



Appendix A

Martin Place Urban Design Study

2015-08-18



Martin Place

urban design study

Gehl
Architects

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PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

Martin Place last saw an upgrade in 2000 in connection with the Olympic Games. This upgrade focused on renewing the paving and public benches in order to align the space with the general public space upgrades in connection with works installed prior to the Olympics throughout the CBD.

Since 2000 numerous projects have evolved in the CBD such as laneway upgrades, the public art program, more residences, and the upcoming George Street transformation project, which will reinstate light rail in George Street, as well as re-establish George Street as the main spine of the CBD. A 1 km stretch of George Street will be pedestrianised including the section that runs past Martin Place.

Martin Place presently has a number of redevelopment sites e.g. the MLC Centre, 20 Martin Place, and 60 Martin Place. The general feeling is that the public space looks tired and is in need of a refresh to bring life back into Martin Place, thereby restoring it as a preferred location in the city. Proposed elements (such as outdoor dining and playful fountains) aim to encourage activation of the public space.

This document is an evaluation and discussion of the various elements that will populate and activate Martin Place in an attempt to develop an informed basis for a future design proposal.

Martin Place in the past

FROM LANEWAY TO CIVIC HEART

Martin Place is a street built in phases and has changed several times during the 1900's to become what it is today. Until the late 1800's the section between Pitt and Castlereagh Street was called Moore Street and was connected to George Street via "St Martins Lane".

The General Post Office was similarly constructed in stages, starting in 1863. Since then it has undergone some changes including its iconic tower being removed in the 1940s, only to be reinstalled in the 1960s. Construction of the GPO concluded at the beginning of the 1890's and in 1892 St Martins Lane was widened and renamed Martin Place. The GPO had a telegraph office attached to it which meant that Martin Place quickly became an important place where news arrived first. Martin Place also became an key centre for business and finance, and remains so today.

The Cenotaph was built in 1927 to commemorate WW1, and commemoration gatherings continue as a significant activity for the space, especially on west Martin Place.

In 1935 extensions to Martin Place were completed all the way to Macquarie Street. As a result, the street became a connection between George Street (the high street) and Macquarie Street (the ceremonial and governmental axis). The street's importance as the civic heart of Sydney grew and during the 1970's the street was pedestrianised. Once the pedestrianisation process was completed, Martin Place Railway Station opened in 1979.

Since then, there has been a clear change in the way we design and use public space. In the past, public space was dominated by representative design and is now performance based. Today, the focus of public space is to provide a framework for public life, rather than a host for various objects. Today spaces are shaped instead of being designed around the objects populating them.

Source: [Wikipedia](#); *City of Sydney & Webber 'The Design of Sydney' 1988*

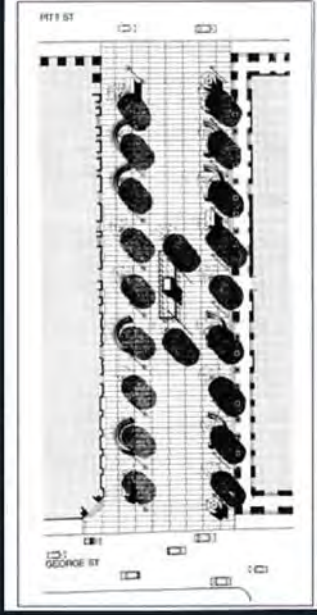


Everyday scenery on Martin Place in the 1950's. Source: [City of Sydney Archive](#)

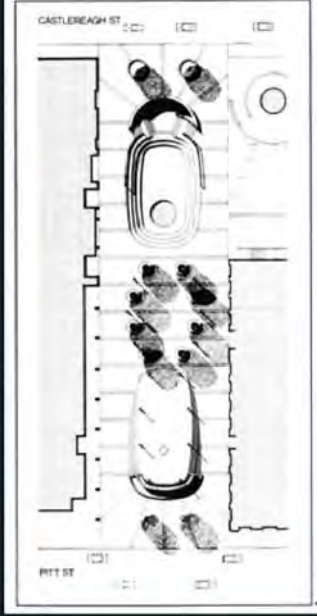


Anzac Parade in Martin Place, 1930. Source: <http://hdimagegallery.net/anzac-day-march>

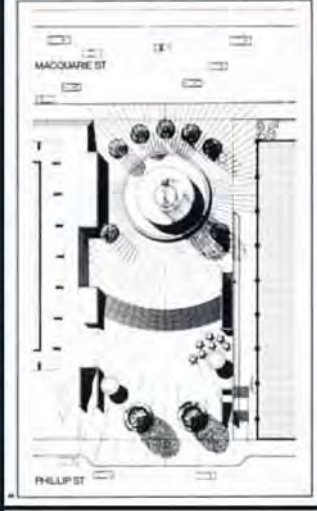
1970
George to Pitt



1972
Pitt to Castlereagh



1975
Phillip to Macquarie



1971 near George Street



early 80s information kiosk



view east to Sydney Hospital

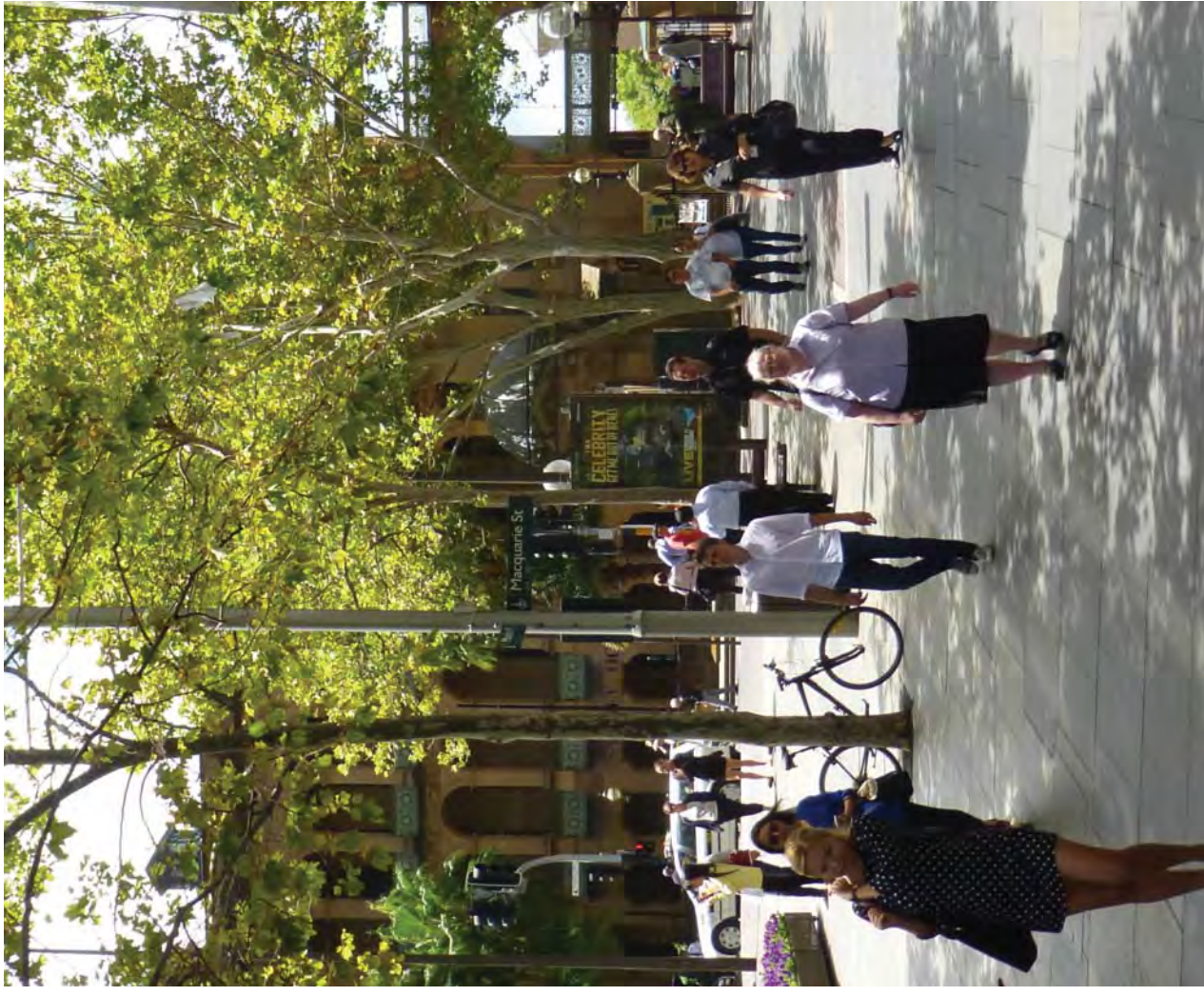
For various reasons the atmosphere from the 1970's pedestrianisation remains in Martin Place despite alterations to the paving and other urban elements over the years. Source: "The Design of Sydney", Webber, 1988

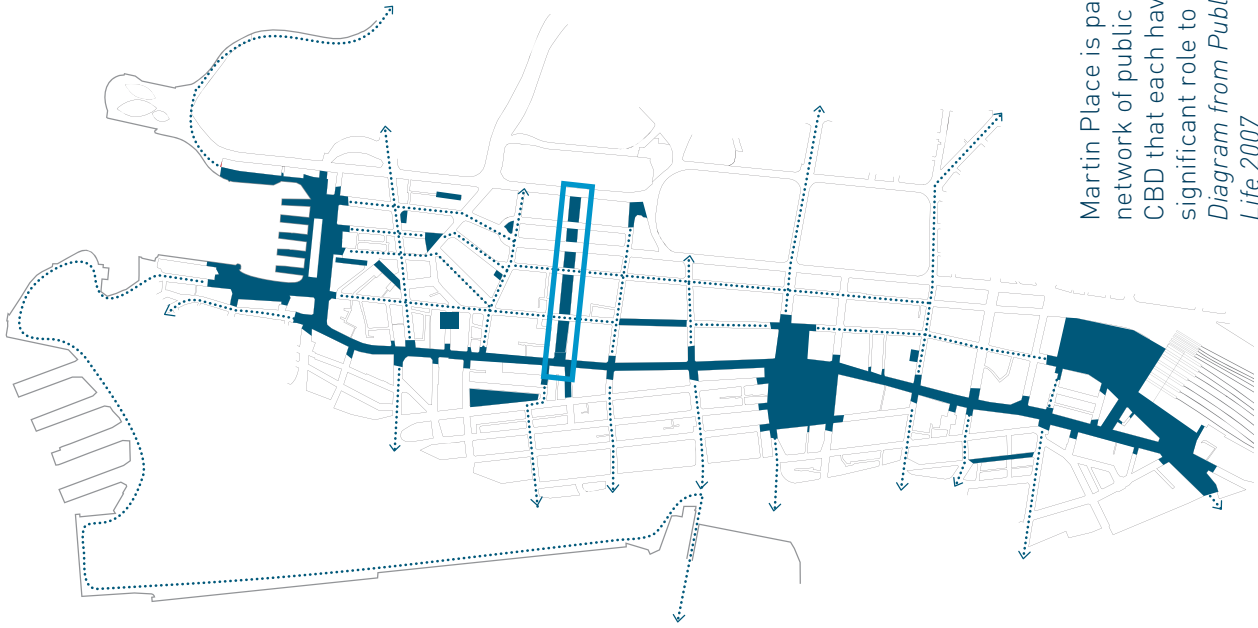
Martin place today

Martin Place is one of many public spaces in Sydney's CBD. However Martin Place holds a significant importance as one of the few urban spaces that holds bigger events and has one of the most central locations.

