

# **Attachment E**

**Heritage Interpretation Plan  
Queen Victoria Building**

**HERITAGE  
INTERPRETATION PLAN  
QUEEN VICTORIA  
BUILDING: 455 GEORGE  
STREET, SYDNEY**

**URBIS**

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Urbis has been engaged by the City of Sydney to prepare a Conservation Management Plan with an accompanying Heritage Interpretation Plan for the site located at 455 George Street, Sydney. The site is known as the Queen Victoria Building. The subject site is identified as listed as a heritage item on the NSW State Heritage Register (SHR) Listing Number 01814 (refer to Figure 106) and on the Sydney Local Environment Plan 2012 Item Number 1783, 'Queen Victoria Building including interior' and Item Number 1736 'Bicentennial Plaza including monuments' (refer to Figure 105). The site is not located within a Heritage Conservation Area.

The purpose of this Heritage Interpretation Plan (HIP) is to conceptualise the vision for 'interpretation' and highlight opportunities for interpretation based on the current use of the site and any future use. The formalisation of the final Heritage Interpretation will be developed in consultation with City of Sydney. The final design of the interpretation would be subject to detailed design development in conjunction with the consultant and technical team as well as specialist designers (graphic, web design etc.) to integrate interpretation within any potential future development of the site.

This HIP highlights the historical and cultural significance of the subject site while also recommending interpretation themes and media. The historical themes and narratives that have been outlined in Section 5.2 has been informed by the historical research and summary provided in Conservation Management Plan (CMP) prepared by Urbis in 2019. This history has been included in Section 3 of this HIP.

Below is a summary of the key mediums recommended for heritage interpretation:

- Implementation and installation of interpretive signage;
- Printed and digital media; and
- Expanding the guided tours on offer.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. BACKGROUND

Urbis has been engaged by the City of Sydney Council to prepare the following Heritage Interpretation Plan (HIP) for the Queen Victoria Building (QVB) as a requirement of part of a Heritage Floor Space (HFS) Application. The QVB is owned by the City of Sydney Council and leased and operated by Ipoh Pty Ltd and Vicinity Custodian Pty Ltd as a shopping centre. The HFS Application is based on conservation works that have already taken place over the last 30 years.

The subject site is identified as listed as a heritage item on the NSW State Heritage Register (SHR) Listing Number 01814 and on the Sydney Local Environment Plan 2012 Item Number 1783 and Item Number 1736. The site is not located within a Heritage Conservation Area.

## 1.2. SITE LOCATION

The subject site, known as the Queen Victoria Building (QVB), is located at 455 George Street, Sydney. The subject site is located on the western side of George Street, on a block bordered by Market Street to the north, DrUITT Street to the south and York Street to the west. The subject building encompasses the entire block. Land and Property Information identifies the site as Lot 1 DP 811077.



Figure 1 – Aerial image of subject site, indicated by red outline

Source: Urbis, 2018

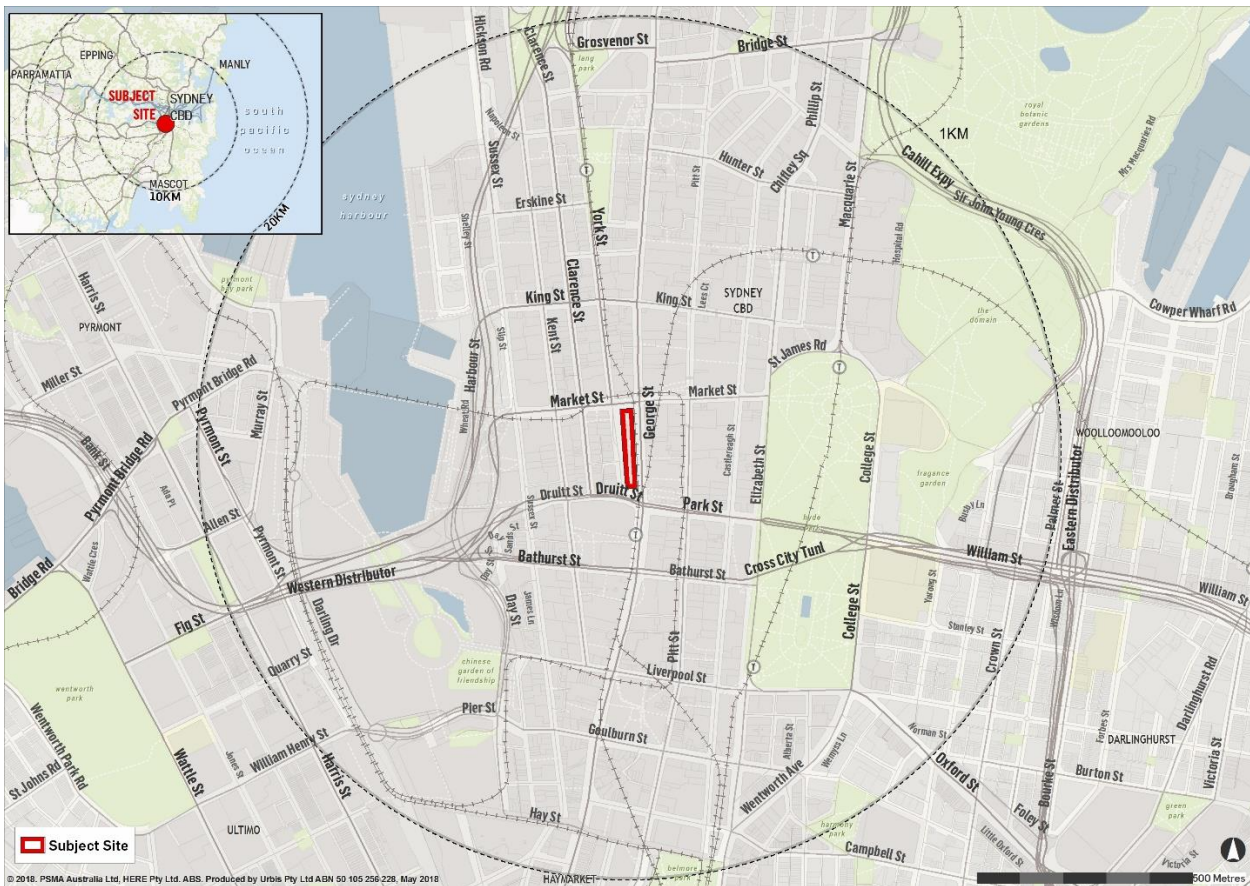


Figure 2 – Locality map, subject site indicated by red outline

Source: Urbis, 2018

### 1.3. METHODOLOGY

This Interpretation Plan is intended to inform and guide collaborative interpretation planning with stakeholders and relevant parties. The Interpretation Plan has been prepared in accordance with relevant guidelines and relevant policy as outlined below.

#### 1.3.1. Heritage Guidelines and the Burra Charter

Heritage conservation seeks to sustain the values of heritage landscapes, places and objects, individually and collectively, so that the community and visitors can continue to appreciate, experience and learn from them and about them, and so that they can be passed on to future generations.<sup>1</sup> Interpretation is an integral part of the experience of significant heritage places and the conservation and management of heritage items and is relevant to other aspects of environmental and cultural management and policy. Interpretation also incorporates and provides broad access to historical research and analysis.<sup>2</sup>

This Interpretation Plan has been prepared in accordance with the *NSW Heritage Manual*, the *NSW Heritage Branch Interpreting Heritage Places and Items: Guidelines* (August 2005) and the *NSW Heritage Branch's Heritage Interpretation Policy* (endorsed by the Heritage Council August 2005) as well as the conditions of consent as outlined above in Section 1.1. The general philosophy and process adopted is guided by the *Australia ICOMOS Burra Charter 2013*.

*The Burra Charter* defines interpretation as “all the ways of presenting the *cultural significance of a place*” (Article 1.17) and it may be a combination of the treatment of the fabric, the use of and activities of the place, and the use of introduced explanatory material. Interpretation should provide and enhance understanding of

<sup>1</sup> NSW Heritage Branch, Department of Planning, Heritage Information Series, Heritage Interpretation Policy August 2005, p2.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid 3

the history, significance and meaning of the place. Interpretation should respect and be appropriate to the cultural significance of the building (Article 25).

The NSW Heritage Branch *Interpreting Heritage Places and Items: Guidelines* lists the following best practice “ingredients” for interpretation:

- Interpretation, People and Culture – Respect for the special connections between people and items;
- Heritage Significance and Site Analysis – Understand the item and convey its significance;
- Records and Research – Use existing records of the item, research additional information and make these publicly available (subject to security and cultural protocols);
- Audiences – Explore, respect and respond to the identified audience;
- Themes – Make reasoned choices about themes, stories and strategies;
- Engaging the Audience – Stimulate thought and dialogue, provoke response and enhance understanding;
- Context – Research the physical, historical, spiritual and contemporary context of the item, including related items, and respect local amenity and culture;
- Authenticity, Ambience and Sustainability – Develop interpretation methods and media which sustain the significance of the items, its character and authenticity;
- Conservation Planning and Works – Integrate interpretation in conservation planning and in all stages of a conservation project;
- Maintenance, Evaluation and Review – Include interpretation in the ongoing management of an item; provide for regular maintenance, evaluation and review;
- Skills and Knowledge – Involve people with relevant skills, knowledge and experience; and
- Collaboration – Collaborate with organisations and the local community.

## 1.4. AUTHOR IDENTIFICATION & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The following report has been prepared by Alida Eisermann (Heritage Consultant). Jonathan Bryant (Heritage Director) has reviewed and endorsed its content. Unless otherwise stated, all drawings, illustrations and photographs are the work of Urbis.

Sections of this Heritage Interpretation Plan (HIP) have been sourced from the Conservation Management Plan (CMP) prepared for the Queen Victoria Building by Urbis, that has been largely sourced from the previous CMP prepared by Graham Brooks and Associates dated November 2010.

Table 1 – Conservation Management Plan versions for the Queen Victoria Building

Date	Author
November 2010	Jonathan Bryant of GBA Heritage (formerly known as Graham Brooks and Associates)
November 2003	Anita Krivickas and Bruce Edgar of Graham Brooks and Associates
1996-1997	Graham Brooks, Glen Cowell, Paul Dignam and Challis Smedley of Graham Brooks and Partners Pty Ltd

## **1.5. LIMITATIONS**

It is noted that the suggested content of this Interpretation Plan is indicative only and is subject to amendment prior to the implementation of the plan and graphic design.

Use of images is also contingent upon copyright permission and right of reproduction which is subject to confirmation prior to the implementation of the plan.

## 2. SITE DESCRIPTION

The following summary site description has been based on a detailed site description included in *Conservation Management Plan: Queen Victoria Building by Urbis* (2019).

The subject site is an elongated rectangle, which narrows slightly to the Druitt Street end. The long sides of the rectangle are bounded by George and York Streets, and are approximately 177m and 189m respectively. The Market Street frontage is 40m and the Druitt Street frontage is 34m. The total site area is approximately 6,950 m<sup>2</sup>. The building occupies the boundaries of the entire site area. An underground carpark was built during the major work in the 1980's and occupies an area under York Street roughly in line with the boundary of York, Market and Druitt Street. The site is located roughly in the centre of the city in a precinct of government, church, commercial and retail buildings. It is linked by underground tunnels to Town Hall Railway Station and the nearby Myer Department store. The internal pedestrian routes, particularly the ground and underground links, form primary pedestrian routes in the city, contributing to the building's important public character. The subject site is an important element, along with the Sydney Town Hall and St Andrew's Cathedral, in the imagery of this part of the city.

The QVB in its current form comprises a combination of various modified internal spaces and commercial activities within an elaborate historic external envelope. At the basement level, is a pedestrian link from Town Hall Station in the south to the Myers Department Store in the north. This through link provides a variety of shops for the passing trade. The basement level makes a significant contribution to the current building's ongoing commercial success by linking it to transport nodes and major retail stores. The internal voids of the QVB extend through to the basement levels, bringing a degree of daylight from the glazed roof high above, however majority of the basement space is consistent in character with an underground pedestrian route. Although it shares similar shopfront details and floor tile patterns with the remainder of the building, it lacks the proportions and ambience of the ground, first and second floor levels. The ceiling heights are lower and the formal centralised void is not as strong a visual element. The basement, while not a significant space, does act as a complementary visual component of the overall site.

The ground, first and second floors contain the major spaces with large distinctive internal voids flanked by galleries that are naturally lit through the overhead glazed roof. The essential character of this space is an arcade or internal street similar to many other arcades that existed in Sydney such as the Strand, but much larger and elaborate. Where arcades tended to fit in between rows of existing buildings to form internal streets, often with glazed roofs to provide natural lighting, the QVB stands alone, occupying an entire city block with a distinctive external presence and form. The QVB was planned as a stand-alone building, which was intended to complement a precinct of important civic and public buildings such as the Town Hall and Saint Andrews Cathedral. The arrangement of individual shops along the arcade galleries, with access provided from the arcade, and visual access and daylight provided through the shopfront windows along the street, is not consistent with the concept of an arcade as an internal street sited between buildings, lit by sunlight via a glazed roof. The character of the individual shops is thus both internal and external, which sets them apart from other arcade and retail developments in the city. The elaborate and extensively decorated façade treatment of the QVB, unusual for an arcade building in Sydney, has contributed to its status as an esteemed Sydney retailing icon. The imagery of the copper domes, sandstone facade, heavy massing, elaborate decoration, arrays of shopfronts and in particular its location in the centre of the city, contributes to the landmark status of the QVB.

## 3. HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The following history of the site has been sourced from *Conservation Management Plan: Queen Victoria Building* by Urbis (2019).

### 3.1. HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

#### 3.1.1. Introduction

This section provides an overview and historical background to aid in the understanding of the building. By necessity areas of this section overlap with the Section 2 (Site Description), as both aspects contribute to an understanding of the existing building and cannot be separated.

#### 3.1.2. Brief Development of Retailing in Sydney

Retailing in NSW began with the bartering of goods between the early members of the Colony. A more conventional form of retailing developed as agents acted for military officers who were able to purchase goods from visiting ships. As the colony grew, individuals and companies were attracted to the financial opportunities the Colony presented. The earliest shops in Sydney date from about 1800. Though little more than makeshift premises they were usually converted from the front room of a house, however door to door hawkers and a visit to the Sydney Markets were still the main source of supply for the basic necessities.<sup>3</sup>

It was not until the 1830s that demand for a greater variety of goods led to the establishment of “shops” on a more sophisticated level. Most began trading as small family businesses, the majority began as general drapers and most, recognising the importance of location and accessibility, located themselves on prominent and often corner sites along Sydney’s main traffic arteries.<sup>4</sup>

One of the typical successful early stores, David Jones, set up a shop on the corner of George and Barrack Streets, influenced by the central location. By the 1870s the typical small businesses had developed into primitive department stores. The greater demand for a wider range of goods and increased importations, driven largely by growing affluence resulting from the gold rush and international influences, contributed to and promoted retail development so that by the 1880s large “emporia” and arcades had begun to develop, based on overseas models such as Le Bon Marché in Paris.<sup>5</sup>

#### 3.1.3. Arcade and Emporium Development 1880-1915

In 1881, Sydney’s first arcade, the Sydney Arcade, was opened. Designed by the architect Thomas Rowe it joined the corner of King and George Streets. Its immediate success led to a period of rapid arcade construction in Sydney. Shortly after, Rowe designed the Royal Arcade between George and Pitt Streets (now the site of the Hilton Hotel). The Victoria Arcade was constructed between Elizabeth and Castlereagh Streets in 1887, followed by the Imperial Arcade which opened in 1891, the Strand Arcade in 1892, and the Queen Victoria Markets, constructed adjacent to the Centennial or Sydney Town Hall, opened in 1898<sup>6</sup>. The Queen Victoria Market has been considered here as an arcade as its essential internal configuration is consistent with that of an arcade.

The covered arcades proved to be suited to Sydney’s climate providing enclosed areas protected from the rain and sun, and separated from the increasingly busy and dirty streets. They were popular with property owners as they made use of land in the middle of the city blocks that previously were not utilised.

In 1881, Anthony Horden constructed the Palace Emporium in the Haymarket. This and the construction of the Sydney Arcade coincided with the beginning of an economic boom that swept Sydney and continued to the early 1890s.

One of the first multi-storey retail emporia was erected at the northern end of George Street in 1893-95 for the retail and commercial firm of Holdsworth and MacPherson and Co, now the former George Paterson’s Building. The revolution however occurred with the construction of Anthony Hordens’ New Palace Emporium built on a large block bounded by George, Goulburn and Pitt Streets in 1905. Other companies soon followed. Marcus Clark moved to Railway Square in 1906, Grace Bros opened their Broadway store in 1906, Mark Foys Piazza

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<sup>3</sup> Christie Michael, 1988, 'The Sydney Markets 1788 - 1988', Macarthur Press, Parramatta, p 16.

<sup>4</sup> Schwager Brooks and Partners. 1996, 'Conservation Plan David Jones Elizabeth Store and Market Street Store'.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid

<sup>6</sup> Salisbury, Barbara, 1990, 'The Strand Arcade A History', Hale and Ironmonger, Sydney, p 53.

store in 1909, Farmers built a six-storey store in 1910, Ball and Welch in George Street and Snows in Pitt Street in 1915. David Jones by 1915 occupied most of the buildings between Barrack and King Streets operating a highly successful retail store that also boasted an extensive mail order service.<sup>7</sup>

### **3.1.4. Brief History of Market Trading in Sydney**

#### **3.1.4.1. Early Years**

At the time of first settlement in Sydney Cove, trading in goods was restricted to bartering. There was no need for markets, shops etc., as all goods including the convicts were in custody of the Crown.

The first Government Stores were built of wood with thatched roofs. Little provision was made for protection from the elements and from theft. Essentially the Government Store was a precursor of the market, because convicts, sailors and soldiers gathered each week to collect their rations, exchange goods and gossip. A thriving black market developed in the early years of the colony as food items were particularly scarce and any excess could be traded or sold. Most trading took the form of barter, an exchange of goods or services.

Trading in any recognisable form started after the arrival of the second and third fleet and by trading ships of the East India Company. Informal gathering at the wharves took place on ration day. The emergence of markets appeared around the wharves. The open space around the jetties was interspersed with baskets of produce or wicker cages containing chickens and piglets. Regulations governing the markets were introduced in 1806, which required sellers to stack produce in an orderly manner so that the jetties could be kept clear.<sup>8</sup>

#### **3.1.4.2. Rum Corps**

Under the direction of Grose who acted as Governor after Phillip, restrictions on trade actively encouraged the Officers to buy goods landed from passing ships and resell them either in the marketplace or to agents thus creating a monopoly in trade. Soon the re-sale of goods by the Corps were often at profits of 100% to 1000%. This was managed by government restrictions limiting entry of ships and tight control by the upper level of officers. Rum began to be used as currency as it was always in demand. The officers bought up supplies directly from the ships and thus could manipulate the price. Rum was also available as payment of wages to workers.

The rum trade was reduced when Hunter was appointed Governor in 1800. A government store was set up which forced prices down due to competition. Markets could sell goods and services at a reasonable market price both in Sydney and Parramatta. Small farmers were encouraged to grow more produce as fairer prices could be had. In 1803 prices and the supplies of goods were reported in the Sydney Gazette, which further helped introduce fair trade.<sup>9</sup>

#### **3.1.4.3. Sydney Markets**

By 1806, the area just to the west of Circular Quay, where the present-day museum of Contemporary Art stands was the site of the first Sydney Markets. During that year orders were given by Governor Blight to move the market away from the wharves and ban selling of goods before reaching markets in an attempt to regulate a fair market system. After the arrest of Bligh in 1808, Lieutenant Governor Paterson ordered the markets be moved to the Old Parade Grounds.<sup>10</sup> Restrictions were applied which effectively stopped the trade of produce and goods at any other place or time except on designated market days. Goods that arrived on any other day had to be kept in store until market day. The monopolies of the NSW Corps were finally broken in 1810 when Macquarie arrived as Governor and restored order to the Colony and the market place.<sup>11</sup>

The marketplace even in the early years was more than simply a market. It was a place of social interaction. A place to be seen, to meet and discuss. It became the focus of colonial society. It was the economic and social hub of the colony. The markets took on the character of the rural markets of Ireland and England crossed with the flea markets of London. Stocks were erected in the centre of the space where criminals were forced to endure the ridicule of the crowd.

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<sup>7</sup> Schwager Brooks and Partners 1996 "Conservation Plan".

<sup>8</sup> Christie Michael, 'The Sydney Markets 1788 - 1988', p 37.

<sup>9</sup> Christie Michael, 'The Sydney Markets 1788 - 1988', p 35.

<sup>10</sup> Christie Michael, 'The Sydney Markets 1788 - 1988', p 36.

<sup>11</sup> Christie Michael, 'The Sydney Markets 1788 - 1988', p 40.





