_Mardi_Gras_Parade_in_Shreveport.jpg)*
- Figure 12 *Union Square, New York, [urban75.org](http://urban75.org)*
- Figure 13 *San Francisco Parking Day [sf.funcheap.com/free-food-spur-parking-day-party-sf/](http://sf.funcheap.com/free-food-spur-parking-day-party-sf/)*
- Figure 14 *Hobart MONA [smh.com.au/travell/all-hip-and-happening-20121109-292ym.html](http://smh.com.au/travell/all-hip-and-happening-20121109-292ym.html)*
- Figure 15 *Mercedes Benz Fashion Week 2012, Stockholm, [meliasson.com/mercedes-benz-stockholm-fashion-week-aw-2012-1st-day/](http://meliasson.com/mercedes-benz-stockholm-fashion-week-aw-2012-1st-day/)*
- Figure 16 *Market Street San Francisco, Gehl Architects*
- Figure 17 *La Rambla, Barcelona [landarchs.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/5665661411cc0a1549c3\\_b.jpg](http://landarchs.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/5665661411cc0a1549c3_b.jpg)*
- Figure 18 *Main image: Bordeaux light rail  
Secondary image: Bordeaux light rail stop, designer Elizabeth de Portzamparc [fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elizabeth\\_de\\_Portzamparc](http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elizabeth_de_Portzamparc)*
- Figure 19 *Barcelona street scene [sandratblog.com/2013/07/07/catalonias-vibrant-barcelona](http://sandratblog.com/2013/07/07/catalonias-vibrant-barcelona)*
- Figure 20 *Concept images by Tzannes Architects in association with Australian Built Urban Designs*
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- Figure 22 *Times Square New York [iaminformed.files.wordpress.com/2010/02/alg\\_times-square.jpg](http://iaminformed.files.wordpress.com/2010/02/alg_times-square.jpg)*
- Figure 23 *Flower stall, Covent Garden [flowerona.com](http://flowerona.com)*
- Figure 24 *Broadway, New York*
- Figure 25 *In Flakes, Mount Fuji Architects Studio [dezeen.com/2010/09/16/in-flakes-by-mount-fuji-architects-studio/](http://dezeen.com/2010/09/16/in-flakes-by-mount-fuji-architects-studio/)*
- Figure 26 *Sydney Square, City of Sydney*
- Figure 27 *Le Cafe de Flore, Paris*





- Figure 28 *Ash Street, Sydney*
- Figure 29 *Tait 'jak' chair and table*
- Figure 30 *Femob 'bistro' chair and table*
- Figure 31 *Derlot 'lerod' chair & table*
- Figure 32 *Bruuns Bazaar Pop-up Kiosk [bruunsbazaar.dk](http://bruunsbazaar.dk)*
- Figure 33 *California Bakery mobile store, [californiabakery.it/locations/california-bee.html](http://californiabakery.it/locations/california-bee.html)*
- Figure 34 *Veggie Patch Van Food Truck [resources3.news.com.au/images/2012/10/10/1226492/695111-vegie-patch-van.jpg](http://resources3.news.com.au/images/2012/10/10/1226492/695111-vegie-patch-van.jpg)*
- Figure 35 *Madrid street kiosk [flickr.com/photos/68684697@N04/7533756682/](http://flickr.com/photos/68684697@N04/7533756682/)*
- Figure 36 & 37 *Olympic Parade 2012, George Street*
- Figure 38 *Festival of Sydney, Martin Place*
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- Figure 41 *Workshop Coffee, George Street Sydney*
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- Figure 59 *773-779 George Street Sydney*