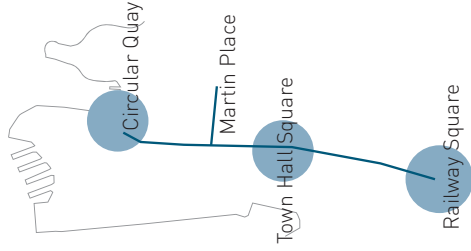
The following characteristics are defining Martin Place today:

- **FORMAL**
- **EVENT SPACE**
- **THOROUGHFARE**
- **PUBLIC TRANSPORT NODE**
- **FINANCIAL DISTRICT**
- **HIGH LEVEL BRANDS**
- **CEREMONIAL**
- **LUNCHTIME PLAZA**
- **RESPITE**

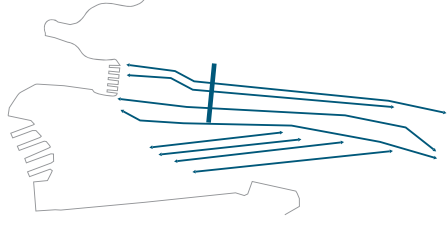




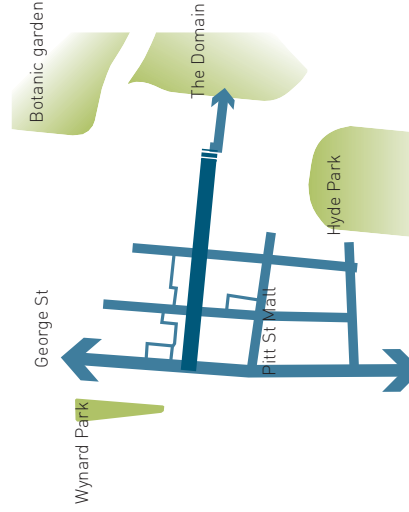
Martin Place is part of a wider network of public spaces in the CBD that each have their own significant role to play.
Diagram from Public Spaces Public Life 2007



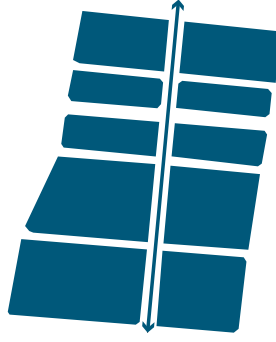
George Street is the spine of the CBD, with three main spaces - Circular Quay, Town Hall Square, and Railway Square.



The CBD is dominated by north-south axis streets. Martin Place is an exception and provides an opportunity to experience the city on an east-west axis.



Martin Place is well connected to numerous key destinations in the CBD.



The CBD is dominated by rectangular blocks with long north-south facades and narrow east-west facades. Martin Place is populated by shorter blocks, which provide more variation in building frontages, but also more intersecting streets.

Martin Place today - Public Life Data

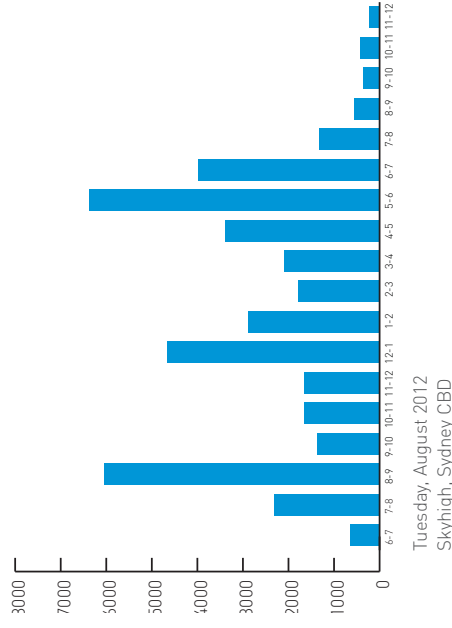
PEDESTRIAN TRAFFIC IN 2012

Weekdays are dominated by a morning, lunchtime and evening peak, highlighting office workers in the area as the primary users.

Weekends see very little activity in Martin Place with a slight peak around lunchtime. Weekend visitors do not spend much time in Martin Place and do not perceive Martin Place as a key destination.

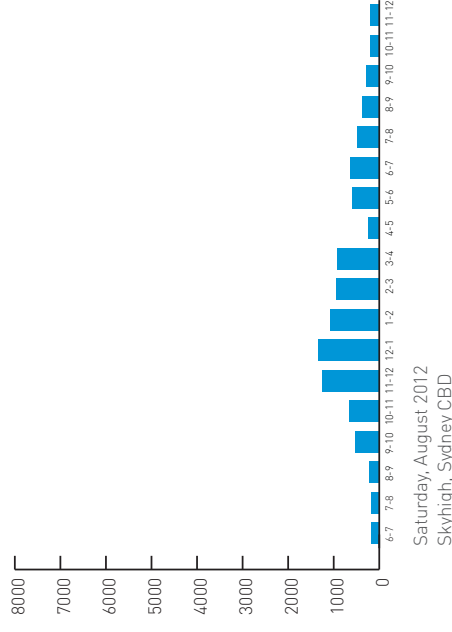
MOST BUSY AT PEAK HOUR & LUNCHTIME

George St - Pitt St

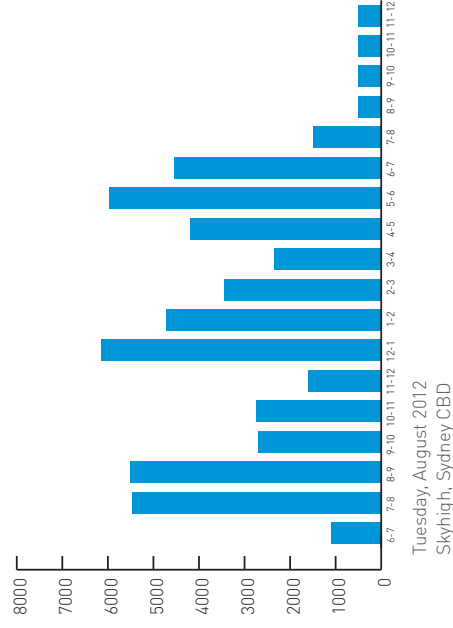


NOT A WEEKEND DESTINATION

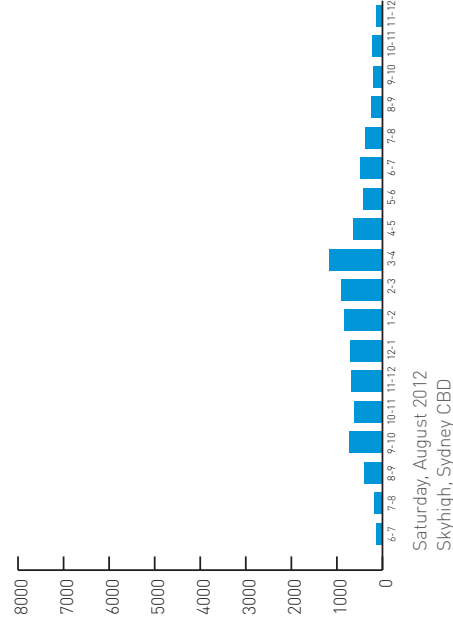
George St - Pitt St



Pitt St - Castlereagh St



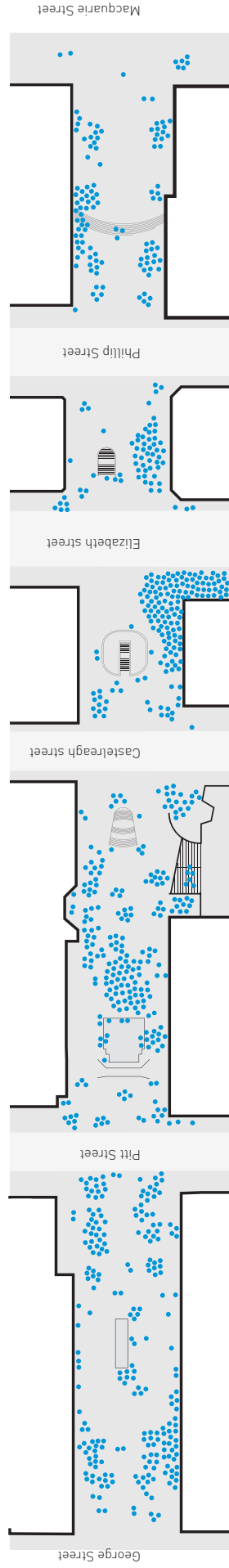
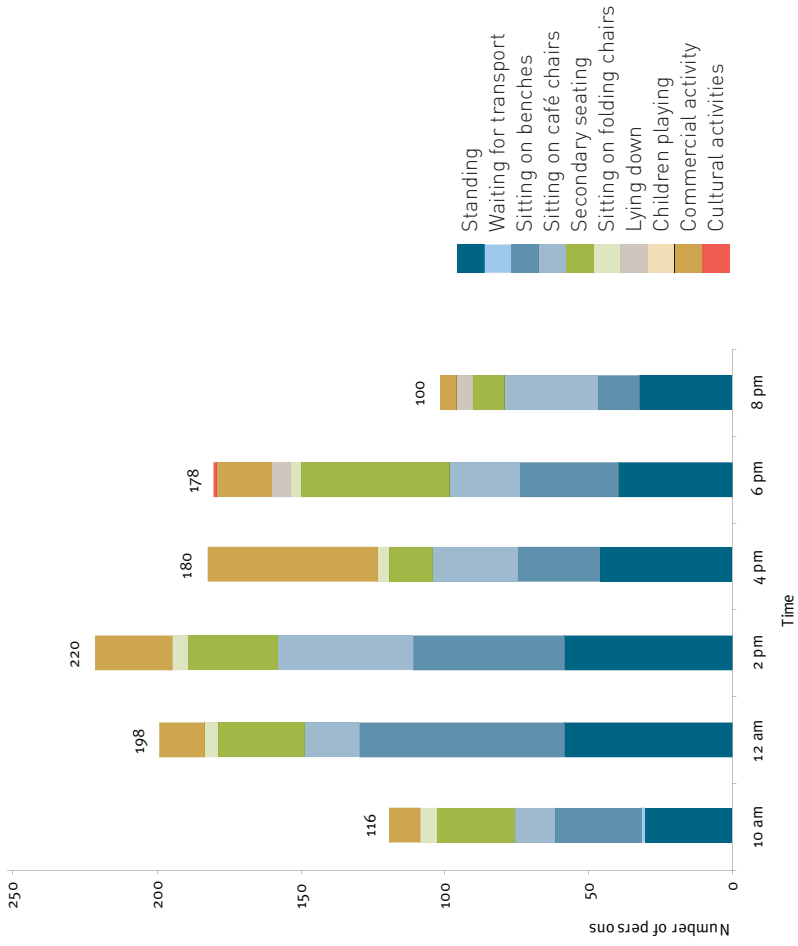
Pitt St - Castlereagh St



STATIONARY ACTIVITY REGISTRATIONS IN 2007

As part of the Public Spaces and Public Life study in 2007 registrations of recreational activities were undertaken. Activities may include people who stop walking to rest on a bench, people who stop to engage in a conversation, people sitting at an outdoor café, or people smoking outside offices.