Figure 3 – Sketch of George Street looking north with the markets beyond Greenway’s Police Court Building, 1842

Source: State Library of NSW, John Rae, DG SV\*/Sp Coll/Rae/7

#### 3.1.4.4. New Market Square 1810

The public wharf was the landing place for river born produce but as the volume of market goods increased so did confusion in the Rocks area on market days. A decision was made to build a new wharf in Cockle Bay (market wharf) to land river born produce to reduce congestion in the Rocks area. In October 1810, Macquarie ordered the markets be moved to a site in George Street, now occupied by the Queen Victoria Building.<sup>12</sup>

This land was then on the outskirts of town, being part of Blaxland’s dairy paddock, next to the burial grounds. A clerk was appointed to control the marketplace and had the power to arrest troublemakers. Housing was provided for the clerk, a market store built and stalls erected for sellers and a stockyard for livestock. A track was built along the present Market Street to Cockle Bay where the wharf was located together with holding pens for livestock as they were unloaded from boats. By 1813, a similar set of regulations were applied to the Parramatta markets and a public fair established twice a year.

Macquarie engaged the convict architect Greenway to design a Market house on the site. The building built in 1820, was a fine two storey brick and stone building, neoclassical in design with a portico and a domed bell tower. A town hall, a cathedral and a government hotel were envisaged to complement the market buildings and to mark the civic centre of the city.

By 1829 Governor Darling moved the livestock markets to a flat area at the end of Brickfield Hill south of Campbell Street<sup>13</sup>. This was a response to the overcrowding of the market square site and also, as stock were often driven along the Parramatta Road, a livestock market in that area was a logical place. The Greenway designed market building was converted to a Police Office and Court House and cells were built. The Market sold grain, fish, poultry, and other produce.

<sup>12</sup> Christie Michael, 'The Sydney Markets 1788 - 1988', p 42.

<sup>13</sup> Christie Michael, 'The Sydney Markets 1788 - 1988', p 49.

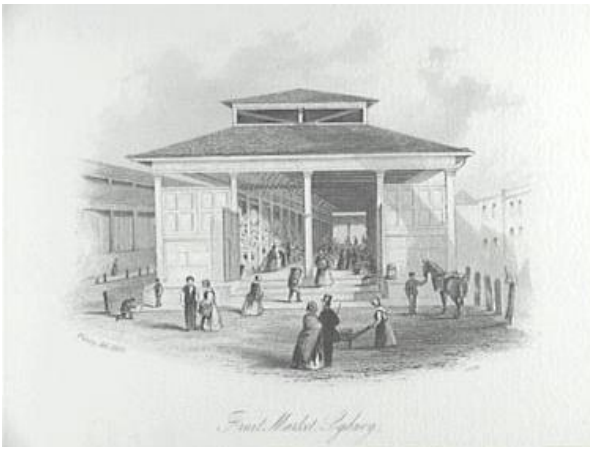


Figure 4 – George Street Markets, 1853.

Source: *Sydney Mail*, 'Some Recollections of Old Sydney', Wednesday 17 July 1918



Figure 5 – Interior of the George Street Markets, 1859.

Source: *National Library of Australia*, PIC Drawer 2509 #S9882

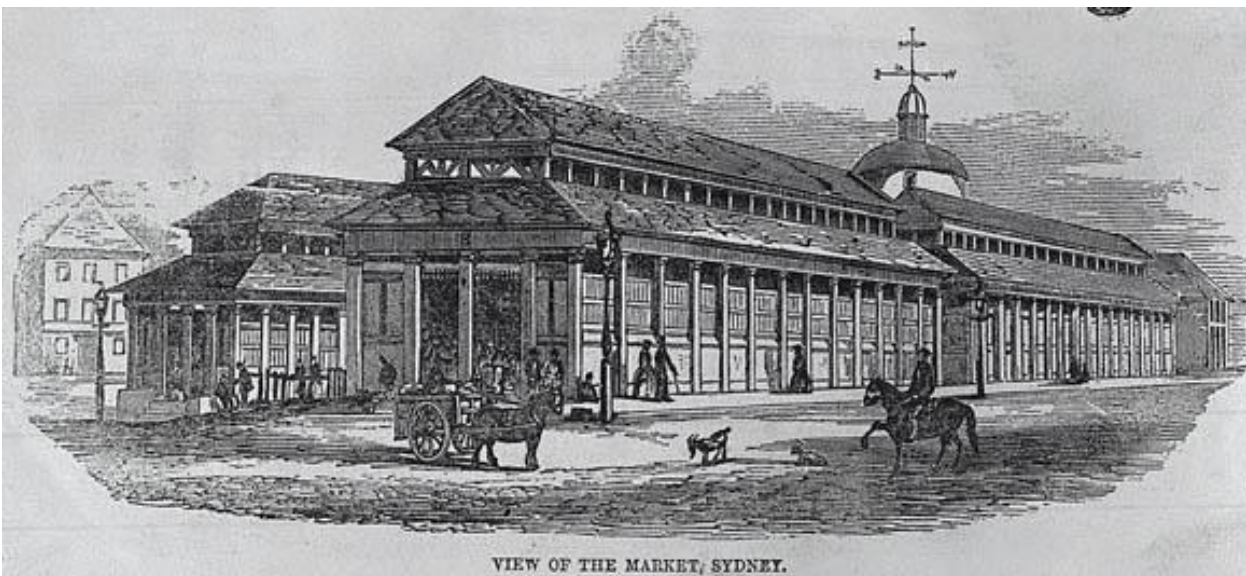


Figure 6 – George Street Markets, 1857.

Source: *National Library of Australia*, Walter. G. Mason, PIC Volume 6A #S1258

### 3.1.4.5. Rebuilding of Central Markets 1834

The original stalls built under Macquarie, although well-constructed, were rebuilt from 1831 to 1834 in several stages under the influence of Governor Bourke. The floors were paved with stone with roofs supported on stone piers, arranged around an open square terminated at one end by the Greenway designed building.<sup>14</sup> Bourke also moved the hay and corn market to a site near the cattle yards bounded by George, Hay, Castlereagh and Campbell Streets. A new brick building was built for the storage of hay and for market offices. This site was to become known as Paddy's Markets. The activities of this market moved between the hay market and the cattle market.

In 1839, the Market Commission Act<sup>15</sup> was passed which relieved the Governor of any further involvement in running the markets. This legislation allowed any collection of over 25 households to set up a separate Market Commission. Parramatta was the first town to set up such a commission.

Practices at the early markets led to much concern, as only a proportion of the produce actually reached the market. Hawkers often sold produce directly from the street or from carts on the way to market and an area

<sup>14</sup> Christie Michael, 'The Sydney Markets 1788 - 1988', p 53.

<sup>15</sup> Christie Michael, 'The Sydney Markets 1788 - 1988', p 59.

around the hay market was popular in trading to avoid paying market fees. After an inquiry in 1843,<sup>16</sup> control of the markets was given to the Council and strict regulations set in place to control hours of operation, conduct, control of weights, etc. The George Street Markets were open till 11.30 PM on Saturdays and became a focus of Saturday Night entertainment in Sydney.

By 1846, the Council decided to lease the market operations to private individuals who would be responsible for supervision and running. This arrangement was suitable for many years. With the gold rushes, which began in the 1850's, the markets entered a new era as they supplied the many new arrivals with equipment and provisions in search of gold. Many astute farmers and market gardeners realised there were larger profits in supplying the diggers rather than taking the risk of digging at the goldfields themselves.

#### **3.1.4.6. Expanded Facilities 1858**

The George Street Market buildings had been neglected for many years and in 1858, the second Corporation of Sydney began to make improvements.<sup>17</sup> The four separate market buildings were united under a single roof and the spaces between the pillars in George and York Streets were turned into enclosed shops. There were 24 shops along George Street and 22 along York Street. A further 48 shops were created facing into the interior market space. Open stalls were provided in the enclosed central space. These alterations changed the character of the central market.<sup>18</sup> The councillors intended to change it from a boisterous farmers market to an orderly wholesale area in keeping with its location in the centre of a rapidly expanding city. Other improvements included a bell tower at the Market Street end and elaborate entrance halls midway along each side.

By the 1880s, the George Street Markets had become a wholesale fruit and meat market. Most small growers found it easier to sell their produce at the Campbell Street Markets. By this time the old market buildings had become tatty especially with the backdrop of the newly constructed town hall and Cathedral. It was decided that the old markets would have to go and several concepts were put forward from a central park to a lavish public building. The fruit markets were already being disbanded due to complaints from stall holders and a new Fruit and Vegetable Market was built at Belmore Street in 1893.<sup>19</sup> Several unofficial markets were also being held in disused buildings around the Haymarket area partly as a protest to the inadequate facilities provided in the central markets and partly to avoid paying the required stall holders fees.

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<sup>16</sup> Christie Michael, 'The Sydney Markets 1788 - 1988', p 60.

<sup>17</sup> Christie Michael, 'The Sydney Markets 1788 - 1988', p 64.

<sup>18</sup> Christie Michael, 'The Sydney Markets 1788 - 1988', p 66.

<sup>19</sup> Christie Michael, 'The Sydney Markets 1788 - 1988', p 78.



Figure 7 – George Street Markets, 1870.

Source: *City of Sydney Archives*,

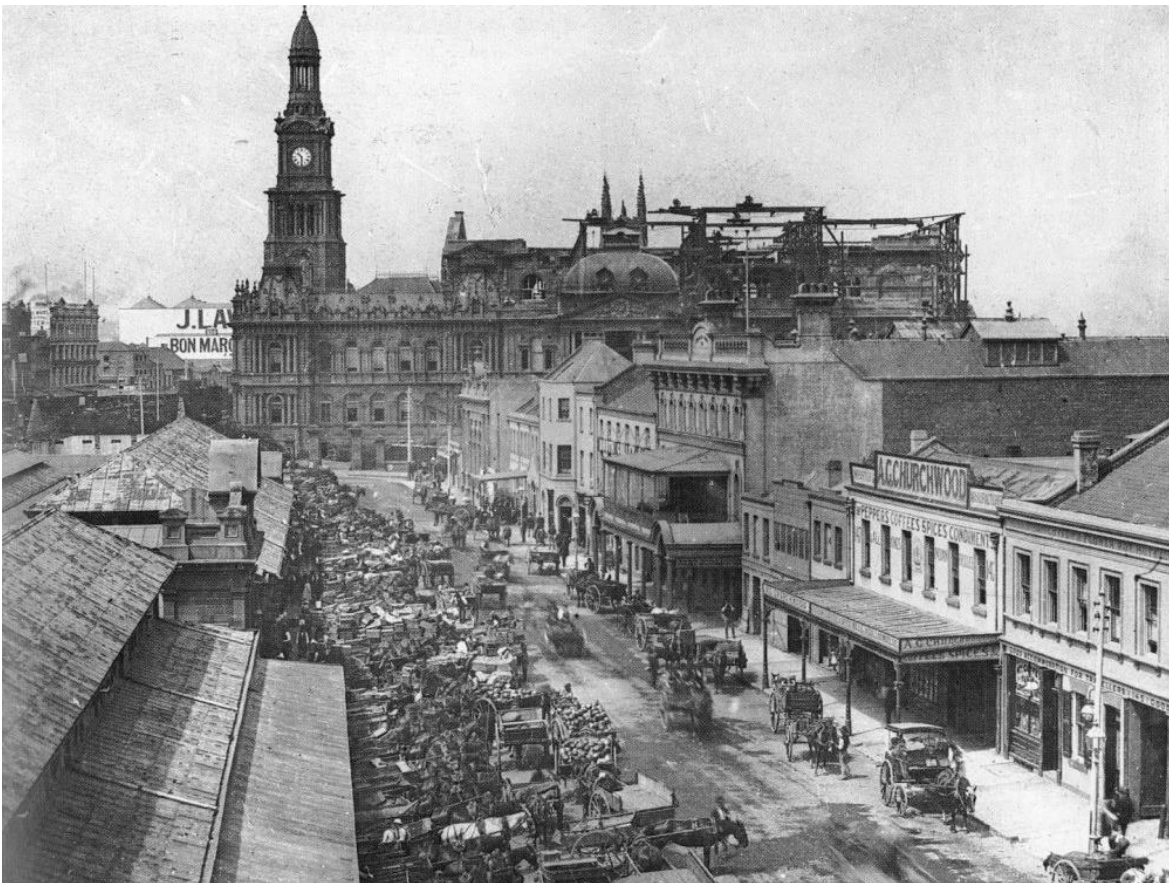


Figure 8 – George Street Markets with the unfinished Sydney Town Hall located in the background, 1880s.

Source: *City of Sydney Archives*,

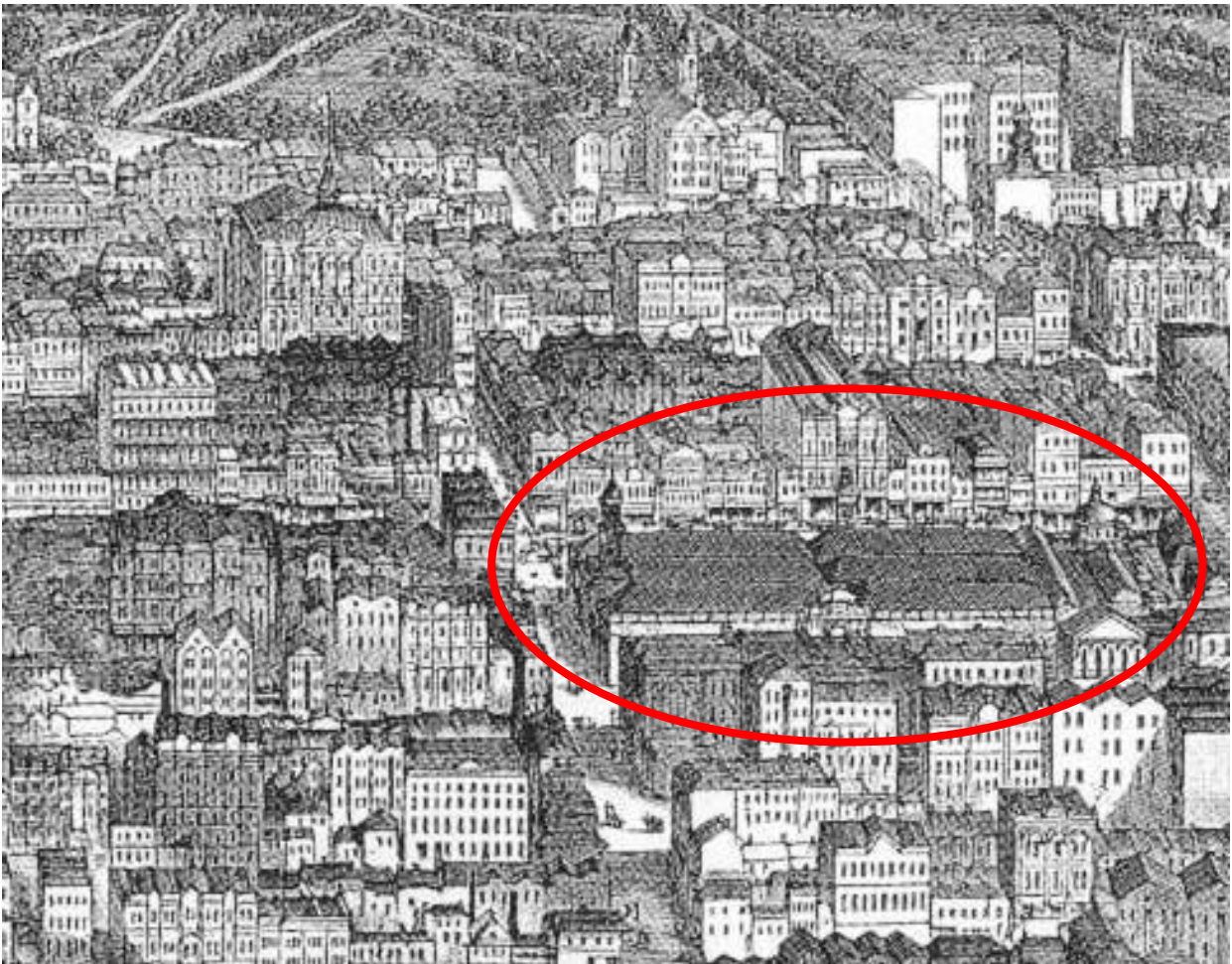


Figure 9 – A bird's eye view of Sydney with market site indicated in red, 1888.

Source: Max Kelly and Ruth Crocker, *Sydney Takes Shape, '1888: Sydney a birds-eye view from Darling Harbour', 1977*

### 3.1.4.7. Demolition of Old Central Market Buildings 1891

Despite objections, the old George Street Markets were demolished by Council in 1891, in anticipation of a lavish new facelift. The Council also bought the old Police Courts (former Greenway building) for the enormous sum of £124,000, and quickly demolished both the market buildings and Police Courts. Excavation began almost immediately. Contracts for clearing the site were signed for £10,000 even before plans for the new building were at hand.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Manning, W. P., 1892, Report of the Markets Committee on the Utilisation of the George Street Market and Central Police Court Sites, Town Hall Sydney.'



Figure 10 – George Street Markets with Greenway's Police Court building to the right, pre-1891

Source: State Library of NSW



Figure 11 – George Street Markets, pre-1891

Source: State Library of NSW



Figure 12 – Interior view of the George Street Market, undated

Source: Tyrell Collection in John Shaw, *The Queen Victoria Building 1898-1986*, 1987

### 3.1.4.8. The Market Site

Much controversy surrounded the acquisition and demolition of the old Police Courts and Market Buildings. The Council was using public money to act in competition with private citizens. An amount of £300,000 was to be borrowed for the construction of a new building. There was much speculation as to whether such a large loan was wise as the existing facility returned Council £20,000 to £30,000 a year. In the early 1890's the city was in the depths of recession. At a time when men could not find work, the Council decided to spend a lavish sum to build monuments when it could be argued the money could be used in ways to reduce problems such as unemployment and public health.

The site, declared as a market in 1810 by Macquarie, was granted to the Mayor and Councillors of Sydney in 1846 for a quit rent of one farthing a year provided the site was used for a market.

*“...the Land shall be at all times hereafter set apart maintained and used by the said Mayor Alderman and Councillors and their successor as and for a General Market for the use and convenience of the inhabitants of the said City...”<sup>21</sup>*

A further condition of the Grant stated that the land would revert back to Government ownership after being vacant continuously for a period of three years. In 1888, the Council sought legal opinion concerning the use of the market site for other uses. The legal opinion stated the Council was bound to build a market on the site.<sup>22</sup> A bill was proposed in 1890 to free the George Street Markets of the conditions of the original grant, but the proposed bill was dropped at about the time the Council purchased the old Police Court site.

In their eventual proposal for a new building, Council adhered to the letter of the law by reserving the basement as a market space. The large space with a high ceiling enjoying a diffused natural light and cool temperatures, serviced by four cart lifts was indeed a suitable space for a market, yet market facilities were already provided in other parts of the city to serve this intended function. Even at the time of opening the market traders were never attracted to this location. It was however an attractive space for other functions. The basement was not tenanted until 1900, when the northern end was used by a Fruit Supply Company, Wine Company premises, Printing and Drafting Office and the southern end was used for a variety of offices, workshops and storehouses.<sup>23</sup> The southern end was occupied for many years after 1902 as a Wine Cellar, a use compatible with its size, thermal and spatial qualities.

### **3.1.5. George McRae City Architect**

George McRae was born in Edinburgh in 1858, where, after completing his schooling he was apprenticed to Messrs. George Beattie and Sons, architects. After several years in private practice, he decided to emigrate to Australia. McRae arrived in Sydney in 1884, as a young architect. Soon after arrival, he was appointed as principal assistant to the City Architect, T.H. Sapsford.

One of Sapsford's major projects at the time was the second stage of the Sydney Town Hall, which was completed in 1888. McRae spent much time with Sapsford on this project and saw it through to completion. McRae was directly responsible for the design and erection of the Eastern Fish Market in Woolloomooloo and the Fruit and Vegetable Market Building in Belmore Street.

In 1897, McRae was appointed principal assistant architect in the Public Works Department of New South Wales, and in 1912 he succeeded W.L. Vernon as Government Architect, a position he held until his death in 1923. In this position, he participated in the design and construction of many prominent public buildings, including the old Fisher Library building, the southern cloister of the Quadrangle and the Andersons Stuart Medical School at the University of Sydney, the Parcels Post Office at Railway Square, the Department of Education Building, Manly and South Steyne Surf Pavilions, part of the Jenolan Caves House, Taronga Park Zoo, Central Railway Station and the old Treasury Building in Bridge Street.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Deed of Grant, 5 November, 1846.

<sup>22</sup> Christie, *The Sydney Markets 1788 - 1988*, p. 82.

<sup>23</sup> Sands Sydney Directory, 1900.

<sup>24</sup> Stenning, Nicholas & Eve, 1977, 'George McRae', Undergraduate Thesis, Sydney University.



Figure 13 – Portrait of George McRae, c. 1890

Source: City of Sydney Archives, SRC 15120 (originally CRS80/7)



Figure 14 – Eastern Fish Market in Woolloomooloo, c. 1870

Source: Mitchell Library in John Shaw, *The Queen Victoria Building 1898-1986*, 1987



Figure 15 – Parcels Post Office at Railway Square (now operating as a hotel), 1967

Source: City of Sydney Archives, NSCA CRS 48/6206



Figure 16 – Department of Education Building, 1915

Source: State Library of NSW, *Government Printing Office 1 - 18335*

### 3.1.6. Design of New City Markets

Sapsford was asked by the City Council to prepare a design for a new City Market as early as 1883, but it is believed no drawings were produced by him for the new market and he died in 1887. That responsibility thus passed to McRae.

