

# Public seating

City of Sydney has had a suite of furniture designed for the public spaces in the city. This furniture is gradually being introduced across the city.

Positive aspects of using this bench design is that it supports a unified design when used throughout public spaces in Sydney, which also helps making maintenance easier.

The bench is quite small and slender and needs to be placed in pairs or used strategically with other urban elements in a place as large as Martin Place.

At the same time the Sydney bench offers variety in possibilities for creating different seating arrangements and works well in the steeper topography too.

## THE SYDNEY BENCH



The Sydney public bench designed by Alex Tzannes and part of the Street Design Codes.



The Sydney public bench is currently only installed in Kent Street.

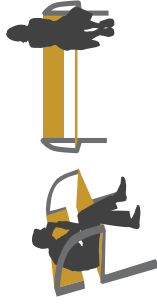


The Sydney bench can be placed back to back or on an angle to create more direct views towards the plaza



### FOR A COMFORTABLE MICROCLIMATE

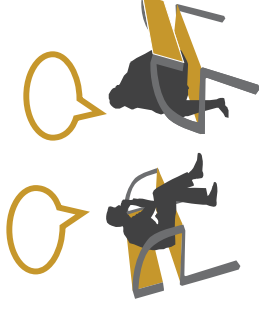
Place the Sydney bench on each side of the trees to strengthen the linear space, minimize obstacles and achieve a good microclimate



### FOR VIEWING A GREAT SPACE

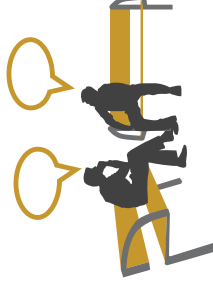
The GPO section of Martin Place is the flattest - here the bench can be placed along the space as well to enhance the feeling of the space as a plaza.

## THE SYDNEY BENCH - VARIETY THROUGH PLACEMENT



### FOR SOCIAL SITTING

By at some places placing the benches nearer to each other, create a social seating option. Don't do this too often since, if one person sits alone in one of these two benches it can give the feeling that 'the seat is taken'



### SITTING NEAR OR APART

The perpendicular placement that works well in front of the GPO also gives the user a choice to sit close and talk privately or sit apart and have their own personal space.

# Planter seating

To integrate planting in Martin Place on a medium term, planters with integrated seating can be introduced in areas where trees cannot be planted in ground due to underground infrastructure. The planters should not be too long - or they become an obstacle. With this in mind, as well as the advice from the arborist regarding soil demands of plane trees, the recommendation is to use low level plants when introducing planter seating in Martin Place. In the future when soil depths can be fully explored, it may be possible to replace low level plants with appropriate tree-types recommended by the arborists.

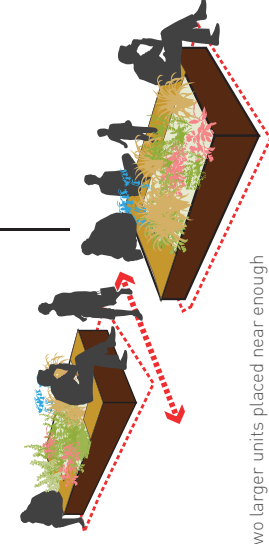
- Take up features of existing design in Martin Place, such as the wood used in the Sydney Bench for the planter seats
- Corten steel is an option for planter base, a material that adds colour and works well with planting and a wooden seat. Explore other ideas from the existing palette test with the Sydney Bench. of the characteristic 'Living colours' planters that could be developed to integrate seating.
- Use native species or species that are well suited for the climate and can manage in periods of drought.
- A possibility could be to connect Martin Place to the botanical garden by introducing some durable species from the gardens in the planters, and also some small signs telling about the species present.



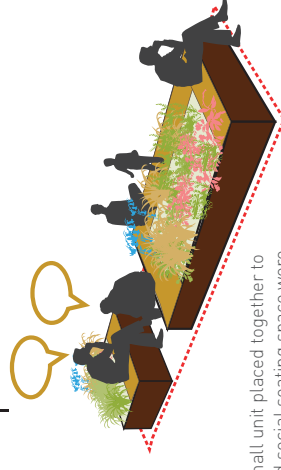
The Living Colours flower displays show example of colourful and interesting low level planting that could be used in the planter seating



Section; Elizabeth St - Phillip St. approx 1 m in 14 m slope (7 cm/metre)



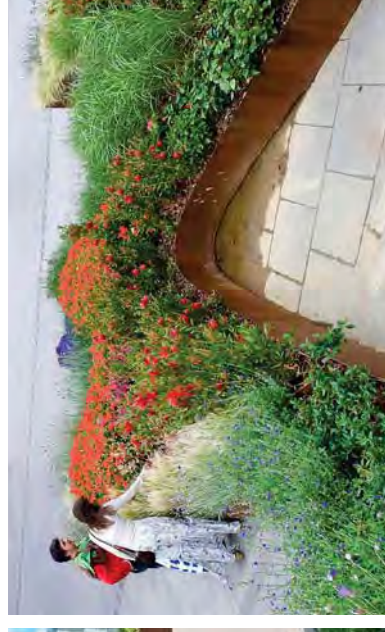
Example with two larger units placed near enough to read as a couple, but 2 m apart in order to allow for walking through. Can still be experienced as one larger obstacle



A larger and a small unit placed together to create a unity and social seating space where they meet.



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



A more organic form is an option. The round corten steel base of *The Garden that climbs the stairs* by Batmori Associates, follows the landscape. Bilbao, Spain

# Flexible seating

## A COMPLEMENT TO THE FIXED SEATING

The flexible seating can instantly be rearranged to fit with social requirements of its users. It represents a quick way to adapt the public plaza as needed and invites visitors to inhabit the space in a new way. A consistent style of flex-furniture should be adapted for Martin Place to ensure quality, identity, and visual cohesion. This should be selected in coordination with guidelines for outdoor dining furniture.

