

# **Attachment A2**

## **Oxford Street Urban Design Study**



An aerial photograph of Sydney, Australia, showing a dense urban landscape. The foreground and middle ground are filled with a variety of buildings, from low-rise residential structures to mid-rise commercial buildings. A prominent green park area is visible in the center-right. In the background, the Sydney city skyline is visible, featuring several tall skyscrapers. The water of the harbor is visible in the top right corner.

# Activity Street Precinct 3: Oxford Street

## URBAN DESIGN STUDY

Prepared for the Council of the City of Sydney  
27.04.2021

Studio Hollenstein



ACTIVITY STREET PRECINCT 3 : OXFORD STREET

We acknowledge and respect the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation, the traditional custodians of this place we now call Sydney. We pay respects to the elders of past, present and future for they hold the memories, traditions, and culture of their people.

**Prepared by**  
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Curio Projects

**Prepared for**  
The Council of the City of Sydney

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## INTRODUCTION

### BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

City of Sydney Council engaged Studio Hollenstein to prepare an urban design study relating to the Oxford Street 'Activity Street precinct'. This urban design study is supported by a Heritage Study of the study area prepared by Curio Projects.

The following objectives were developed by Council and used to guide the urban design study process:

- Respect the existing character;
- Maintain heritage values;
- Build on the fine urban values
- Protect economic activity in the activity street precinct, and allow it to grow.

The outcomes of the study are intended to support the objectives of the Eastern Creative Precinct with Oxford Street as its focal point. The built form and diverse land uses on Oxford Street have contributed to its vibrant character, hosting a mix of businesses, educational institutions, health facilities, and spaces for workers, visitors and festivals, such as Mardi Gras. The precinct will encourage the clustering of cultural and creative uses and capitalise on the proximity of the National School with its new 45-year lease and the UNSW Art and Design campus in Paddington.

The urban design study utilises a place-based approach to understanding the unique structural, heritage and built aspects of the study area and is founded in detailed contextual character and building typology analysis. While the ultimate outcome of the study is to recommend changes or refinements to development controls, particularly building height and floor space ratio, for consideration by council, these recommendations are grounded in an understanding of the existing neighbourhood character and council objectives for the area.

The study was initially briefed as a study in two parts, focusing initially on the western portion of the study area, followed by the eastern portion. After discussions with council it was agreed that the study would benefit from a more holistic approach that considered the whole precinct. The study was developed with close consultation with the City of Sydney Council, Heritage consultants Curio Projects and the Design Advisory Panel and subcommittee.

The key urban design analysis tasks included the following:

#### Context and site analysis of the study area

The study area was analysed to understand its unique position and role within Sydney, its topography, land uses, street layout, subdivision, streetscape, open space, vegetation, transport and noise. This high-level analysis was complemented by a more detailed block by block analysis to allow further consideration of building typologies, awnings, materiality, active interfaces, servicing, vehicular access and sensitive interfaces. A photographic streetscape analysis was completed to understand the streetscape and historic character of the study area and identify key vantage points from the public domain which new development may impact. The site analysis was supplemented by photographic streetscape elevations that were provided by council.

#### Review of the controls for the study area

Relevant state and local government controls were reviewed including the Sydney Local Environmental Plan 2012 and Sydney Development control Plan 2012 maps and locality statements to understand the controls applying to the area. Government Architect New South Wales, "Sydney Green Grid" was also reviewed to understand the role it identified for Oxford Street. During the preparation of the urban design study the NSW Government published the "Neon Grid" 24-hour Economy Strategy which was reviewed to ensure the study could support its objectives and outcomes.

#### Existing built form analysis

A built form analysis was prepared to illustrate the relationship between the existing LEP controls and the existing built form within the study area as well as provide a more flexible means to understand the built form character of the precinct. The study utilised a detailed digital model of the study area and surrounds which included façade detailing and fenestration. This model was developed by Studio Hollenstein utilising a base model from the City of Sydney Council. The built form was reviewed from key views within the study area. These key views were utilised within the assessments of the subsequent masterplan options. A solar access study was prepared to identify solar access at key times through the day to the public domain as well as cumulative solar access study prepared to understand sunlight to lots, in particular residential lots.

#### Review of the Heritage Study

A heritage study was prepared by Curio projects and included a Heritage Assessment and Conservation Management Strategy that informed and supported this urban design study. The two were undertaken concurrently with close co-ordination. The significant heritage of the study area, including the number of heritage items and contributory buildings, was a key driver for the urban design study and was the defining element, along with land use, in determining the current and desired future character of the study area. A detailed façade typology study was prepared to identify and categorise the predominant historic façade typologies within the study area test different approaches to building additions.

#### Structure Plan and Principles

A structure plan was developed to provide a strategic framework for the future development of the Oxford Street Activity Street Precinct. The structure plan includes recommendations for built form and additional development along with public domain improvements, land use, landscape, signage, lighting, traffic and servicing. A set of principles was developed alongside the structure plan to guide built form priorities and outcomes. The structure plan and principles balance opportunities for development with the need to retain and celebrate the historic character of the area. These principles were tested through the development of a series of masterplan options and scenarios.

#### Masterplan options

A set of masterplan options were prepared to test potential development outcomes within the study area. The options, developed in consultation with council, were not limited by existing development controls and were developed with consideration of the urban design study analysis, the heritage study, the structure plan and principles. The built form envelope options were modelled in three dimensions and inserted within the detailed city model to assess their impacts. The development potential (FSR) of the built form envelopes was calculated and tabulated to allow for the comparison between masterplan options, with the existing built FSR and with the current FSR control. This report include two masterplan options; the preferred option and a 'growth' option for comparison. The remainder of the masterplan options and the FSR spreadsheet are included in the report appendices.

The masterplan options were assessed and compared through a streetscape perspective study utilising the digital model of each option placed within the city model. The visual impact of each option was reviewed from key points within the public domain. This approach allowed for the iterative refinement the built form envelopes and the ultimate selection of a preferred masterplan option.

#### Preferred masterplan option and typical built form controls

A preferred masterplan option was selected from which built form controls were defined that responded to the unique conditions and interfaces within the study area. These controls included FSR, height, street wall alignments and upper level built form setbacks. These controls were further refined in response to specific heritage advice.

#### Supporting Studies

This urban design study was informed and supported by the following studies led by council:

- Oxford Street Cultural Activity Study prepared by SGS Economics and Planning
- Oxford Street Floorspace Supply and Demand Study by SGS Economics and Planning
- Community Engagement report by Cred Consulting



SITE ANALYSIS  
BROADER CONTEXT

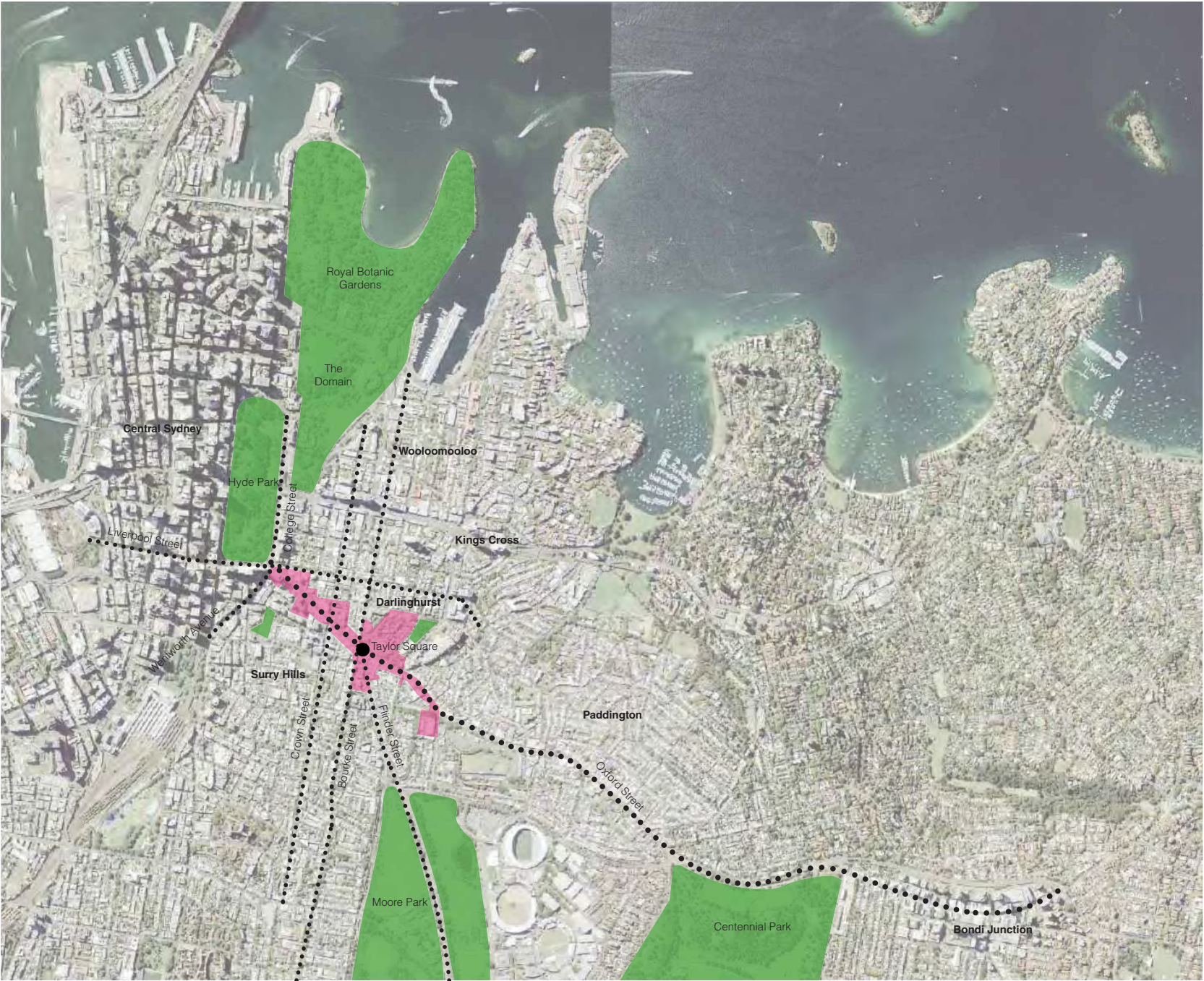
This activity street precinct study centres on Oxford Street and the lots that front it and those at Taylor Square where Bourke Street and Flinders converge. Oxford Street is one of Sydney's best known streets and has an international reputation as an iconic LGBTIQ precinct that thrives with night time activity. It is a regionally significant retail and entertainment street and a local business centre for Surry Hills, Darlinghurst and surrounds. The street is one of the key transport routes that connects Sydney CBD with the eastern suburbs.

The street was first named Oxford Street in 1875 to reflect its commercial basis and allude to its London retailing namesake, however its path was originally used to access the signal station at South Head, that alerted the settlement of approaching ships.

Oxford Street runs along a ridge line as it ascends from Hyde Park to Taylor Square. It bisects the predominant street grid that runs through Surry Hills on its south and Darlinghurst to the north. This geography creates a clearly framed view corridor down the street towards Hyde Park and the city skyline beyond. The lots on the north side of the street, especially at their upper levels, are afforded views toward Sydney Harbour, as Darlinghurst falls away to the north.

The Oxford Street precinct has a built form rich in heritage and character, with a significant number of heritage listed and contributory buildings. These come from a range of periods, including Nineteenth Century and Federation style. Its established heritage character is reinforced by its narrow frontages and consistent awnings. Aside from a few particular buildings, Oxford Street is generally lined by 3 storeys buildings, serviced by rear lanes. Oxford Street is considered the epicentre of the LGBTIQ community in Sydney and every year plays host to the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras. This event has increased the international profile of Oxford Street and has been supported by the thriving night time economy along Oxford Street.