At the young age of 28, McRae became the new City Architect and was given a chance to make his mark on the town of Sydney. In 1888, he published a design for a New City Market in the *Building and Engineering*



*Journal*. This design was for a building 400 feet long and 115 feet wide, in a Queen Anne Style, topped with turrets and gables. The interior was basically a large space enclosed by a glass roof, which although not entirely new at the time, was a concept with some merit and foresight.<sup>25</sup> Criticism of this design suggested filling the large interior space with galleries to increase the rentable floor area. Perhaps this was a concession to the economic demands and practicality of the Victorian minds.

The opportunity to create a grand new building came about in 1892, when the State Government decided to vacate the old Police Courts and Cells designed by Greenway, located adjacent to the City Markets. This gave the Council the opportunity of extending the market site to include the area of the old Police Courts, thus a complete city block would be available.<sup>26</sup> After acquisition of the land, another two hundred feet was added to the site. McRae was thus given a remarkable chance, perhaps a once in a lifetime opportunity, to design such a large building. The Council's brief was simply for a building with a large basement and three floors. The design of such a large construction project should have been preceded by a design competition, but this would have meant inevitable delays. The concept brief for the new market determined a building of three floors and a basement with a minimum ceiling height of 22 feet.<sup>27</sup> As the site had already been cleared, it was the Council's wish to proceed as quickly as possible. Excavations for a deep basement commenced in March 1893, even before a design had been finalised, such was the energy and enthusiasm of the Council.

By July 1893, McRae presented a plan which complied with the brief. A selection of four facade treatments were presented including; Gothic, Queen Anne, Renaissance and Romanesque. There was little indecision from the Council, who choose the Romanesque facade. Much speculation has been offered as to the reasons for this choice. One theory is that the loss of the Crystal Palace in 1882, with its large dome, gave a sympathetic reception to a building with many domes.<sup>28</sup> Perhaps the beautifully drawn and rendered perspective of the New City Markets with the Town Hall in the background added weight to the choice.

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<sup>25</sup> Overton, Peter, 'A Study on the Re-use and Restoration of the Queen Victoria Building in George Street Sydney,' Undergraduate Thesis, Volumes 1 & 2, 1982, Sydney University.

<sup>26</sup> Manning, W. P., 1892, Report of the Markets Committee.

<sup>27</sup> Sydney City Council Meeting, 17 October 1892.

<sup>28</sup> Fitzgerald, Shirley, *Sydney 1842-1992*, Sydney 1992, p. 100.

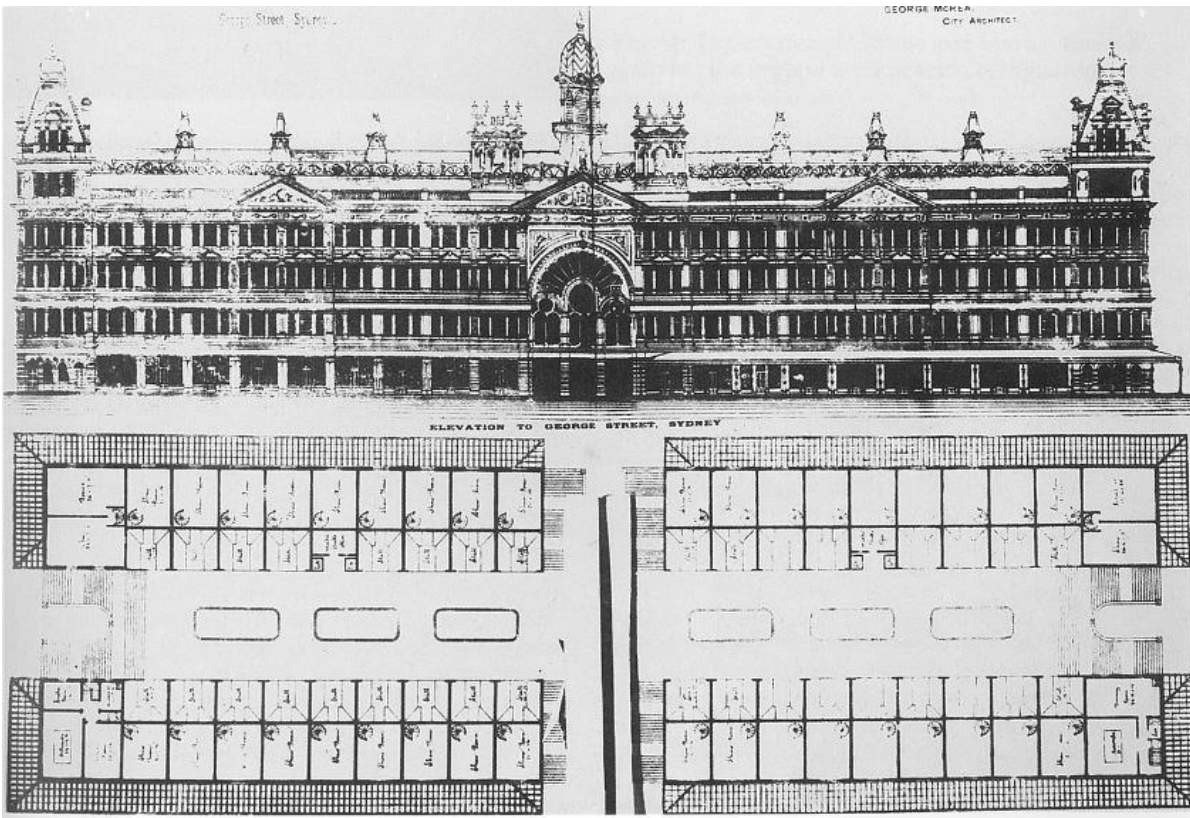


Figure 17 – McRae's Queen Anne design option for the Queen Victoria Building  
 Source: Mitchell Library in John Shaw, *The Queen Victoria Building 1898-1986, 1987*



Figure 18 – George McRae's perspective of the chosen Romanesque scheme for the new markets  
 Source: *City of Sydney Archives*

### 3.1.7. William McIntosh

The six statues above the York and George Street entrances of the QVB were designed by prolific Sydney sculptor William McIntosh. The six figures were installed shortly after the opening of the Queen Victoria Market.<sup>29</sup>

McIntosh was born in Ayr, Scotland, and arrived in Australia in 1880. In the early 1880s, he attended drawing classes at the Mechanic's School of Arts on Pitt Street, and then the Sydney School of Arts, where he once one of nine original students to study under Lucien Henry. In 1899, McIntosh won a competition for the design of statues to be erected at the Queen Victoria Market, for which he travelled to Italy for the purchase and 'roughing out' of the marble. The statues, which were twice life size, represented national unity, the arts, science, labour, justice and business. It is not known who modelled for the female figures, however the male figures were modelled by famed Sydney swimmer Percy Cavill, then twenty-four years of age and the holder of many records in Australia and England. Their location however, twenty metres above the street, meant that their details are all but invisible to passers-by, and their exact messages matter less than their general decorative effect.

It is believed that these statues were not the only ones commissioned for the QVB. It is thought that upon seeing the statues, prominent QVB tenant Quong Tart, commissioned a set of marble bas reliefs, one of which (depicting St Cecilia) is known to be in private ownership.<sup>30</sup> McIntosh worked extensively within Sydney and Brisbane, and other examples of his work include the following:

- Carved sandstone blocks set into the pillars at the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences Building (1892) Sydney and Sydney Technical College (1890-93), in association with James Fillans.
- Series of 16 statues for the Lands Department Building, Sydney 1892, in collaboration with Fillans, James White, Alexander Sherrif and Tomaso Sani, and commissioned by the Parkes Government. Statue of Sir Thomas Mitchell for the Land Department Building.
- Reredos based upon Leonardo Da Vinci's Last Supper, for the Soldiers Chapel (1922) at St Saviour's Anglican Cathedral, Goulburn.
- Figures representing Agriculture and Labour, on the pediment of the Executive Building, Brisbane, 1908.
- Printer's Devil over the doorway of the Government Printing Office, Brisbane, 1910.
- Bronze group of figures on the Metropolitan Board of Water Supply and Sewerage Building, Sydney, 1916.
- A number of war memorials within NSW and Queensland, including Soldier at the Ready in Double Bay, 1919.

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<sup>29</sup> Scarlett, Ken, *Australian Sculptors*, pp. 397-400.

<sup>30</sup> Personal conversation with Jeanette Holybone, Kogarah Historic Society, February 2003.



Figure 19 – The statues of McIntosh representing Justice, Labour and Commerce, undated

Source: *City of Sydney Archives, SRC10905*

### 3.1.8. Construction of New City Markets

After getting approval for a loan of £300,000, tenders were called. By November 1893, a contract for the basement structure was signed and work commenced. A ceremony was held on the 15th December to commemorate the laying of the first in terpretat, attended by the Mayor, William Manning.<sup>31</sup>

The actual construction work proceeded rapidly and smoothly. At this time the city was recovering from a recession and workers for the project were plentiful. Workers were paid 5 shillings a day for the pick and shovel work and the jobs eagerly sought.<sup>32</sup> The construction of such a large building was one of the factors helping to lead the economy out of recession, as the construction became a tangible symbol of recovery in the economy.

Council had considered constructing the building in two halves to meet the requirements of the original land grant which limited the time the site could be devoid of a market activity to a maxim of three years. The construction techniques were so rapid they approached a kind of 'fast track' similar to modern construction techniques.

Council records noted that:

*"There will be no unnecessary delay in completing the building, the various contracts being so let as to overlap the proceeding one."*<sup>33</sup>

This type of construction system had been tried before for such buildings as the Crystal Palace and the Lands Department building in Bridge Street, but was uncommon for the day. Perhaps Council may have had a preferred list of contractors that had already successfully completed work and could be relied upon at short notice. The speed of the project is indicated by the fact that the basement excavations were completed even before the design had been finalised or confirmed and before Council had chosen the facade design,

<sup>31</sup> Shaw, John, *The Queen Victoria Building 1898-1986*, Sydney 1987, p. 42.

<sup>32</sup> Overton, Peter, 'A Study on the Re-use and Restoration of the QVB.'

<sup>33</sup> Sydney City Council, *Town Clerks Report*, 1893.

invitations for tenders to the steel and iron superstructure were being written. The work was allocated to a number of major tender's including:

- Excavation/Messes, Tate & Lawler £10,757
- Superstructure/Messes Phippard Bros. £203,000
- Iron Columns and Girders/R Tulloch £5,759
- Brickwork and Trachyte/Loveridge & Hudson £2,759
- Ironwork-northern basement/R. C. Scrutton & Co. £3,352
- Hydraulic Elevators, Cart Lift and Machinery/Waygood Elevator Co. £10,2851
- Incandescent Gas Lights/F. Lasseter & Co. £1,591
- Finishing of Basement Floor/Messrs Phippard Bros. £4,985
- Gas Fittings/F. Lasseter & Co. £1,175<sup>34</sup>



Figure 20 – Excavated site of the New City Markets (now known as the Queen Victoria Building)

Source: *City of Sydney Archives, SRC12696*

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<sup>34</sup> Overton, 'A Study on the Re-use and Restoration of the QVB.'

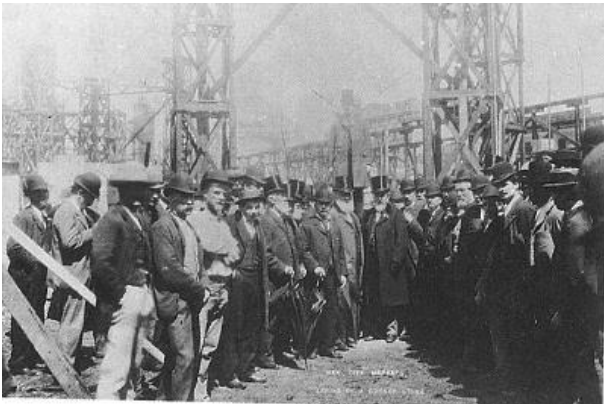


Figure 21 – S. L. Lees, the Mayor of Sydney, laying a cornerstone for the New City Markets

Source: Mitchell Library in John Shaw, *The Queen Victoria Building 1898-1986, 1987*

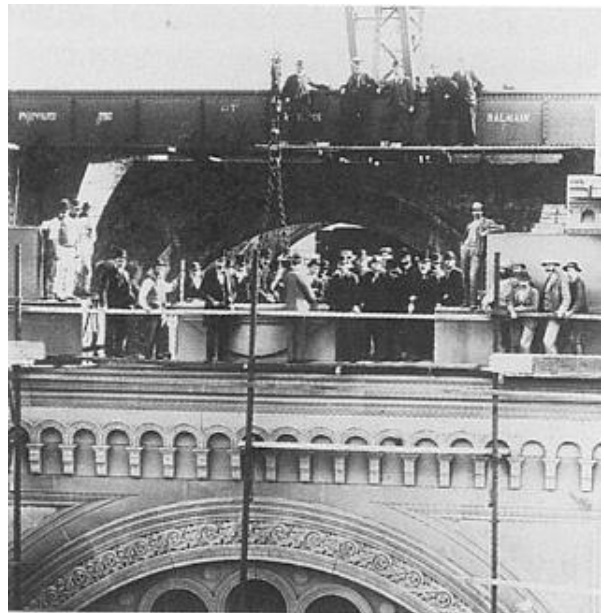


Figure 22 –A stone laying ceremony, possibly commemorating the installation of the McIntosh's Statues

Source: National Trust in John Shaw, *The Queen Victoria Building 1898-1986, 1987*

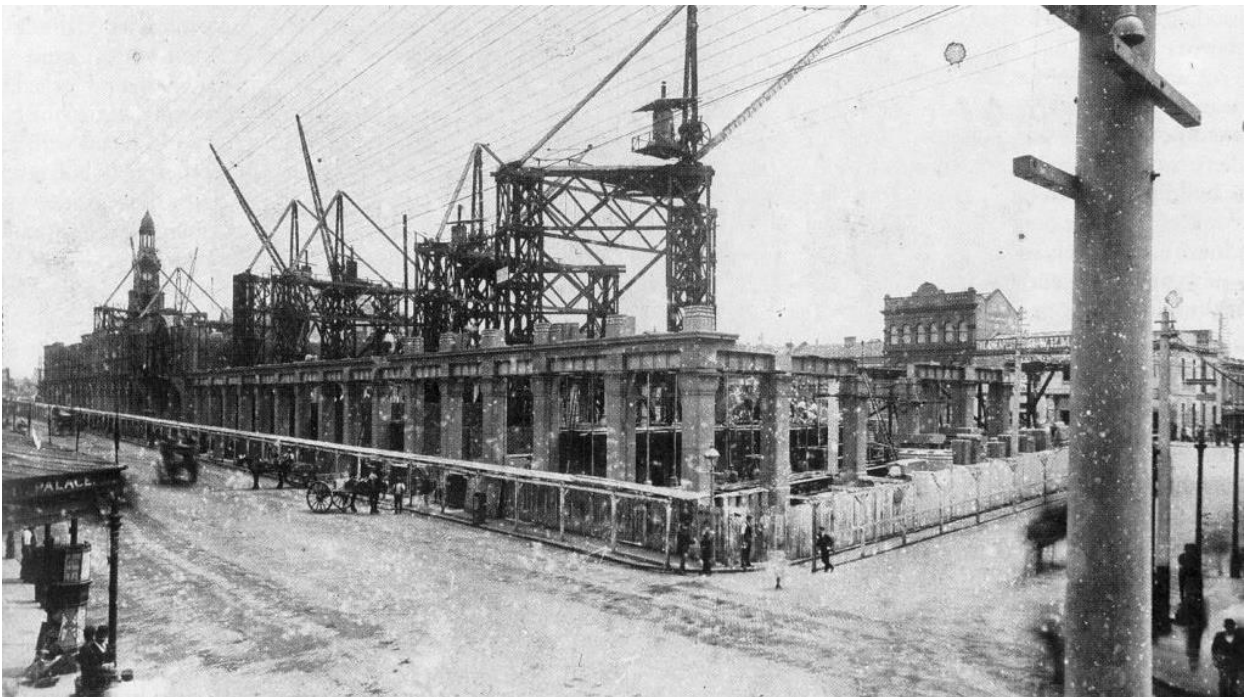


Figure 23 –The corner of George and Market Streets, showing the ground floor construction nearing completion, undated

Source: National Trust in John Shaw, *The Queen Victoria Building 1898-1986, 1987*



Figure 24 – View of the framing of the central dome, c. 1898

Source: Mitchell Library in John Shaw, *The Queen Victoria Building 1898-1986*, 1987



Figure 25 – The central dome nearing completion, c. 1898

Source: Mitchell Library in John Shaw, *The Queen Victoria Building 1898-1986*, 1987



Figure 26 –Newly completed Queen Victoria Market Building (name of building upon completion), viewed northwest from the corner of Druiitt Street, York Street and George Street, prior to the installation of the awning, 1898

Source: City of Sydney Archives, SRC10843. Originally CRS 80/248



Figure 27 – Looking out to the street from the central dome area, 1898

Source: *City of Sydney Archives, NSCA CRS 189/11*



Figure 28 – Looking into the stairway leading off the central dome area, 1898

Source: *City of Sydney Archives, NSCA CRS 189/9*



Figure 29 – Looking through the ground floor of the galley with decorative tessellated tile floor, 1898

Source: *City of Sydney Archives, NSCA CRS 189/3*



Figure 30 – Looking into the stairway leading off the central dome area, 1898

Source: *City of Sydney Archives, NSCA CRS 189/8*



Figure 31 – One of the York Street lifts which serviced the basement livestock, fruit and vegetable market, 1898

Source: *City of Sydney Archives, NSCA CRS 189/15*



Figure 32 – Looking into the central dome area, 1898. The interior originally appeared to have a very pale almost monochrome, colour scheme

Source: *City of Sydney Archives, NSCA CRS 189/6*





Figure 33 – View of ground floor, first and second floor gallery with details of joinery, railings and shopfronts, 1898

Source: *City of Sydney Archives, NSCA CRS 189/4*



Figure 34 – View of barrel vault roof and shopping gallery, 1898

Source: *City of Sydney Archives, NSCA CRS 189/12*

### 3.1.9. Opening of the Queen Victoria Market Building 1898

The building was officially opened at a golden key ceremony on Thursday 21 July 1898, by the Lord Mayor of Sydney, Matthew Harris. The building had taken only four years and eight months to complete. It was opened as the 'Queen Victoria Market Building', a change from its earlier name 'New City Market Building', to commemorate the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria in 1897. The term 'market' was dropped from the name in 1918, to become simply the "Queen Victoria Building", perhaps a more fitting name as the intended market function was never truly fulfilled and the primary retail functions were eventually eroded into general office space in the rush to increase rents, revenue and ultimately profitability.

The opening was a grand affair with 1,500 official guests. A special gold key costing £50 was made for the ceremony. That night a ball and banquet was held in the Town Hall to toast the future of the Queen Victoria Market Building and was attended by the social set.

At the opening the building still required several finishing touches, which were soon completed. Several alterations and minor changes were undertaken in the first few years including; completion of the statues above the side entrances, adapting the concert hall into a library, connecting several rooms with gas, supply and erection of wrought iron gates to the main entrances, 'wiring in' of roof glazing, a small addition to the roof on the George Street side southern end and conversion of the hydraulic lifts to electric power.<sup>35</sup> The posted cast iron and glass footpath awning was not added for several more years, although the exact date has not been determined and is believed to be between 1902 and 1905.

### 3.1.10. Early tenants of the QVB

In the first decade or so the QVB had the atmosphere of a bazaar, and the earliest tenants conducted a mixture of commerce, crafts and skills. There were shops, studios, offices and workrooms for some two hundred traders, dealers and artisans.

Early tenants included purveyors of Australian wine, such as Penfolds and Lindeman's, and other household names such as Singer's sewing machines and Lysaght's galvanised iron. Other retailers included tailors, milliners, boot makers, gloves, herbalists, feather-dressers, spectacle-makers, corset-fitters, carriage traders and caterers. Purveyors of less tangible services included palm and mind readers and fortune tellers.

Housed within the upper galleries were more scholarly destination tenancies, such as bookshops, sheet music shops, piano-sellers and piano-tuners, as well as the salons of private teachers of music, dancing,

<sup>35</sup> Sydney City Council Building Index Cards.

singing, elocution, painting, sculpting, drawing and dressmaking. There were also more decorous sports including a billiards saloon, a gymnasium for ladies and a table tennis hall.

Religion was also well represented, with the Christian Science Room, Young Women's Christian Association, the Anglican Diocese of Sydney, the Australian Board for Waifs, and Orphans Fund, all renting rooms in the building.

## Quong Tart

Quong Tart was a businessman who operated the Elite Tea Room in rooms on the first-floor level overlooking the central gallery, and was possibly the most renowned of the early tenants. The Elite was advertised as "a spacious and elegant hall for banquets, balls, socials, concerts and meetings," assuring readers that "dining contentedly" at his tables were "members of parliament, judges, lawyers, bankers, journalists, doctors, clergymen, merchants and in fact, everybody who is anybody".