These types of activities indicate the general usage or lack of usage of a public space, and tend to happen when the urban quality is right and the weather is good.



STATIONARY ACTIVITY USE PATTERN DURING A SUMMER WEEKDAY

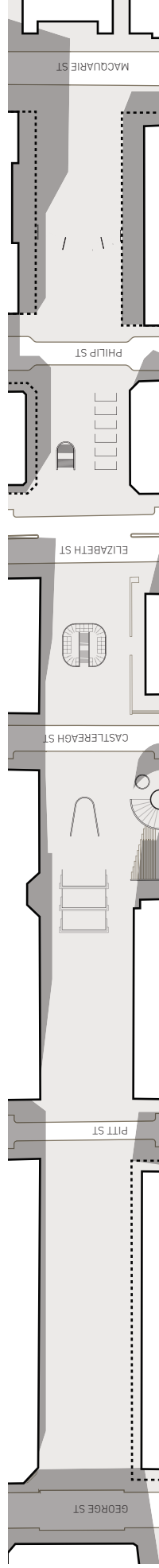
Scale 1 : 2000

(Accumulation of 6 recordings carried out on a summer weekday between 10am and 8pm)

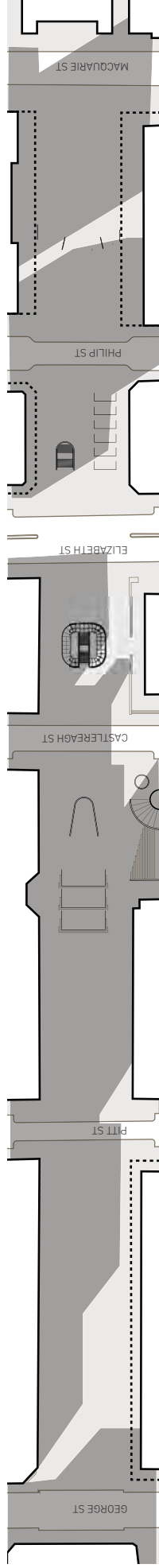
Martin Place today - Microclimate

AT 2 PM IN JUNE
ALL OF
MARTIN
PLACE IS
SHADED

SUNNY MOST OF THE DAY IN SUMMER
2 PM IN DECEMBER



SUNNY PATCHES ALONG THE SOUTHERN FACADES IN SPRING AND AUTUMN
2 PM IN MARCH



Generally people favour the steps in the sun for the majority of the year.

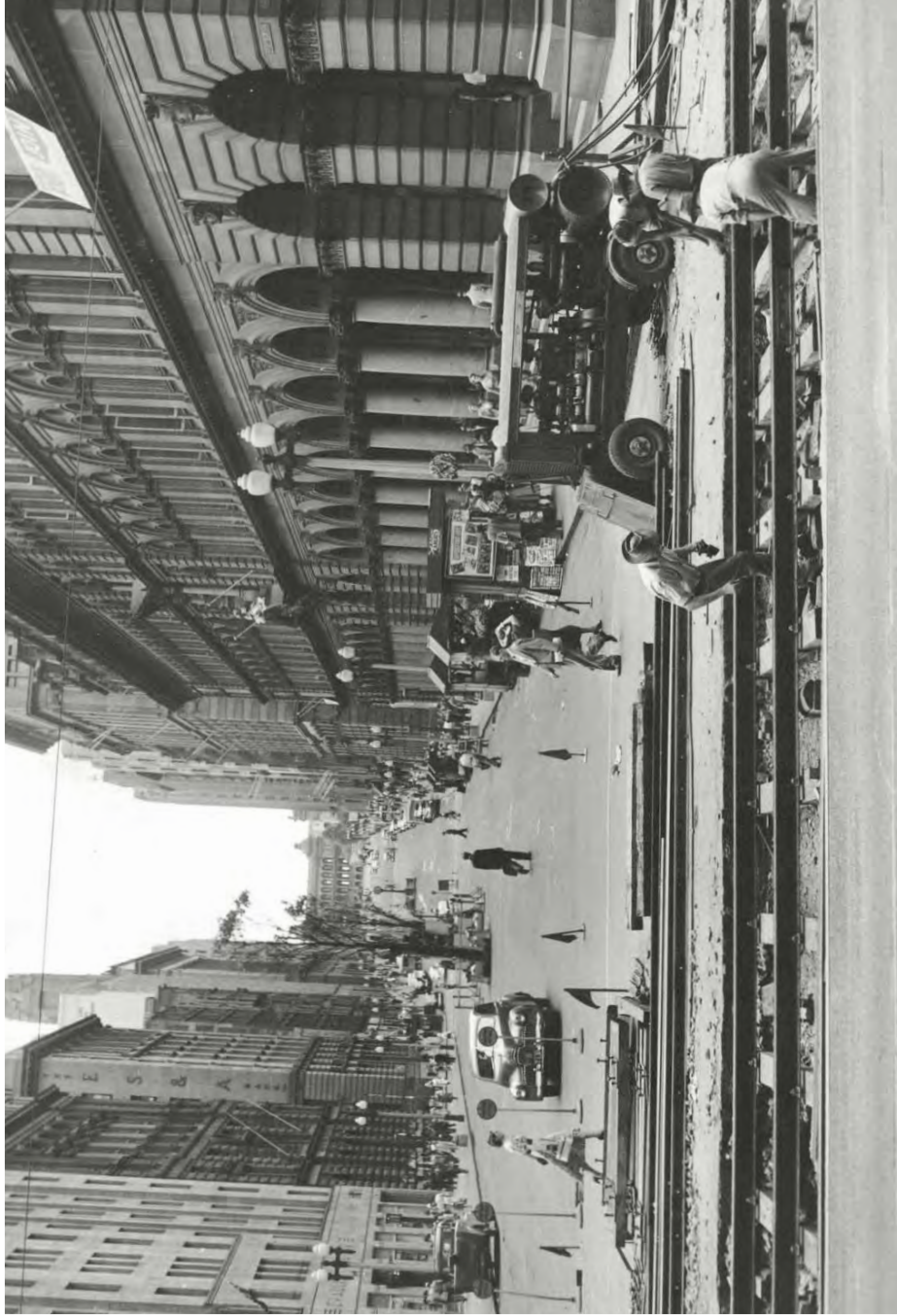


Steps in the sun are more appealing than benches in the shade.

Opposite page: The steps at the GPO are a favorite place for lingering and enjoying the sun.

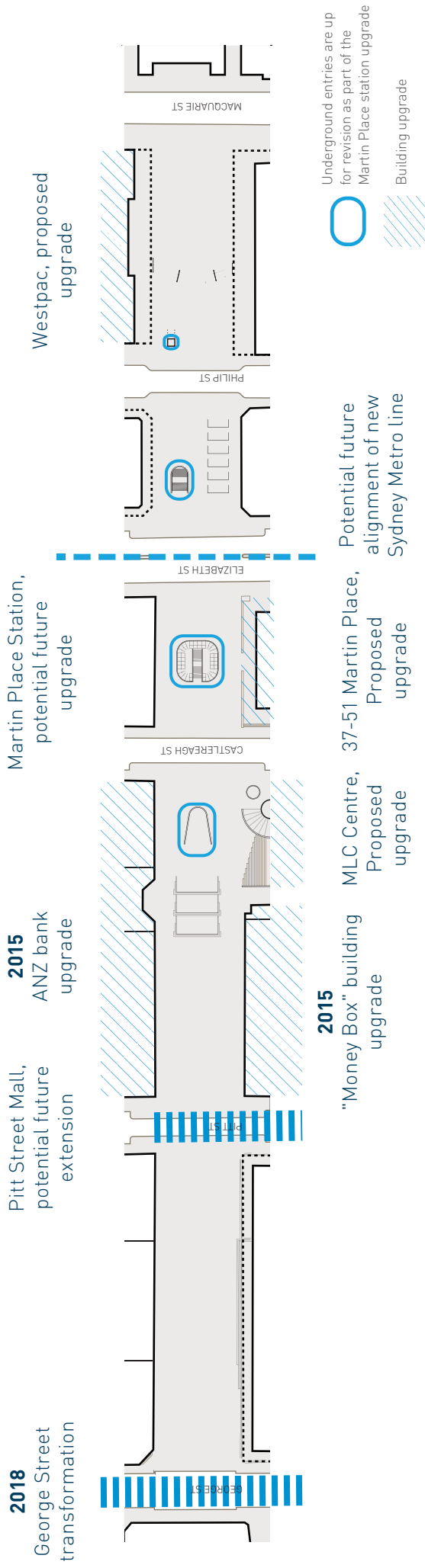


Martin Place tomorrow



Martin Place in the 1950s
Source: <https://www.historypin.org/channels/view/30932/#|photos/list/>

FUTURE AND ONGOING PROJECTS IN MARTIN PLACE



The illustration above indicates future changes in and around Martin Place.

A number of redevelopments are occurring in Martin Place in the nearby future, as well as the George Street transformation project.

The upgrade of Martin Place Station is also scheduled, however the exact timing is unknown.

Main Potentials

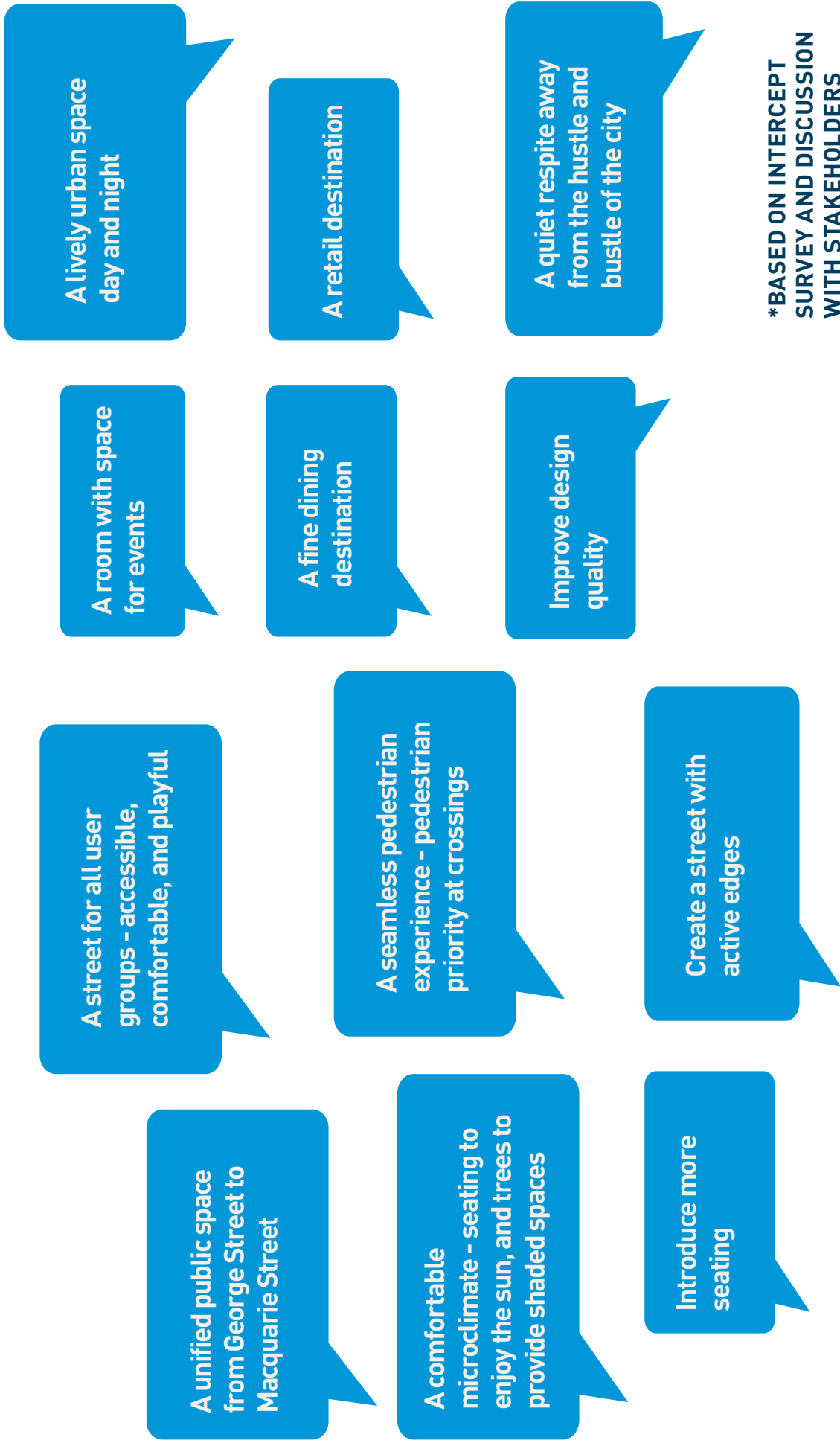
- **Central**; in the retail core of the CBD
- **Accessible**; many points of entry
- **Connected**; a pedestrian link connecting transport modes
- **Destination**; Sydney's gathering space
- **Topography**; interesting views and experience
- **History**; heritage buildings of fine quality
- **Quiet pockets**; no vehicular access east-west
- **Change is in the air**; new developments are on the way
- **Good access to sunny spaces**