 Oxford Street Activity Street Precinct





SITE ANALYSIS  
CONTEXT ANALYSIS

Oxford Street is a key vehicular and pedestrian path to and from Central Sydney. The volume of traffic is a significant noise source and reduces your sense of safety when standing on the footpath.

Oxford Street sits on a ridge line, with the topography falling away to the North. This provides sites on the edge of the ridge with expansive views across Darlinghurst and Woolloomooloo to the harbour beyond.

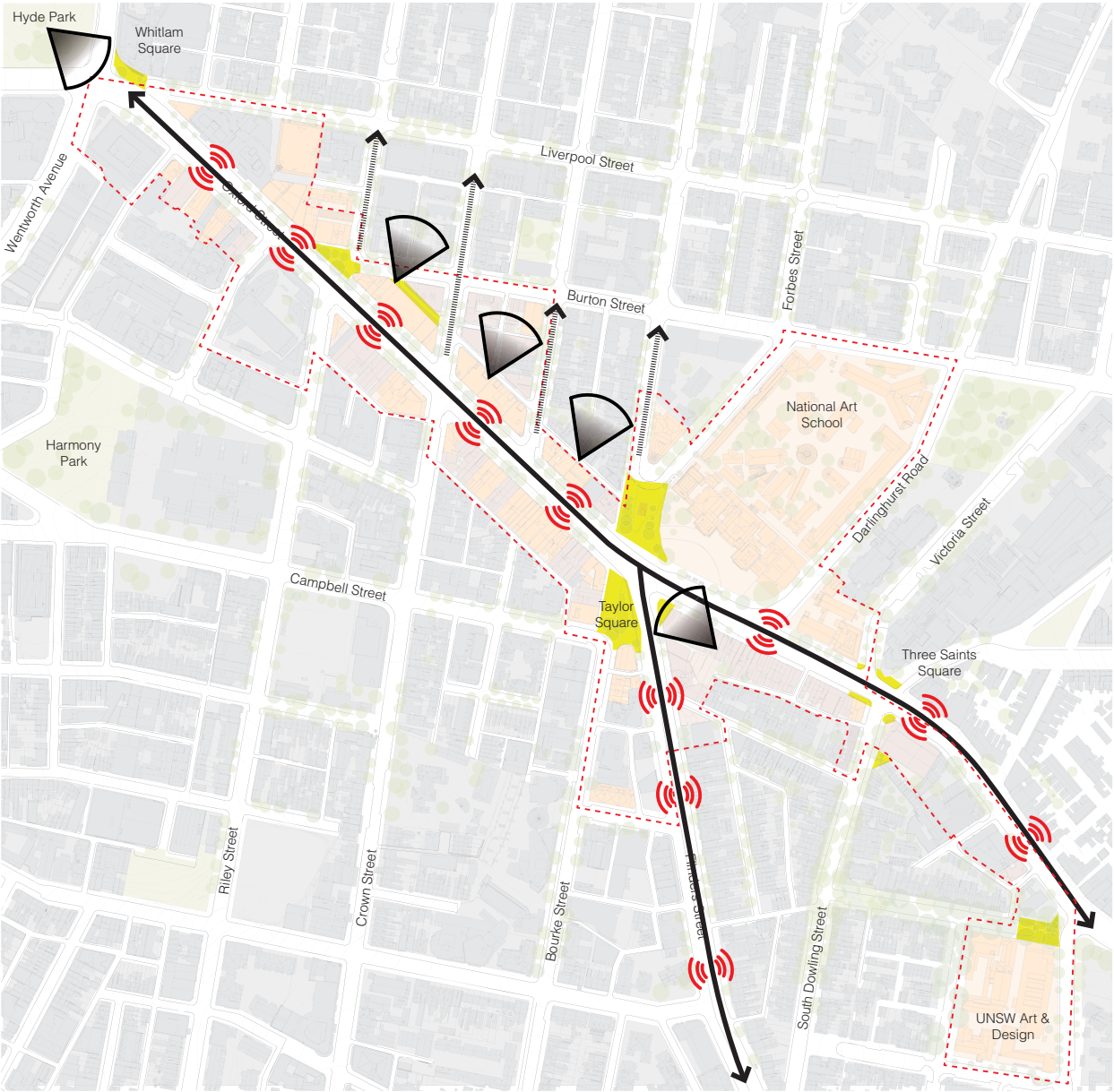
A set of small public spaces is scattered along the length of Oxford Street and culminates in Taylor Square, a key public space that hosts local markets and is a key gathering point in the yearly Mardis Gras parade.

The length of Oxford Street from Taylor Square to Hyde Park is straight, creating a significant vista down the street to Hyde park, the anzac Memorial and city skyline beyond. This vista and route provides an iconic entry point into the city, framed by heritage buildings on either side.

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- Public Space
- Key Vehicular Route
- Steep level change
- Noise
- Views

1:4000 @ A3



SITE ANALYSIS  
CONTEXT ANALYSIS

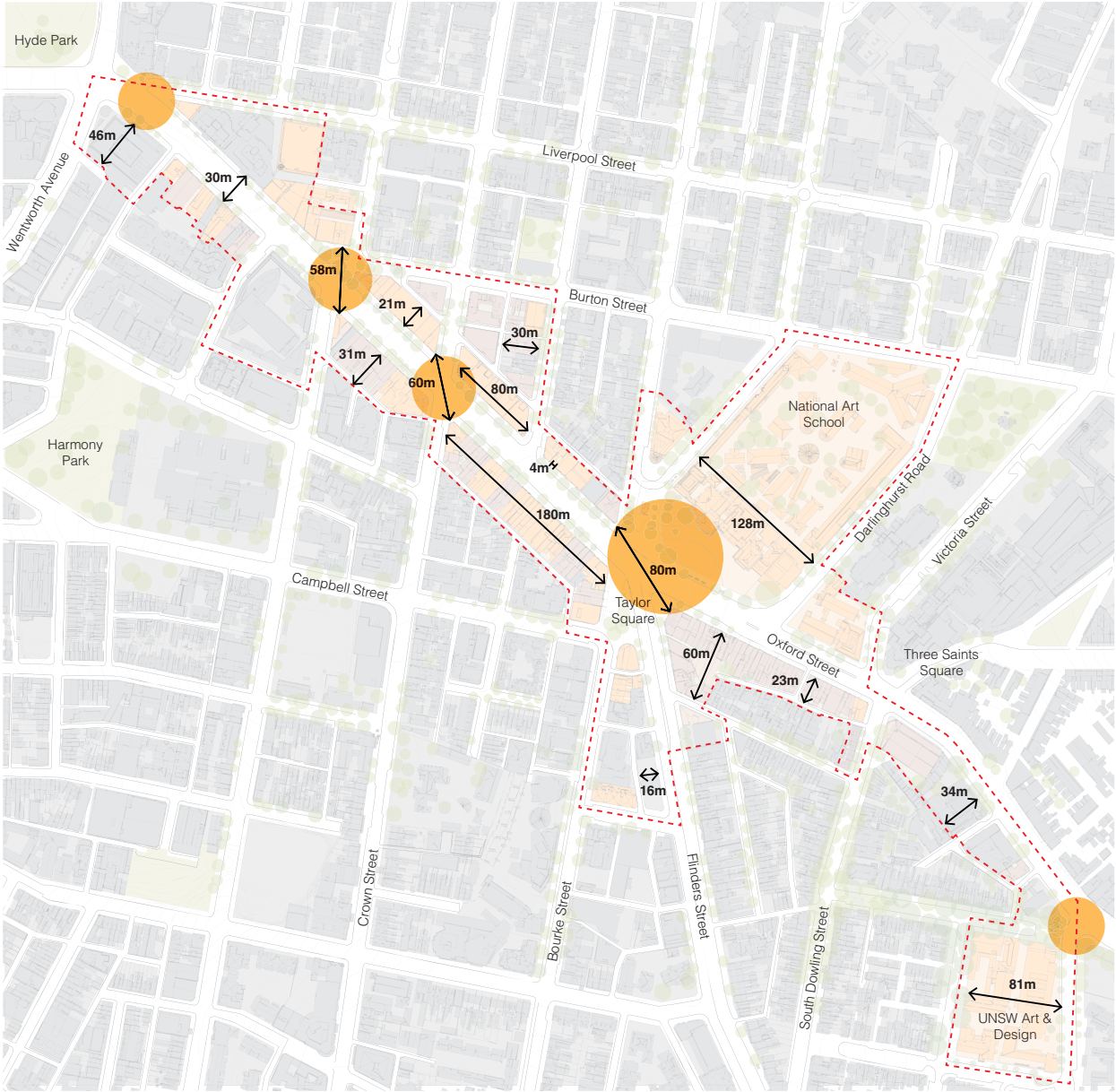
Oxford Street slices through the predominant street grid of the area on an angle. This creates a series of unusually proportioned and shaped blocks. These blocks do however have some similarity in that they are all broken up into a large number of narrow (and deep) lots. These reflect the history of the area as one of terrace houses and commercial shops.

A number of larger lots exist, which have likely been consolidated from smaller lots, or are the site of large public facilities such as the Darlinghurst Courthouse.

The variation in lot and block size indicate that any additional built form will have to be considered on a block by block basis to ensure an appropriate fit as well as a tying into a cohesive strategy for the whole precinct.

There are a number of very long blocks, up to 180m which isolate their rear lanes from the activity and opportunities of Oxford Street.

The intersections between Oxford Street and Crown, Bourke and Riley Street create quite large openings within the 'room' of the street.



1:4000 @ A3

SITE ANALYSIS  
TOPOGRAPHY

Oxford Street runs along a ridge line as it ascends from Hyde Park to Taylor Square. It bisects the predominant street grid that runs through Surry Hills on its south and Darlinghurst to the north. This geography creates a clearly framed view corridor down the street towards Hyde Park and the city skyline beyond. The lots on the north side of the street, especially at their upper levels, are afforded views toward Sydney Harbour, as Darlinghurst falls away to the north.