Quong Tart arrived in Australia from the Canton Province in China in 1865, at the age of nine, working initially on the Arulan goldfields, NSW, before moving to Sydney. Encouraged by his guardians, the family of Robert Percy Simpson, he acquired shares in gold claims, and was wealthy by the age of eighteen. At Arulen he was prominent in sporting, cultural and religious affairs, joining a Oddfellows lodge and later becoming a Freemason in 1885.<sup>36</sup>

After a visit to his family in China in 1881, Quong Tart opened a tea and silk store in Sydney, followed by a chain of teashops. During the mid to late 1880s he was an ardent campaigner against opium imports. In 1886, Quong married a young English woman, Margaret Scarlett. On a second visit to China in 1888, he was appointed a mandarin of the fifth degree by the Chinese Emperor, which was advanced to mandarin of the fourth degree on a third visit in 1894.

By the time the QVB opened, Tart operated the most popular dining saloon on King Street, which stayed open late for the "especial convenience" of audiences at the nearby theatres. A typical theatre supper included Manning River oysters, hot "Scotch" pies, passionfruit and ice cream, apple tartlets and his famous Chinese tea. He also catered for picnics, to which his staff delivered baskets of "the best provender." No Chinese dishes were offered. Quong Tart also had tearooms in the Royal Arcade and the Sydney Arcade.

In 1899, he leased a room on the ground floor level facing George Street which was such a success that in 1902 he leased a second room on the York Street side, also serving his "special cakes and pastry". He then took out a four-year lease for rooms at first floor level, from which he operated the Elite Tea Room, one of the most popular social centres in Sydney. His employees, whom were mostly Europeans, benefited from his enlightened policy, with time off for shopping, and sick leave with pay. In August 1902, only four months after the Elite opened, Tart was assaulted by an intruder in his office, from which he never recovered, and died from pleurisy in his home in Ashfield. His family and partners kept the Elite open until 1905, when the tenancy was released.

Quong Tart is of significance as the only Chinese person to be fully accepted by the New South Wales elite during the late decades of the nineteenth century. At a time when individual and official racism was the common, Tart was described in the *Daily Telegraph* as "well known as the Governor himself and quite as popular among all classes". In 1896, the English journalist wrote of him as one of the most respected and popular citizens of Sydney.

*'He has the manners of an educated European and the habits of a gentleman. He is a good employer, and a man of unbound generosity. His wife is an Englishwoman and Mr Quong Tart sometimes poses as a Scotchman. It is an unaccustomed sight to see a Chinaman in kilts and to hear him sing a song. He dances the Highland fling with great gusto.'*<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Taishanese Expatriates in Australia, November 2002, [www.apex.net.au](http://www.apex.net.au)

<sup>37</sup> Shaw, *The QVB 1898-1986*, p. 62.

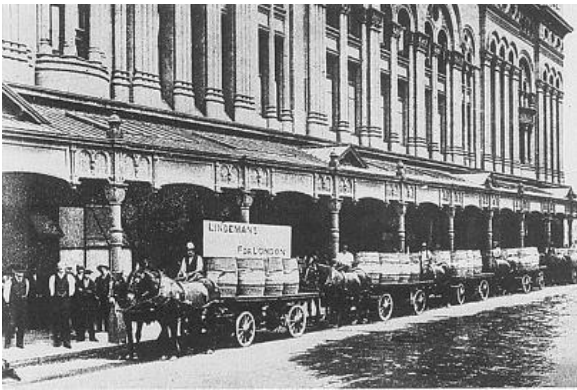


Figure 35 – A shipment of Lindeman's departing from the Queen Victoria building bound for London

Source: Lindeman's in John Shaw, *The Queen Victoria Building 1898-1986*, 1987



Figure 36 – A shop window demonstration from within the Singer Store in the Queen Victoria Building, 1926

Source: City of Sydney Archives, SRC10937



Figure 37 – Portrait of Quong Tart, undated

Source: National Library of Australia, 'Tesla Studios', PIC Box PIC/7193 #PIC/7193



Figure 38 – Interior of Queen Victoria Building decorated with lanterns, streamers and flag. Several retailers are apparent including a bookseller and photographer

Source: Sydney City Library in John Shaw, *The Queen Victoria Building 1898-1986*, 1987

## 3.2. MAJOR ALTERATIONS, 1918

The building was heavily criticised in the early years of its operation due to its poor financial return. Original real estate advice indicated the building could pay for itself from rents received, within thirty years. The first few years were slow. In 1898, only 47 out of about 200 available spaces were tenanted.<sup>38</sup> This improved by the following year with another 20 tenants joining the list. By 1905, there were 150 tenants, but it was not until 1917 that the building was reaching its maximum tenancy rate. Up until that time there was a continual shortfall between the costs to Council and the rents received and Council was constantly looking at ways of improving its return.

In 1909, a design competition was held suggesting ways to alter the building that would increase the rents and return a profit to Council. None of the schemes were successful, mainly due to their high cost and the idea was abandoned, but not forgotten, at least for a few years.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Sands Sydney Directory, 1898.

<sup>39</sup> Shaw, *The QVB 1898-1986*, p. 66.

In 1915, still considering almost any option for the building, the Council offered it as a future station in the underground railway that was being planned, but the offer was subsequently declined by the railways. Other suggestions included exchanging the building for the GPO, but this offer was also declined. The ultimate concern of Council was based on the continual financial loss of around £7,200 a year and the future profitability of the building. It was hoped that it could at least pay for itself and perhaps return a profit.

Council's Comptroller of Assets, Mr. J. Neale Breden produced a report in 1917 indicating that the debt of £7,200 per year<sup>40</sup> could be wiped out and a profit of £2,619 a year returned by undertaking several alterations which would greatly increase the floor area and 'update' the Victorian appearance of the building. His report stated:

*"I wish to impress the fact that the outstanding architectural beauty of this municipal building, probably the only advantage that the building has secured to the city, an advantage, by way, that must not be discounted, will in no wise be impaired by the alterations, but in addition to its aesthetic value to the city, will also secure a financial gain."<sup>41</sup>*

A remodelling scheme was finally adopted by Council in May 1917. McLeod Brothers were awarded the contract for the work in June 1917 at a cost of £40,944. The following alterations were undertaken:

- Removal of posted awning and replacement with a modern cantilevered awning with a lined soffit
- Removal of the internal arcade on the ground floor producing shops running continuously from George to York Street
- The gallery space was extended on the first floor reducing the void space and the remaining void covered over with a coloured leadlight ceiling (indicated on the drawings as lanterns) so that some light was available to the centre of the ground floor shops
- The tiled floor was covered with concrete and timber obliterating the circular pavement lights
- Removal of the entrance from Druitt Street to create one large shop with frontages to three streets
- A new entrance was cut into the York Street side, to provide an entrance to the stairs and lift at the Druitt Street end of the building
- New shopfronts were provided to the George Street facade. This work involved boxing in the trachyte columns behind showcases. The line of the shopfronts was extended out past the line of columns and a new marble and plate glass shopfront installed. Leaded glass panels were installed above the transom line, below the awning. The original coloured glass highlight panels were removed and clear glass panels in steel frames installed. The stall-board lights under the shopfronts were also removed, but some new pavement lights were installed to compensate.
- The original timber and glass shopfronts along George Street were re-erected to the shops in York Street providing additional street entrances from York Street, as the market activity in the basement no longer continued.
- New bathroom facilities were provided on a new mezzanine level along York Street.
- One passenger lift in the southern lift core was cut out and a new stair to the basement level installed.
- One lift in the northern stair lobby was cut out and the lift removed.
- A new goods lift was inserted near the central entrance on the York Street side.
- The void space under the central dome was infilled with a new passenger lift.
- Two of the cart lifts to the basement along York Street were removed and the resultant space formed into shops.
- The galleries on the first and second floors were cantilevered seven feet out into the void space and the shopfronts moved forward seven feet to increase the available floor space in the tenancies.

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<sup>40</sup> Lord Mayors Minute, 8 September 1916.

<sup>41</sup> Lord Mayors Minute, by Comptroller J. Neale Breden, December 1916.

- The first-floor void area above the entrance at the Drutt Street entrance was formed into a room by inserting a new floor.
- The small passage serving the rooms along the first and second floor, at the Drutt Street end was removed increasing the floor space.
- The existing Concert Hall with a height of 42 feet was remodelled with two new floors inserted into the grand space providing three levels to provide space for the city library.<sup>42</sup>

Much discussion at the time was centred around removing every second trachyte column and setting the shopfronts back further thus providing an 'island window arcade' at street level.<sup>43</sup> Considered opinion at the time regarded this alteration essential to the success of the scheme, but fortunately this was not done due to the high cost. The second option, which simply covered the existing trachyte columns with showcases and extended the shopfront in a continuous line proud of the columns was adopted.

These alterations in the name of economy and increased floor space destroyed much of the magnificent interior spaces and character of the building. The ground floor arcade was obliterated, the light quality in the basement reduced, the southern entry devalued, and the internal voids and galleries reduced and devalued. The alterations were undertaken to remove what Council saw as, "inherent flaws," in what its Victorian creators considered an architectural triumph. One of the disturbing aspects of these radical alterations was that now that the building's internal character had been violated and devalued, there was little resistance to further alterations.

During the following years many alterations were proposed to improve financial returns and rentable floor space, but little was actually done. The problem of constant financial losses to Council continued as the 1918 alterations did not improve the financial position; a Council report in 1921 stated losses in the previous five years totalled £47,000, on average higher than the £7,200 quoted as the average yearly loss before remodelling.

Proposals for adding two extra floors to the building were put forward even while the alteration work was being undertaken in 1918, but the idea was postponed until plans for the new city underground railway route were known.<sup>44</sup>

A decision was made in 1922 to build the Harbour Bridge and with it came proposals to widen York Street as the main approach. Bradfield, the designer of the Bridge, proposed to demolish the QVB in a deal which would provide money from the Commonwealth Government to pay off all debts and provide a reasonable profit to Council. The scheme did not go ahead due to its high cost and the perceived small benefits gained.<sup>45</sup>

The building continued to incur losses and by 1933 the accumulated debt was announced as £500,000. No major alterations occurred between 1918 and 1934, but many small alterations to the individual shops such as new partitions, fit outs, and mezzanines were continually taking place.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Noted from Contract Drawings held at Sydney City Council Archives.

<sup>43</sup> Lord Mayors Minute, by Comptroller J. Neale Breden, December 1916.

<sup>44</sup> Shaw, *The QVB 1898-1986*, p. 66

<sup>45</sup> Fitzgerald, *Sydney 1842-1992*, Sydney 1992, p. 146.

<sup>46</sup> Sydney City Council Building Index Cards.



Figure 39 – Images of the 1918 alterations. View of the earlier posted awning that was removed, undated

Source: State Library of Victoria, John Henry Harvey, H92.150/723



Figure 40 – Images of the 1918 alterations. Removal of the posted awning, 1918

Source: City of Sydney Archives, NSCA CRS 51/2366



Figure 41 – Images of the 1918 alterations. Construction of the steel cantilevered awning, 1918

Source: City of Sydney Archives, NSCA CRS 51/2379



Figure 42 – Images of the 1918 alterations. The completed awning, 1919

Source: City of Sydney Archives, NSCA CRS 51/2422



Figure 43 –Internal demolition, 1918  
 Source: *City of Sydney Archives, NSCA CRS 51/2300*



Figure 44 –Scaffolding and demolition materials, 1918  
 Source: *City of Sydney Archives, NSCA CRS 51/2329*



Figure 45 – Enclosure of the arches, 1918  
 Source: *City of Sydney Archives, NSCA CRS 51/2375*



Figure 46 –On the ground floor the arches led into a warren of rooms  
 Source: *City of Sydney Archives, NSCA CRS 51/2336*



Figure 47 –The ground floor tessellated tiles were concealed under concrete and timber, 1918

Source: City of Sydney Archives, NSCA CRS 51/2399

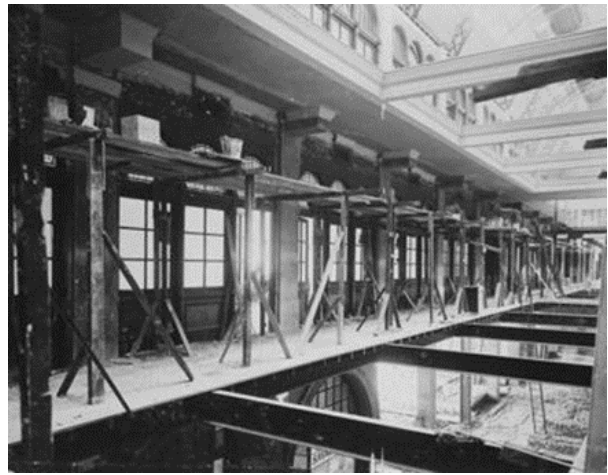


Figure 48 –Major alterations as the tenancies were increased in size, 1918

Source: City of Sydney Archives, NSCA CRS 51/2327



Figure 49 –Progression of the modification of the upper level, 1918

Source: City of Sydney Archives, NSCA CRS 51/2327



Figure 50 –Balustrades of the upper levels were enclosed with timber cladding, 1918

Source: City of Sydney Archives, NSCA CRS 51/2385



Figure 51 –Gallery shopfronts were brought forward and voids reduced in width

Source: City of Sydney Archives, NSCA CRS 51/2304



Figure 52 –Looking down into the reduced area of the south gallery, 1918

Source: City of Sydney Archives, NSCA CRS 51/2351



### 3.3. SECOND MAJOR ALTERATIONS, 1934

By the mid-1930s the depression was receding, employment growing and building and business reviving. Time had come to rework the building to further reduce the debt and hopefully return a profit. The Council decided to move the rapidly expanding Electricity Department out of the Town Hall and relocate it in the QVB.

In December 1933, Council voted to approve a major proposal to alter the Queen Victoria Building to suit the requirements of the Electricity Department. Approval was also given to invite tenders for the work. The majority of the work was confined to the central and northern section of the building. Essentially this scheme was to convert the interior to a general office space and install floors in what remained of the Grand internal spaces. The work costing £125,000 was completed by 1935 and included the following changes:

- Shopfronts along George Street were removed and replaced with a new Art Deco facade with Staybright steel mouldings, plate glass windows and black structural glass facing panels.
- To the York Street facade, new plate glass shopfronts were added with terracotta tiles over the trachyte columns and remaining areas.
- A new Art Deco fascia and soffit to the cantilevered awning along George Street.
- The passenger lift was removed from the central void under the main dome and the floor infilled to create more floor space and a counter.
- Removal of the glass inner dome under the main dome and infilling with a new concrete floor to provide space for a new air conditioning plant.
- Removal of both of the grand staircases below the central dome to provide a central vestibule, air conditioning plant and locker rooms.
- Infilling of the void to the first floor, northern end, to provide additional floor space.
- Installation of a suspended ceiling under the main glass roof and cladding the glass roof with corrugated iron.
- The existing ground floor level was altered by inserting a new reinforced concrete floor over the existing with a series of steps to provide a level floor addressing each street level.
- Almost all decorative elements, features and mouldings were removed from the interior.
- New suspended ceilings and lighting to all other office spaces with ducted air conditioning services supplied.
- Removal of some of the spiral staircases.<sup>47</sup>

Many of the shops at ground floor level in the southern part of the building were retained although they received new shopfronts in line with the updated Art Deco image. The library in the northern area was retained with no new major alterations. The basement was subject to various alterations such as new concrete stairs, timber framed mezzanines and some new plant equipment, but the long-term tenants remained in the basement ensuring little need for alterations.

These extreme alterations attracted little public comment at the time. It is fortunate that the majority of the façade fabric was not altered above the awning line. The building has always retained its ability to evolve internally without losing its external imagery and architectural strength as a city landmark. Up until the early 1970s, the building was occupied by the Sydney County Council (SCC) and much of its identity in the city was based on this use even though the external envelope had not changed.

The occupancy by the SCC did however provide some security for the building by providing a constant income base. The SCC undertook continual changes to the building, some being significant alterations, but the majority were minor such as new partitions, showrooms and fit outs. For example, in the thirty years between 1936 and 1966 a total of 79 separate building applications were lodged with the City Council by the

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<sup>47</sup> Contract Drawings held at Sydney City Council Archives.

SCC.<sup>48</sup> There is little evidence that any of this work proceeded with any concern for the architectural strengths of the building and were basically related to functional uses and the needs of occupants.



Figure 53 – The boarded up ornate archway of the Queen Victoria Building, 1938

Source: State Library of NSW, Home and Away - 8891



Figure 54 – Interior of the SCC Accounts Department and enquiry counter, c. 1938

Source: City of Sydney Archives, SRC10927

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<sup>48</sup> Sydney City Council Building Index Cards.

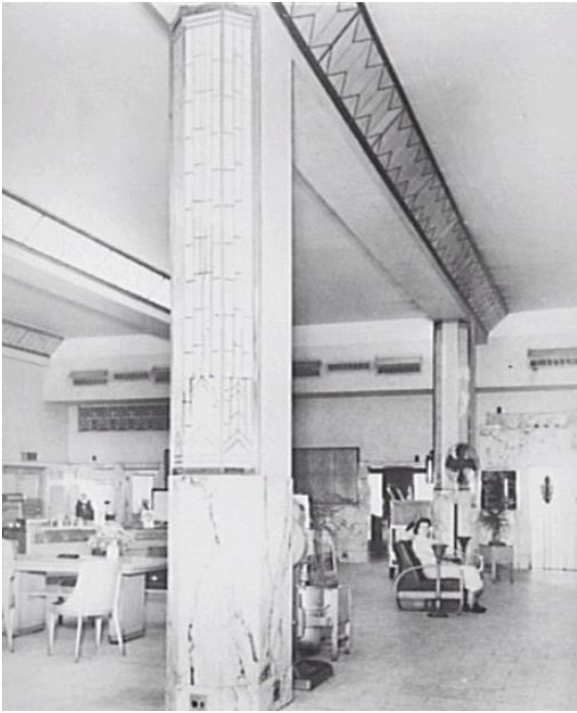


Figure 55 – The Sydney County Council Electricity Department. Interior of the SCC Electricity Department Showroom, c. 1938

Source: City of Sydney Archives, SRC10931. Originally CRS 80/154



Figure 56 – The Sydney County Council Electricity Department. The Art Deco Style entrance to the SCC Electricity Department, 1938

Source: City of Sydney Archives, SRC10939. Originally CRS 80/150.



Figure 57 – A typical nondescript council office, 1969

Source: City of Sydney Archives, NSCA CRS 871/56(g) 24

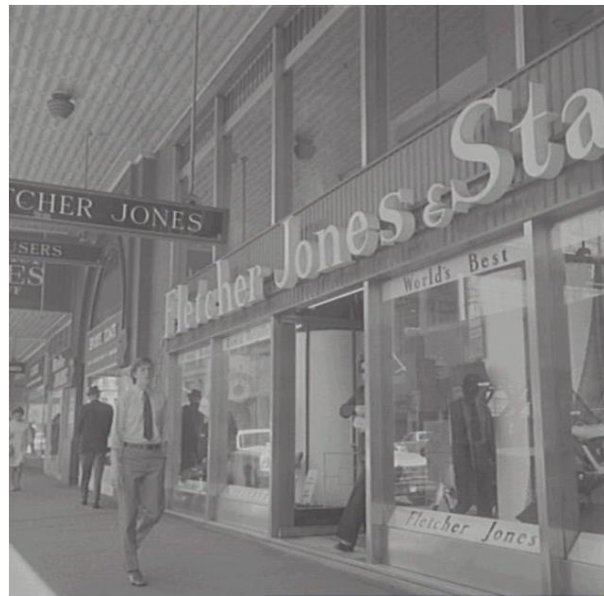


Figure 58 – Shopfronts of the QVB (George Street), 1971

Source: City of Sydney Archives, NSCA CRS 871/68 (i) 5

### 3.4. PROPOSED DEMOLITION

Proposals for demolition of the building gained strength by the late 1950s, in a city eager to modernise and grow rapidly. The post-war boom was in full swing and business confidence high. In 1959, Lord Mayor Jensen suggested a scheme demolishing the QVB and replacing it with a public square. Revenue from a badly needed underground carpark would pay for the demolition of the QVB and construction of the square.<sup>49</sup> This scheme gained much support both from the public and the design professions in general. Jensen further suggested an international design competition similar to the competition for the Opera House site and won much support for the idea.