(as opposed to most locations in Sydney CBD)

Main Challenges

- **Underwhelming**
- **Dimensions; long and narrow**
- **Divided**; a sequence of spaces divided by vehicular streets
- **Formal**; memorial space, formal architecture
- **Mono functional**; primarily banks and offices, less retail
- **Heritage**; limited adaptation of heritage buildings
- **In-active**; deserted outside office hours, inactive frontages
- **Urban corridor**; people tend not to spend time
- **Cluttered**; numerous un-coordinated street elements
- **Accessibility**; steps and ramps
- **Event space**; a busy event schedule of mixed quality events
- **Quality varies**; quality difference from west to east

Martin Place objectives*



***BASED ON INTERCEPT SURVEY AND DISCUSSION WITH STAKEHOLDERS**

A PEOPLE PLACE



BEAUTIFUL LIGHTING



ABUNDANCE OF SEATING



LUSCIOUS GREEN



A GREAT SPACE FOR DINING



INSPIRING WATER & ART



AN EVENT SPACE



GREAT PAVING THROUGHOUT



Spatial concept

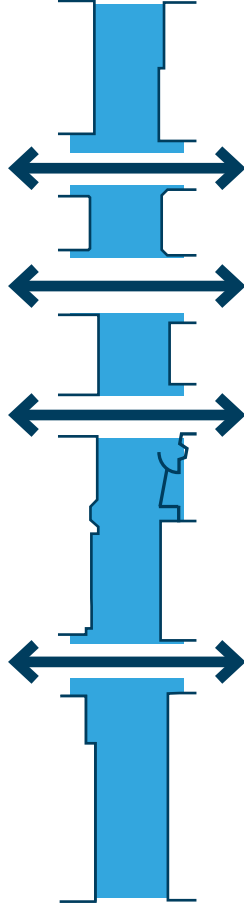
FROM A SEQUENCE OF SPACES ...



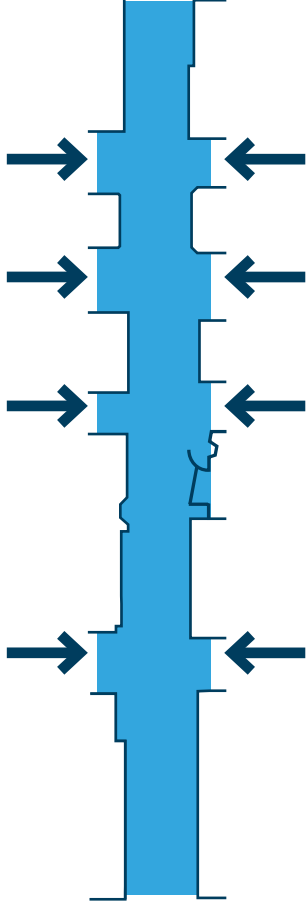
... TO A UNIFIED SPACE



FROM STREETS SEPARATING MARTIN PLACE ...

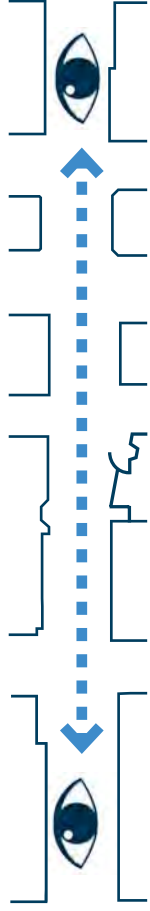


... TO STREETS ARRIVING AT A SQUARE

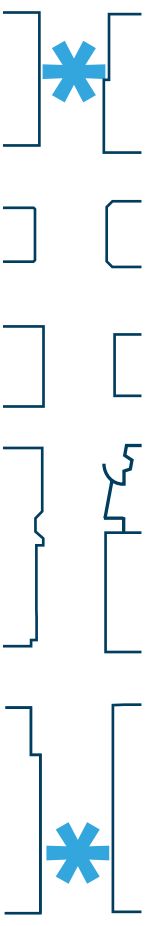


Guidelines

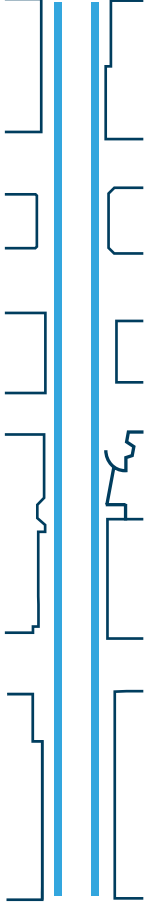
KEEP SIGHT LINES CLEAR FROM EAST TO WEST



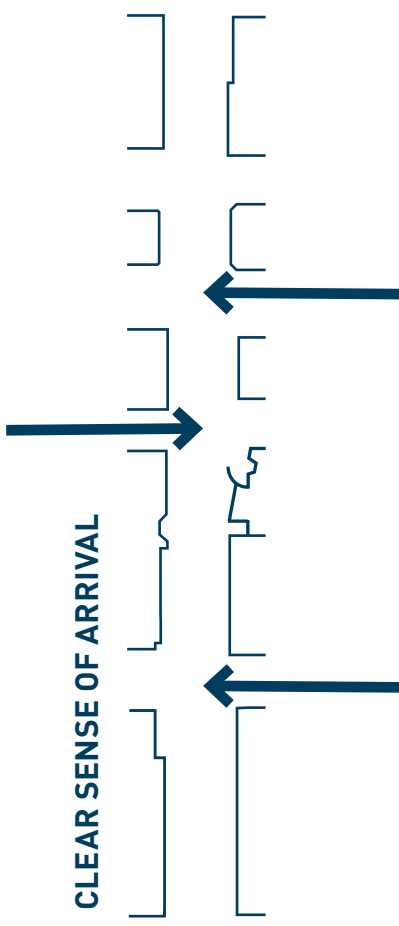
DESTINATIONS AT EITHER END OF MARTIN PLACE



USE THE TREE PLANTING ZONE FOR FURNISHING



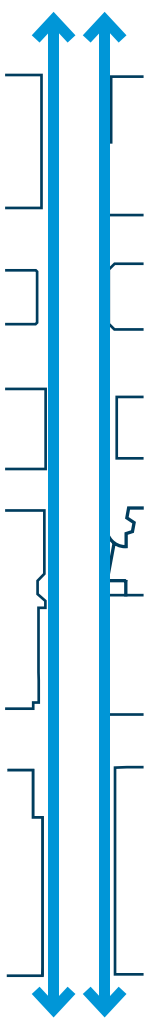
CLEAR SENSE OF ARRIVAL



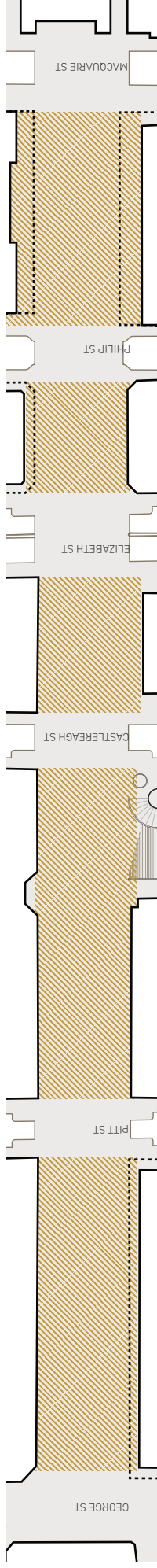
ACTIVE EDGES + CENTRAL EVENT SPACES



CONTINUOUS, ACCESSIBLE MOVEMENT ZONES ALONG EDGES



Usage concept



ITALIAN PIAZZA

- Classical
- Formal
- Inviting
- Spacious
- Warm
- Outdoor dining
- Tranquility

- EVENTS

WATER PLAY

- Informal seating
- Friendly
- Engaging
- Short stops
- Meeting place
- Children
- Play
- Well connected to retail core

- EVENTS

QUIET ZONE

- Access to public transport (short term)
- Respite
- Watching the daily street ballet
- Coffee spot
- Newspapers
- Reading room