Bourke Street Section



SITE ANALYSIS  
SYDNEY GREEN GRID

The Sydney Green Grid identifies two opportunities that overlap with the Oxford Street Activity Street Precinct:

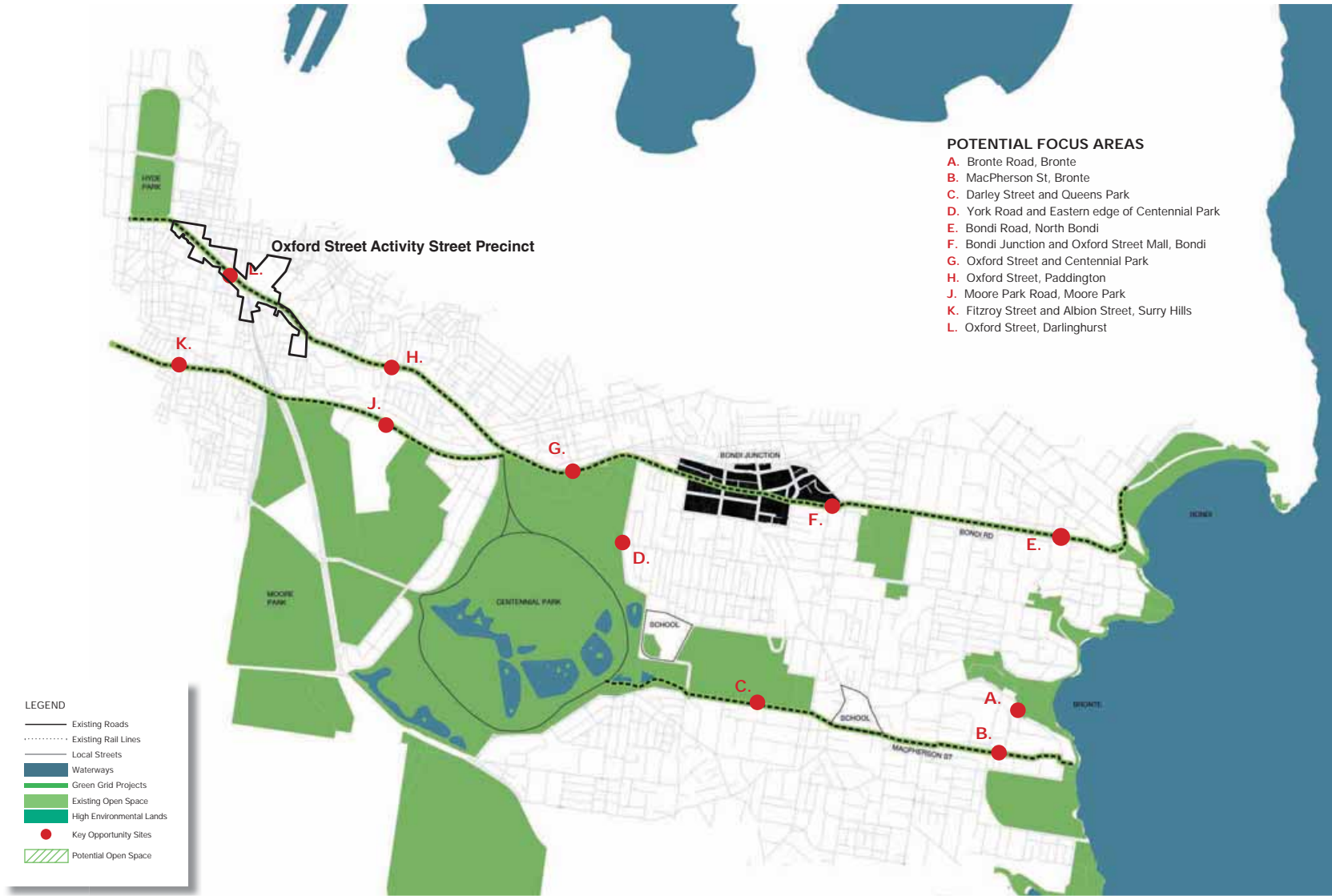
- South East Light Rail Corridor
- East West Coastal Green Links: Hyde Park to Bronte

Both of these opportunities highlight the importance of Oxford Street as a critical pedestrian and cyclist route connecting central Sydney to the city at large.

Given the potential evolution of the built form along Oxford Street, we believe there is a third opportunity. An opportunity to connect the landscape and habitat of Centennial Park, Moore Park with Hyde Park, The Domain and the botanical Gardens beyond. This opportunity could be realised through the use of on street landscape and extensive green roofs on new (and existing) developments. This approach would build on the City of Sydney's existing green Roofs and Walls Policy.



Green Grid Opportunities Map



East West Coastal Green Link Map

Image source: Sydney Green Grid, Spatial Framework and Project opportunities, Central District

## REVIEW OF CURRENT CONTROLS

### LEP MAPS

### LAND ZONING

The land zoning for the majority of sites within the precinct is B2 - Local Centre with the following objectives:

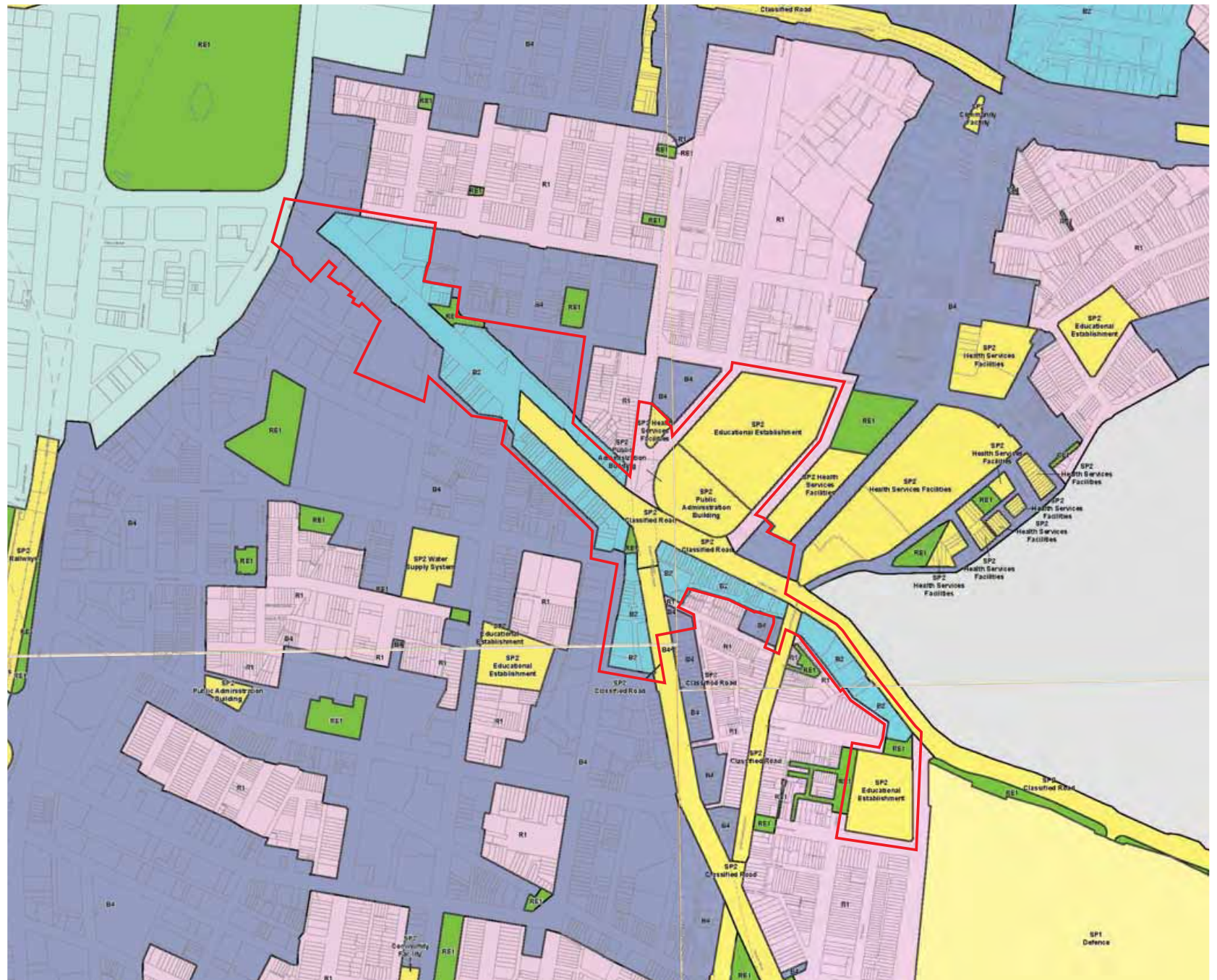
- To provide a range of retail, business, entertainment and community uses that serve the needs of people who live in, work in and visit the local area.
- To encourage employment opportunities in accessible locations.
- To maximise public transport patronage and encourage walking and cycling.
- To allow appropriate residential uses so as to support the vitality of local centres.

A number of sites are zoned B4 which has the following objectives:

- To provide a mixture of compatible land uses.
- To integrate suitable business, office, residential, retail and other development in accessible locations so as to maximise public transport patronage and encourage walking and cycling.
- To ensure uses support the viability of centres.

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Zone	
BC1	Neighbourhood Centre
B2	Local Centre
BC2	Commercial Core
MU	Mixed Use
BD	Business Development
EC	Enterprise Corridor
BP	Business Park
MC	Metropolitan Centre
GI	General Industrial
LI	Light Industrial
GR	General Residential
LR	Low Density Residential
PR	Public Recreation
SA	Special Activities
INF	Infrastructure





REVIEW OF CURRENT CONTROLS  
LEP MAPS  
FLOOR SPACE RATIO

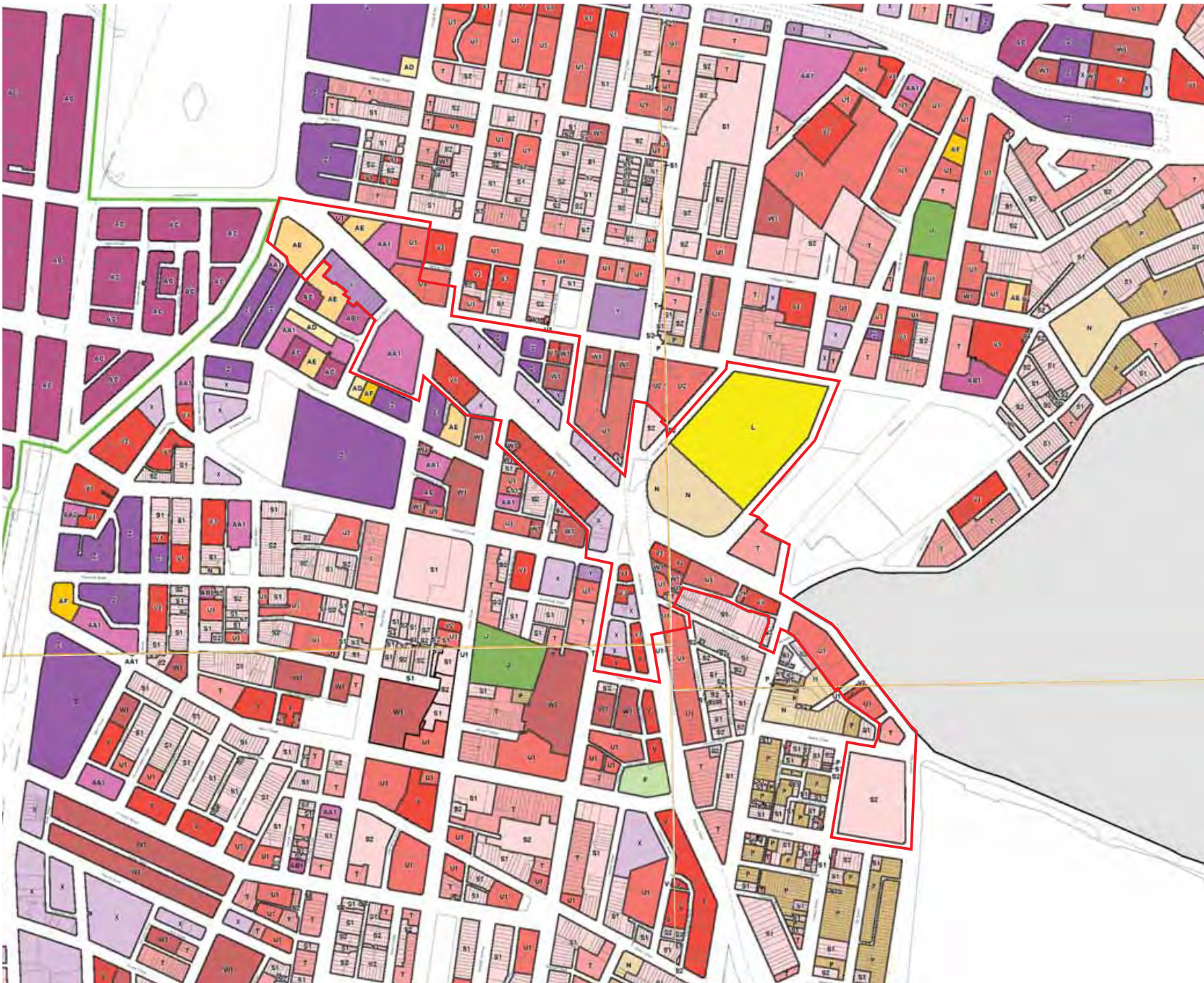
The Maximum floor space ratio map indicates a variety of FSR's that are generally between 2.5:1 - 4:1 and appear to be modelled on the existing built forms.