Demolition proposals at the time were largely postponed by the continued presence of the SCC in the building. The SCC required another long lease which was granted by the City Council in 1961. The SCC was planning a new large building opposite Town Hall and required the existing facilities in the QVB to be retained until its completion. The City Council was in no position to refuse the SCC, and thus the demolition proposals were temporarily thwarted, although opinion was always behind demolition and a reuse of the site at the time.<sup>50</sup>

A form of demolition actually started in 1963 with removal of the smallest cupolas on the roof. Concern about their stability was given as the reason for their removal. The contractor paid for their removal and made a larger profit out of the sale of the salvaged cupolas as souvenirs and garden decorations, than for the contract to remove them.<sup>51</sup>

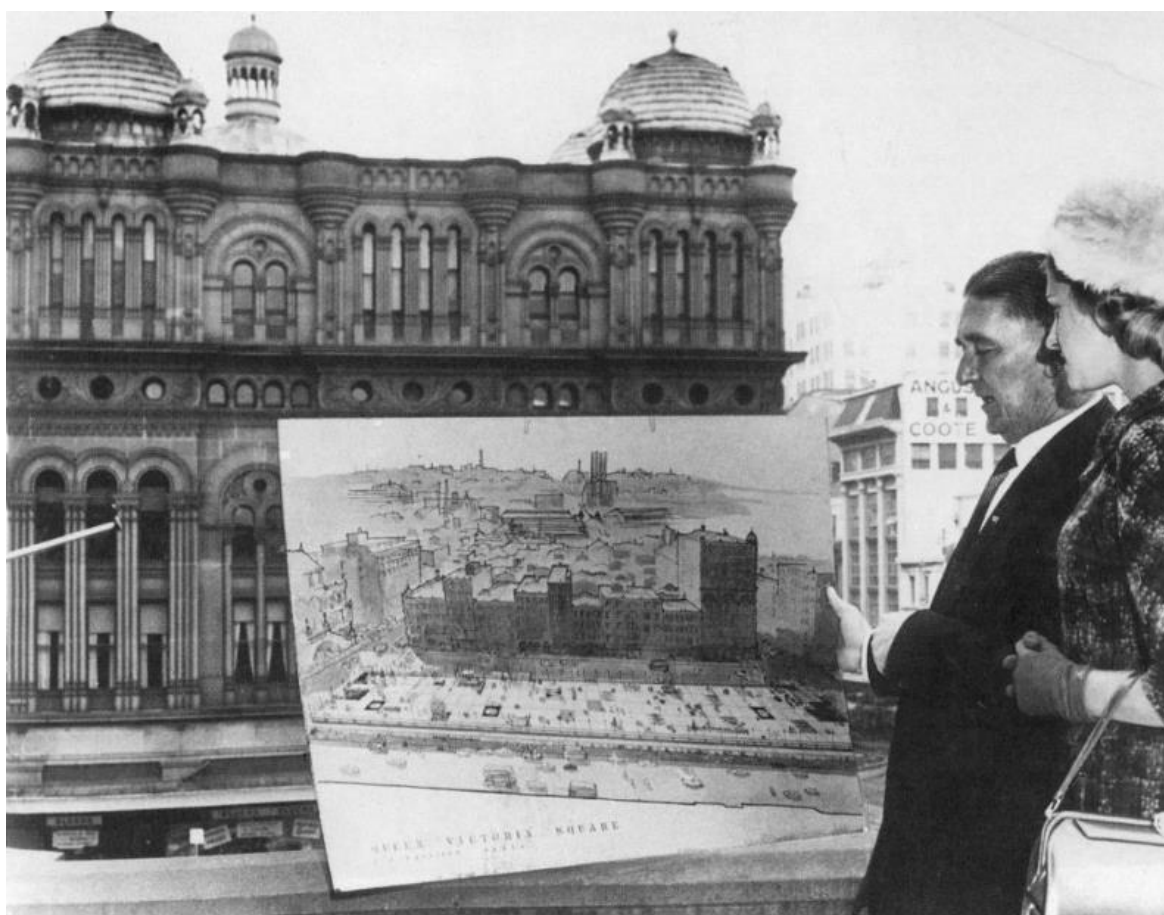


Figure 59 – Lord Mayor of Sydney, Alderman Harry Jensen, displaying another scheme to completely demolish the QVB, 1959.

Source: *John Fairfax and Sons*

<sup>49</sup> Shaw, *The QVB 1898-1986*, p. 80.

<sup>50</sup> Shaw, *The QVB 1898-1986*, p. 84.

<sup>51</sup> Interpreted from Drawings held at Sydney City Council Archives. Article SMH. 15/3/1993.

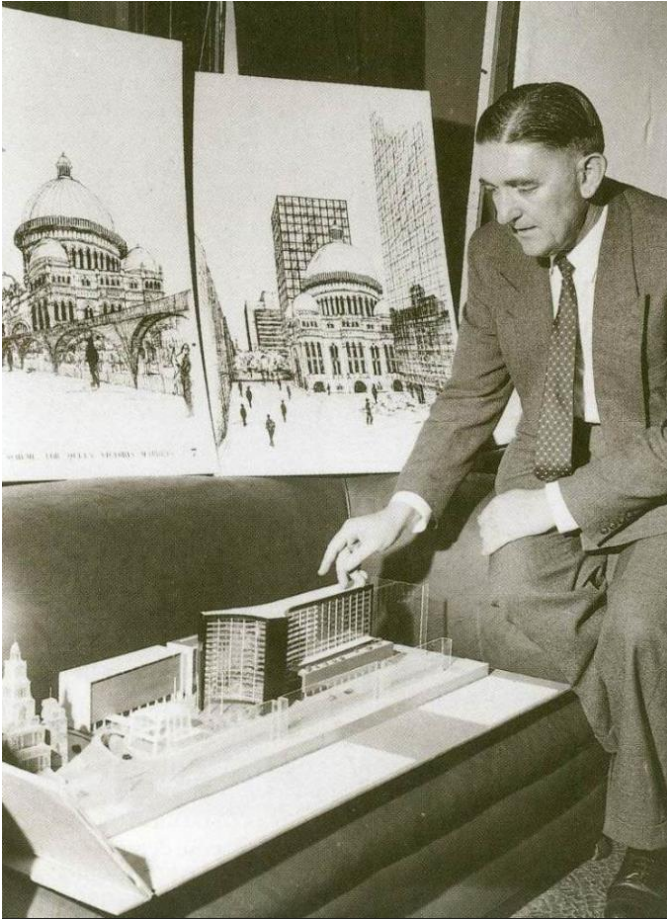


Figure 60 – Lord Mayor of Sydney, Alderman Harry Jensen, with a model of a proposal to replace the QVB. Also shown are the sketches of other schemes which retain the central dome of the building.

Source: John Fairfax and Sons

### 3.5. MAJOR GROWTH IN THE CITY

The general prosperity in the fifties continued and influenced all aspects of life. Demand for large city buildings was pushing height limits ever upwards. The AMP Building at Circular Quay with a height of 383 feet penetrated the skyline and shattered the familiar scale. Once broken, the limits kept going higher and higher.

As buildings became larger, it became necessary to redevelop obsolete city zones by amalgamating a number of titles of small portions of city land into one parcel and erecting a tall tower, leaving large areas of the ground area open as a plaza or a public square. The Australia Square project completed in 1967 was an exemplar to this practice and a forerunner to many other similar schemes, all of which were changing the established character, scale and pattern of the city. The apparent chaos and panic over redevelopment naturally led to concerns over retaining what little remained. Perhaps ‘the shock of the new led to affection for the old’.<sup>52</sup>

### 3.6. BATTLE FOR CONSERVATION

As the new SCC building was nearing completion the question of the QVB’s ultimate fate was approaching again. The debates in the late 1950s and early 1960s were largely deflated by the continued occupation of

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<sup>52</sup> Shaw, *The QVB 1898-1986*, p. 88.

the site by the SCC and other long-term tenants, but, as this was not an issue any longer, the debate was to enter another stage.

By 1967, calls for its preservation were being made by the National Trust declaring it should be saved because of its historical significance. The Trust listed the building in its now superseded system of classification as category 'B' (recommended for preservation). Calls for not only its preservation but also its restoration by stripping away the disfigurements, restoring the glass vaulted roof, ground floor arcades, tiled floors, and stone stairs were being heard. Many schemes were promoted such as linking the building by underground tunnels to the Town Hall and other city buildings. Along with schemes involving constructing nightclubs or planetariums under the dome,<sup>53</sup> with shops on the lower levels, art galleries, hotel rooms etc on the upper levels. Although these plans would have to wait, the Council actually spent considerable funds on renovating the City Library.

A significant step in the QVB's history was a studio design by senior architecture students from the University of New South Wales. The project was based on four options, ranging from retaining portions of the building to almost total demolition. A rebel group of students refused to accept the parameters of the design projects guidelines and demonstrated for its restoration.<sup>54</sup> Public comments were sought and a very high proportion commended plans for complete restoration. The public appeared to be concerned about depriving future generations of relics from the past.

Demolition was still the favoured option by many in the Council. Even as late as 1969, the Labour Party candidate running for mayor in the City Council elections stated that, if elected he would propose demolition of the QVB, which he said was "a firetrap to make way for a new civic square".<sup>55</sup> Shortly after and perhaps as a threat to possible demolition, the National Trust upgraded its classification to category 'A', which defined it as 'urgently in need of acquisition and preservation'. By 1971 the Royal Australian Institute of Architects entered the debate advocating preservation, on the grounds of the QVB's historical significance.

In 1971, the new Lord Mayor Alderman Emmet McDermott, leader of the Civic Reform Group, announced that the QVB would be "preserved and restored to its original state".<sup>56</sup> There was no suggestion of how that was going to take place, but such a statement became the turning point very much in the building's history and eventual fate.

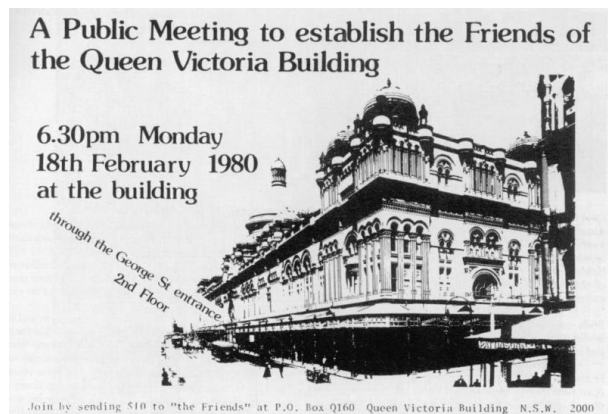


Figure 61 – A poster for a meeting to establish the 'Friends of the Queen Victoria Building' in 1980

Source: John Fairfax and Sons



Figure 62 – Alderman Emmett McDermott, Lord Mayor of Sydney 1969-1972

Source: John Fairfax and Sons

<sup>53</sup> Proposal in 1978 to re-use the QVB as the home of the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences that eventually found a home in the former Ultimo Powerhouse.

<sup>54</sup> Discussions with Mr Peter Reynolds, former Director of Conservation Studies at UNSW.

<sup>55</sup> Former Lord Mayor of Sydney, John Armstrong.

<sup>56</sup> 31 May 1971 after election of his party; 'The Civic Reform Group.'

### 3.7. RECONSTRUCTION AND RESTORATION

The building was to be saved, but there was no plan or suggestions about where the funds were to come from. In 1979, the Town Clerk, Mr Leon Carter stated; 'The Council is determined that the high cost of rebirth of the QVB will not fall on the blistered shoulders of the weary ratepayer'.<sup>57</sup> The final answer did not come until 1980 when a Malaysian businessman just happened to notice the signs on the building as he was leaving Sydney. In the ensuing time, opinion regarding the importance of conservation was growing. No legislative controls were in place to protect historic buildings. The new Federal Government ordered a Register of the National Estate to be made listing the nation's natural and built heritage. In 1977, the State Government introduced the *Heritage Act* to protect the built heritage of New South Wales. Local Councils were beginning to undertake heritage surveys and form lists of buildings worthy of conservation.

Restoration proposals were held up by a lack of funds. In 1976, the building was being occupied by the City Library, Council offices and discount shops. A submission by the group who had just completed restoration of the Strand Arcade entitled "Faithful Restoration" was received. It comprised Architects Stephenson & Turner, Real Estate Adviser Hardie & Gorman, Quantity Surveyors Chas A. Harding and Structural Engineers (not associated with the Strand), Ove Arup and Partners.<sup>58</sup> This submission prompted Council to ask for further submissions from the Community and in 1977 a panel of Council Officers was set up to assess future schemes. Fifty-five schemes were received and ten were selected and the authors asked to submit further details. Eight of these accepted the offer and the panel then selected five of these submissions and offered a small fee of \$5000 to produce detailed plans for public scrutiny. The submissions were exhibited at the Town Hall in August 1978, the submissions were produced by; Stephenson & Turner (Faithful Restoration Group), Kahn Finch and Partners, two submissions from Peddle Thorp and Walker and builders Kell and Rigby. Of these schemes, only the Stephenson & Turner submission was considered by the National Trust to be appropriate. The National Trust sought to influence Council in this decision.

Further support for a full restoration was offered by many authorities including the Royal Australian Institute of Architects. The Council then decided to explore its options by inviting the five remaining firms to submit preliminary restoration and management contracts. Council rejected all five detailed schemes because none of them was financially satisfactory.

Once again, by the end of 1979, Council decided to seek further applications that would relieve the public from the burden of the restoration. Fears were held that the building would fall into further disrepair if it was left idle for any longer. The Council issued a comprehensive "Restoration Brief" in November calling for the restoration of the exterior and interior. The document stated:

*"Council is seeking a successful organisation which has carried full responsibility for large projects where the organisations own money has been at risk. The scheme should be practical and economically viable, and preference will be given to a concept that encourages life within the building during and particularly after business hours, and restores the building in areas available to the public."<sup>59</sup>*

Only three formal tenders were submitted to Council. A London company proposed an entertainment and restaurant centre. A Filipino company suggested a hotel and retailing complex. While a Singapore group envisaged a hotel and conference rooms. None of these schemes complied with Council's brief. As a last attempt Council offered a further two months for the three applicants to submit further details.

By chance Mr Dato Yap Lim Sen of the Malaysian Company IPOH Garden Berhad Limited noticed the signs on the building on the day he was leaving Sydney and just 7 days before the closing date for final tenders. He returned to Sydney to put a bid together and with the advice of Mr Graham Drew teamed up with the "Faithful Restoration" Group. A team was established between Architects Stephenson & Turner and Rice & Daubney, Engineers Meinhardt and Partners, Kuttner Collins & Partners for administration, with financial backing by IPOH Garden Berhad.<sup>60</sup>

Key conservation groups backed the plan. Negotiations about plans and leases continued for almost three years, but eventually on 1 August 1983 the Lord Mayor and IPOH Garden, signed a ninety-nine-year profit sharing lease.

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<sup>57</sup> SMH, 8/11/79.

<sup>58</sup> Conversations with Architect Alan Lawrence, January 1997.

<sup>59</sup> Restoration Brief, Sydney City Council, November 1979, p. 1.

<sup>60</sup> Information supplied by architect Alan Lawrence, letter dated 31 January 1997.



Figure 63 – View of the top floor illustrates how little of the original interior remained, 1984

Source: Jenny Blain in John Shaw, *The Queen Victoria Building 1898-1986*, 1987



Figure 64 – The degraded ground floor in 1984 with Art Deco style light fittings, only the remnant arches in the background remained from the original presentation

Source: Jenny Blain in John Shaw, *The Queen Victoria Building 1898-1986*, 1987



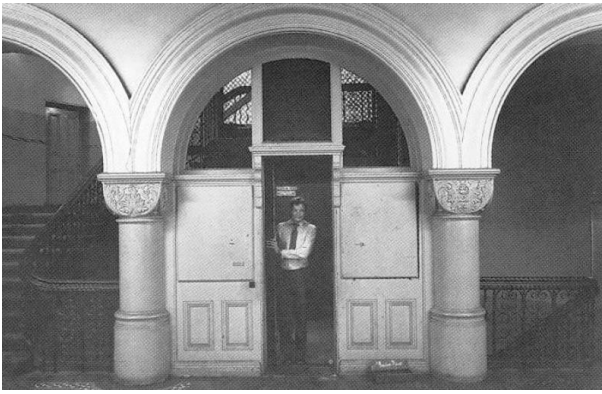


Figure 65 –The north and south cores were also amongst the few areas to remain moderately intact

Source: David Moore in John Shaw, *The Queen Victoria Building 1898-1986*, 1987



Figure 66 –The top floor at the commencement of works in 1984. The structure which supported the false ceiling under the barrel vault is evident and the concrete infills of the gallery voids had yet to be removed. Sheets of corrugated iron which replaced the original glass had been removed to allow light to be admitted

Source: David Moore in John Shaw, *The Queen Victoria Building 1898-1986*, 1987



Figure 67 –The roof with corrugated iron still in place

Source: Craig Carlstrom in John Shaw, *The Queen Victoria Building 1898-1986*, 1987



Figure 68 –Some of the men's bathrooms with their cast iron and porcelain urinals and partition posts were amongst the few internal areas to remain moderately intact

Source: David Moore in John Shaw, *The Queen Victoria Building 1898-1986*, 1987



Figure 69 – The concrete slabs were removed by 1985 and the interior voids recaptured, note the extent of original interior fabric

Source: *Kraig Carlstrom in John Shaw, The Queen Victoria Building 1898-1986, 1987*

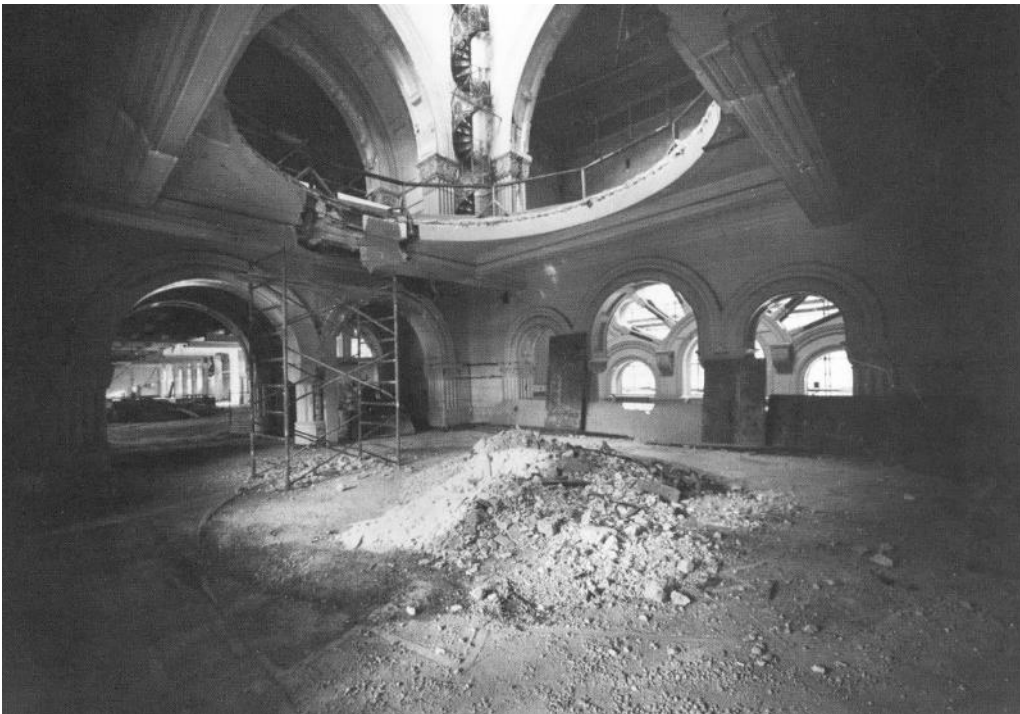


Figure 70 – The interior accretions were cleared from the dome space prior to the concrete slabs being demolished, 1984

Source: *Kraig Carlstrom in John Shaw, The Queen Victoria Building 1898-1986, 1987*