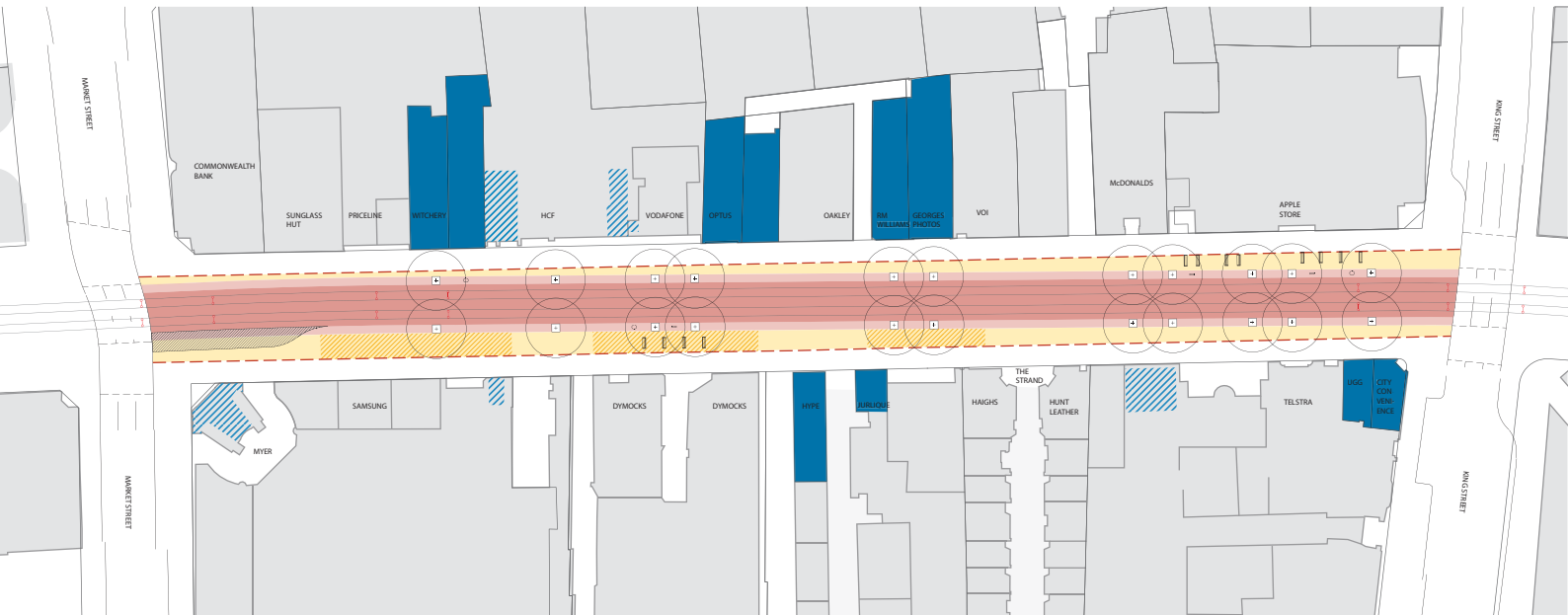


## 5 Public domain activation plans - block by block



## 5 Public domain activation plans - block by block

### Market Street to King Street



- Light rail DKE
- tree zone (1.35m)
- pedestrian movement zone (3.6m)
- flex zone
- potential activation zone
- fine grain opportunity
- 3 phase power preferred area

## 5 Public domain activation plans - block by block

### King Street to Wynyard Street



- Light rail DKE
- tree zone (1.35m)
- pedestrian movement zone (3.6m)
- flex zone
- potential activation zone
- fine grain opportunity
- 3 phase power preferred area