A number of exceptions exist which are generally above this FSR and accommodate tower forms such as 1 Oxford Street, the monment apartments and the park ridge apartments.

Most sites within the precinct appear to capture their prescribed floor space potential, with only the addition of one or so floors required to maximise their potential.

29 Oxford Street, a petrol station, is one exception where it has not yet captured its potential 2:1 FSR.

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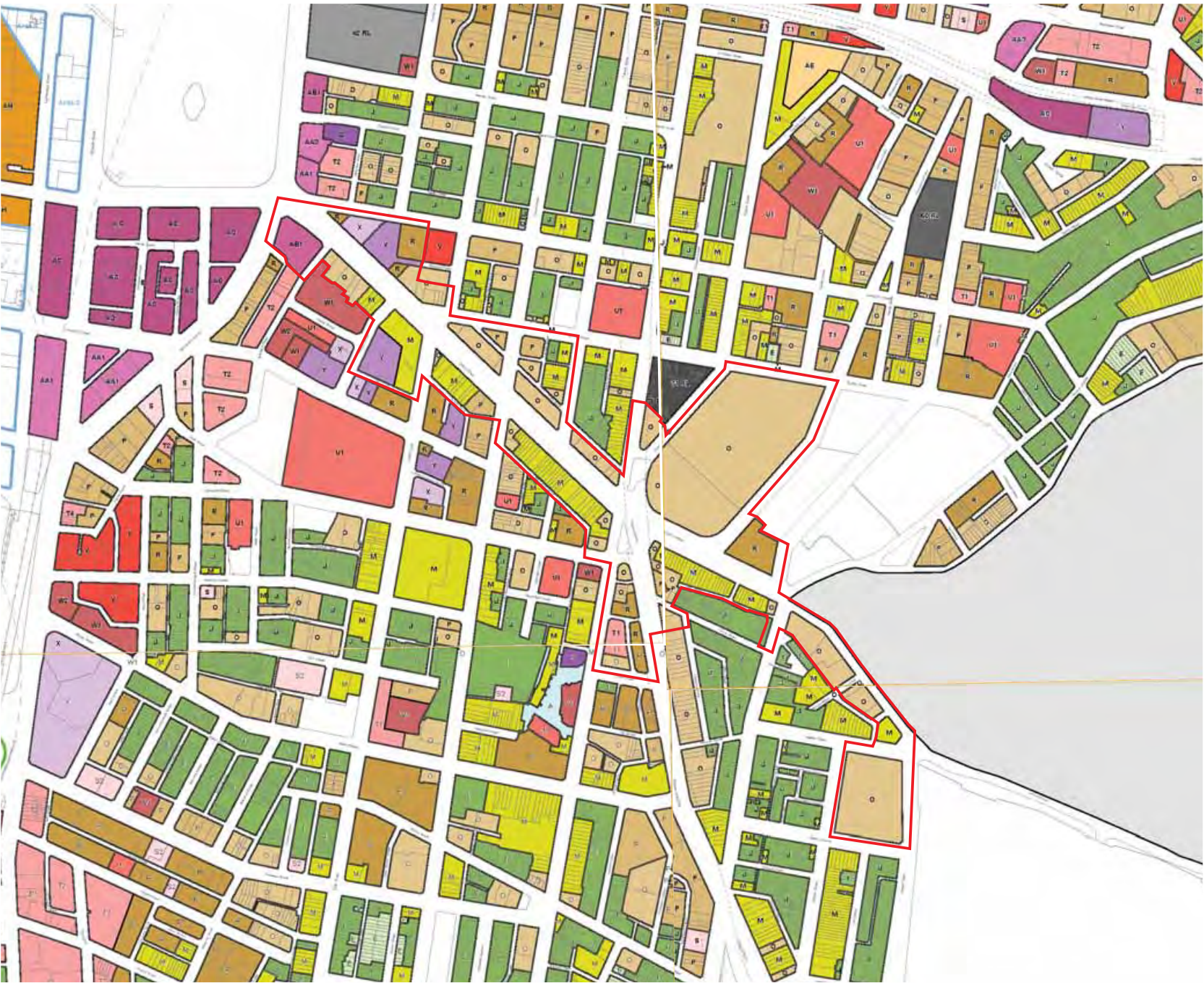


REVIEW OF CURRENT CONTROLS  
 LEP MAPS  
 HEIGHT OF BUILDINGS

Within the Activity street Precinct there are a variety of prescribed maximum building heights ranging from 9-80m. The predominant height is 12-15m which correlates with the existing building height of many of the heritage buildings in the area.

Sites are predominantly taller on the southern side of Oxford Street and taller along its western tip due to the proximity to Central Sydney and its associated scale.

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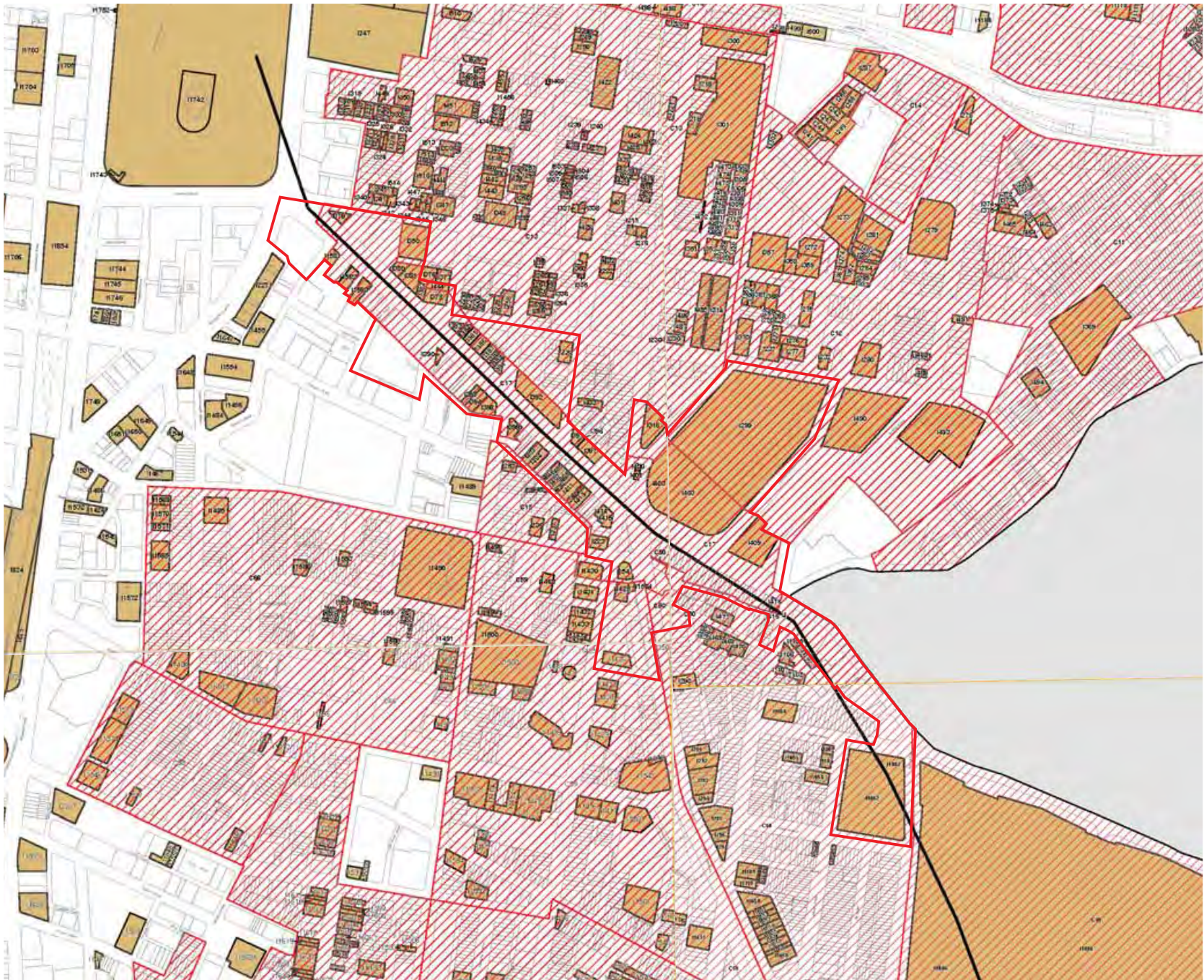
REVIEW OF CURRENT CONTROLS  
 LEP MAPS  
 HERITAGE

The Heritage map identifies the full extent of the precinct as being within Conservation areas, with the exception of 1 Oxford Street and the monument Apartment Building at 20 Pelican Street.

Within the Conservation areas there are a significant number of heritage items ranging in scale from narrow commercial buildings to the large Darlinghurst Courthouse and National Art School.

Oxford Street has a very beautiful built form and this is largely related to the strength of character and beauty provided by the heritage buildings along the street. The largely homogenous and intact streetscape is made up of Victorian and Federation era buildings with robust materiality, elegant proportions and fine detailing.

New development will have to strategically insert itself within the heritage fabric of the streetscape.



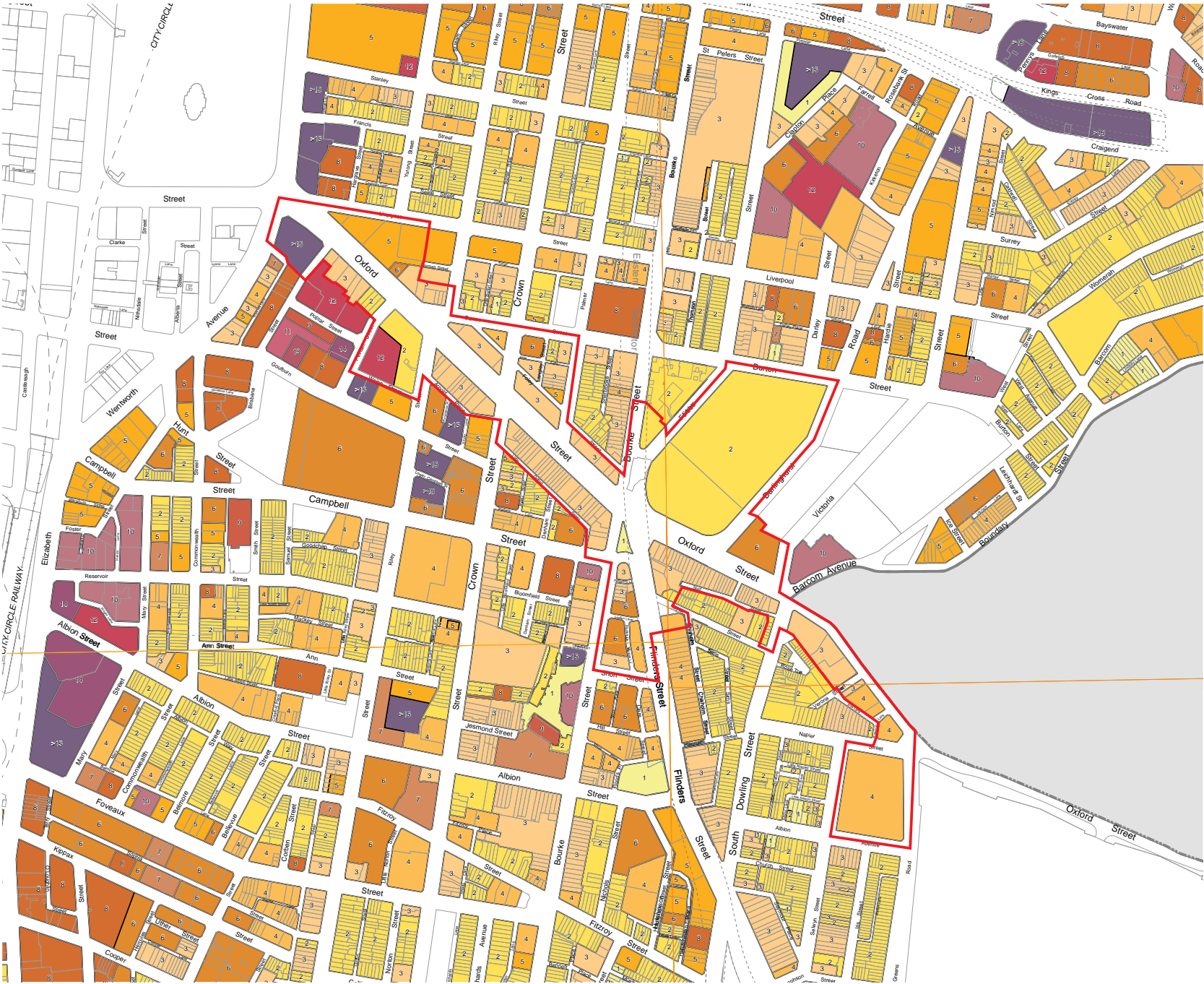
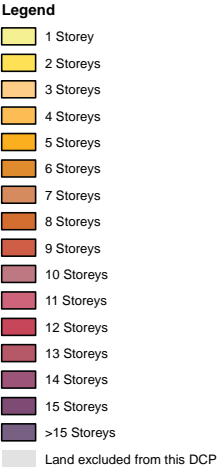