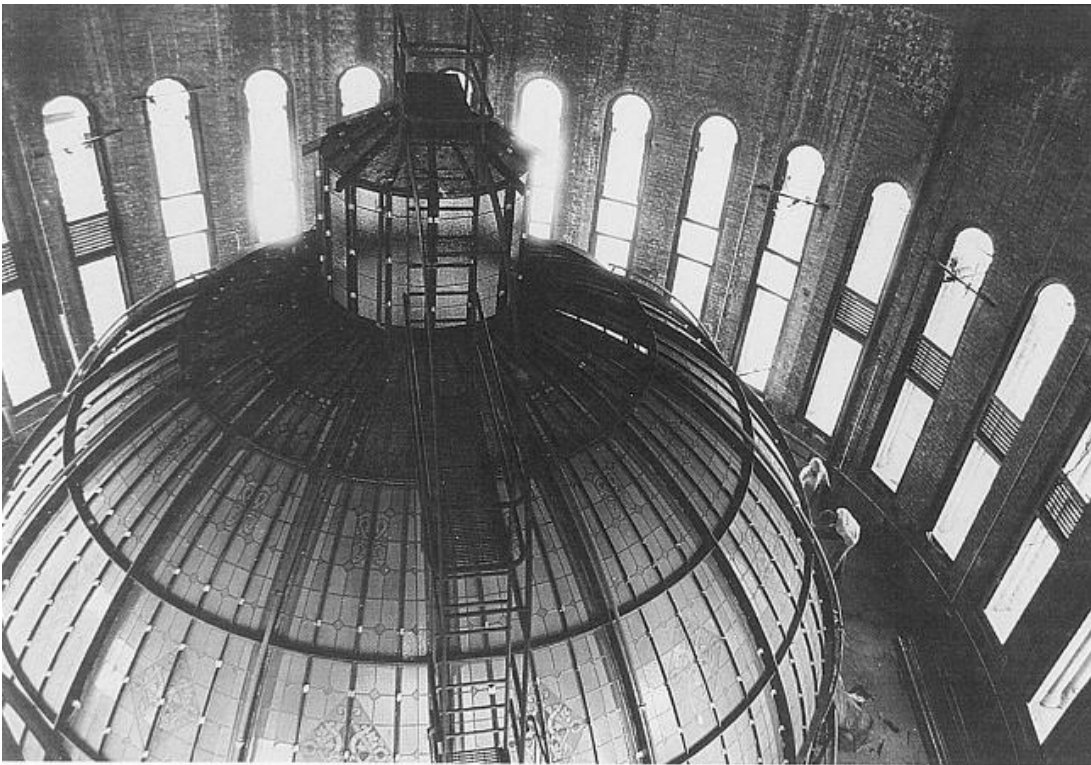


Figure 71 – The completed inner glass dome

Source: Jenny Blain in John Shaw, *The Queen Victoria Building 1898-1986*, 1987

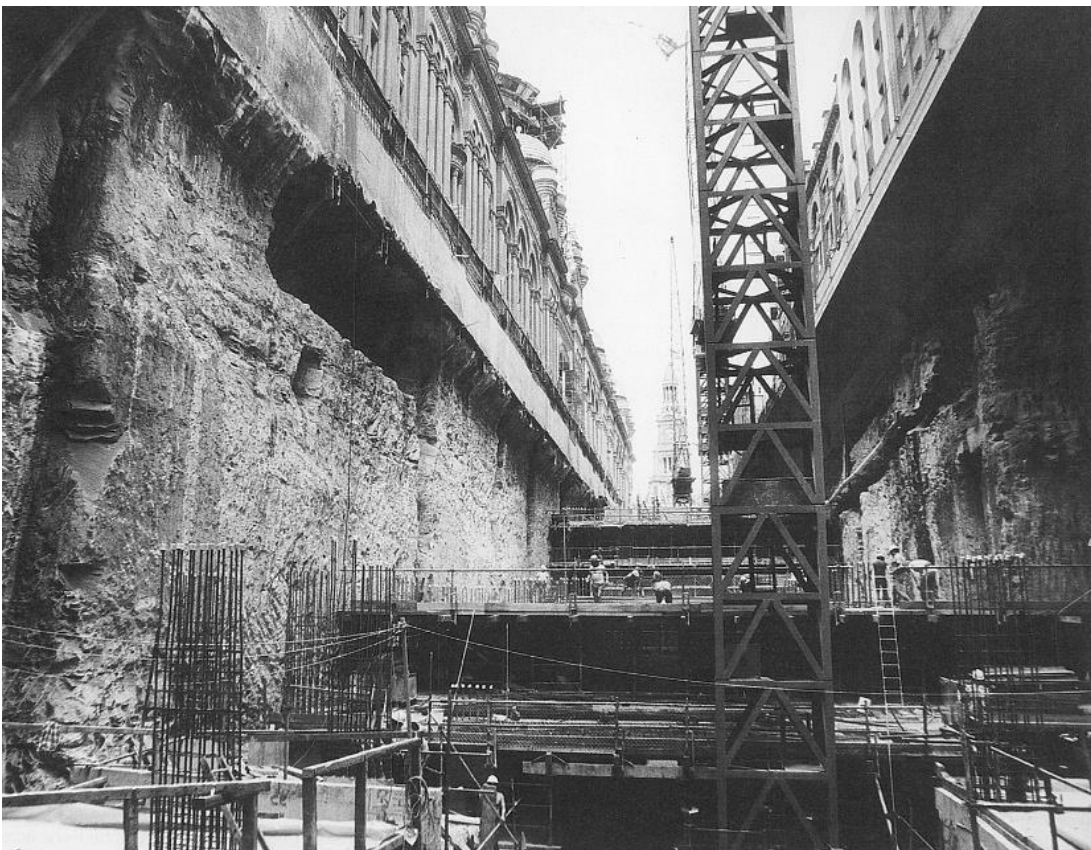


Figure 72 – Excavation for the car park, the QVB can be seen perched on the edge in the top left of frame

Source: Jenny Templin in John Shaw, *The Queen Victoria Building 1898-1986*, 1987



Figure 73 – Looking through the newly recovered central dome voids, 1984  
 Source: City of Sydney Archives, SRC10985



Figure 74 - Looking up from the ground floor through the newly recovered voids, 1985  
 Source: City of Sydney Archives, SRC11025



Figure 75 - Looking up through the newly recovered central dome area prior to the installation of  
 Source: City of Sydney Archives, SRC11048

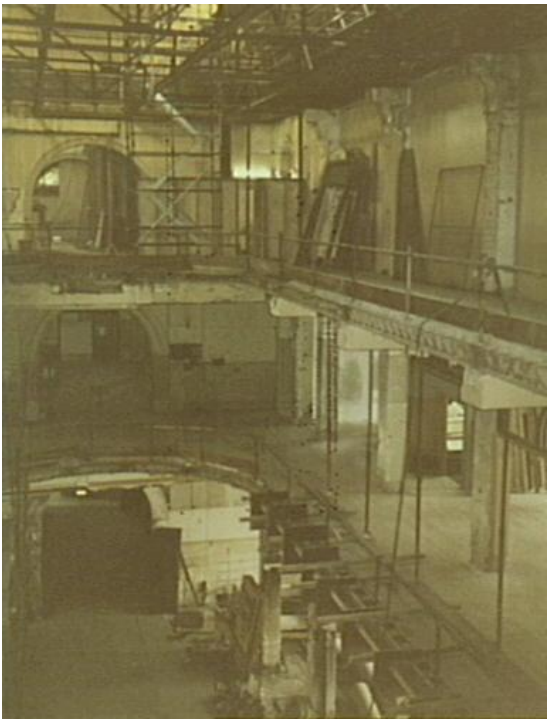


Figure 76 – Looking across the voids in 1984. Note the degraded state of the building following the removal of later linings

Source: *City of Sydney Archives, SRC10970*



Figure 77 – Escalators were installed in the north and south voids in 1985

Source: *City of Sydney Archives, SRC10999*



Figure 78 – Concrete stairs leading out to York Street

Source: *City of Sydney Archives, SRC11005*



Figure 79 – Looking across the void, 1985

Source: *City of Sydney Archives, SRC11046*

The building reopened at the end of 1986, just in time to catch the busy Christmas trading season. The work had taken almost four years to complete and included a new underground carpark, linking tunnels and an interpretively reconstructed interior. As almost nothing of the original interior fabric was left intact the work largely involved reconstructing strategic details and atmosphere. The interiors were painted in a scheme which incorporated typical Federation colours that were particularly popular in the 1980s. These colours were not, however, based on historic evidence. The place was also fitted out with numerous fixtures that sought to augment the associations of Queen Victoria with the building originally named after her.

The completed project was to be considered a sound commercial scheme, but not a true reconstruction. A museum approach to conserving the building was recognised by all authorities as being unworkable as the building would be uneconomic and subsequently devoid of the life the restoration brief considered essential.

The reopening of the QVB instantly proved a success. The combination of historic grandeur and modern retailing facilities became an instructive example for planners, architects and the public in general of the benefits conservation and re-use of historic buildings could have. The QVB became an important pedestrian transport link, a thriving retail centre, a tourist destination and, above all, a refreshed city landmark.

### 3.8. BICENTENNIAL PLAZA

Bicentennial Plaza is located at the southern end of the Queen Victoria Building and contributes to the overall setting of the Queen Victoria Building. The plaza was officially opened 1988 and named in commemoration of Australia's Bicentenary. The plaza contains the Statue of Queen Victoria and the Statue of Islay.

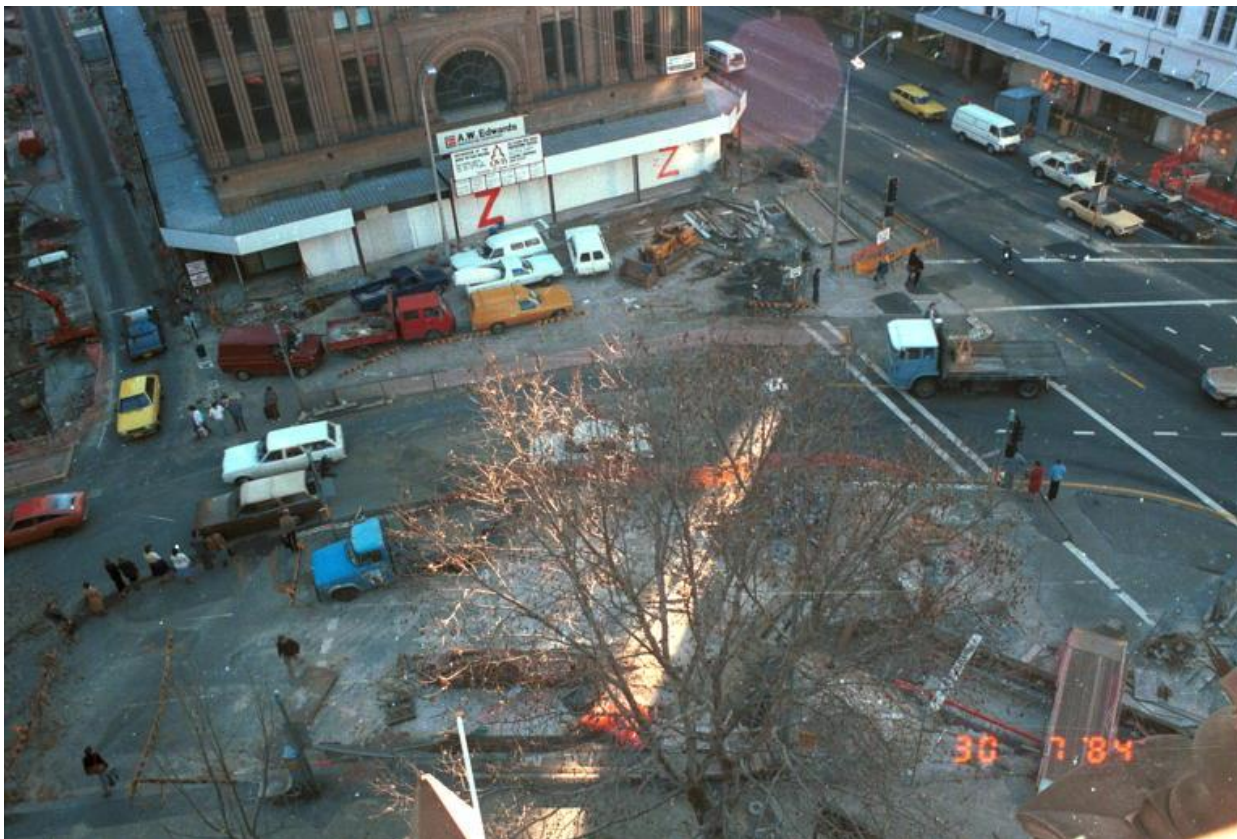


Figure 80 – View of the Queen Victoria Building prior to the construction of Bicentennial Plaza, 1984

Source: City of Sydney Archives, CRS 422/2/47



Figure 81 — Opening ceremony of Bicentennial Plaza, 14 January 1988

Source: City of Sydney Archives, SRC11059



Figure 82 –Unsworth unveiling a plaque to commemorate the opening of Bicentennial Plaza, 14 January 1988

Source: City of Sydney Archives, SRC11057

### 3.8.1. Statue of Queen Victoria

“When the Queen Victoria Building was under restoration in the 1980s, the developers Ipoh Gardens decided in consultation with Sydney City Council that an exterior sculpture of Queen Victoria would be an appropriate addition to the building. The proposed statue was to be located in the large area of open space at the Druiitt Street end of the building.

The hunt for a suitable statue began in 1983. The project manager Neil Glasser toured the world searching India, Pakistan, South Yemen and Turkey for an appropriate sculpture. Although he located hundreds of suitable statues, Glasser encountered a general reluctance in each country to part with their statues. Late in 1985, Glasser’s search ended at a farmhouse in Dangan, Ireland, where a large statue of Queen Victoria was in storage since being removed from its original location in front of Leinster House, the seat of the Irish Parliament in Dublin. The statue had been the centrepiece of several sculptured figures and had occupied the position outside Leinster House from 1907 until the granting of Irish independence in 1947.

Following negotiations including discussions within the Irish Cabinet, Ireland emerged as the only country willing to part with ‘the Queen’. The statue was eventually offered to the City of Sydney as a gesture of goodwill from the Government and People of Ireland on a ‘loan until recalled’ basis.

Due to its weight and size the statue departed Ireland on a ship. When it arrived in Sydney in November 1986, it underwent ‘a few minor renovations’ and was finally unveiled on a fine sandstone plinth on 20 December 1987.”<sup>61</sup>



Figure 83 – Queen Victoria Memorial, Leinster House Dublin, c. 1908

Source: <https://comeheretome.com/2012/05/24/statues-of-dublin-the-unveiling-and-removal-of-queen-victoria/>, accessed 17 May 2019



Figure 84 – Removal of the Queen Victoria Statue from Leinster House, 1948

Source: <https://comeheretome.com/2012/05/24/statues-of-dublin-the-unveiling-and-removal-of-queen-victoria/>, accessed 17 May 2019

<sup>61</sup> Queen Victoria QVB, <https://www.cityartsydney.com.au/artwork/queen-victoria-qvb/>, accessed 17 May 2019



### 3.8.2. Statue of Islay

The Statue of Islay comprises a 60-centimetre bronze statue of Queen Victoria's favourite pet, a Cairn terrier named Islay. The statue is propped up on a sandstone wishing well outside the Queen Victoria Building, George Street, Sydney.

Islay was Queen Victoria's much-loved companion for only 5 years because he became involved in a dispute with a cat and it was Islay that died. Queen Victoria recorded: "*My faithful little companion of more than five years, always with me*".<sup>62</sup>

The statue was designed by Justin Robson in 1987. It is part of a wishing well which raises money for the Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children in Sydney. In 1998, radio broadcaster, John Laws voiced Islay encouraging passers-by to give a coin for charity: "*Because of the many good deeds I've done for deaf and blind children, I have been given the power of speech*".

## 3.9. CONTINUING EVOLUTION OF THE QVB, 1986-2005

Since the reopening of the QVB in 1986, a number of alterations and additions were undertaken as part of the continuing retail and commercial use of the building. The majority of these included tenancy changes, combining or dividing of tenancy spaces, new shop fit outs or changes to shopfronts within the prescribed "QVB style."

A number of alterations however had a greater influence on the functioning and character of the QVB:

- Installation of a moulded steel, suspended awning around the perimeter of the building in 1997. This awning was not intended to be an accurate reconstruction of the original or subsequent awnings, but rather in a style sympathetic to the Federation style of the QVB. The awning was deliberately designed not to extend over the four street entrances.
- Refurbishment of the former Eat Street area in 1996, including realignment of the shopfronts with the internal columns, refurbishment in the standard 'QVB style' and changes to the escalators and stairs leading from basement 1 level.
- Provision of external seating servicing cafés along the York Street frontage since 1997. The café fit out of the corner tenancy to Druiitt Street included the provision of bi-fold doors facing out onto York Street.
- Construction of the access tunnel to Myers Department Store at the northern end of the building, 1996.
- Cutting of new voids between ground floor level and basement levels at both the northern and southern ends of the building. Installation of new escalators leading down to basement 1 level within one of these voids near to the centre of the building, 2000.
- Installation of freestanding coffee kiosks within the central walkways at basement 2 and ground floor level since 1996. These have also included provision of seating.
- New vertical connections between individual tenancies to provide larger retail spaces over two or more floors, such as Country Road and Esprit (2001).
- New Tearoom fit out within the former QVB ballroom in 2000, primarily consisting of a new bar, colour scheme and light fittings. The lift and stair lobby was also repainted, and a new arched opening cut into the end wall, allowing a view over the galleries. The kitchen was refurbished in its existing location.
- Opening up of part of the southern end of basement 2 level, for a new retail tenancy (present-day Victoria's Basement tenancy) in 2000. These works included creation of a new void between basement 1 and 2 near to the southern end of the building, and installation of escalators. A second entrance was provided from the service tunnel behind the escalators at this floor level. This area had been remodelled in the 1940s to house bomb proof shelters, however had been most recently used for storage and 'back of house' areas, and plant rooms.
- New art gallery fit out within the former Victoria Rooms.

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<sup>62</sup> *The Spectator*, April 15, 2000 by Johnson, Paul

- Installation of cafés at both the northern and southern ends of the building at both first and second floor levels since 2000. The existing reconstructed shopfronts were replaced with new timber and glazed bi-fold doors opening out to the gallery spaces and seating.
- Installation of Mobile Telephone Distributed Antenna System (DAS) in 2000. This involved the installation of small wall or ceiling mounted antennae within the public areas of the Queen Victoria Building.
- This period was characterised by continual changes to the numerous commercial fit outs and configurations.



Figure 85 – Ground floor shopfront, c. 2003  
Source: *Graham Brooks and Associates, 2003*



Figure 86 – Looking across the voids, with the Great Australian Clock in centre of frame, c. 2003  
Source: *Graham Brook and Associates, 2003*

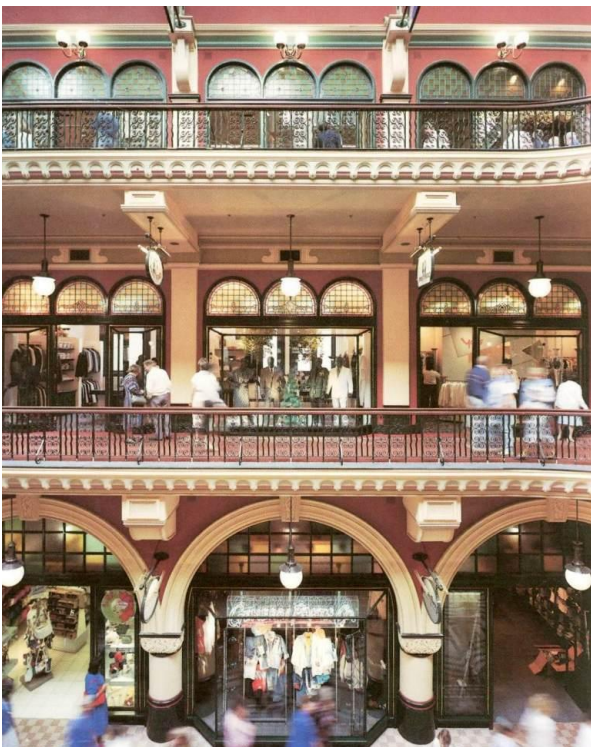


Figure 87 – Looking across the voids, note the previous colour scheme, c. 2003  
Source: *Graham Brooks and Associates, 2003*

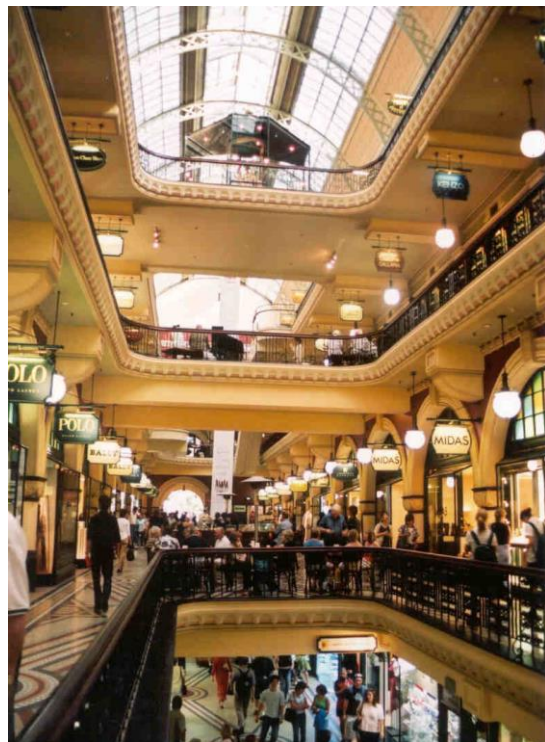


Figure 88 – View through the voids from the ground floor, c. 2003  
Source: *Graham Brooks and Associates, 2003*



Figure 89 – View of the second floor, Market Street end  
 Source: *Graham Brooks and Associates, 2003*



Figure 90 – Looking across the voids  
 Source: *Graham Brooks and Associates, 2003*



Figure 91 – Typical splayed ground floor shopfronts  
 Source: *Graham Brooks and Associates, 2003*



Figure 92 – Looking north into the central dome area,  
 2003  
 Source: *Graham Brooks and Associates, 2003*



Figure 93 – Looking across the northern gallery voids  
 Source: Graham Brooks and Associates, 2003



Figure 94 – The lobby of the Tea Room  
 Source: Graham Brooks and Associates, 2003



Figure 95 – The Tea Room, 2003  
 Source: Graham Brooks and Associates, 2003



Figure 96 – The northern core of the first floor, 2003  
 Source: Graham Brooks and Associates, 2003



Figure 97 – The upper level gallery with the so called ‘Royal Clock’ and wax model of Queen Victoria in coronation robes and other regalia

Source: *Graham Brooks and Associates, 2003*

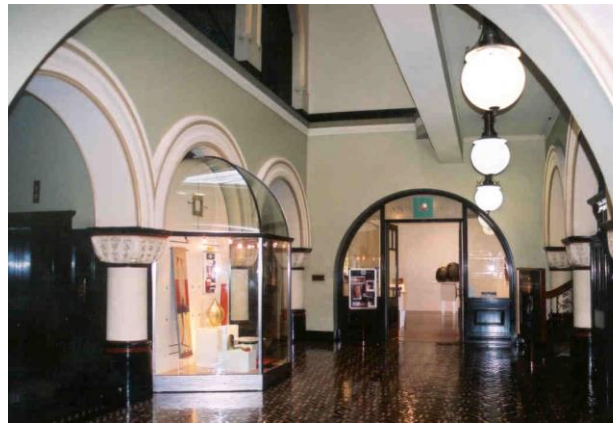


Figure 98 – The southern core on the second level, 2003

Source: *Graham Brooks and Associates, 2003*

### 3.10. CONSERVATION AND REFURBISHMENT, 2006-2009

By 2006, after successfully trading for twenty years, comprehensive plans were being prepared to conserve the exterior and refurbish the interior of the building to ensure the place was commercially viable as an ongoing retail complex. The major upgrade of the building’s interiors was overseen by the architectural firm Ancher Mortlock and Woolley, with esteemed architect Ken Woolley consulting. The interior colour schemes and carpets were designed by award winning interior designers George Freedman and Ralph Rembel of interior design firm Freedman Rembel. Heritage consulting services were provided by Graham Brooks and Associates. The complete refurbishment included installation of:

- Contemporary frameless glass shopfronts that replaced the nostalgic timber splayed shopfronts dating from the 1980s refurbishment.
- New contemporary interior signage including illuminated tenancy signage that replaced the nostalgic signage introduced in the 1980s refurbishment.
- A new internal colour scheme that differentiated different levels and zones of the building. The new colour scheme, while clearly contemporary, was inspired by the strong colours of the late nineteenth century.
- New custom designed and made carpets to the upper galleries that referenced the running external acanthus frieze.
- New internal lighting that was more energy efficient and provided greater colour rendition. The new transparent glass fittings more accurately interpreted the appearance of the original fittings.
- BCA compliant glass and metal balustrades. These elements while they provided the necessary function, were designed to be clip-on reversible elements that allowed the balustrades, reconstructed in the 1980s, to continue to read as the primary balustrade design element.
- Reconstruction of the decorative ground floor steel entrance gates to George, Market, Druiitt and York Streets. The reconstructed gates reintroduced important elements of the original design and facilitated control of public access afterhours.
- Selective bathroom upgrades. Bathroom surfaces and fixtures from the 1980s refurbishment were selectively replaced.
- A new suspended vertical escalator system, connecting ground level with levels 1 and 2, in both the north and south galleries which replaced those which were installed during the last major refurbishment

of the building in 1984. The escalator scheme was developed with significant input from the City of Sydney and NSW Heritage Council after the careful consideration and investigation of many alternative schemes with the design consultants. The new escalators were designed to be seen as new sculptural elements expressed in their own right and to follow the *Burra Charter* principles that new insertions should be clearly expressed in a contemporary way so that they will be recognised as a later addition. The completed design was minimalist, contemporary, and reversible, using an engineered structure that does not overpower the ornate building elements.