## COMPLETELY FLEXIBLE AND EASY TO MOVE

- +** Easy to move around into different social seating formations
- Easy to remove when needed for events or to be included as part of events
- Ability to test and evaluate different placements and move if needed



Cafe style flex seating in bright colours can quickly change the appearance of a space and provide good contrasts to grey paving.

Gehl Architects — Urban Quality Consultants

- Care should be taken when using chairs in particular contexts near stairs etc.
- Potential need for storage



Slightly reclined movable seat which is robust and heavy, with arm-rests.

## FIXED - BUT REMOVABLE

- +** The city has control over the placement and there is certainty that no chairs will end up in the middle of a walking zone or in front of entrances
- Safe - no risk of chairs falling down steps.
- Loses some of the playfulness and spontaneity of the flex seating



Robust chairs that are fixed to the ground. They are not as flexible but a good complement to other public benches. Comfortable and accessible with solid arm rests.

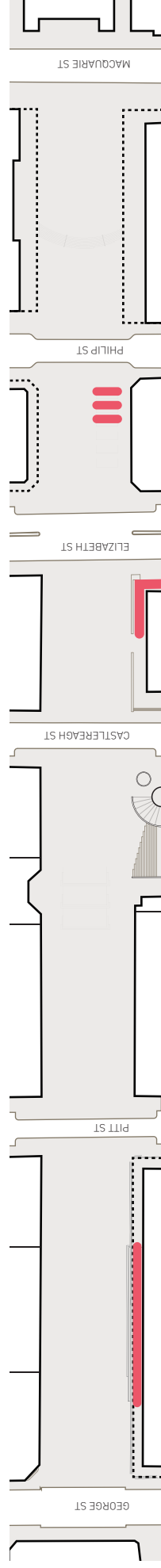


# Outdoor dining & cafes

## EXISTING CONDITIONS

- Very few outdoor café seats
- Mixed quality furniture
- Too dispersed to create a destination
- Surrounds are difficult - noise & cars moving through.
- Martin Place is currently not a weekend destination (limited trade).
- The place feels formal

**126**  
café and bar  
seats  
(approximate numbers  
not incl. MLC upper  
courtyard)



E

Outdoor dining



Dining in the colonnade.  
GPO



Sunken outdoor serving area.  
Martin Place bar

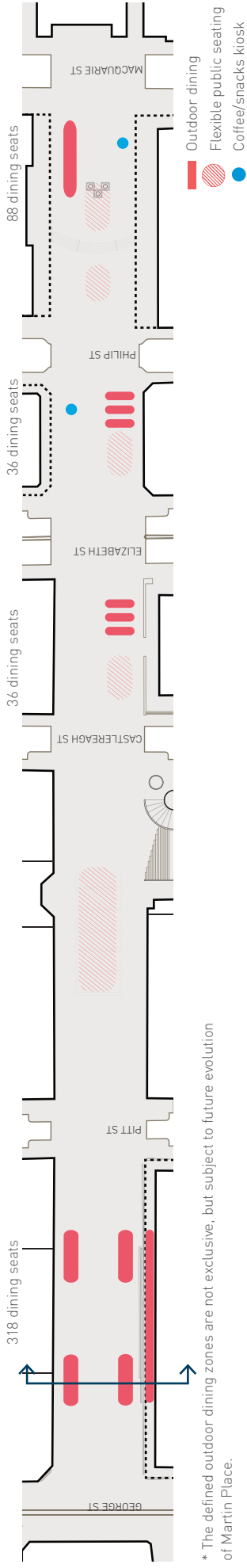
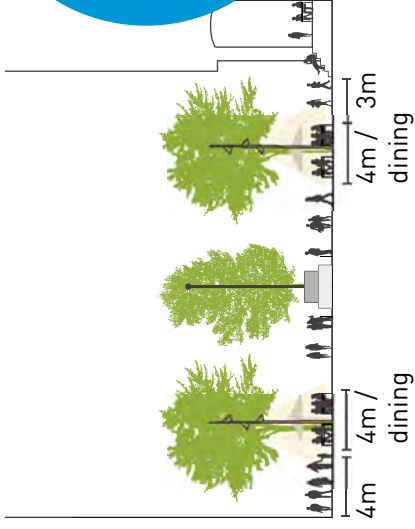


Café seating on a terraced area.  
Lindt Café

## PROPOSAL

- Ensure flexibility in legislation to allow for conversion to outdoor dining.
- Streamline outdoor furniture per block to ensure high quality.
- Support outdoor dining with complementary activation of the square.
- Ensure formal outdoor dining areas and informal public seating for people buying take away coffees and food (middle section).
- Provide umbrellas where needed during the hottest summer months.
- Take advantage of the sunlit areas along the southern facades.
- Introduce guidelines for outdoor serving - colours, materials, types - where deviations are subject to approval.
- Ensure all elements for outdoor serving are not fixed and are removable.

**478**  
**dining/café seats**  
 (estimation includes existing seats on the steps of GPO but not sunken area by Martin Pl. Bar)



Create guidelines for commercial outdoor café seating, with a common design for tables and chairs as well as umbrellas.



