

Attachment A11

**Heritage Assessment - 15 Wylde Street,
Potts Point - Denison**

Name		Denison	
Address	15 Wylde Street, Potts Point	Lot number	Lot 1 DP 511667, Lots 1-76 SP 1964
Architect	Hugo Stossel & Associates	Construction date	1965
Builder	Mainline Corporation		
Listings	Sydney Local Environmental Plan 2012: located within the Potts Point Heritage Conservation Area (C51). Noted as 'detracting' within the Sydney Development Control Plan 2012 building contribution map.		

Historical overview

The Cadigal people of the Eora nation have lived in the Sydney area for thousands of years and have shaped its landscape and nurtured its plants and animals. Before the arrival of the European settlers the Potts Point area was known as Kurrajeen (or Curageen) and Yarrandabbi. Governor Lachlan Macquarie set aside land near Elizabeth Bay, Potts Point and Woolloomooloo as a 'model fishing village' for Aboriginal people in 1820. At this settlement, known as Elizabeth Town, several huts were built, a patch of land was cleared for a garden, and boats were provided for use by the Aboriginal people who lived there. John Palmer's estate at nearby Woolloomooloo Bay was also an important gathering place for local Aboriginal people, and was the location of a corroboree in 1831 attended by Bungaree's son, Young Bungaree.¹

The rocky ridge that extended inland from Potts Point was called Eastern or Woolloomooloo Hill from the early days of white settlement. The earliest grant of land on Woolloomooloo Hill was made to Judge-Advocate John Wylde in 1822. In 1828 Governor Darling ordered the subdivision of Woolloomooloo Hill into suitable 'town allotments' for large residences and extensive gardens. He then issued 'deeds of grant' to select members of colonial society (in particular, his senior civil servants). The first seven grants were issued in 1828, and the other allotments were formally granted in 1831 including land granted to Judge-Advocate John Wylde (after whom Wylde Street is named).

The private residences that were built on the grants were required to meet Darling's so-called 'villa conditions', which were possibly determined and overseen by his wife, who had architectural skills. These ensured that only one residence was built on each grant to an approved standard and design, that it was set within a generous amount of landscaped land and that, in most cases, it faced the town. By the mid-1830s the parade of 'white' villas down the spine of Woolloomooloo Hill presented a picturesque sight and was visible from the harbour and town of Sydney.² The name of the suburb Potts Point honours a self-made man, Joseph Hyde Potts, who was employed with the Bank of New South Wales when it initially opened for business in 1817.

The subject site is located on Lots 1-5 of a subdivision of 'eight allotments at Potts Point' advertised for auction sale in November 1905. It forms one part of a small block between Wylde Street and Grantham Street, with Oak Lane forming its western and northern boundaries.

The City of Sydney Council granted development permission on 21 December 1955 to erect a nine-storey building, including basement, over approximately half of the site of 15 Wylde Street, Potts Point (formerly No. 9), for use as residential hotel with a dining room and a coffee lounge on the ground floor and a private basement carpark for use by hotel guests only.

Development permission to construct an eight-storey private hotel was granted on 21 December 1956, subject to the proposed building being set back to conform with the fixed building line on Grantham Street. This did not go ahead.

A new development application was approved on 29 June 1964 to erect an eight-storey and basement building containing 40 bed-sitting room type residential flats and 8 one-bedroom flats

¹ City of Sydney 2013, 'Aboriginal People and Place'.

² State Library of NSW, 2002.

Historical overview

with provision for off-street parking in the basement and in the open yard. At this date the land was vacant but was previously the site of a residential building called Mulwa, which was built sometime after 1905. This building was demolished in 1956. The estimated cost of the new development was £85,000.

When completed in 1965 the building was marketed as 'Denison' and home units were advertised for sale under strata title. One such advertisement noted units 'featuring fully enclosed kitchen, tiled bathroom, spacious living area ... in a building of striking appearance, with magnificent harbour views'.³ Units were priced from £3950.