## 5 Public domain activation plans - block by block

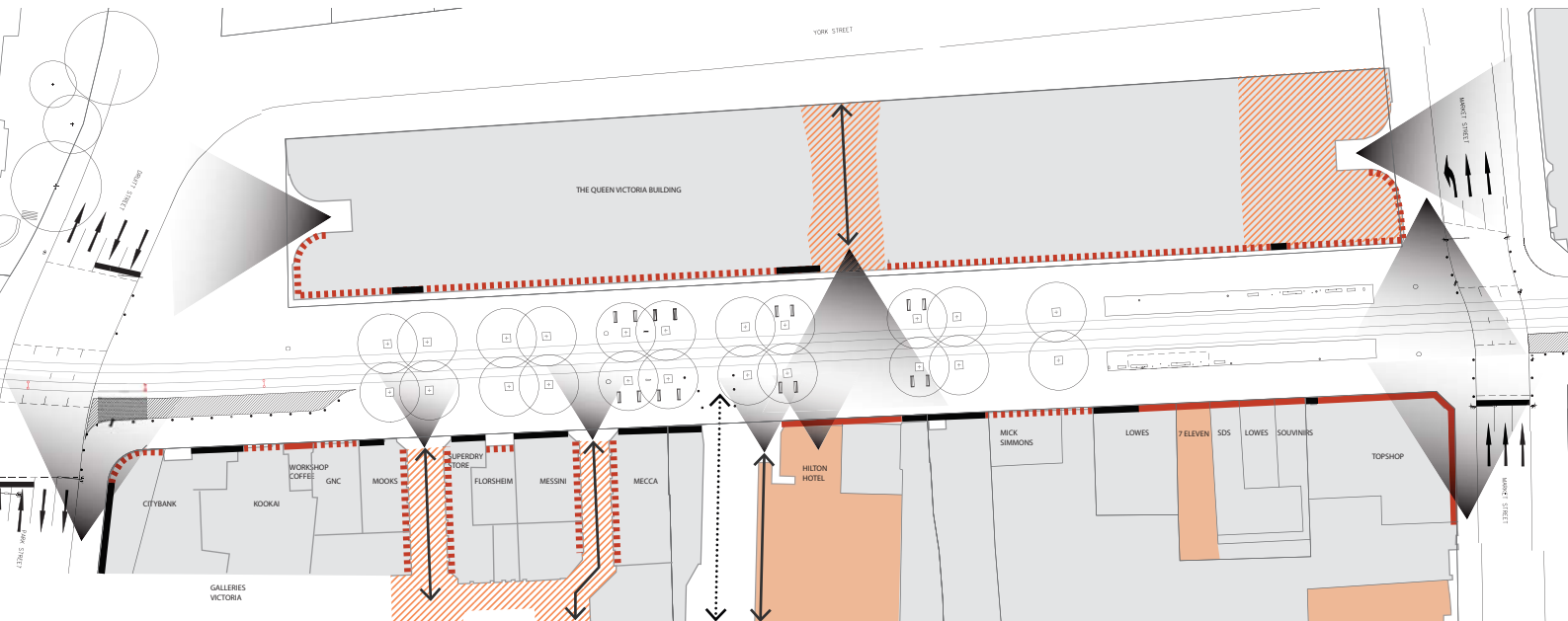
### Wynyard Street to Hunter Street



- Light rail DKE
- tree zone (1.35m)
- pedestrian movement zone (3.6m)
- flex zone
- potential activation zone
- fine grain opportunity
- 3 phase power preferred area