- EVENTS

QUIET ZONE

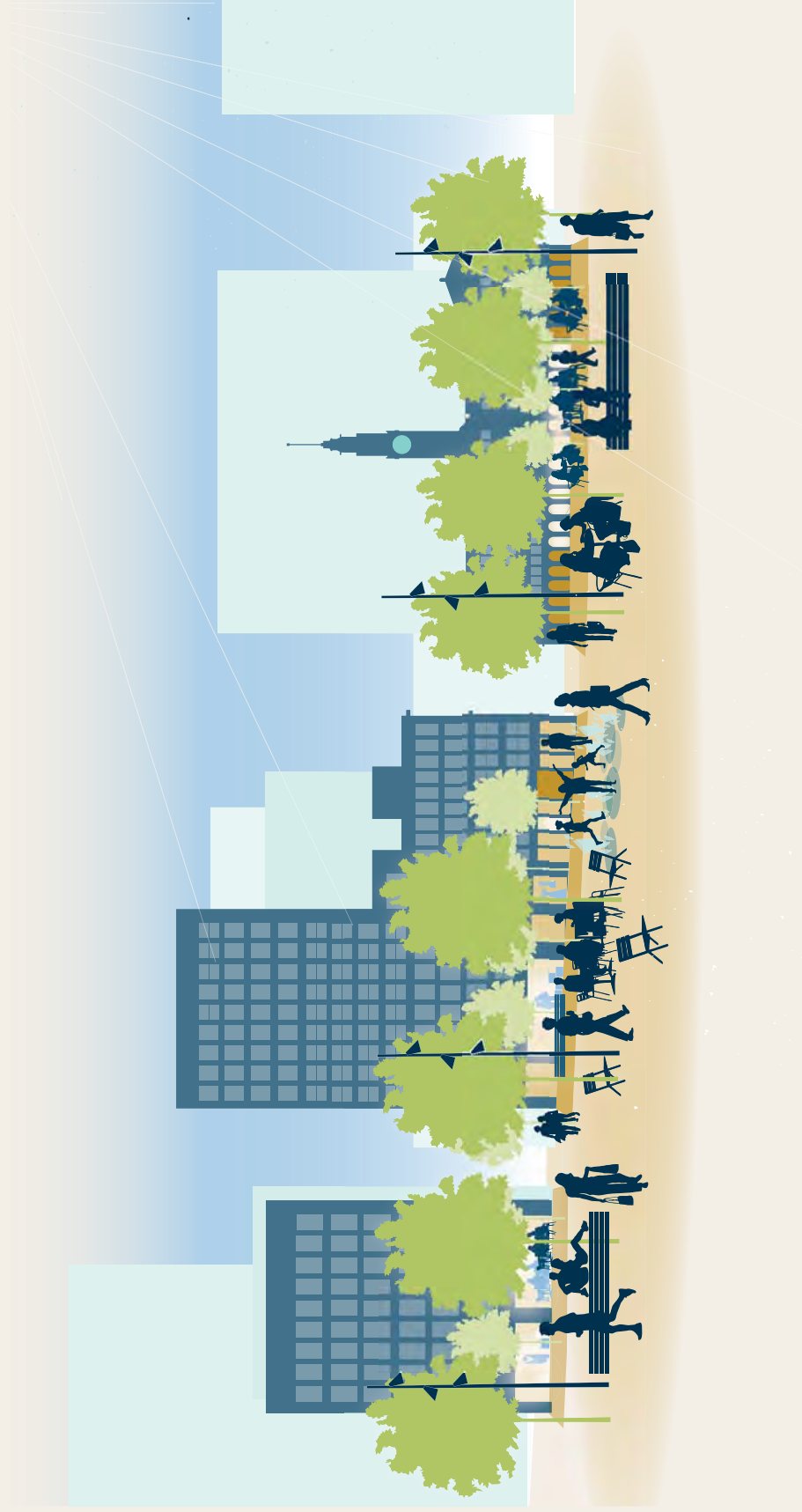
- Great views
- Spectacular stairs/ramps
- Water
- Green
- Fun and play
- Temporary interventions
- Public art
- Showroom

- EVENTS

CIVIC ZONE

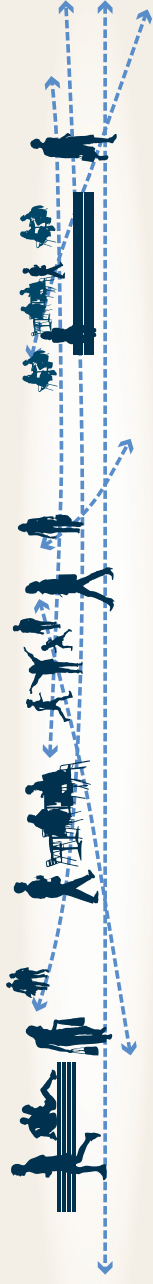


Conceptual approach



LIFE

a thoroughfare AND a recreational place



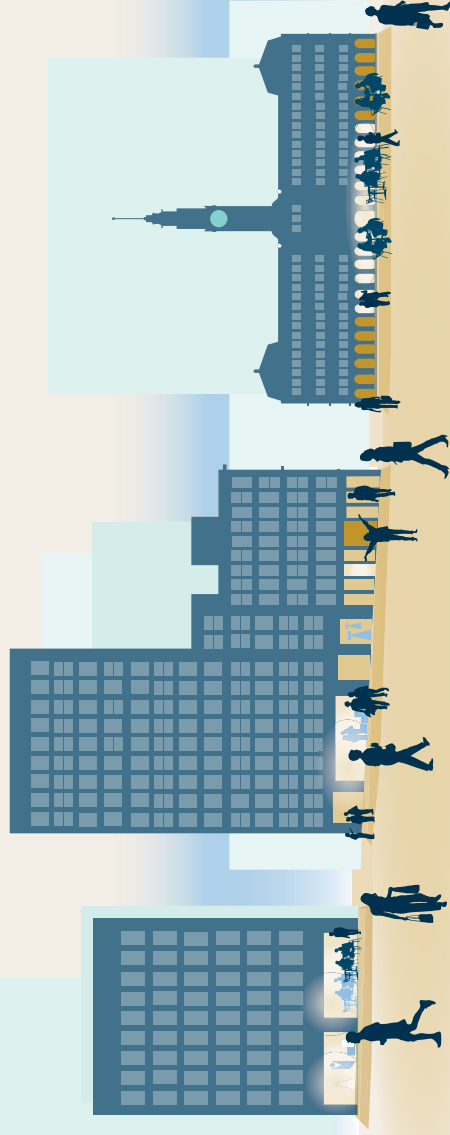
SPACE

a green and attractive experience



BUILDINGS

active and inviting built edges

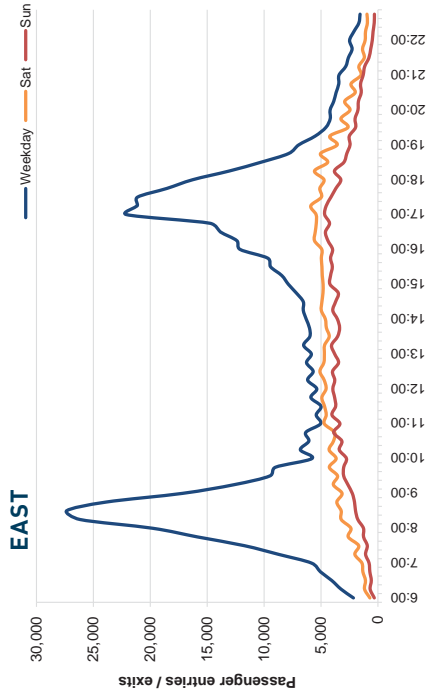
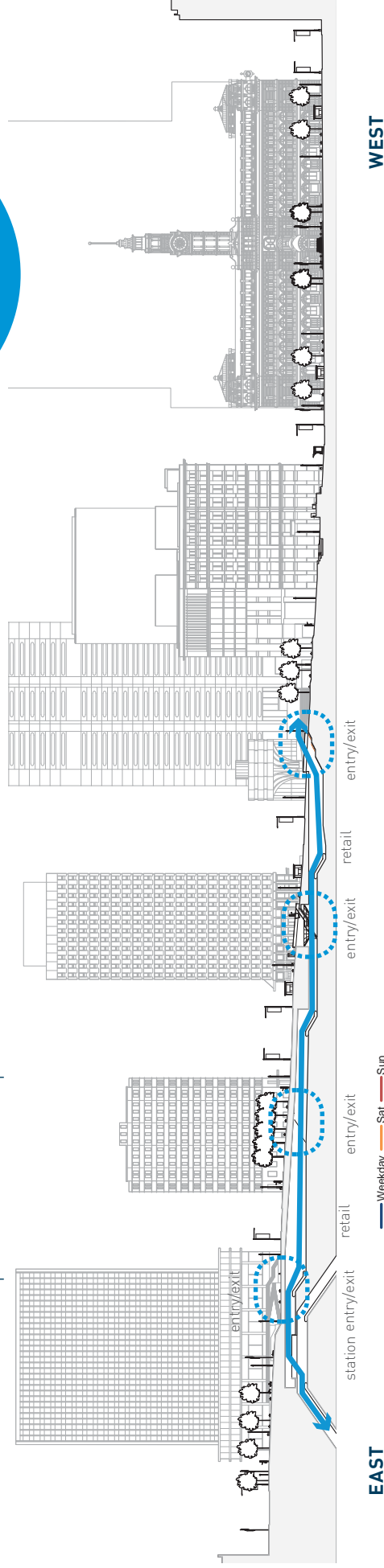


Underground & train entries

EXISTING CONDITIONS

- Substantial underground system beneath Martin Place.
- Station located at the far east end.
- Irrational movement to go up and down to access and exit the station.
- Entries take up space and create inflexible usage at ground level.
- Activity is drawn away from Martin Place.
- Safety issues at night around entries.
- Martin Place Station is up for future redevelopment.

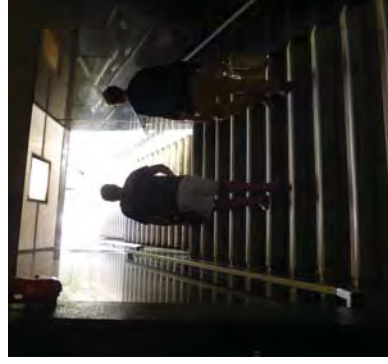
37.600
Daily
Passengers



Passenger flow in /out of Martin Place station.



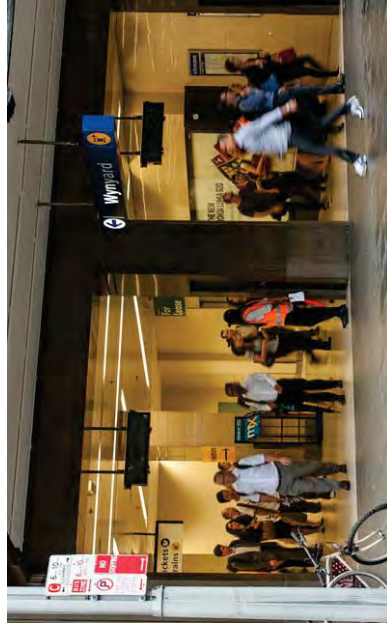
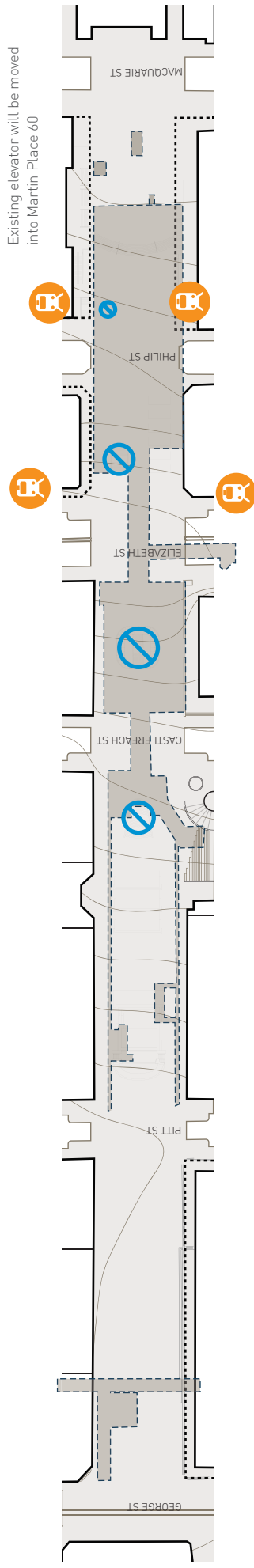
Entrance to underground shopping/dining area.