Cane chairs with wooden tables and white umbrellas with wooden structure offer a coherent experience for the users. Copenhagen, Denmark





Before



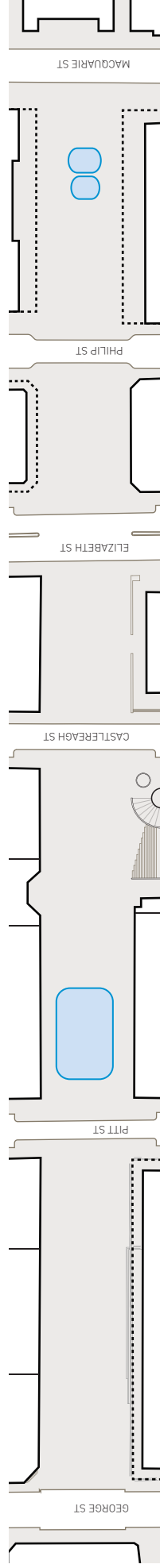
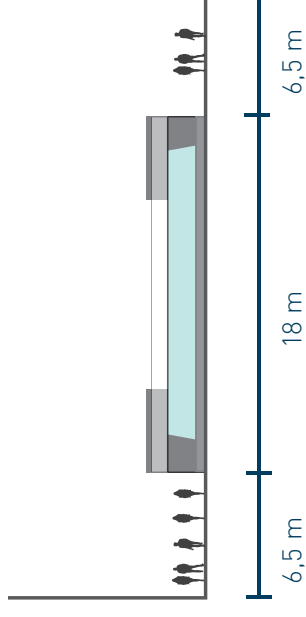
After



# Fountains

## EXISTING CONDITIONS

- There are three existing water features in Martin Place today. In general there are very few water features in Sydney so this is a quality in itself.
- The fountain at Pitt Street is outdated and acts as a visual and physical barrier.
- The splashing bowls at Macquarie Street have a good sensory quality.
- Make sure water installations work practically, in windy weather etc.
- The water installation closest to Macquarie Street (entitled 'Passage' by Anne Graham) operates subject to wind conditions to prevent wetting pedestrians in windy weather



Pitt Street fountain enhances the urban quality of Martin Place, but creates a visual and physical barrier for pedestrians.



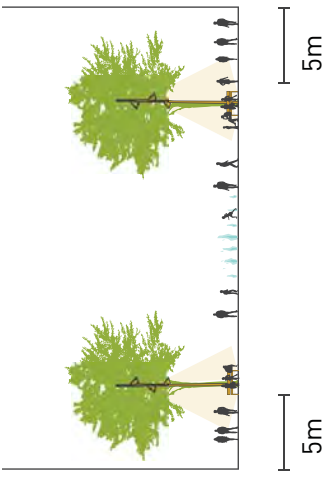
The playful water bowls near Macquarie Street are part of the water theme of Martin Place, and work well from a human scale perspective.



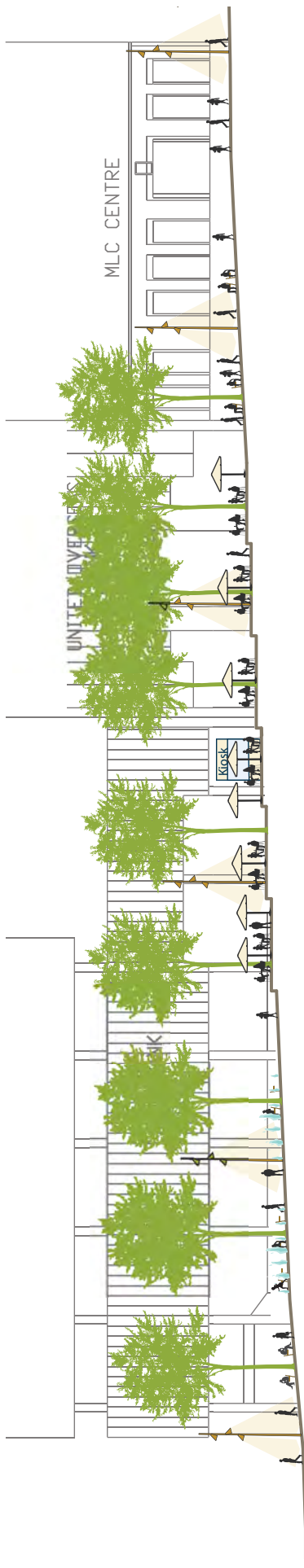
"Passage" fountain near Macquarie Street.

## PROPOSAL

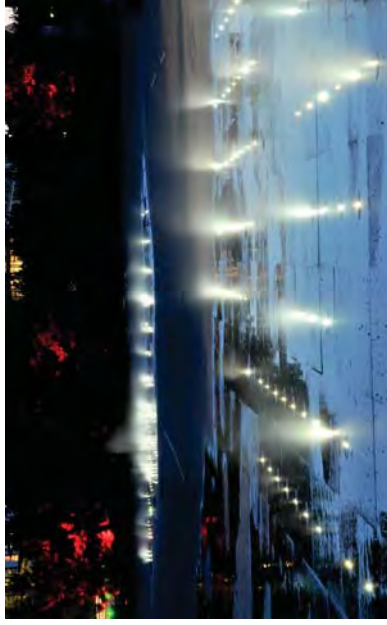
- Keep water elements in Martin Place to maintain the identity of the place, and to strengthen links to Sydney as a waterfront city.
- Use water elements to break up the extensive hard surfaces.
- Explore the potential of fountains to highlight the significant topography.
- A water feature at Pitt Street is a reminder of the tank stream.
- Introduce an interactive water feature that invites children to play.
- Provide a new water feature that is flexible and does not create a barrier, as well as one that can be turned off to extend useable areas during special events and gatherings



Water jets enable free movement across the space and do not block it with a large physical object. They invite people to play on warm days.



Proposed new water feature.



When lit up at night, water jets create an ethereal atmosphere



Water jets as an interactive and playful element.