REVIEW OF CURRENT CONTROLS  
 DCP MAPS  
 HEIGHTS OF BUILDINGS

The heights of buildings map generally prescribes 2-3 storey buildings along Oxford Street within the precinct. This generally aligns with the Sydney Local Environment Plan 2012 and allows for the larger floor to floors heights generally seen within the precinct.

- There are a number of exceptions to this height pattern and these are generally located on the western end of Oxford Street including:
- 1 Oxford Street is significantly taller at 24 storeys, due to its proximity to Central Sydney and Hyde Park
  - Monument Apartments is 17 storeys. This is above the prescribe 12 storey height limit in the DCP
  - The Park Ridge apartments at 18-32 Oxford Street are 18 storeys. This is above their prescribed 5-6 storey DCP limit.

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REVIEW OF CURRENT CONTROLS  
 DCP MAPS  
 STREET FRONTAGE HEIGHT

The Building street frontage map indicates few controls for lots facing Oxford Street itself, and instead prescribes heights for the rear of these lots or blocks one street back. These vary but are generally between 3-4 storeys.

The lack of controls on Oxford Street fronting lots may be related to the number of heritage buildings, or due to the varied nature of the heights along the street (despite the prominence of low rise buildings).

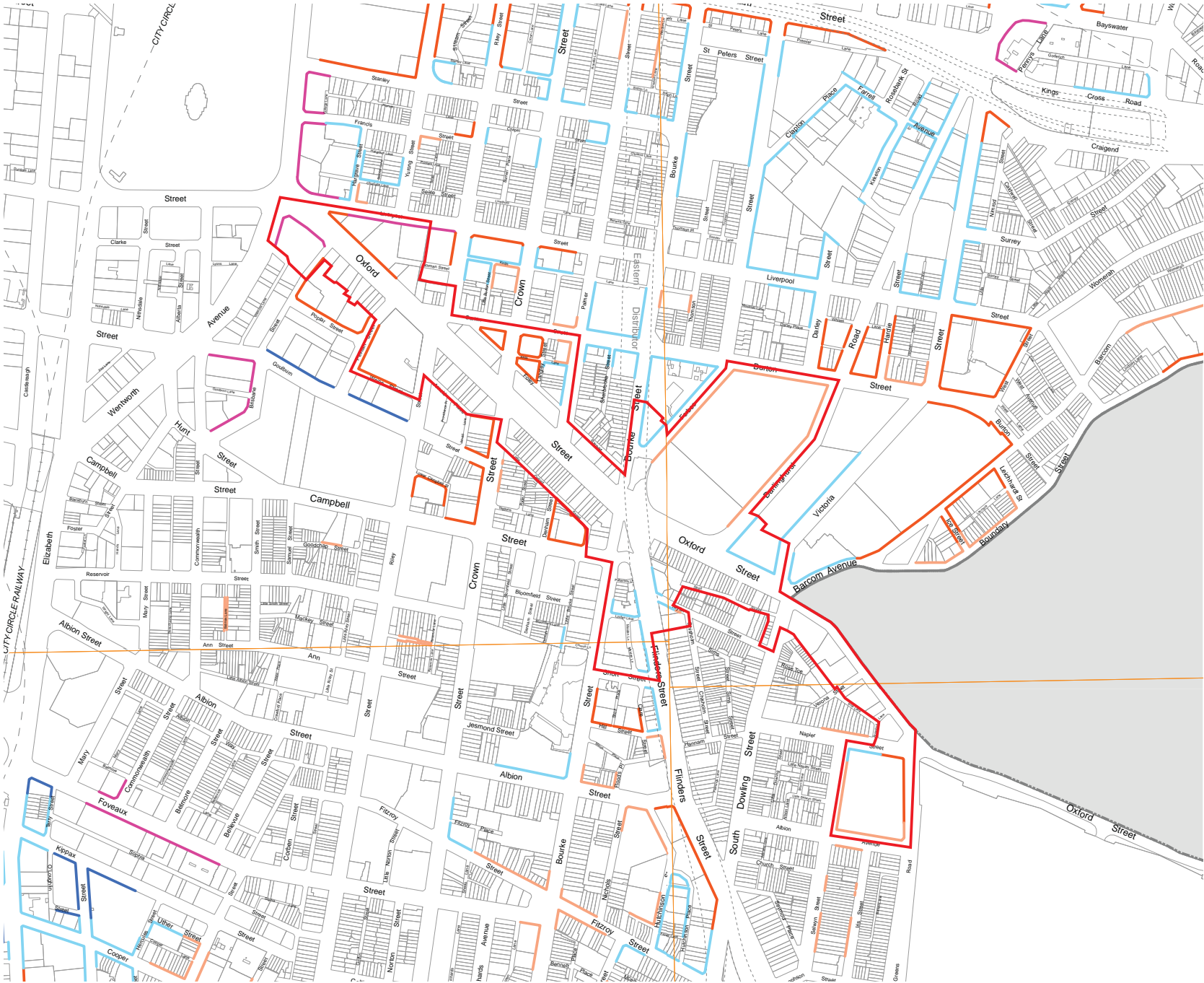
1 Oxford Street has a 5 storey building frontage limit, despite it only having a partial 1 storey podium, with a tower set back from the street. This would imply an intention to carry the form of Oxford street around the site.

The Darlinghurst Courthouse and National Art School have a 2 storey building frontage control which likely relates to the height of its existing heritage fabric.

252

Legend
 

- 1 Storey
- 2 Storeys
- 3 Storeys
- 4 Storeys
- 5 Storeys
- 6 Storeys
- 7 Storeys
- 8 Storeys
- 9 Storeys
- 10 Storeys
- Existing height
- Land excluded from this DCP



REVIEW OF CURRENT CONTROLS  
 DCP MAPS  
 ACTIVE FRONTAGES

The Active frontage map shows that all frontages of Oxford Street are required to be active from Hyde park up to Taylor Square, from which point only the southern side is active until it reaches South Dowling Street.

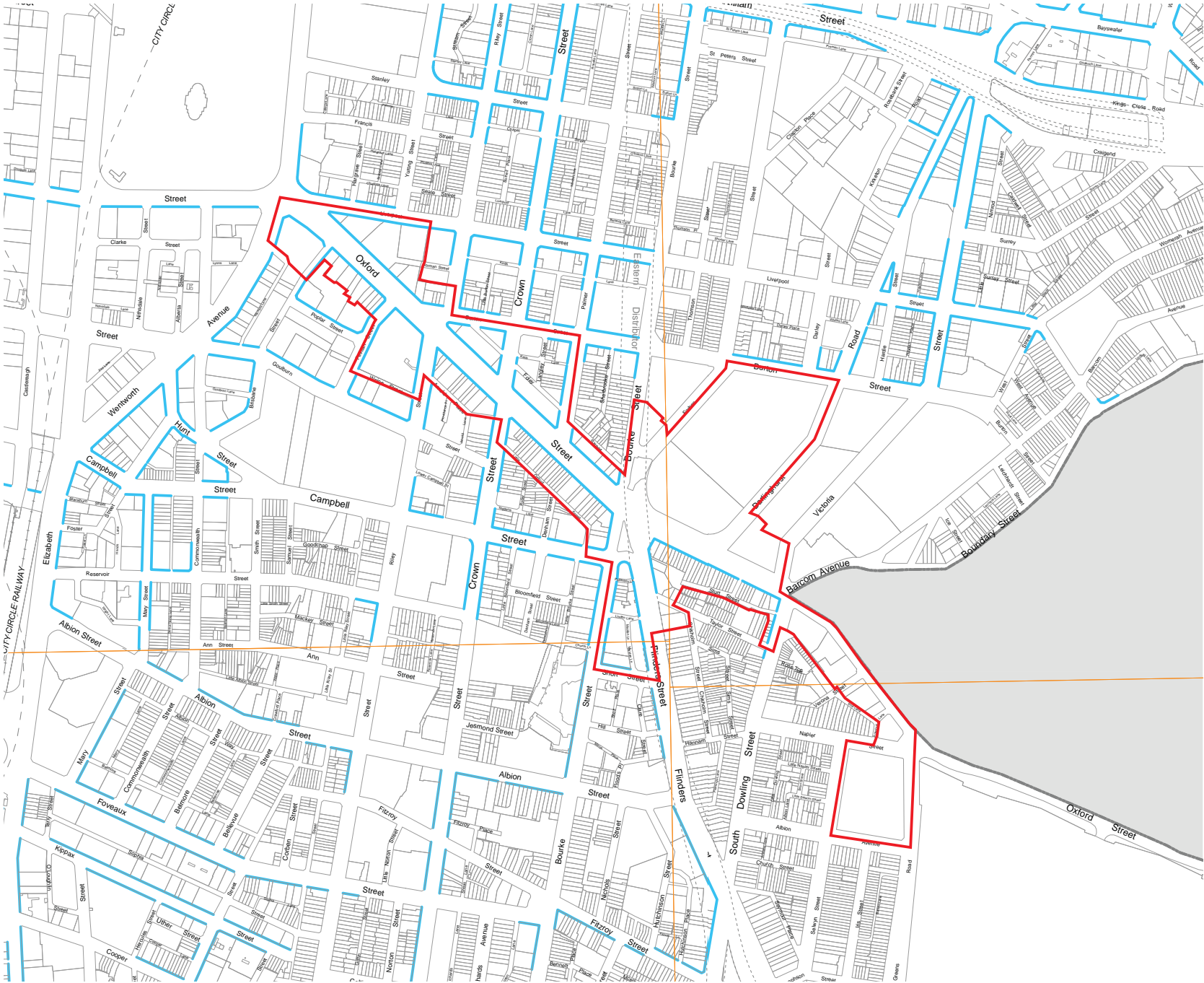
The active frontages generally wrap around to the sides of each block, recognising that many of these are significant streets in themselves, such as Crown Street, Bourke Street and Liverpool Street.