Hugo Stossel & Associates

Hugo Stossel (1905–2002) was born in Hungary, moving when young with his family to the Hungarian capital, Budapest. From 1928 to 1932 he studied architecture at the Technische Hochschule in Vienna, graduating with a diploma of engineering in architecture. From 1933 to 1938 Stossel worked as an architect in Bucharest, designing theatre interiors, apartment blocks and commercial buildings. Stossel left Europe on the eve of World War II, arriving in Sydney in 1939.

During the war Stossel continued to design, completing a number of buildings in Sydney in the 1940s. Once he was naturalised as an Australian citizen in 1948, he registered as an architect, aged 43.

His early projects included a house in Warrawee for Polish steel manufacturer and developer Moses Eisner (1947) and a house for renowned Viennese furniture-maker Paul Kafka in Lindfield (1948) both of which were published in *Australian House and Garden*. Stossel's focus later moved to apartment design, beginning with the innovative, steel-framed St Ursula building in Elizabeth Bay, an 'ultra-modern' home-unit block with a curved wall of floor to ceiling steel-framed windows.

He later undertook significant commissions for the new development company Civil & Civic (later Lendlease), including Broadwaters (1958) in Darling Point. These were followed by numerous other apartment and commercial developments completed over the next decade, with seven in the Elizabeth Bay area alone. The 20-storey Eastbourne Tower (1968), Darling Point, cemented the position of Hugo Stossel & Associates as one of the major contributors to Sydney's burgeoning apartment scene.

In 1953 Eugene Goossens, conductor of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, commissioned Stossel to design a speculative opera house on a site at Wynyard. The design was published on the front page of *The Sydney Morning Herald* on 31 March 1954. When the NSW Government endorsed a future opera house and designated Bennelong Point as its location, Stossel was one of many local and international architects to make a submission to the 1957 architectural competition.

Stossel formed Hugo Stossel & Associates and was joined by fellow Hungarian George Buda, who became a partner in 1960. The firm designed numerous high-rise buildings in the inner city of Sydney including the 22-storey Wynyard Travelodge (1969) and the Sydney Police Headquarters in College Street. It also designed the BMA Tower in Chatswood (1970–1972), which featured an external lift shaft. By 1970 Stossel retained only a remote involvement in the firm, which continued under Buda's and the other partner's leadership. In his later years Stossel lived in Vienna, as well as Italy and England. He died at Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, in February 2002, aged 96.

Mainline Corporation

Mainline Corporation was founded in 1960 as an apartment builder by project manager and estimator Richard Baker and builder Laurie O'Neil. The new company was ambitious, employing high-profile architects on its suburban projects, and by 1965 was also constructing major CBD buildings including Goldfields House, and the AMP Centre on Bridge Street. By 1971 Mainline Corporation was one of Australia's major property and construction companies, building

Denison, The Reef, Mowbray and others residential flat buildings in the Potts Point and Elizabeth Bay area.

³ 'Home Units Potts pt "Denison"', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 9 October 1965, p 37, Sydney Morning Herald Archives 1955–1995, State Library of NSW.

Historical overview

In 1974 a combination of soaring interest rates and declining property prices saw its major creditor ANZ Bank call for the appointment of a receiver. Mainline Corporation was liquidated with debts of \$60 million, though its property holdings sold for more than \$86 million when auctioned in 1975.

Description

A site inspection of Denison was undertaken on 3 October 2024. This included the exterior, and an internal inspection of communal areas and one apartment. Physical analysis of other areas is based on available documentation of the site.

Setting and context

Denison is located at the intersection of Wylde Street and Grantham Street. The land slopes downwards to the north along Wylde Street. The apartment building is located within the Potts Point Heritage Conservation Area (HCA). The HCA within the immediate vicinity of the site is characterised by mixed development of interwar flat buildings and multistorey postwar and contemporary apartments, which are comparable in form and scale to Denison.