Before



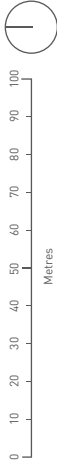
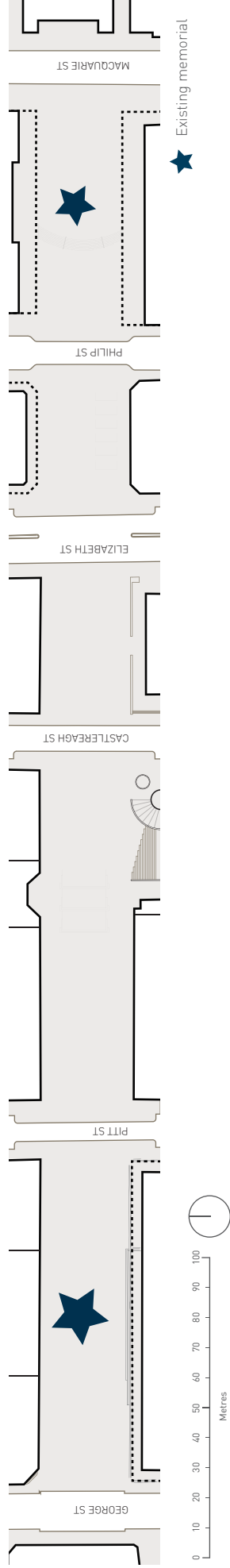


After

# Memorials

## EXISTING CONDITIONS

- There are two existing memorials at either end of Martin Place.
- The Cenotaph commemorates WWI and the Commando Memorial commemorates WWII.
- Events on Memorial Day and on Anzac Day occur at the Cenotaph, which has significant conservation status.
- The recent guard railing around the Cenotaph has been introduced to deter passers-by from lingering around the memorial, however the visual appearance of the railings is far from a desired outcome.
- The recent siege in Martin Place will most likely have a memorial in Martin Place.



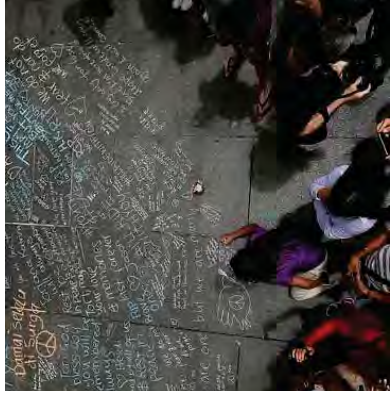
The Cenotaph in the western section of Martin Place is significant for Memorial Day and Anzac Day ceremonies. The recent guard railing around the memorial is not the most appropriate solution.



Commando Memorial, World War II in the far Eastern section.

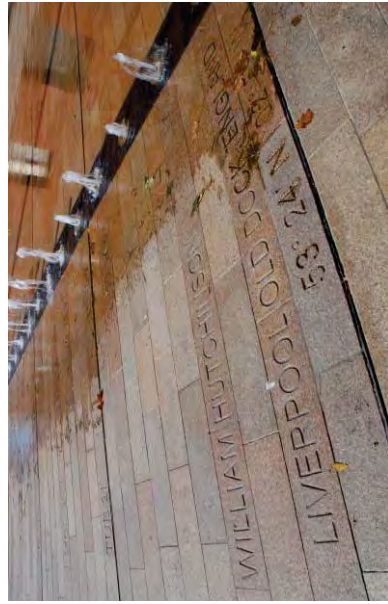
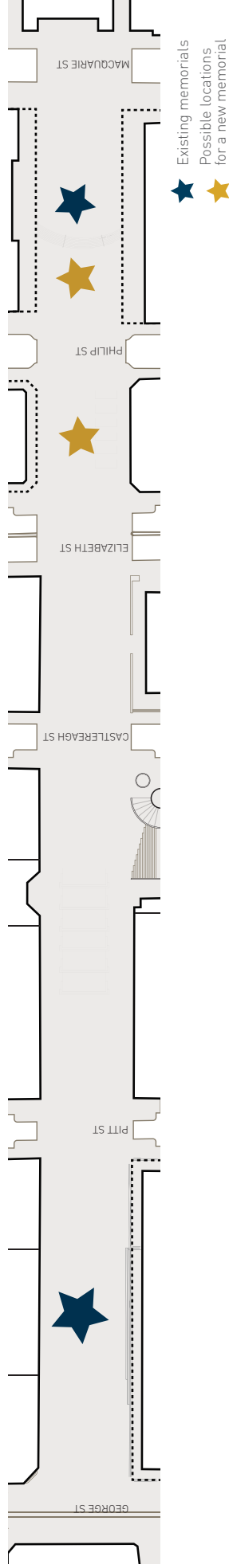


The recent incident at the Lindt Café, where two people lost their lives, sparked a powerful public response. The design process for a memorial is currently being considered by the Premiers office.

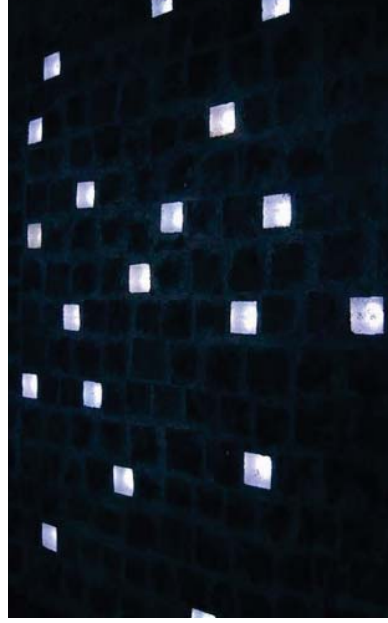


## PROPOSAL

- Ensure all existing or proposed memorials are integrated in a meaningful way in the future redevelopment of Martin Place.
- Ensure all new memorials complement Martin Place.
- Focus on developing memorials that are integrated into the urban fabric of Martin Place, rather than being isolated objects.
- Ensure the placement and design of new memorials will not hinder future improvements to Martin Place.
- Investigate replacement options for the guard railing around the Cenotaph to enhance the overall experience of the memorial.
- Avoid eroding the significance of the Cenotaph. Avoid placing visually competing memorials nearby.