The building work embraced a strong focus on water conservation and energy reduction and was expected to achieve a reduction of approximately 13.7% per cent in the overall QVB power consumption. A reduction in energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions of such mechanical services systems resulted in the QVB reinventing itself as a 'greener building', with Class A recycled water also being used for toilet flushing and cooling towers. There was also a conversion from electricity-based cooling to gas absorption chillers. The use of 100% environmentally friendly refrigerants meant zero global warming potential and zero ozone depletion.

Concurrent with the wide-ranging internal refreshment of the place, the building's exterior sandstone facades also underwent an extensive programme of extensive conservation works. The façade conservation works were carried out by Stone Mason & Artist Pty Ltd and were supervised by Hari Gohil from Shreeji Consultant Pty Ltd.

The recent conservation and refurbishment approach aimed to clarify the legibility between historic fabric and new fabric which must be continually updated to ensure the building is viable as an ongoing commercial complex. After its successful refurbishment, the QVB was officially reopened by the Lord Mayor of Sydney Clover Moore on 25th August 2009.



Figure 99 – The northern gallery with updated colour scheme, c. 2009

Source: *Graham Brooks and Associates, 2009*



Figure 100 – The southern gallery with updated colour scheme, c. 2009

Source: *Graham Brooks and Associates, 2009*



Figure 101 – View of the central area on ground floor

Source: Graham Brooks and Associates, 2009



Figure 102 – View from ground floor through the voids

Source: Graham Brooks and Associates, 2009



Figure 103 – View of the northern gallery and one of two sets of suspended escalators

Source: Graham Brooks and Associates, 2009



Figure 104 – The central drum and updated compliant balustrade

Source: Graham Brooks and Associates, 2009

### 3.11. ONGOING REFURBISHMENT AND UPGRADES, 2010-PRESENT

The building has consistently maintained to a high standard on account of the ongoing occupancy and changes in tenancies. The works undertaken in recent years includes:

- Bathroom works by Pike Withers (2014) to remnant finishes and fittings including cast iron cubicle supports, slate and porcelain urinals, and original tessellated tiles. Non-original fittings and finishes removed with high quality replacements.
- Refurbishment of back of house lift waiting rooms (2014) by Pike Withers.
- North and south elevators were upgraded to designs by Conrad Gargett Ancher Mortlock Woolley (2017-2018).
- Repair work to the southern domes, ongoing.
- Continual replacement of shop tenancy fit outs.

## 4. HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

### 4.1. WHAT IS HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE?

Before making decisions to change a heritage item, an item within a heritage conservation area, or an item located in proximity to a heritage listed item, it is important to understand its values and the values of its context. This leads to decisions that will retain these values in the future. Statements of heritage significance summarise the heritage values of a place – why it is important and why a statutory listing was made to protect these values.

The Heritage Council of NSW has developed a set of seven criteria for assessing heritage significance, which can be used to make decisions about the heritage value of a place or item. There are two levels of heritage significance used in NSW - State and local.

### 4.2. HERITAGE LISTING

The subject site is identified as listed as a heritage item on the NSW State Heritage Register (SHR) Listing Number 01814 (refer to Figure 106) and on the Sydney Local Environment Plan 2012 Item Number 1783, 'Queen Victoria Building including interior'. Item Number 1736 'Bicentennial Plaza including monuments' is located to the south of the site (refer to Figure 105). The site is not located within a Heritage Conservation Area.

Additionally, the site is located within the York Street Special Character Area (refer to Figure 107) and is in proximity to the Sydney Square/ Town Hall/ St Andrews Special Character Area (refer to Figure 108) as listed under the Sydney Development Control Plan 2012.

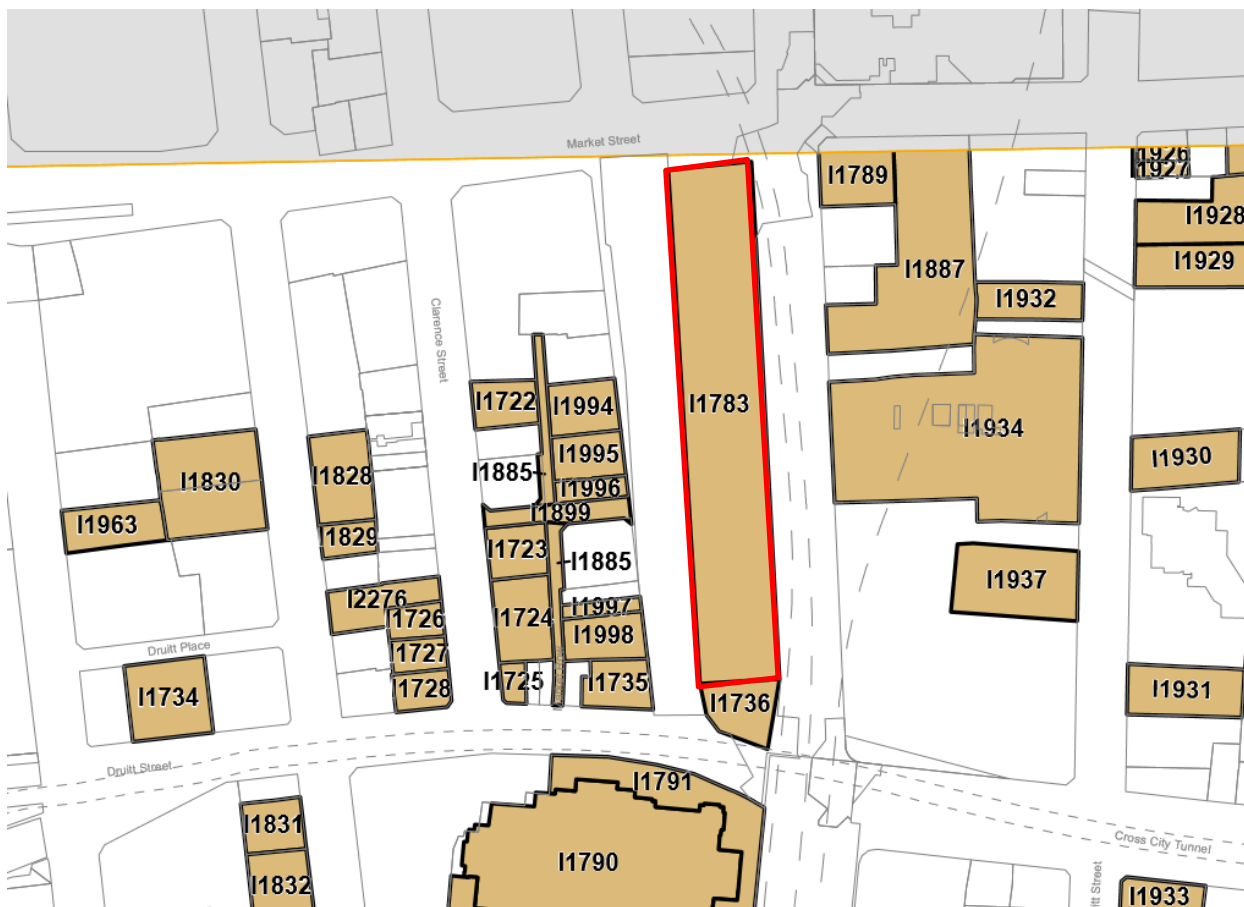
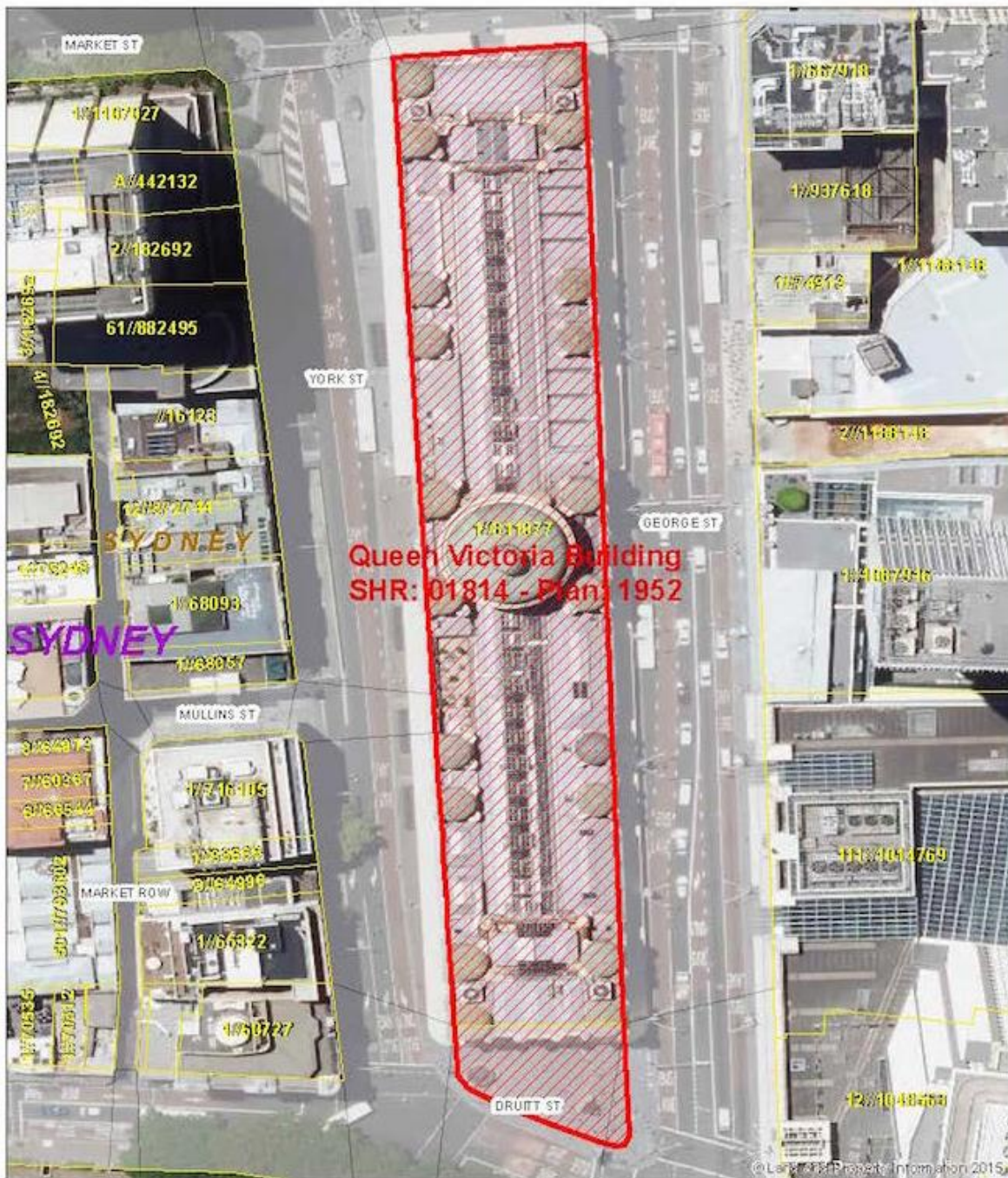


Figure 105 – Extract from the Sydney LEP Heritage Map showing the subject site identified as Item No: 11783, Bicentennial Plaza (11736) is located to the south

Source: Sydney LEP 2012, Heritage Map – Sheet HER\_015





State Heritage Register - SHR:01814 - Plan: 1952

Queen Victoria Building

429-481 George Street Sydney

Gazettal Date: 5/03/2010

0 10 20 30 40 Meters

Scale: 1:1,000 @A4

Datum/Projection: GCS\_GDA\_1994



-  SHR Curtilage
-  Land Parcels
-  Railways
-  Roads
-  LGAs
-  Suburbs

Figure 106 – SHR Curtilage for the QVB and Bicentennial Square, is shown hatched in red and takes in the lot boundary of the site and Drutt Street concourse

Source: *SHR Inventory Sheet for the QVB, SHR 01814*



Figure 107 – York Street Special Character Area including Clarence Street and Kent Street, approximate location of the site is indicated by the yellow highlight

Source: Sydney Development Control Plan 2012, 2.1.1 York Street Special Character Area including Clarence Street and Kent Street

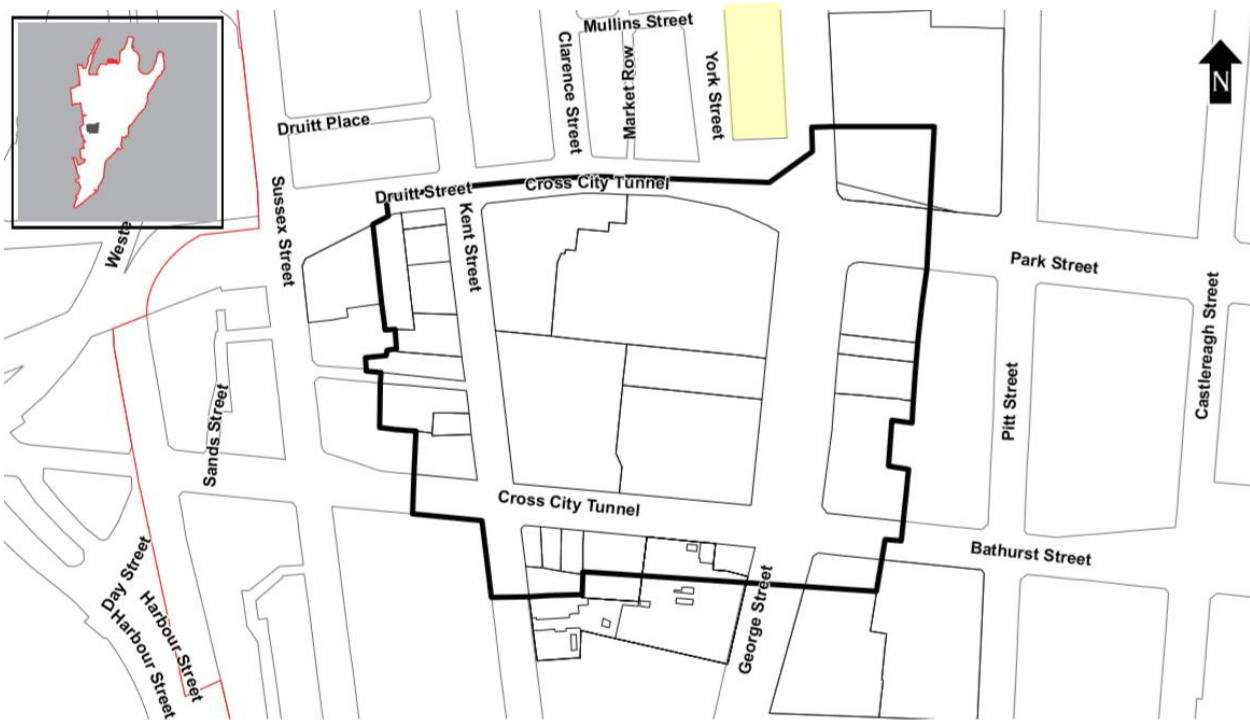


Figure 108 – Boundaries of the Sydney Square/ Town Hall/ St Andrews Special Character Area, approximate location of the site is indicated by the yellow highlight

Source: Sydney Development Control Plan 2012, 2.1.10 Sydney Square/ Town Hall/ St Andrews Special Character Area

### 4.3. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The following Statement of Significance has been sourced from the NSW State Heritage Register listing for the site. Urbis has reviewed the statement and concurs.

*The Queen Victoria Building is an outstanding example of the grand retail buildings from the Victorian-Federation era in Australia, which has no known equal in Australia in its architectural style, scale, level of detailing and craftsmanship. Saved from demolition in the 1980s, and restored to its original glory, the Queen Victoria Building is an iconic heritage building of Sydney and Australia.*

*Dating from 1898, the Queen Victoria Building represents Australia's largest and grandest Federation<sup>63</sup> arcade, as well as the largest, most monumental and most intact of the market buildings of Sydney City. The site of the Queen Victoria Building has continued to operate as a market facility for over 190 years, which is a significant historical continuum.*

*The Queen Victoria Building is a superb example of the Federation Romanesque style, also known as the American Romanesque style and a continuation of the Victorian Romanesque style. It represents possibly the largest and finest example of the American Romanesque style to be constructed in Australia, demonstrating the influence of the prominent 19th Century American architect, Henry Hobson Richardson, in Australia during this period. The building expresses an ambitious use of building technology, excellent craftsmanship and decorative detailing. Both the building exteriors and interiors are remarkable and outstanding for their quality, workmanship, materials, richness, imagery and style. The Queen Victoria Building also represents an important building in the professional work of the prominent City Architect, George McRae (later, the NSW Government architect) and has an outstanding ability to reflect through its aesthetics and scale, the planning strategies of the City Architect for Sydney during the late 19th Century.*

*The Queen Victoria Building represents an important shift in heritage consciousness in Sydney during the 1980s because of the public outcry that brought about its conservation and, in particular, the historical restoration approach taken for its refurbishment. It also reflects, through its building development concessions, the importance of heritage conservation in more recent government strategies. At the time of its restoration by the 1980s, few original internal features remained such as some column capitals, trachyte stairs and some tessellated tiles surfaces. The present interiors of the building demonstrate an interpretive reconstruction from the 1980s intended to recreate the imagery of a grand Federation<sup>64</sup> style arcade with considerable concessions made to ensure the place was commercially viable as an ongoing retail shopping centre.*

*The Queen Victoria Building is a major landmark of Sydney, occupying a full city block, allowing it to be viewed in the round, and forming a major pedestrian link of Sydney City, both at ground level and underground. It makes a significant contribution to the streetscape of the four main streets of the City centre that encircle the building. The building also forms one of the precinct of three key Victorian buildings exemplifying ecclesiastical, government and commercial architecture in Sydney, together with St Andrews Cathedral and Sydney Town Hall. The Queen Victoria Building and these Victorian buildings have a strong presence as the centre of Sydney City.*

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<sup>63</sup> Note: The original statement used 'Victorian', the terminology has been altered to 'Federation' for consistency.

<sup>64</sup> As above.