Endless steps to exit Martin Place station.
Federal Reserve Bank

PROPOSAL

- Opportunities for better integration of station infrastructure and reduced impact on surface level can be achieved with the development of the Martin Place metro station and associated redevelopment of Martin Place train station.
- Elizabeth Street could be a preferred public transport hub because of its extra width which can accommodate light rail in the future as well as access to Martin Place station.
- All station entries to be reintegrated within development. Entry portals at surface within Martin Place to be minimised.
- Access to underground retail via new station entries.
- Underground retail can be minimized to allow for more trees and activity at ground level.
- By removing the western entrance more space is gained in front of the popular MLC stairs. This space has great development potential as the north facades could be activated.
- The staircase to the underground (Castlereagh /Elizabeth) gives access to underground retail that has been leased by council to a private operator for the next 23 years. The staircase to the underground retail can be minimized or potentially relocated.



Entry to Martin Place train station could be relocated to building frontages. Wynyard Station, Sydney



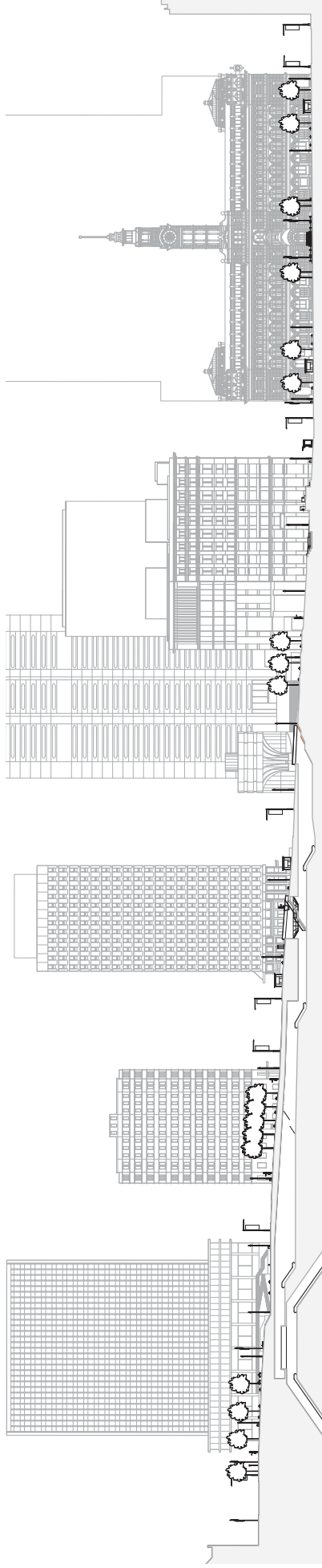
The entry to the underground retail could be minimized or potentially relocated.

Floor & topography

EXISTING CONDITIONS

- Substantial topographical change from west to east.
- Western plaza contains the most even surface.
- Eastern plaza has future potential for increased usage in terms of its even surface at the upper level.
- The current fountain occupies a large area that is relatively flat.
- Visual continuity of Martin Place is interrupted by the bitumen surface of the many cross streets.

18 m
Total height
difference
Between Pitt Stand
Macquarie St



EAST

WEST



The topography of Martin Place is not only a challenge it also provides some wonderful views to the hospital at Macquarie Street or George Street at the other end.



The area behind the fountain is shaped as long atrium steps providing views and a place for resting.



Steps for outdoor serving and public benches provide even surfaces and places for lingering.

PROPOSAL

- Maintain current paving but replace broken tiles etc.
- Clean up of existing paving.
- Continuous paving across intersecting streets.
- Re-work large fountain to be more interactive.
- Extend paving and steps in central area after removal of underground entries (long term).
- Explore public art opportunities in paving or in interpreting topography.
- Maximise even surfaces for events and seating/dining opportunities.

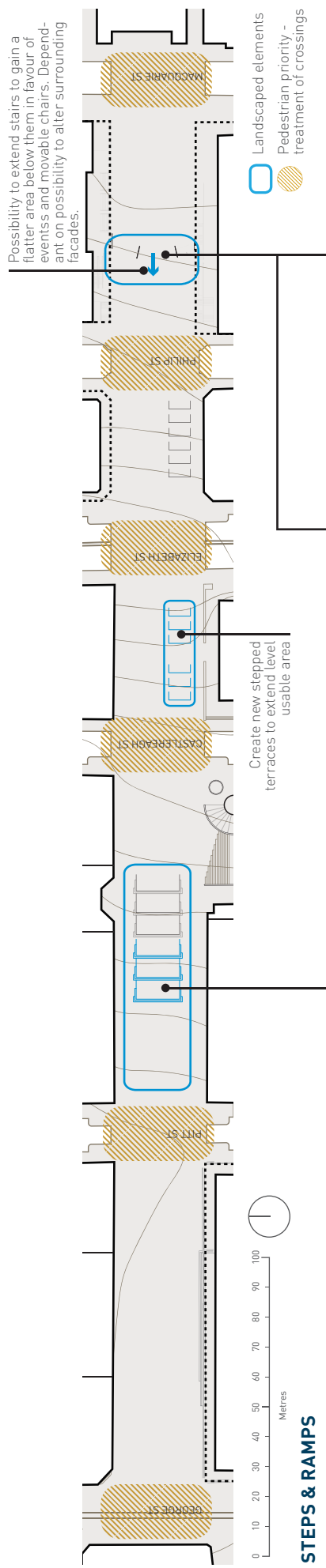
PUBLIC ART



Broadway dancesteps
by artist Jack Mackie



Henrik Ibsen writings
Karl Johan, Oslo



STEPS & RAMPS



Create three more plateaus. Extension of the existing landscape - this will create more secondary seating on the steps. The idea is also to increase the flat surface where small events can take place or movable furniture can be placed.



Activation in form of seating cubes of the popular stairs by the MLC center.



Introduce planting as playful elements in the stairs for a softer impression and a different sensory experience



After

Crossings

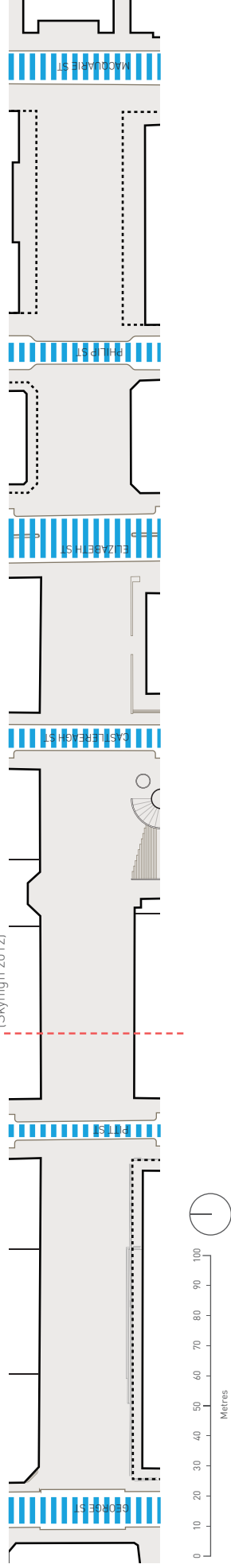
EXISTING CONDITIONS

- Martin Place is divided into 5 separate sections by crossing traffic. At every crossing street there is a signalled pedestrian crossing.
- Lack of pedestrian priority.
- Clutter related to crossings.
- Waiting time.
- Martin Place is not experienced as one grand place.
- Relatively few accidents

6.138
Pedestrians/hour
at peak hour 12
PM*

30%
Waiting time
during test walk
along Martin Pl

*Pedestrian counting position
(Skyhigh 2012)

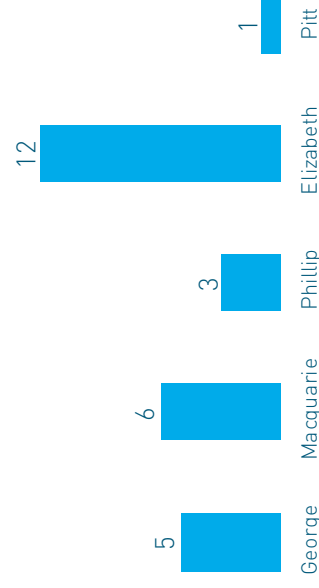


Martin Place is continuously dissected by crossing traffic.
Pitt Street



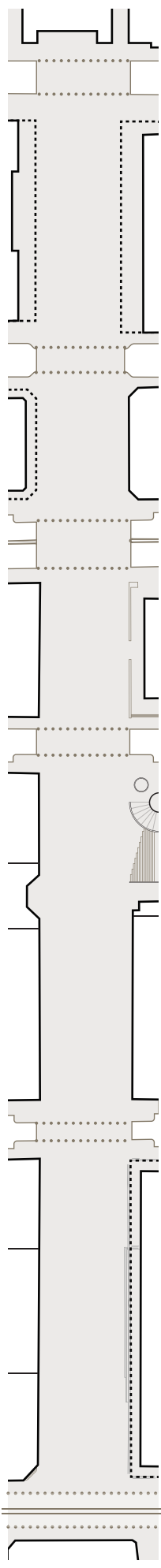
Vision of George Street at Martin Place - flush paving
across George Street. Hassell 2013

Pedestrian accidents on Martin Place
by cross street in 2009-13



PROPOSAL

- Introduce temporary public art as a short term measure to create a sense of character.
- Enhance pedestrian priority by increasing crossing time and decreasing waiting time.
- Long term - unify Martin Place via continuous, consistent paving type.
- Aim to remove signalled crossings and introduce pedestrian priority along Martin Place by incorporating paving to crossing zones.
- Aim for level crossings at all intersections
- No bollards



LONG TERM



Unified paving to the entire crossing zone, which should be differentiated from pavement areas. Oxford Circus, London



The crossing zone is a mix of different types of pavers, but all of the same material and colour. Malmö, Sweden

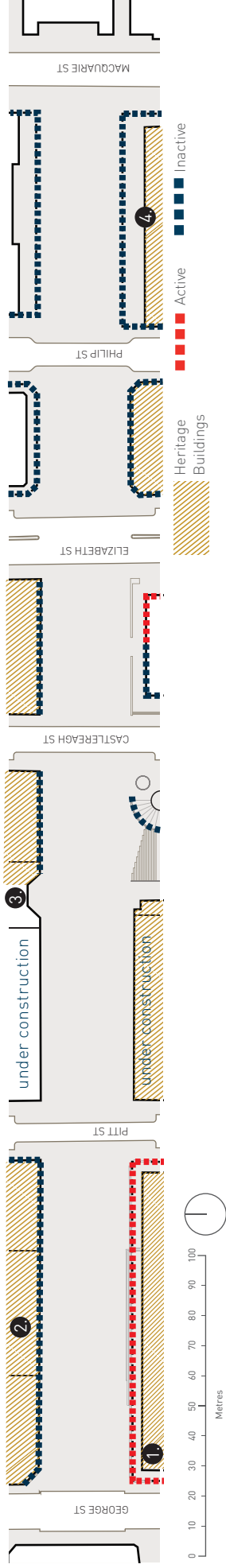


Clearly marked pedestrian zone. San Francisco, USA

Built edge

EXISTING CONDITIONS

- Large scale formal buildings lacking interaction with the place.
- Heritage buildings with limited possibilities for adaptation to other uses.
- Set back frontages, large lobbies etc.
- Materiality. Many fine sandstone buildings, but also slick granite facades.
- The functions of the numerous banks located on the street limit the potential to open up building facades to the place.