## 6 Ground floor frontage analysis - block by block

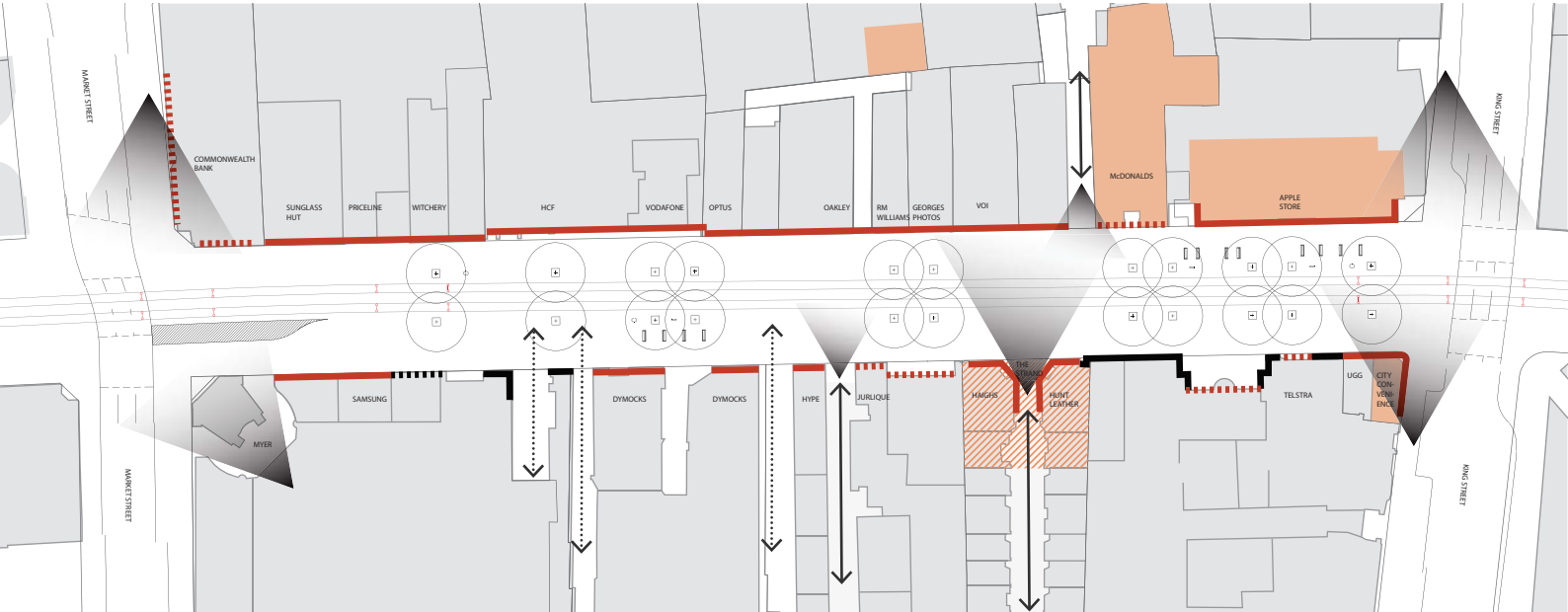
Druitt Street to Market Street



- ← pedestrian through site connections
- ▶ pedestrian flows
- ◀..... vehicular driveway crossings
- active facade
- pleasant facade
- dull facade
- inactive facade
- active past 6pm
- active past 6pm - upper or lower level

## 6 Ground floor frontage analysis - block by block

### Market to King Street

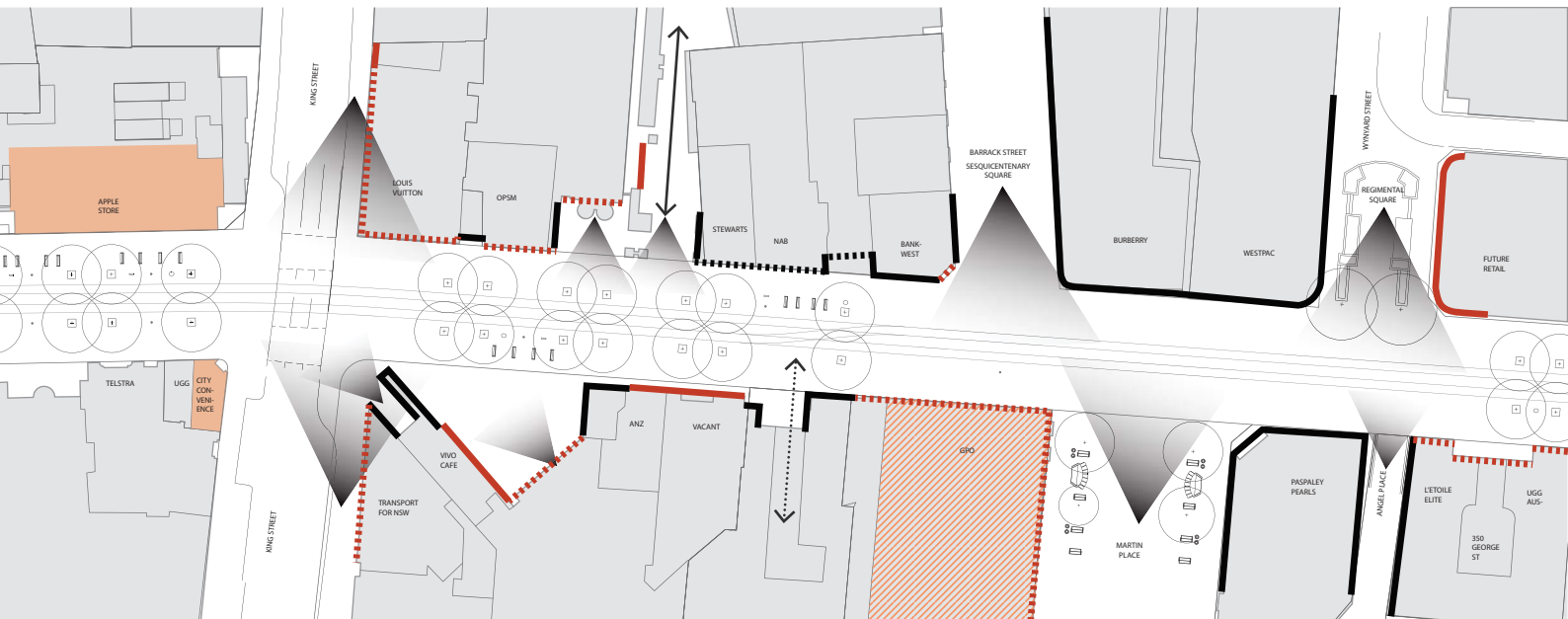


- ← pedestrian through site connections
- pedestrian flows
- ←..... vehicular driveway crossings
- active facade
- - - - pleasant facade
- ..... dull facade
- inactive facade
- active past 6pm
- ▨ active past 6pm - upper or lower level