## 5. INTERPRETATION PLAN AND OPPORTUNITIES

The Heritage Interpretation Plan (HIP) highlights the historic themes and interpretation opportunities for the subject site. The HIP draws on the historic information outlined in Section 3, with specific reference to the intended audience profile and available resources and forms of heritage interpretation media. The interpretation detailed herein outlines recommendations for the potential locations, themes, key messages and interpretative devices that may be used and/or installed throughout the site.

This interpretation has been informed by the heritage significance of the site, and current use, and as such could be altered if these aspects change.

### 5.1. AUDIENCE PROFILE

The interpretation aims to reveal meanings and connections to the subject site. To effectively achieve this, interpretation is predicated on identifying audiences and using appropriate media. It is important to identify specific audiences so that interpretation responds to audience needs and also takes into consideration literacy levels, disability, genders, ethnicity and age.

Due to the central location of the subject site, and the current use, the subject site is visited by a diverse audience. Some of the current and potential future audiences include:

- Visitors, including those who work, and shop at the Queen Victoria Building;
- Interested members of the public, visiting the building because of its heritage values;
- International and domestic tourists, visiting the site on account of its renown and key central Sydney location; and
- Passers-by.

The QVB currently has multiple interpretive devices located on site and further interpretative initiatives have been developed with Vicinity but are understood to have not yet been installed. The significance of the site is multi-faceted. However, it is impractical to communicate every facet of that significance and there is an awareness to not 'overcrowd' with interpretive elements. Therefore, it is appropriate to identify themes and strategies for effectively and creatively communicating the significance to the audience.

### 5.2. INTERPRETATION THEMES AND NARRATIVES

The significance of the Queen Victoria Building is multi-faceted and has numerous layers. The Historic Themes that have been used to inform the recommended narratives are outlined below in Table 2. Historical themes can be used to understand the context of a place, such as what influences have shaped that place over time. The Heritage Council of NSW established 35 historical themes relevant to the State of New South Wales. These themes correlate with National and Local historical themes. Historical themes at each level that are relevant to the site are provided in Table 2.

Table 2 – Historical Themes

<b>Australian theme</b>	<b>NSW theme</b>	<b>Local theme</b>
3. Economy- Developing local, regional and national economies	Commerce- Activities relating to buying, selling and exchanging goods and services	Developing discrete retail and commercial areas
3. Economy- Developing local, regional and national economies	Commerce- Activities relating to buying, selling and exchanging goods and services	Operating market and retail complexes

<b>Australian theme</b>	<b>NSW theme</b>	<b>Local theme</b>
8. Culture- Developing cultural institutions and ways of life	Creative endeavour- Activities associated with the production and performance of literary, artistic, architectural and other imaginative, interpretive or inventive works; and/or associated with the production and expression of cultural phenomena; and/or environments that have inspired such creative activities.	Designing in an exemplary architectural style
8. Culture- Developing cultural institutions and ways of life	Creative endeavour- Activities associated with the production and performance of literary, artistic, architectural and other imaginative, interpretive or inventive works; and/or associated with the production and expression of cultural phenomena; and/or environments that have inspired such creative activities.	Architectural styles and period- Federation Romanesque Revival
9. Phases of Life- Marking the phases of life	Persons- Activities of, and associations with identifiable individuals, families and communal groups	Associations with George McRae Architect

## **6. INTERPRETATION OPPORTUNITIES**

### **6.1. INTRODUCTION**

Heritage interpretation is the art of explaining the significance of a place to the people who visit it, with the objectives of promoting an understanding of its heritage values and the need to conserve it. Interpretation also involves conveying messages including the presentation of particular points of view about places and history. Interpretive methods might include, but not limited to conservation, signage, public programs, publications, heritage trails and web sites on the internet.

### **6.2. OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of interpretation are to:

- Convey the history of the site to the public;
- Ensure that the public are allowed the maximum possible access to the site for understanding the layers of the site's history and fabric; and
- To enhance an understanding of the place through design.

### **6.3. INTERPRETATION MEDIA**

Interpretation can occur in a variety of ways and may consist of:

- Treatment of the fabric – such as the retention of evidence of former use of the site, but now removed;
- Text panels incorporating photographs and images based on historic material such as photographs, maps and plans;
- Furnishings and other objects;
- Signs – permanent, fixed movable and temporary; and
- Interpretive Artwork.

### **6.4. IN THE SETTING**

Protection of significant characteristics of setting by heritage or planning controls (e.g. height controls), protect and retain views, signs and viewing places, public artworks and activities related to a theme.

### **6.5. PUBLICATIONS, PUBLICITY AND SOUVENIRS**

Posters, pamphlets, books, internet web sites, interactive search programs, videos, audio media, postcards and image.

### **6.6. EVENTS AND ACCESS**

Interpretation may include oral histories, video recordings, access to the item through day-to-day use and management; access via tours, open days and events for associated people and special interest groups.

# 7. PROPOSED INTERPRETATION

## 7.1. EXISTING INTERPRETATION AND DEDICATION

There are presently a large number and variety of interpretative and dedication devices at the site. These include, but are not limited to:

- Various signage (interpretation, dedication, and miscellaneous plaques);
- Website;
- Guided Tours; and
- Interpretation initiatives developed with Vicinity but not yet manufactured or installed (refer to Appendix A).

### 7.1.1. Existing Interpretive Signage



Figure 109 – External interpretive signage

Source: Urbis, 2018



Figure 110 – Internal interpretive panel, 'Transportation within the Queen Victoria Building'

Source: Urbis, 2018

## 7.1.2. Existing Dedication Signage and Miscellaneous



Figure 111 – Internal dedication signage

Source: Urbis, 2018



Figure 112 – External dedication signage

Source: Urbis, 2018



Figure 113 – External dedication signage

Source: Urbis, 2018



Figure 114 – External dedication signage

Source: Urbis, 2018





Figure 115 – External dedication signage  
Source: Urbis, 2018



Figure 116 – External dedication signage  
Source: Urbis, 2018



Figure 117 – External dedication signage  
Source: Urbis, 2018



Figure 118 – External dedication signage  
Source: Urbis, 2018



Figure 119 – External dedication signage  
Source: Urbis, 2018



Figure 120 – Honour rolls and the Victoria Cross  
Source: Urbis, 2018



Figure 121 – Letter from the Queen

Source: *Urbis*, 2018

### 7.1.3. Website



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DINING GUIDE

## HISTORY OF QVB



Since first opening in 1898, the QVB has had a mercurial history. Designed by George McRae, it replaced the original Sydney Markets and was named to honour the monarch's Diamond Jubilee. Elaborate Romanesque architecture was chosen for the grand building, which housed a concert hall, coffee shops,

Drastic Art Deco 'remodelling' occurred during the 1930s to accommodate the main occupant - Sydney City Council. From 1959 to 1971, the QVB faced near-demolition. A massive restoration project was given the green light and, in 1982, Ipoh Garden was awarded the restoration project and a 99-year lease. The fully restored Queen Victoria Building reopened her doors to Sydneysiders and visitors alike in 1986. A major refurbishment in 2009 restored her even further. Today the QVB stands in all her glory, testimony to the original vision for the building and the superb craftsmanship of the artisans who put it all back together again.

A complete summary of the site's history is outlined below.

#### TIMELINE

- ▶ 1810 Governor Macquarie sets the area aside, designating it to become a market place.
- ▶ 1820 A two-story building is constructed on the site. The Druitt street end has offices to administer the market. The cross-shaped Greenway's Market House sells maize, wheat, green forage, vegetables, turkeys, ducks, geese, pigs, drapery and groceries.
- ▶ 1828 Greenway's Market House is converted into Police Offices and a Magistrates Court, which all become the Central Police Court.
- ▶ 1829 The Government of the day issues a general order that the area be set aside as a market square.
- ▶ 1869 The whole market area is roofed and the street becomes an arcade within the market.
- ▶ 1887 George Mc Rae is appointed as city architect.
- ▶ 1888 First plans appear for the new George Street Market.
- ▶ 1893 Site work commences with part of the excavation.

George McRae submits four designs for the QVB facades: Gothic, Queen Anne, Renaissance and Romanesque. The Market's committee chooses the Romanesque design and decides the building should accommodate the following:  
the Coffee Palace (a residential hotel) over several floors at the Druitt street end, a concert hall for 500 people at the Market Street end, shops, warehouses, markets in the basement served by four hydraulic lifts.

In December of this year the foundation stone is laid by Major William Manning.

- ▶ 1894 Superstructure commences.
- ▶ 1896 Building nears completion.

Designs are invited for an allegorical group of marble figures over the central arch in George Street. The contract is awarded to Mr W P Macintosh for

Figure 122 – Extract from existing history of QVB on shopping centre website

Source: QVB website

## 7.2. PROPOSED INTERPRETATION MEDIA

The following section details proposed interpretation media for the subject site, including nominating key themes and messages and appropriate locations for interpretation. The proposed interpretation within the subject site should be implemented in accordance with the policies outlined in the Conservation Management Plan (2019) especially with the conservation of significant fabric and built form. The proposed media incorporates a variety of strategies and media digital media, signage and other media.

### 7.2.1. Interpretive Plaques

It should be noted that while there are many plaques, signs and markers throughout the building, Urbis was commissioned in early 2018 to develop the content for additional interpretive signage at the Queen Victoria Building. It is understood that these interpretive devices are not yet designed, manufactured or installed. These elements could be installed in order to present various narratives of the building to the identified audience. The developed content includes the following:

- Panel 1: A Sydney Landmark;
- Panel 2: Retailing at the turn of the century; and
- Panel 3: Conservation and renewal.

The content and images for the interpretive plaques has been included in Appendix A of this report.

### 7.2.2. Printed and Digital Media

It is possible that a multimedia strategy be prepared to maximise interpretation of the building's history and to access multiple narratives. This could include historical information on the building that covers the historic uses, alterations made to the structure over time and restoration works in the 1990s and early 2000s.

Printed and digital media have the flexibility to be added to or altered based on further research or particular events held at the subject site. Digital media has the potential to uncover and highlight narratives and associations with the subject site through personal accounts.

The following materials and digital pieces are recommended to be a part of this strategy.

- Posters/postcards that incorporate significant historic images of the subject site and its location on George Street Sydney. These could be made available or displayed within the building.
- Pamphlets – to be displayed at the subject site and at major tourist hubs in the City of Sydney.
- Internet/website that could include the following: Audio media including video recording and oral histories of past staff, visitors or construction workers who worked on the restoration of the building.
  - Historical images of the building and surrounding streetscapes.
  - Virtual Tour of the building. This could be used to record its current state for the future.

Precedent images are included below of various interpretation media and materials.

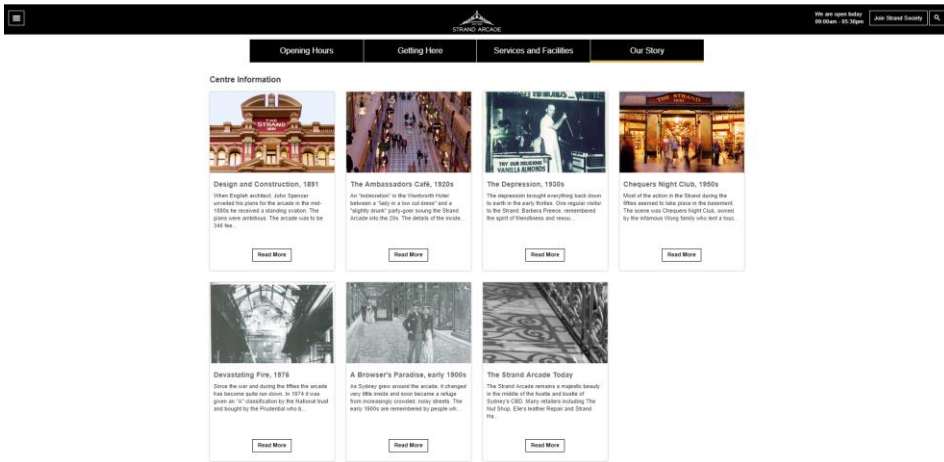
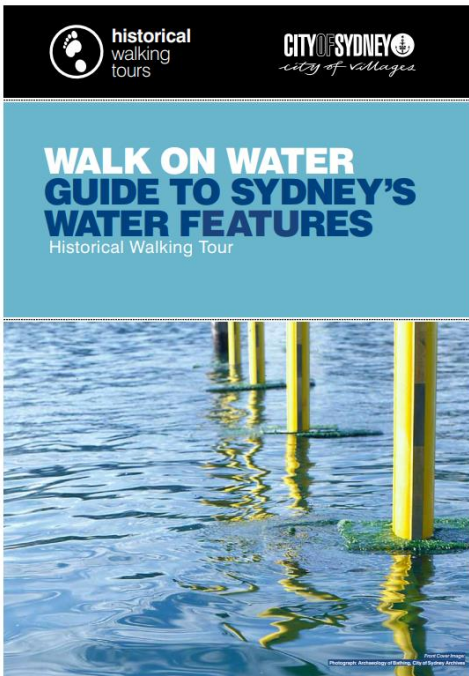


Figure 123 – Precedent image of website history section for the Strand Arcade, Sydney.

Source: Strand Arcade website



BLACKBURN BUILDING

Virtual tours of the Blackburn Building

Back to Virtual Tours

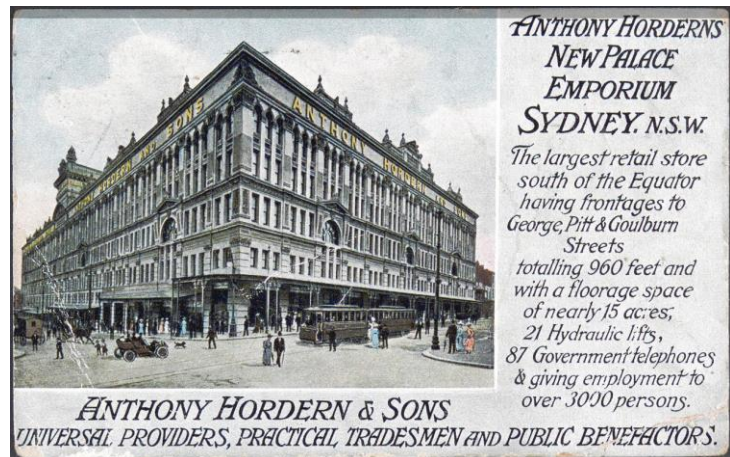
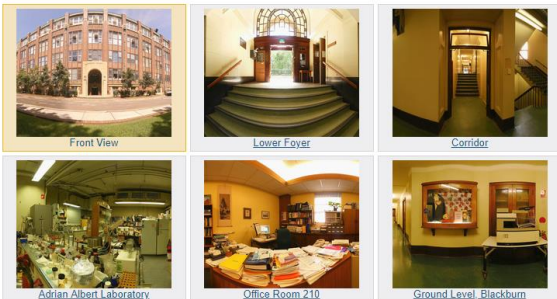


Figure 124 - Precedent examples of printed and digital interpretation. Historic walking tours, postcards, virtual tours and information booklets.

Source: Top left: City of Sydney Council. Top right: MAAS, 90/42. Bottom left: University of Sydney, Sydney Medical School. [https://sydney.edu.au/medicine/museum/mwmuseum/index.php/Blackburn\\_Building](https://sydney.edu.au/medicine/museum/mwmuseum/index.php/Blackburn_Building). Bottom right: AMP, published by John Sands Pty Ltd.

### **7.2.3. Guided Tours**

Public access to the subject site is a key part of heritage interpretation. The QVB presently offers paid guided tours running for 45 minutes at 11.30am Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, and a High Tea tour at 11.30am Thursdays.

To ensure ongoing public access, it is possible that the Centre Management offer additional tours coinciding with major annual National and State heritage events such as History Week, Australian Heritage Festival and Sydney Open, or for specialist groups (ie historical societies or groups). These tours could easily be tailored to the annual theme in line with one of the building's multiple layers of history.

These types of events will continue to provide opportunities to highlight the heritage significance of the building and facilitate ongoing public access and awareness of the building's history.

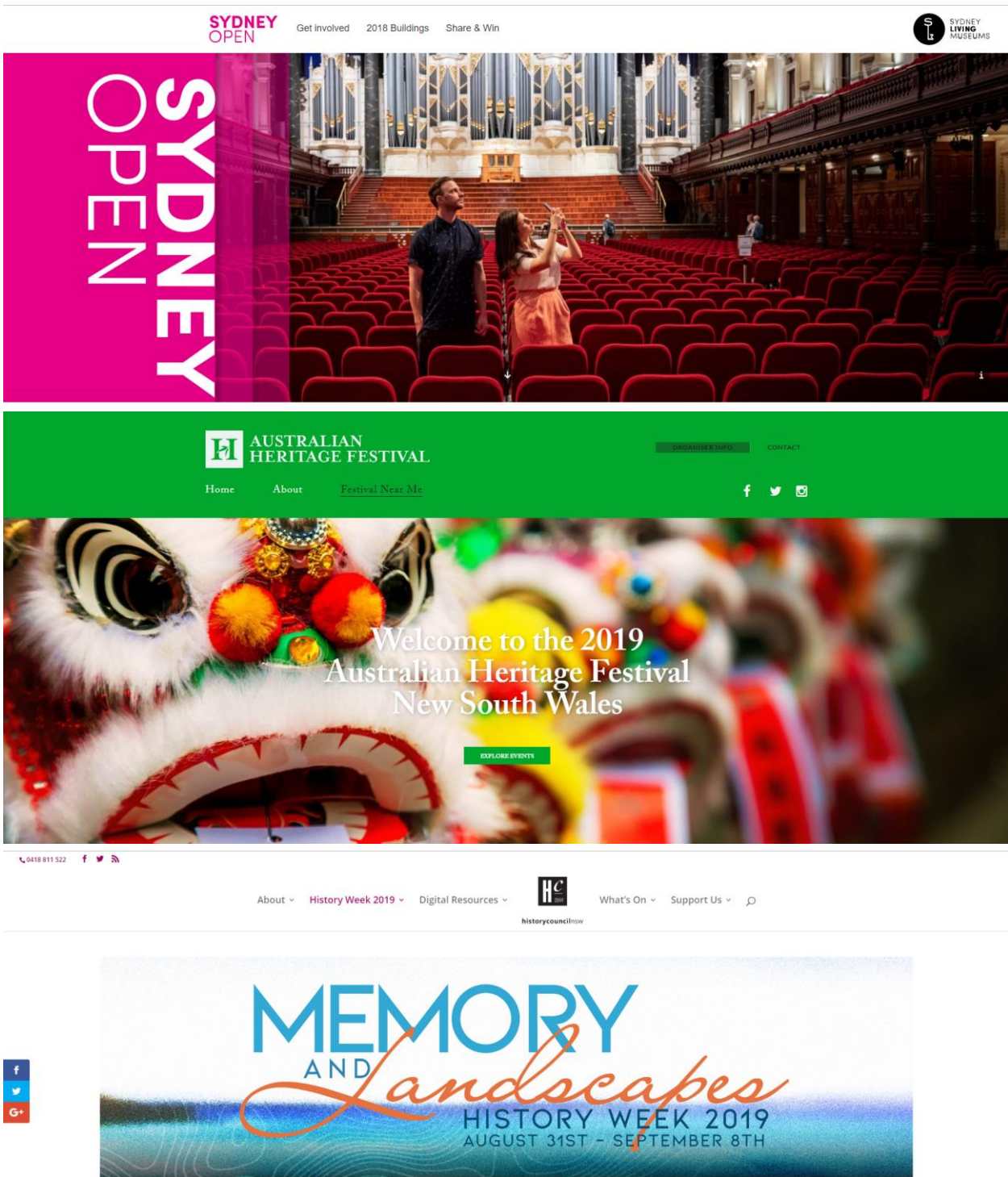


Figure 125 - Types of potential annual events that could facilitate greater public access to the site's history.  
 Source: Sydney Living Museums (top), National Trust of Australia (centre) and History Council of NSW (bottom)

## 8. CONCLUSION

This Heritage Interpretation Plan has been prepared for the City of Sydney in conjunction with the Conservation Management Plan (2019), prepared by Urbis. The subject site, located at 455 George Street, Sydney is known as the Queen Victoria Building (QVB). The QVB is owned by the City of Sydney Council and leased and operated by Vicinity Centres as a shopping centre. The subject site is identified as a heritage item on the NSW State Heritage Register (SHR) Listing Number 01814 and on the Sydney Local Environment Plan 2012 Item Number 1783 and Item Number 1736.

This strategy has been prepared in conjunction with a heritage floor space application. It outlines a number of recommendations for the subject site with its current occupancy and for any potential future redevelopment works.

To heritage interpretation measures included in this report have been informed by the historical overview (Section 3) and heritage significance (Section 4). These sections have informed the themes and narratives that have been highlighted in Section 5.2. This report recommends that the following interpretive measures:

- Implementation and installation of interpretive signage;
- Printed and digital media; and
- Expanding the guided tours on offer.



# 9. BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

## 9.1. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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## 9.2. REFERENCES

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[Note: Some government departments have changed their names over time and the above publications state the name at the time of publication.]

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# **APPENDIX A      PROPOSED INTERPRETIVE SIGNAGE**





### **BRISBANE**

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Brisbane QLD 4000  
Australia  
T +61 7 3007 3800

### **GOLD COAST**

45 Nerang Street,  
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