Water jets and paving details commemorating lives lost.  
Liverpool, England



Feature lighting in paving depicting a star sign.  
Place du Molard, Geneva, Switzerland



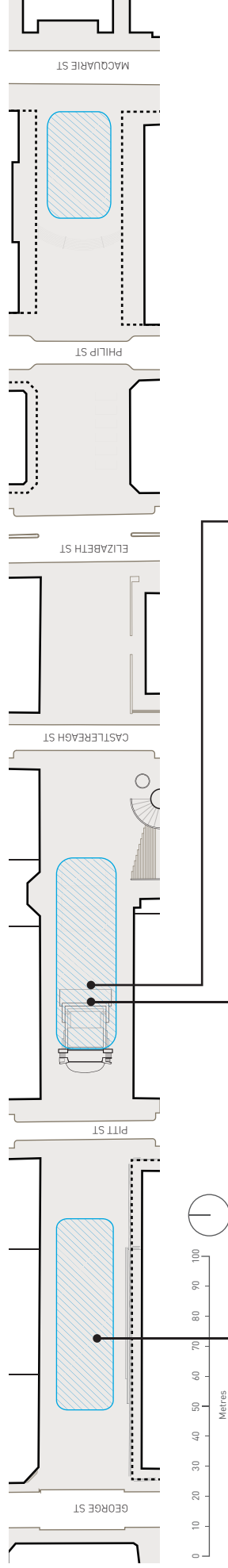
A garden could be integrated into the steps of the far Eastern section.  
Climbing Garden, Bilbao, Spain

# Martin Place as an event space

## EXISTING CONDITIONS

- During 2014, up to 20 different events occurred per month in Martin Place.
- The events are spread throughout the year, with July - October being the busiest. Sometimes two events take place at different places.
- The events range in scale and visitor numbers.
- The events vary greatly with promotional events mixed with fundraising, awareness-raising, and entertainment of different types.
- Studies show that cultural events are favoured both by the owners group and the public.
- Visitors prefer more markets, performances, and commemorative events.
- Noise and visual clutter can be an issue during events.

**39%** of  
intercept survey  
respondents had  
visited Martin  
Place for an  
event



Memorial Day draws thousands of people into Martin Place, who gather around the Cenotaph.



A less visually attractive event in Martin Place.



Martin Place hosts various types of events of a more or less formal setup. The orange and white barriers is the typical way of marking any event.

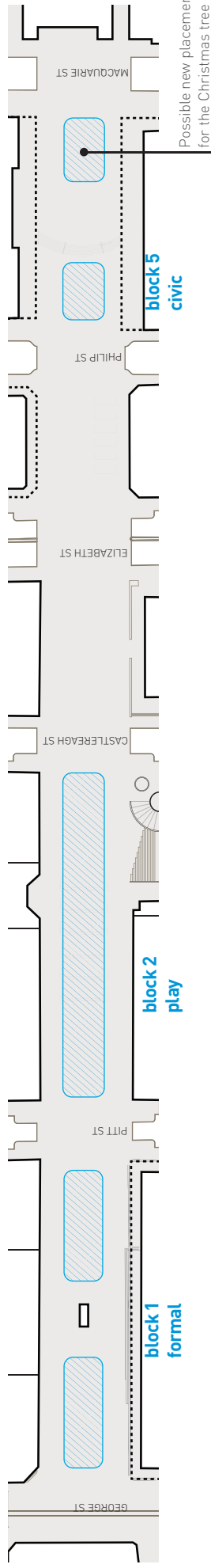
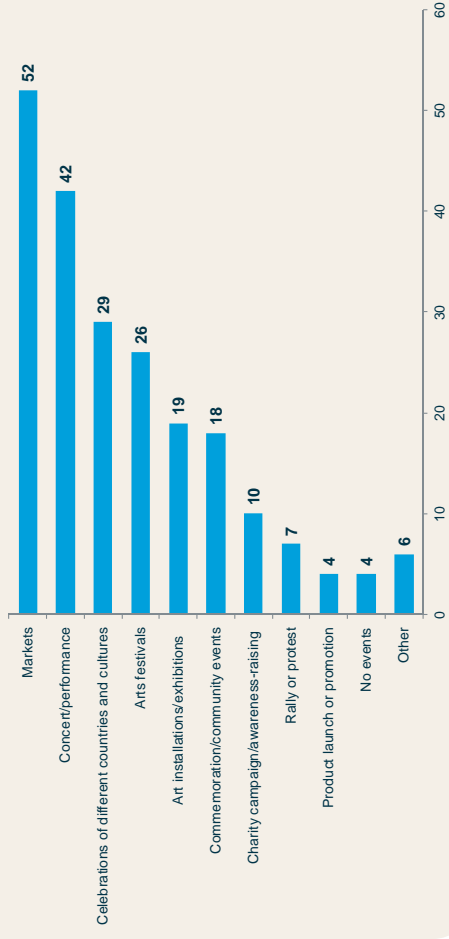
# PROPOSAL

Develop event guidelines for Martin Place in keeping with the following principles:

- Focus events in Blocks 1, 2 and 5, contained within the footprints indicated below and on detailed plans
- Ensure that all events provide a contribution to the cultural life of the City
- Ensure that events are consistent with the character of Martin Place and their specific location
- Encourage more curated events
- Offer events for a wide audience – ensure variety. Offer more events for children and younger audiences
- Ensure that event infrastructure is high quality, including barriers, signage, temporary structures etc.
- Minimise the visual impact of signage and branding
- Consider the acoustic impact of events on surrounding buildings and uses

Increase wayfinding and legibility to the Domain to encourage more and larger events there, reducing pressure on Martin Place.