The rear lanes of many oxford Street blocks are not currently required to have Active Frontages including Foley Street, Little Oxford Street and Arnold Street. This is largely due to their existing nature as service lanes.

253

Legend
 

- Active frontages
- Proposed lane
- Proposed streets
- Land excluded from this DCP



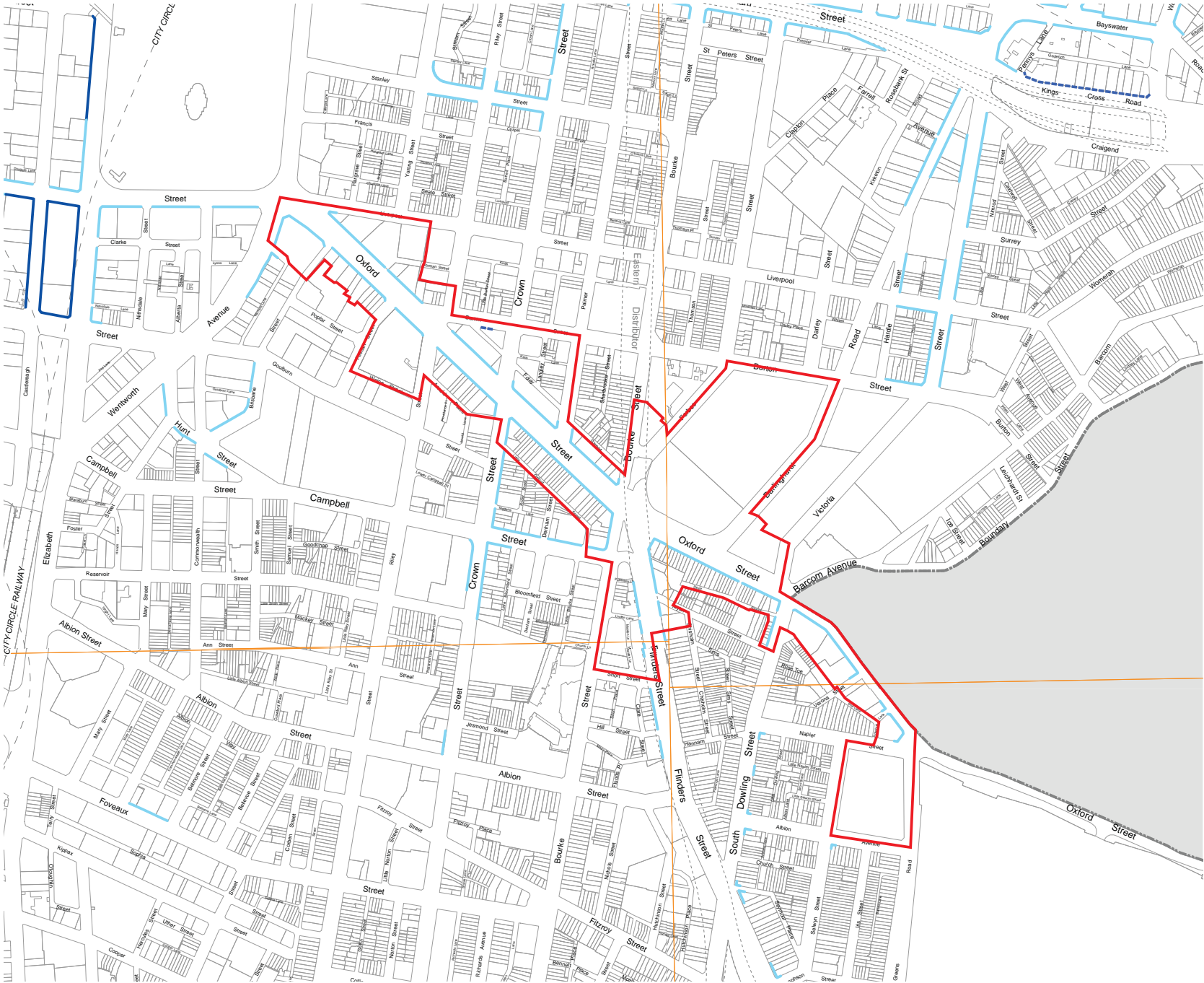


REVIEW OF CURRENT CONTROLS  
 DCP MAPS  
 AWNING AND COLONNADE MAP

The Footpath awning and colonnade map highlights the high street nature of Oxford Street with largely continuous awnings running its length. The awnings provide cover for tenancies as well as providing a covered route for pedestrians travelling to and from Central Sydney.

Awnings are also prevalent along Crown Street, Liverpool Street and Flinders Street as they intersect with the southern side of Oxford Street.

Awnings do not extend down any intersecting streets on the northern side of Oxford Street, which could be related to its steeper terrain and reduction in commercial offerings.



REVIEW OF CURRENT CONTROLS  
 DCP MAPS  
 BUILDING CONTRIBUTION

The building contributions map highlights the significant number of contributory buildings which results from the large number of heritage buildings within the Activity Street Precinct.

There are a limited number of detracting buildings and these are almost exclusively contemporary buildings (from the 1970's to today). In contrast to the heritage buildings, contemporary buildings often suffer due to their material selection which is often light weight and ages faster than their heritage neighbours.

Given the number of contributory buildings, most new development opportunities will have to strategically retain existing contributory fabric.

255

Legend
 

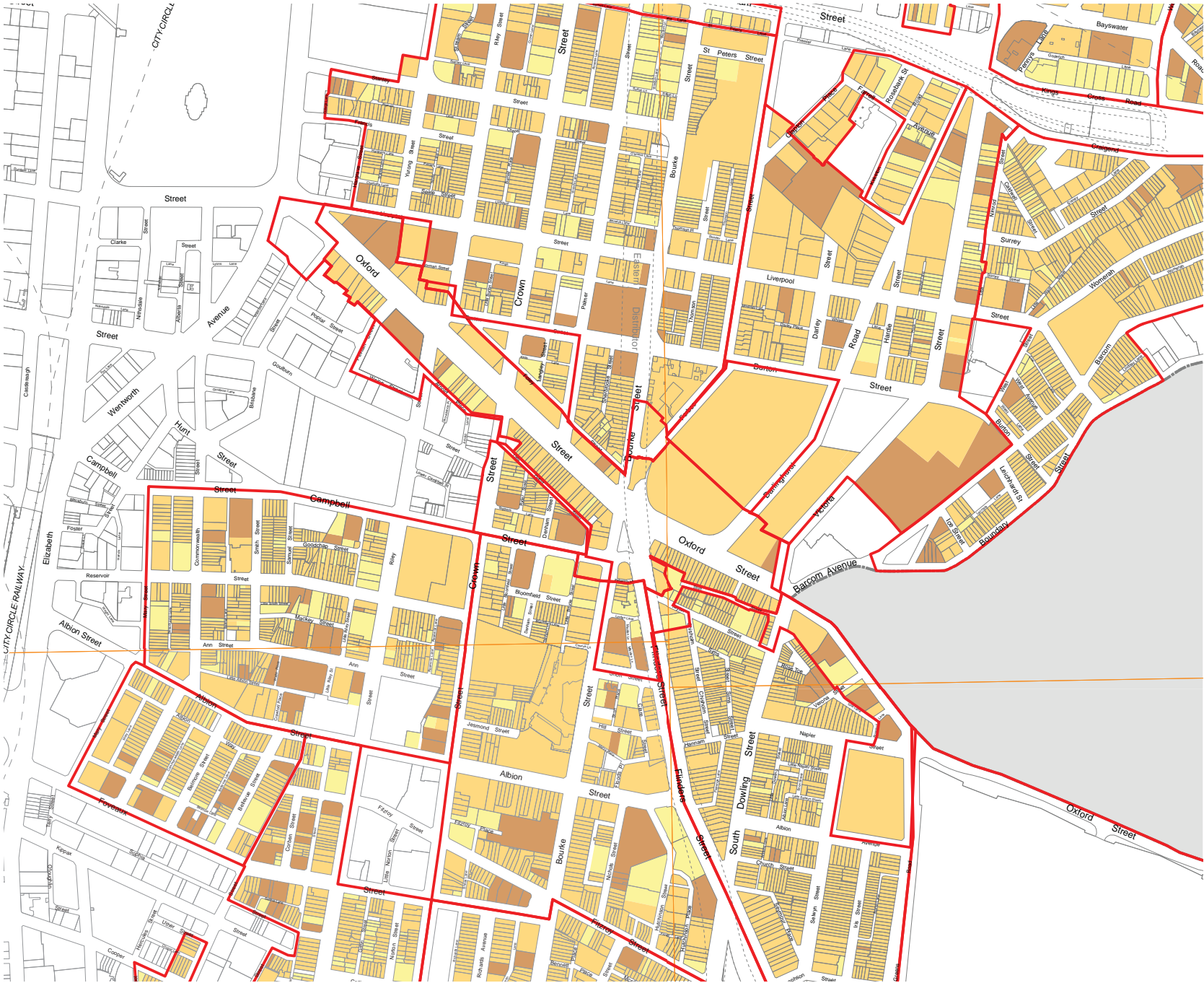
Contributing

Detracting

Neutral

Conservation Area - General (for informa

Land excluded from this DCP





REVIEW OF CURRENT CONTROLS  
 DCP MAPS  
 LATE NIGHT TRADING AREAS

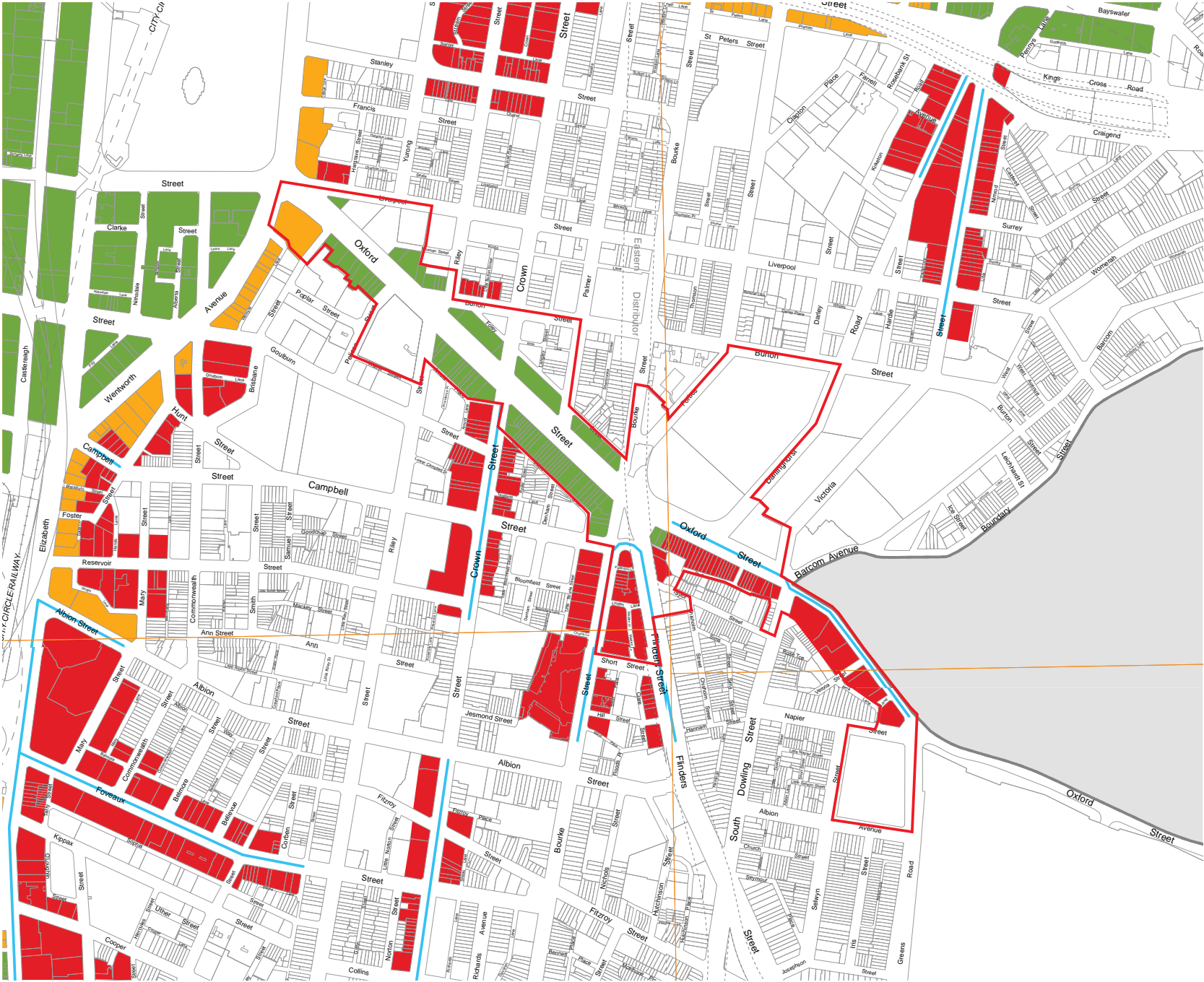
The Late night trading map indicates late night management areas to the length of Oxford Street from Hyde park to Taylor Square (with a few minor exceptions).  
  