## 6 Ground floor frontage analysis - block by block

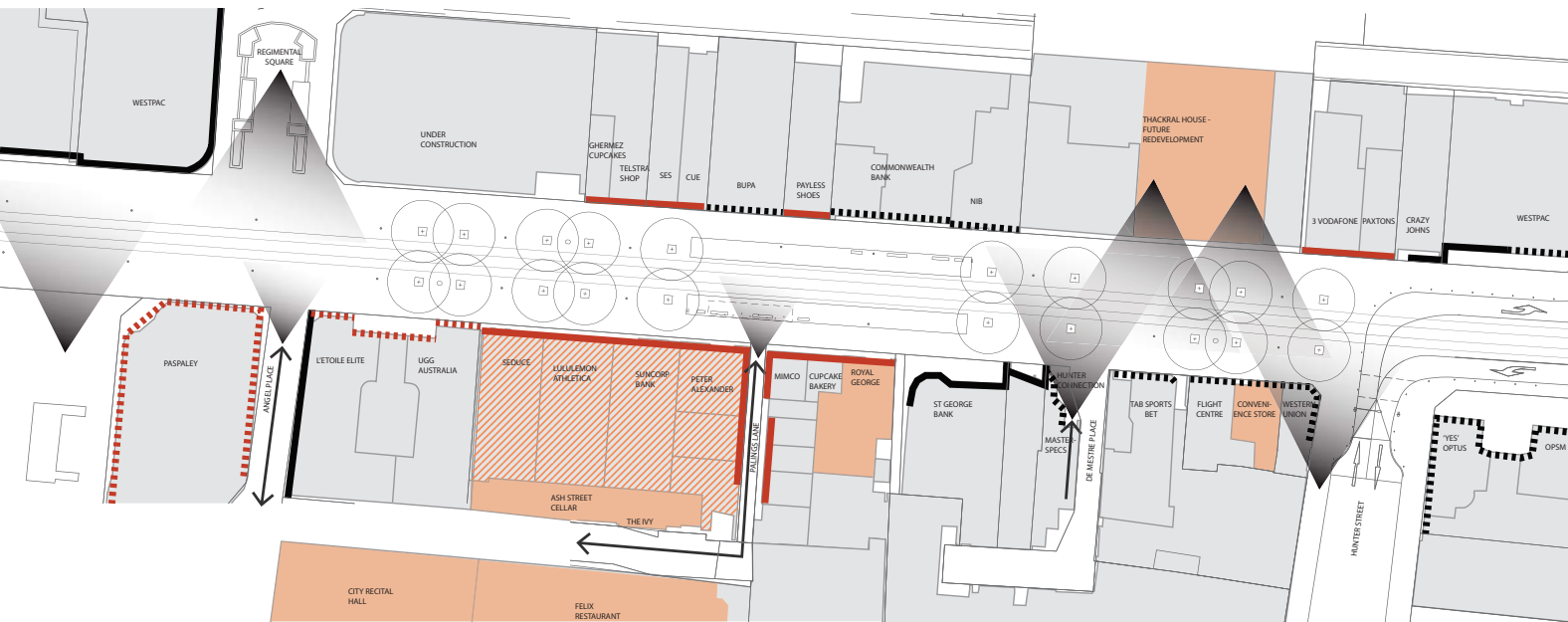
### King Street to Wynyard Street



- ← pedestrian through site connections
- ▶ pedestrian flows
- ⋯ vehicular driveway crossings
- active facade
- - - pleasant facade
- ⋯ dull facade
- inactive facade
- active past 6pm
- ▨ active past 6pm - upper or lower level

## 6 Ground floor frontage analysis - block by block

Wynyard Street to Hunter Street



- ← pedestrian through site connections
- ▶ pedestrian flows
- ◀..... vehicular driveway crossings
- active facade
- pleasant facade
- dull facade
- inactive facade
- active past 6pm
- active past 6pm - upper or lower level