Martin Place Inception Survey - Preferred event types %



Cultural events, and in particular, concerts and performances are one of the most preferred events. Jazz concert, Copenhagen



Invite all age groups



Evening events to activate the space after dark



Before





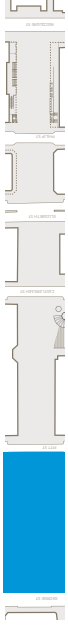
After



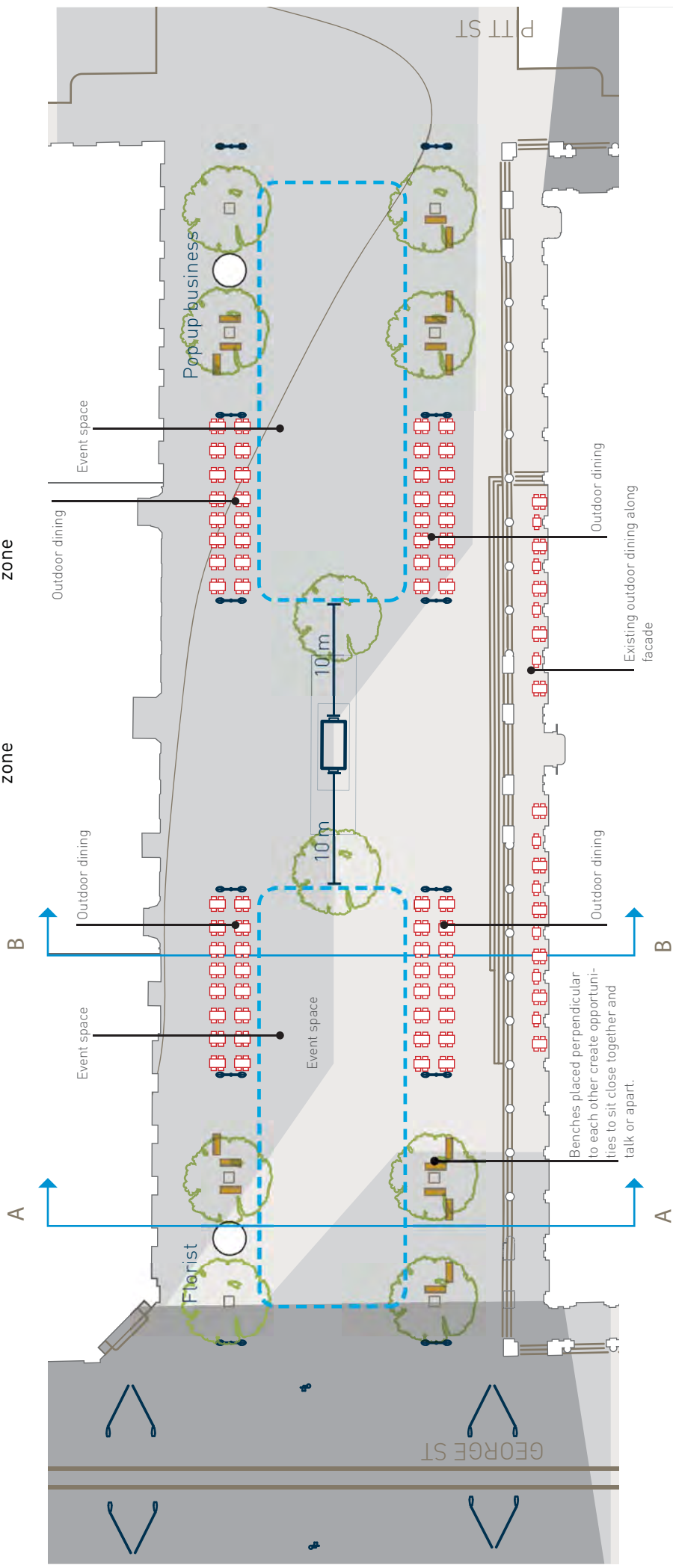
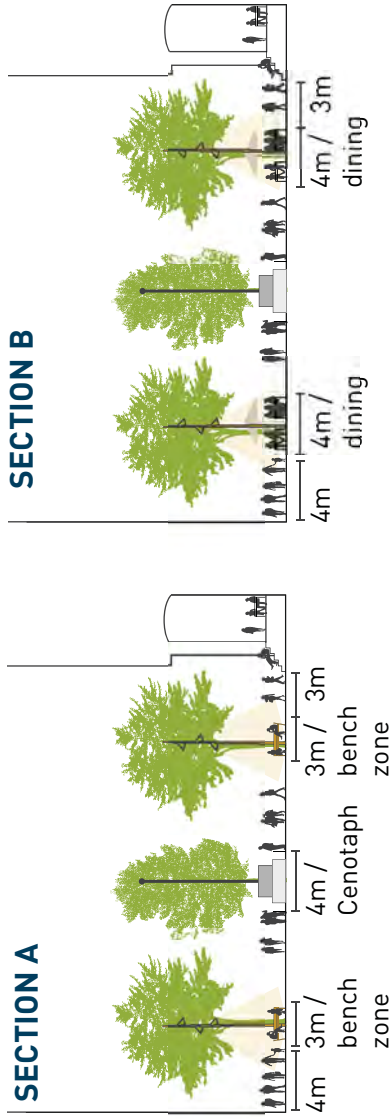
# DETAILED PLANS

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# George St - Pitt St



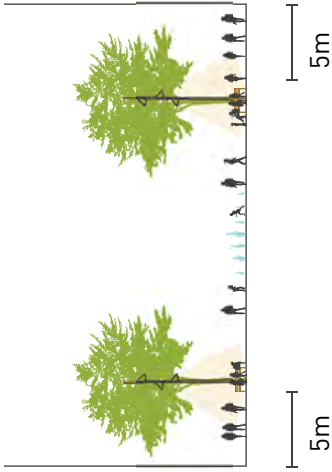
- Some longer larger benches combined with shorter segments creating options for sitting together and talking, or sitting alone reading, or people-watching ('Brighton style' bench)
- Allow great views over the plaza or events taking place
- Ensure not to create extensively long sections of benches - these create barriers to movement
- Long benches along the street are suitable for the flattest areas of Martin Place