 Oxford Street is one of the premier destinations globally for the LGBTQI+ community and offers a number of night time venues to this and the broader community.

New development should be sensitive to these uses and ensure late night offerings are maintained, if not expanded.

256

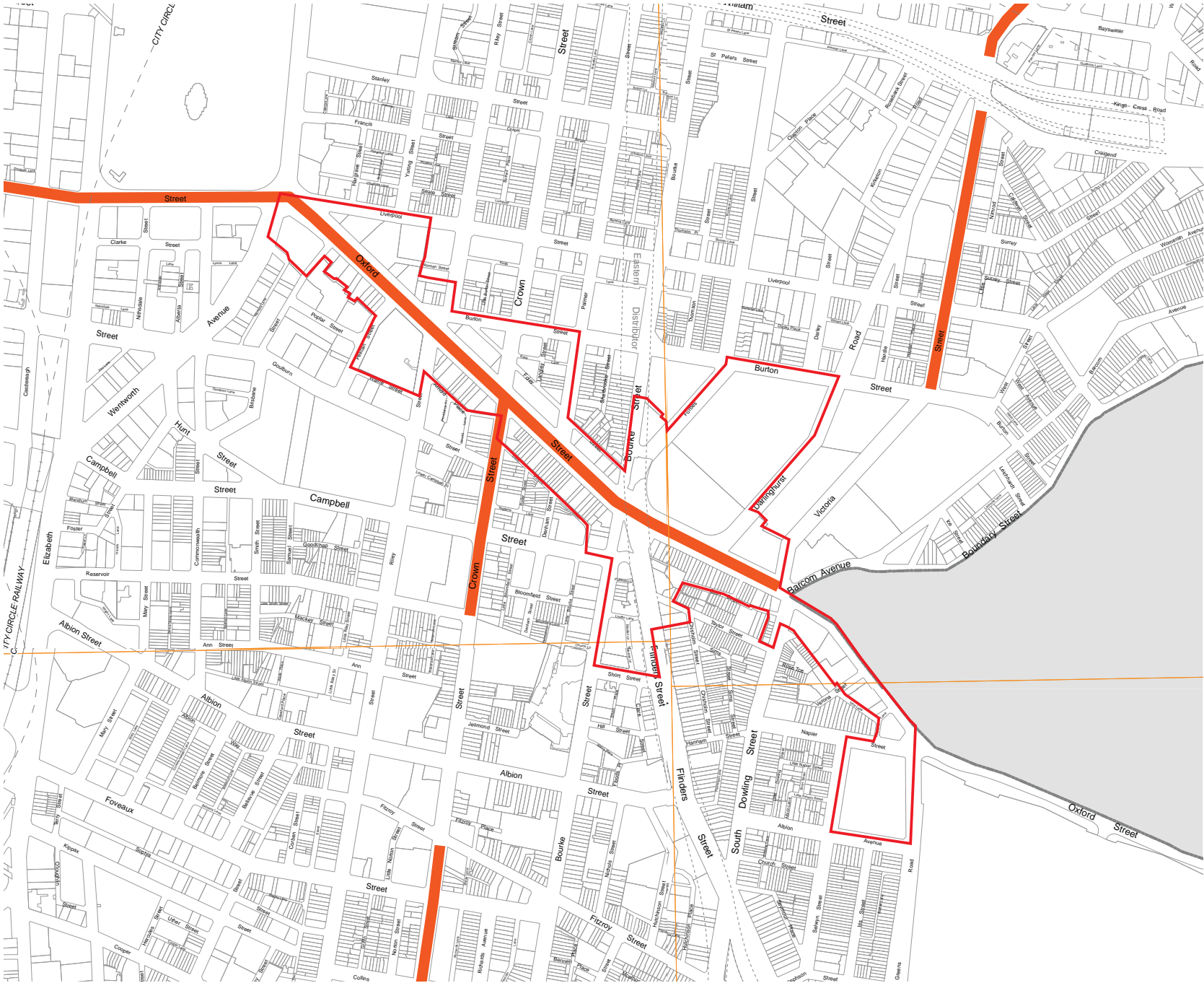
Legend
 

- City Living Areas
- Late Night Management Areas
- Local Centre Areas
- Main Street in Local Centre
- Land excluded from this DCP refer to Late Trading DCP 2007 and Green Square Town Centre DCP 2012



REVIEW OF CURRENT CONTROLS  
 DCP MAPS  
 PEDESTRIAN PRIORITY

The Pedestrian priority map indicates the full length of Oxford Street as pedestrian priority. Crown Street is also identified as a pedestrian priority street in the section extending into Oxford Street.



257

- Legend
- New vehicle access restricted
  - New vehicle access not preferred
  - Land excluded from this DCP



REVIEW OF CURRENT CONTROLS  
 DCP MAPS  
 SIGNAGE PRECINCT

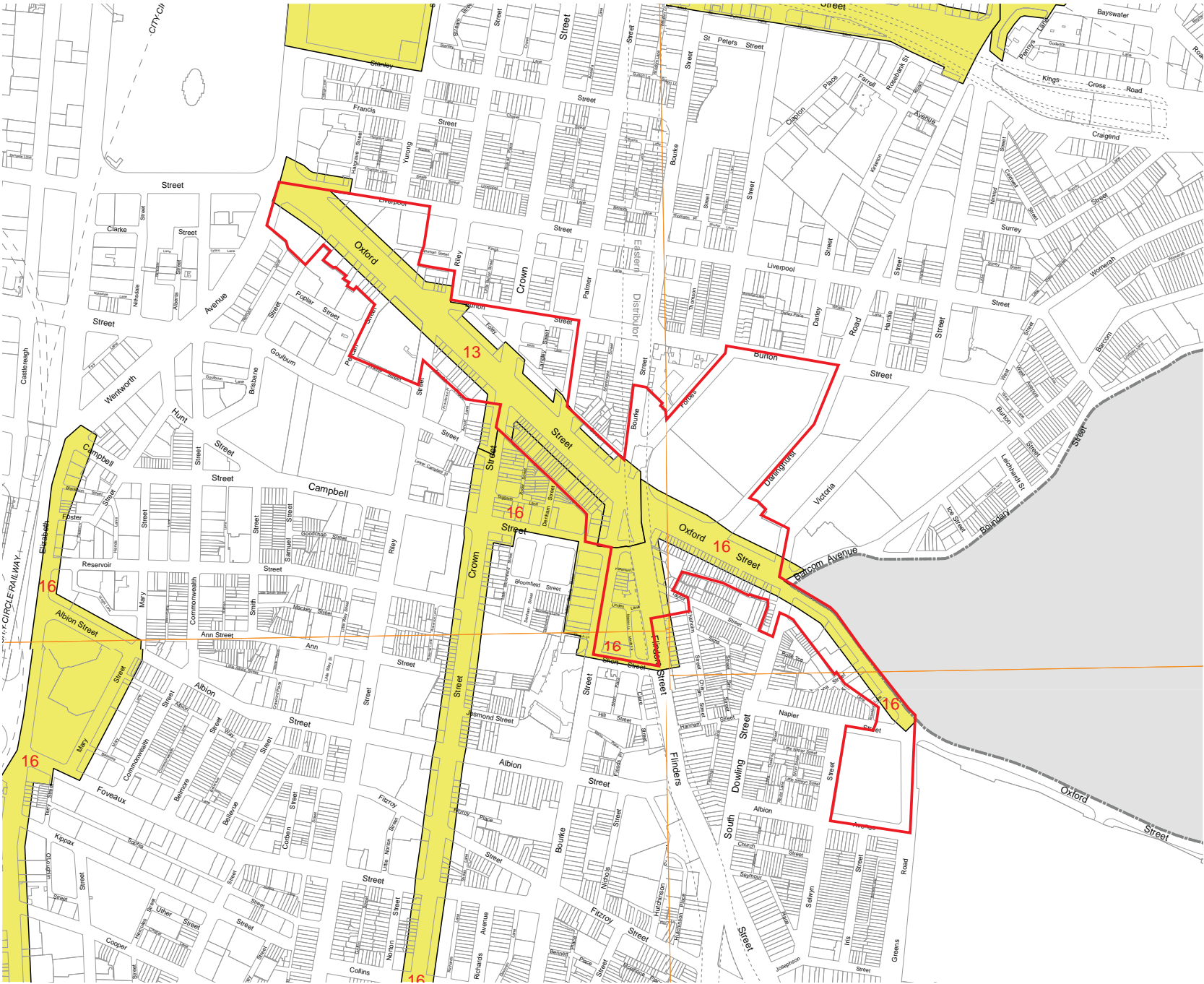
The Signage precinct map indicates two signage precincts across the precinct. The Oxford Street West precinct which runs from the start of Oxford Street to Taylor square, and the Village Main Streets precinct which extends east from after Taylor Square.

When walking along Oxford Street it becomes clear that a tighter set of controls on signage and incentives to change existing signage is needed to provide a more consistent signage approach to the street.

The existing built signage appears somewhat ad-hoc and despite its eclectic nature, is not contributory to your experience of the street.