Unique heritage buildings.
GPO



Inactive facade of heritage building.
Paspaley



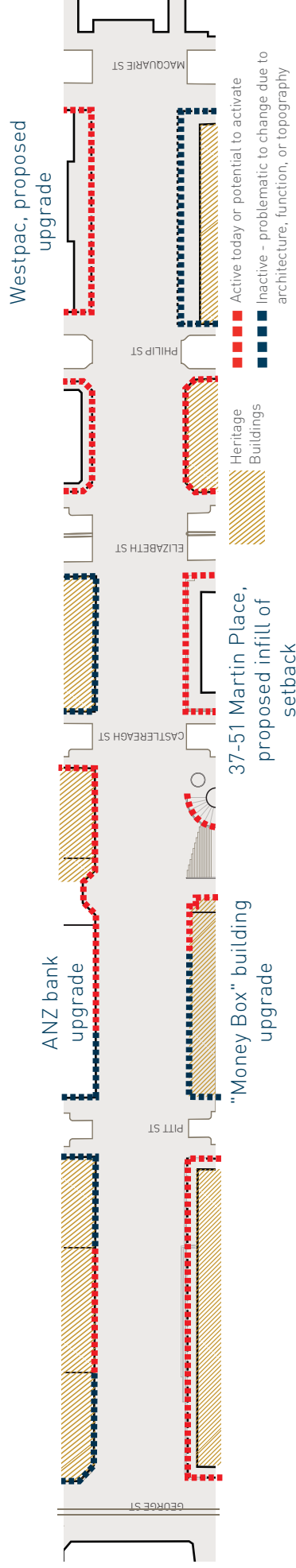
Inactive frontage and problematic setback.
United Overseas Bank Singapore



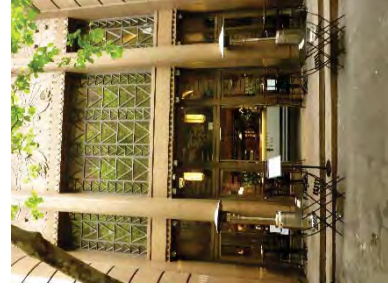
Problematic interface between building and square.
Reserve Bank of Australia

PROPOSAL

- Where possible, convert ground floor frontages to cater for retail and restaurants.
- Develop guidelines and ideas for heritage buildings.
- Encourage new developments to provide active ground floors with public functions.
- Provide assessments with building owners regarding what is possible.
- Encourage precinct-wide thinking rather than a piece by piece approach to ensure coherence and character in Martin Place.



Small coffee shop in the GPO frontage.
Pitt Street



Heritage building with active ground floor.
340-346 George Street



Adapted heritage building.
Brooks Brothers, 44 Martin Place



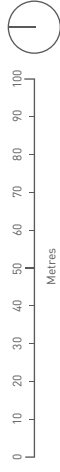
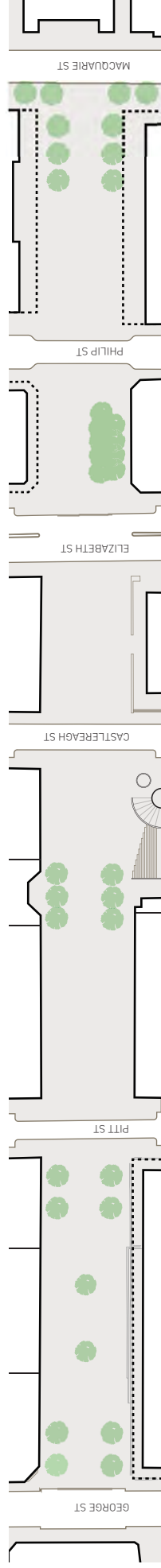
Lobbies can be activated by small scale cafés.
Pitt Street

Landscape

EXISTING CONDITIONS

37 trees
on Martin Place
today

- 37 trees, primarily plane trees.
- 2 trees of different species at the cenotaph. These are the only trees planted in the median.
- Large sections without trees and shade.
- Limitations to supplement existing tree planting due to underground services and facilities.



Tree planting at the cenotaph.



Double row of plane trees providing shade.



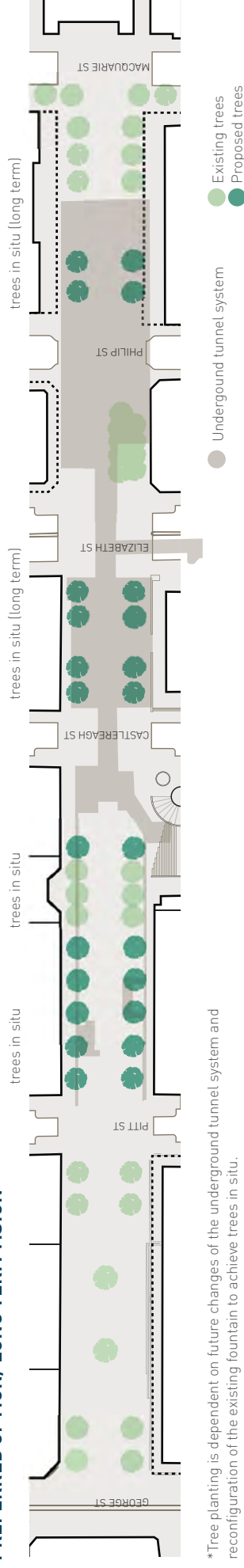
Site dominated by stone materials and absence of trees for shade.

PROPOSAL

- Introduce a coherent avenue of trees
- Strengthen sightlines
- Provide a human scale to the edges
- Trees represent change over the seasons
- Trees represent shading in the summer
- Trees soften the formal feeling of the space
- Keep the central frontage of the GPO clear of tree planting to allow for views to the heritage buildings and allow space around the cenotaph and the poplars.

- The long term vision is for all proposed trees to be planted in the ground. In blocks with underground infrastructure this may not be possible until redevelopment occurs. In the short-medium term, planters can be used to introduce soft landscaping to these blocks. Low level planting can be provided in planters where soil depth is not appropriate for tree planting.
- Planter options need to be further investigated to avoid a barrier effect. Landscape elements like the Living Colour displays could be integrated with the seating in a smaller format compared to trees in planters. (See page 43 'Planter seating' for more detail.)

PREFERRED OPTION/ LONG TERM VISION*



*Tree planting is dependent on future changes of the underground tunnel system and reconfiguration of the existing fountain to achieve trees in situ.

ALTERNATIVE OPTION/MEDIUM TERM:



Preferred option: Trees in situ. Due to limited soil this is how-ever hard to achieve with the current configuration of Martin Place. La Rambla, Barcelona, Spain



Alternative: Combination of seating and landscaping in planter box. Beethovenstraat, Amsterdam, Netherlands.



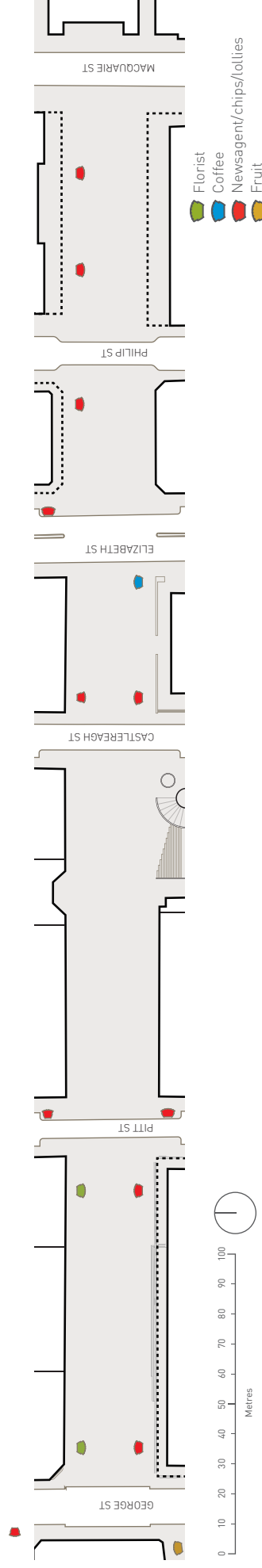
Alternative: Integrate landscaped elements as part of stairs or as stand alone elements, like e.g. Living Colour. The Garden that climbs the stairs by Batmori Associates, public stairs in Bilbao, Spain

Kiosks

EXISTING CONDITIONS

- Overload of kiosks in Martin Place.
- Lack of diversity in products offered.
- Inflexible use.
- Only one coffee outlet with no seating options nearby.
- Lease with JC Decaux expires in 2018. Kiosks will remain until then.
- Tenants can not be swapped within lease period.

15 kiosks
in
Martin Place



Today there is a lack of diversity in use of the kiosks, with 11 as newsagents.



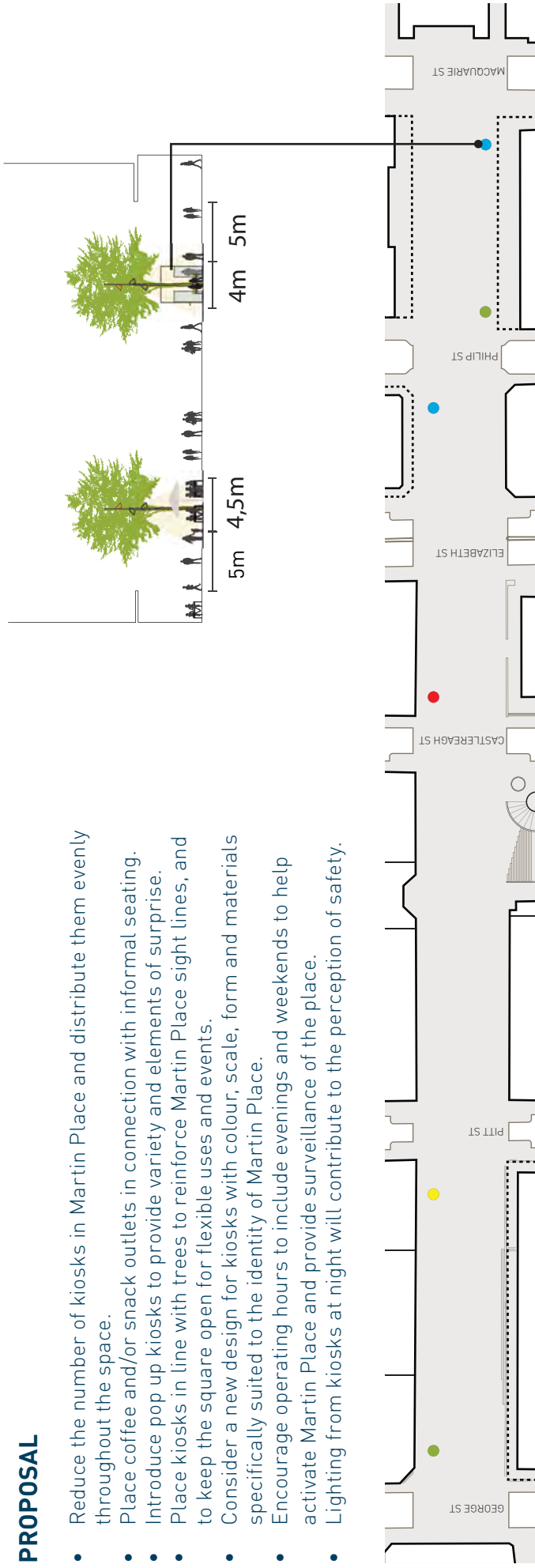
Kiosk goods colonising public space.