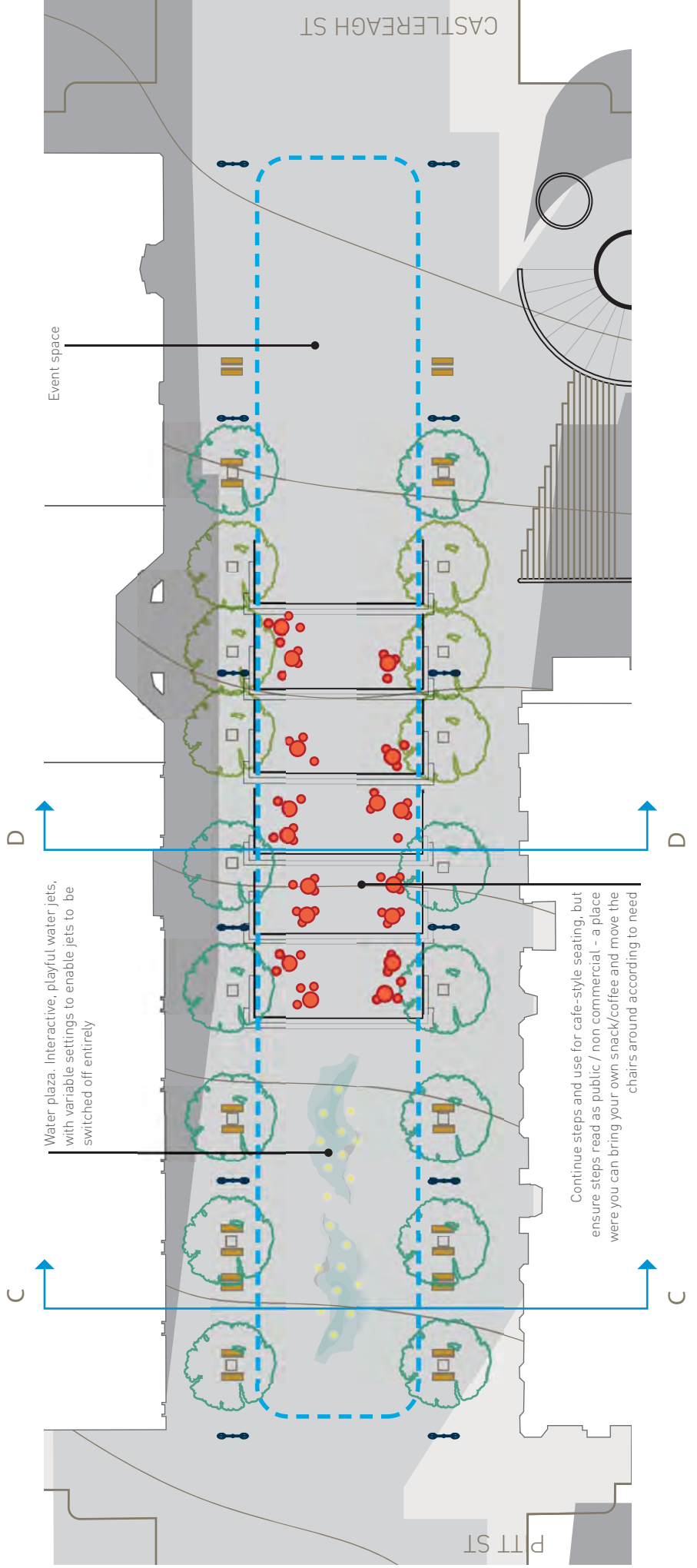
# Pitt St - Castlereagh St



SECTION C



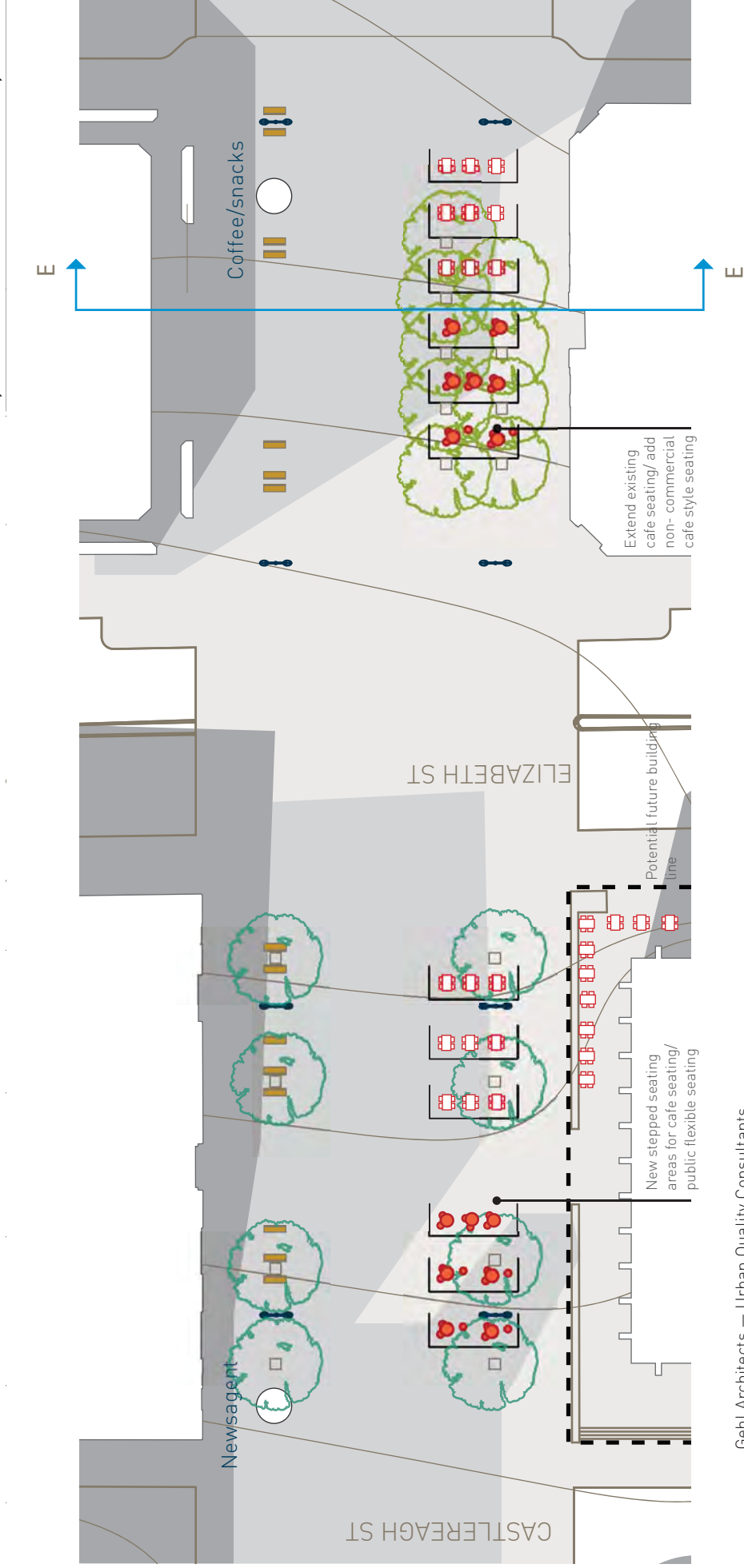
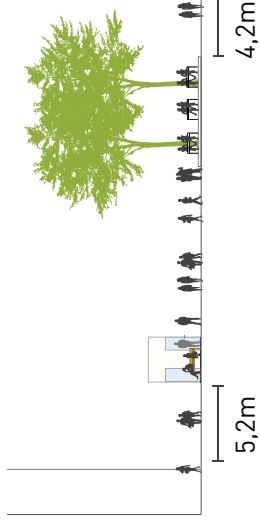
SECTION D