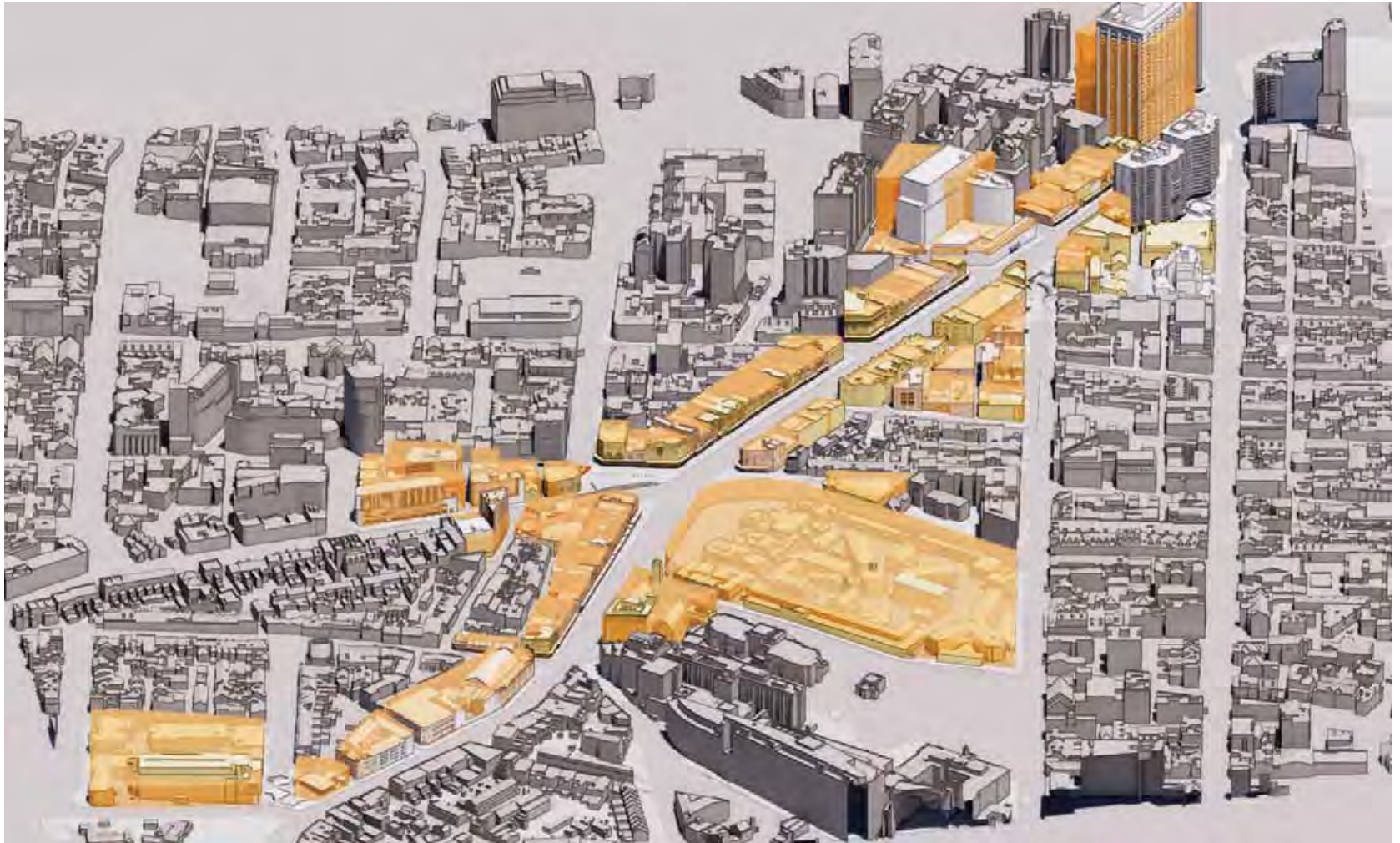
258

- Legend
- 1 Millers Point & Dawes Point
  - 2 Circular Quay
  - 3 Bridge Street
  - 4 Wynyard
  - 5 George Street
  - 6 Martin Place
  - 7 Town Hall
  - 8 Pitt Street Mall
  - 9 Macquarie Street & College Street
  - 10 William Street West
  - 11 Kings Cross
  - 12 Chinatown
  - 13 Oxford Street West
  - 14 Parramatta Road & Broadway
  - 15 King Street Newtown
  - 16 Village Main Streets
  - 17 The Rocks
  - 18 Darling Harbour



## BUILT FORM ANALYSIS

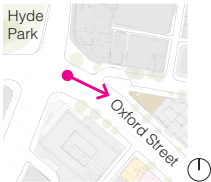
This built form study has been prepared to illustrate the relationship between the existing LEP controls and the existing built form to identify existing capacity within the precinct. This methodology will be used to determine which sites require changes or refinement to their built form controls based on their streetscape impacts. What the visual study does not illustrate are sites whose FSR is currently not able to be fulfilled above ground and existing development controls.



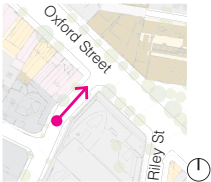
EXISTING LEP HEIGHT LIMIT OVERLAY



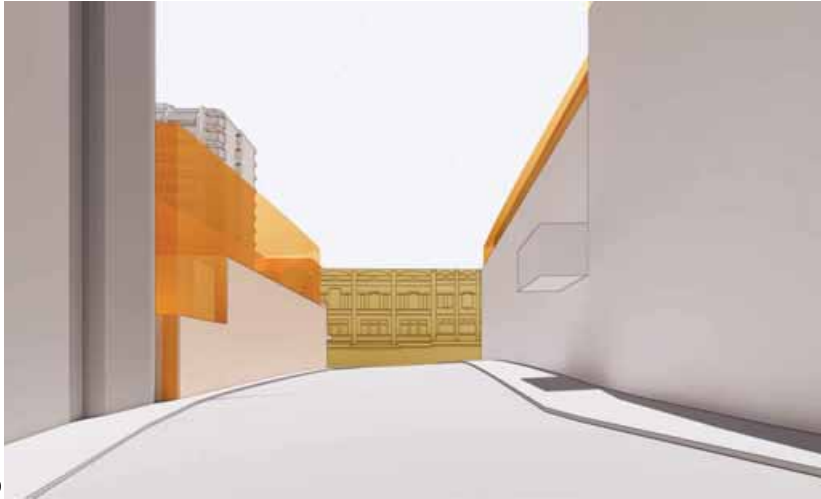
**BUILT FORM ANALYSIS**  
STREETSCAPE PERSPECTIVE ANALYSIS



1. View up Oxford Street from Hyde Park



2. View up Oxford Street adjacent Brisbane Street



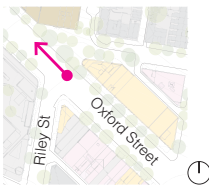
3. View north along Pelican Street towards Oxford Street



4. View up Oxford Street adjacent Oxford Square

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**BUILT FORM ANALYSIS**  
STREETSCAPE PERSPECTIVE ANALYSIS



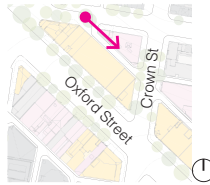
5. View west along Oxford Street adjacent Riley Street



6. View north along Riley Street towards Oxford Street



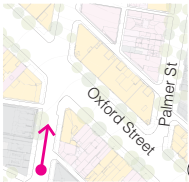
7. View west along Oxford Street adjacent Crown Street



8. View west along Foley Street towards Crown Street from Oxford Square

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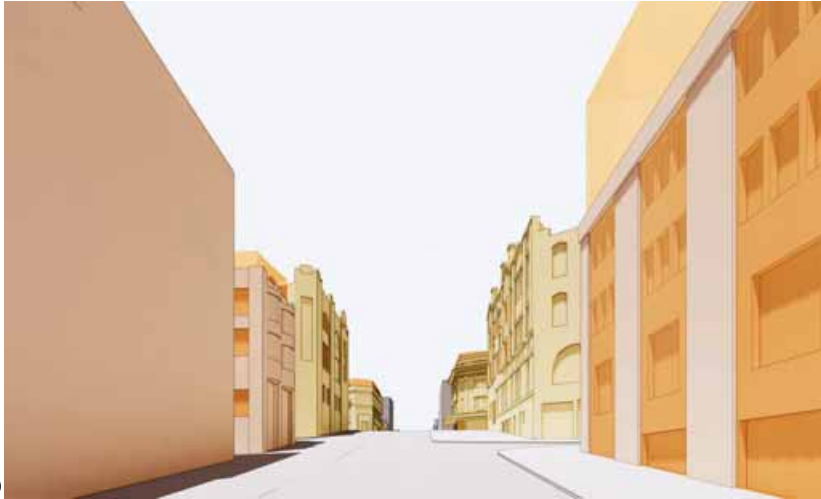




9. View north along Crown Street towards Oxford Street



10. View up Oxford Street adjacent Crown Street



11. View south along Crown Street towards Oxford Street

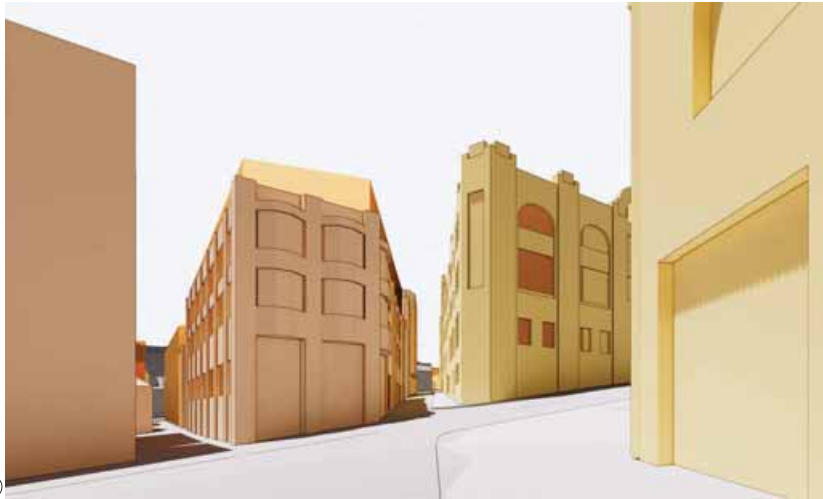


12. View south along Crown Street towards Oxford Street from Burton Street

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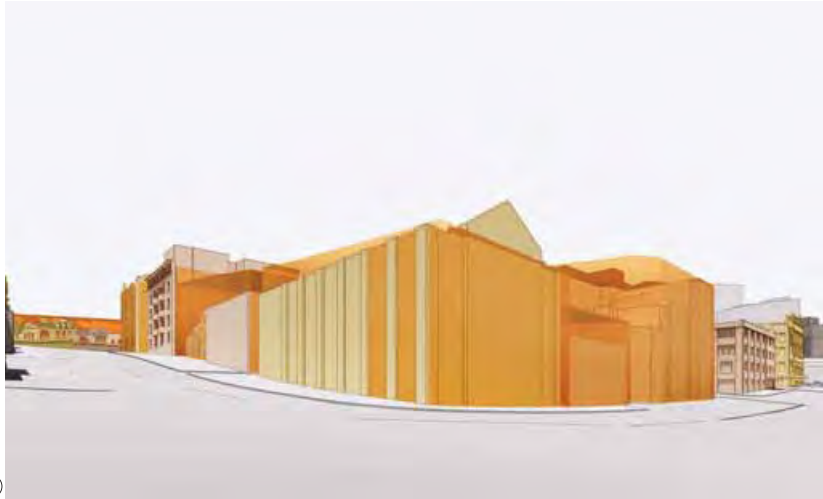
13. View west along Oxford Street adjacent Palmer Street



14. View west along Foley Street towards Palmer Street from Crown Street



15. View south along Palmer Street towards Oxford Street



16. View south along Palmer Street towards Oxford Street from Burton Street

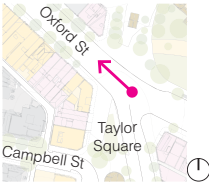
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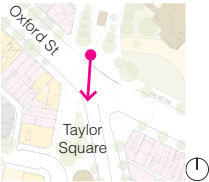
**BUILT FORM ANALYSIS**  
STREETSCAPE PERSPECTIVE ANALYSIS



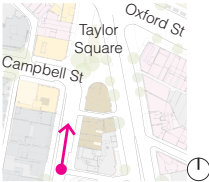
17. View up Oxford Street adjacent Palmer Street



18. View west along Oxford Street from Taylor Square



19. View south towards Taylor Square from outside the Darlghurst Courthouse



20. View north along Bourke Street towards Taylor Square

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