Only one coffee kiosk along the entire length of Martin Place

PROPOSAL

- Reduce the number of kiosks in Martin Place and distribute them evenly throughout the space.
- Place coffee and/or snack outlets in connection with informal seating.
- Introduce pop up kiosks to provide variety and elements of surprise.
- Place kiosks in line with trees to reinforce Martin Place sight lines, and to keep the square open for flexible uses and events.
- Consider a new design for kiosks with colour, scale, form and materials specifically suited to the identity of Martin Place.
- Encourage operating hours to include evenings and weekends to help activate Martin Place and provide surveillance of the place.
- Lighting from kiosks at night will contribute to the perception of safety.



Minimalistic bakery.
San Francisco, US



Café structure.
2 Phillip Street, Sydney



Café structure.
1 Bligh Street, Sydney



Open air library.
Austria

- POP UP KIOSKS _ TEMPORARY LEASES**
- Florist
 - Coffee /snacks
 - Newsagent
 - Pop up kiosk
 - Fruit

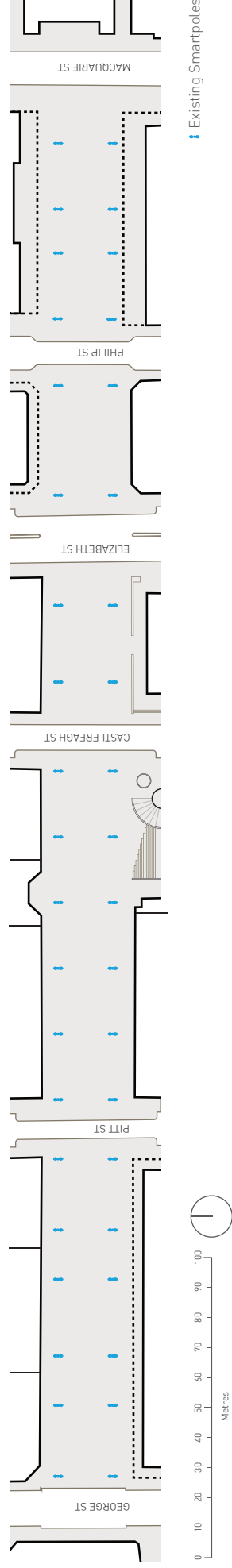
Lighting

EXISTING CONDITIONS

- Lighting consists of smartpoles placed along the full length of Martin Place. Spacing varies along the different sections.
- The smartpoles are tall with two light sources at the very top and have banners, some signage, and a speaker system attached.
- The smartpoles are fitted with cool LED luminaries (*Martin Place Lighting Plan*).
- Current lighting within Martin Place is highly utilitarian (*Martin Place Lighting Plan*).
- Martin Place also has facade lighting to some areas.

“Current lighting within Martin Place is highly utilitarian and does not appear to have been designed to articulate the urban and architectural context or enhance the visual atmosphere within the plaza, but rather provide code compliant levels of lighting for good visibility and safe circulation”

- Martin Place Lighting Plan



Smartpoles have been installed in Martin Place in a lower version than nearby George Street. The smartpoles carry a number of different elements - e.g banners that are visually dominant.



Today: Limited lighting of facades and architecture such as the clocktower.



Existing vision for the future: Enhance the facades and architectural features. Ensure a well-lit walking environment. *City of Sydney, Martin Place Lighting Masterplan (Steenzen Varming 2014)*

PROPOSAL

- Support a perception of safety throughout Martin Place.
- Celebrate the grand facades of the heritage buildings.
- Encourage modern buildings with glazing to contribute interior lighting.
- Add artistic, poetic elements e.g. lighting of trees or water features.
- Ensure that lighting infrastructure does not create visual clutter during the day, or obstacles for pedestrians.
- Ensure flexible lighting to accommodate both everyday activities and events.
- Consider redesigning smartpoles. A bespoke lighting pole (long term).
- Remove banners due to their visual dominance over the space.
- **Create a warm welcoming overall impression of the plaza at night time**

MARTIN PLACE LIGHTING PLAN

- Creates a strong sense of place
- Aims to ensure a cohesive, sustainable approach to the lighting of Martin Place and encompasses facades, temporary events, landmarks, urban objects, and pedestrian area lighting
- Considers the different zones of movement and the various lighting needs
- The lighting system should be sustainable and energy efficient
- Lighting treatments should create a harmonious urban context throughout Martin Place
- **The lighting plan also incorporates the crossing streets, thus ensuring good quality, safe access along Martin Place**



The main lighting from inside or outside is based on facade type - heritage, modern glazed or unglazed.



Subtle and poetic to create variation in the paving, or as extra wayfinding



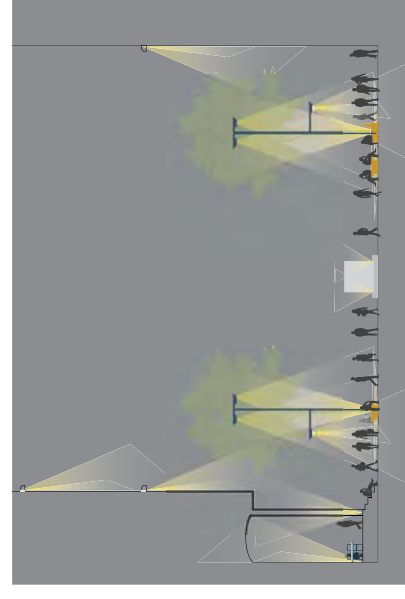
Dramatic lighting to enhance water features



Transparent facades contribute life and light to the street



Enhance grand heritage facades and their unique features



A future lighting scheme needs to ensure appropriate lighting in all the different zones of Martin Place.

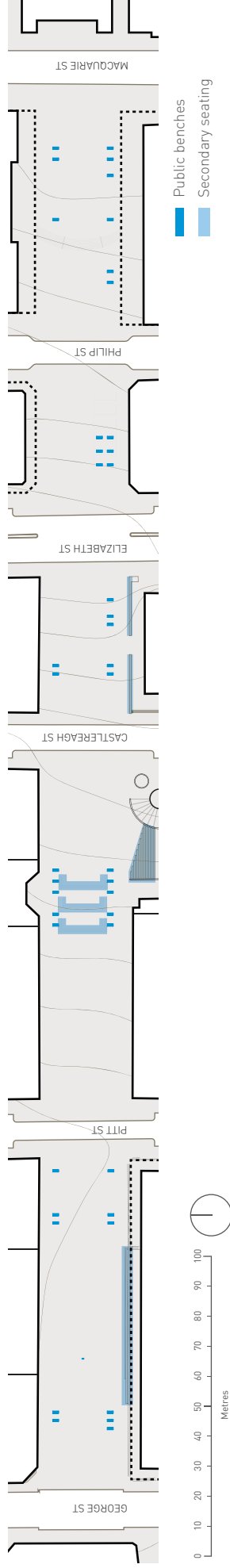
Public seating

EXISTING CONDITIONS

- Few benches.
- Benches placed in north/south direction due to topographic conditions.
- Benches located quite far apart which is appropriate for fine for sitting alone or side by side, however very few seating options are available for larger groups
- Benches lack anchoring to other urban elements and feel uncomfortable due to their exposed nature.
- Large amounts of secondary seating (e.g. people sitting on stairs or ledges) imply a need for more frequent benches.
- 30% of visitors come to Martin Place in order to sit, relax, eat, and socialise. 18% rated 'more benches' as the priority for future additions to the space. (*Martin Place Intercept Survey 2014*)

43
benches in
martin place
today

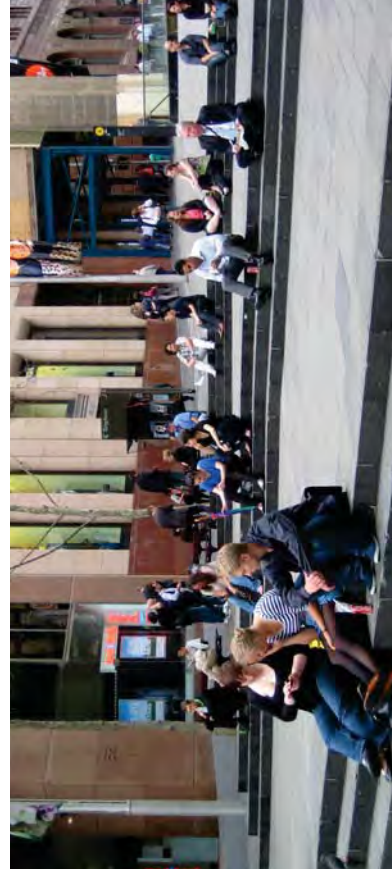
39%
of non-commercial seating
is secondary
seating



The benches are not 'anchored' to anything and are often located far from other attractions such as fountains.



Existing benches are not used to their full potential due to design issues - low back-rests make it inconvenient for 6 people to use the bench at the same time.



Secondary seating is widespread due to the lack of benches available.

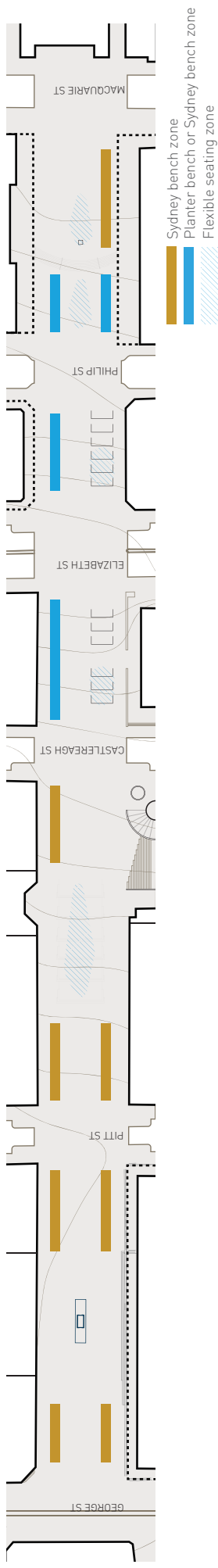
PROPOSAL

The sections of Martin Place differ from each other, hence there is a need to explore various options for public seating. These can then be combined. All options should fulfill the following requirements:

- Provide a large number of benches, variation of invitations to stay
- Fixed benches to be placed in tree planting and landscape zones to maximize the usage of the open areas.
- Flexible seating (semi-permanent) in central areas in connection with water features. Option to be removed during large events.
- Provide options - sitting alone, sitting in a group, talkspace, standing

THREE MAIN PRINCIPLES FOR PUBLIC SEATING

- Sydney bench - as the primary seating option
- Planter seating - in sections where trees can not be achieved
- Flexible seating - primarily located in the middle zone



PUBLIC SEATING TYPES



The Sydney public bench.



Landscaped seating that takes up the topography and adds low level greenery to the space. Delft, Netherlands



Provision of flexible seating alternatives. Times Square, New York, USA.