# Castlereagh St - Philip St

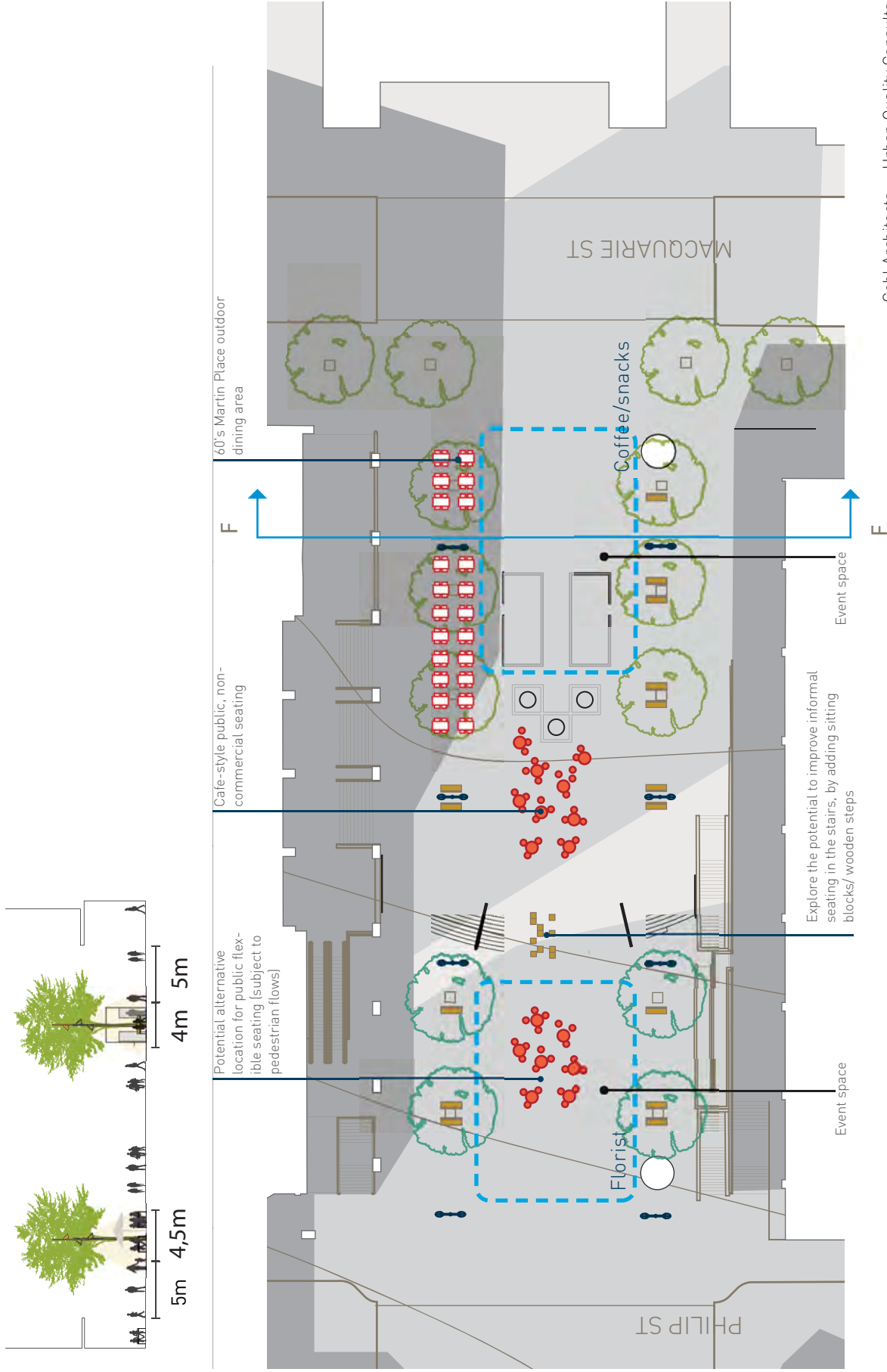


SECTION E



# Philip St - Macquarie St

## SECTION F







# PHASING

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## **SHORT TERM; commence within 2 years**

- **Benches;** replace and supplement
- **Memorial**
- **Flexible seating**
- **Event guidelines**
- **Continuous flush paving through crossings**
- **Activation of built edges**
- **Kiosk strategy**
- **Street trees /landscaping**

## **MEDIUM TERM; commence within 5 years**

- **Fountain Renewal**
- **Changes to steps /topography**
- **Lighting;** implement the lighting masterplan

## **LONG TERM; 5+ years**

- **Station;** relocation of station entries