There are clear views of Denison from the north on Wylde Street and partial views from Grantham Street, obscured by vegetation. Although the building is only eight storeys, being located on the Potts Point ridgeline, it offers expansive views, particularly from the rooftop areas.

Physical description

Denison is an eight-storey flat building with two levels of basement carparking (built as 48 units in total, some studios and some one-bedroom units). The building is located in the centre of its allotment with a landscaped setback from Wylde Street to the east and Grantham Street to the south. Responding to the shape of the lot, the building follows the curve of Wylde Street, with a trapezoidal form with a bevel edge to the southeast. To the north of the building is a ramped driveway access to an underground level of parking. The carpark forms a podium that extends beyond the floor plate of the residential units.

The main entry is off Grantham Street at the southwestern corner of the building. The unassuming entry is formed by an external stair leading to an elevated walkway that is glazed on both sides. A terrazzo stair with a decorative handrail leads to the first floor. Evidence of terrazzo flooring in the entry lobby remains, now covered with ceramic tiles. A curved blue awning has been added above the double glazed entry doors. To the south, below the entry walkway, a ramp leads to a partly below-ground level of carparking.

The building is constructed of an exposed reinforced concrete frame with cream face brickwork infill walls laid in a stack bond. The concrete slab and columns are exposed externally, dividing the façades into a distinct grid. On the four main elevations, there is a consistent fenestration pattern of multi-pane silver aluminium-framed windows at full or half height. The narrow 'bevel edge' of the building on the southeastern corner is finished in painted concrete and features the building name 'Denison' on the second floor with raised lettering.

The flat concrete roof is paved on the western half and lined with artificial turf on the eastern half. The paved portion accommodates a small, flat slab-roofed block containing a lift motor room, common laundry and fire stair. A contemporary, steel-framed, sheet metal canopy has been installed over a seating area adjacent. The high glazed perimeter fence of the roof is also a later addition.

The stair is located on the western side of the building. It is set back from the main façade, creating a vertical recess along the western elevation. Oriented east-west it provides access to the short internal corridor at each level. The lift core is located to its east at the centre of the building plan. The original metal balustrade with tri-angular panels remains extant within the stairwell.

The units are arranged around the double-sided corridor. Each level has six units per floor. This includes five studio units of varying configurations and a one-bedroom unit in the southeastern corner. The living rooms have larger windows, and as was required by the planning controls of

Description

the day, kitchens and bathrooms are naturally ventilated, typically with half-height strip windows. Some units retain the original internal timber partition between the kitchen and the living space with bench seating, original built in wardrobes and bathroom finishes and configurations with bath.

Landscaping

There is a low retaining wall along the lot boundary with a garden with hedged elements. Mature plantings on the southern side of the lot create a green screen between the apartments and the public domain.

Modifications/integrity

Council records from 1996 indicate the following:

A Building Related Application was submitted in 1996 (S/XSK/1996/818) for a high safety fence around the perimeter of the roof.

DA/2003/457 was submitted for the replacement of windows to all units and common stairs (all materials to be powder coated aluminium).

D/2014/401 was approved for alterations and additions to the existing residential flat building including works.

Condition

There appear to be issues arising from water ingress into the building and ongoing repairs to windows are being undertaken.

Comparative analysis

This section compares the subject building with other works designed by Hugo Stossel, and apartment buildings in the Potts Point area of the same period, in order to determine whether the subject site has rarity and/or representative value.

The construction methods and materials used in Denison, including reinforced concrete frame and slab construction, face brickwork, and consistent presentation of the façades and fenestration pattern, can be seen as typical of apartment buildings of its period. The building has been designed to provide compact studios and one-bedroom units with a maximum of amenity within a small building footprint. This reflects the period of development in Potts Point when many residential blocks were constructed as motels or short-stay accommodation or small affordable housing for singles, and were later converted by strata title to individual ownership. In this regard Denison can be seen as representative of smaller residential flat building development in the period in the local area.

Denison, designed in the mid-1960s, came late in Hugo Stossel's career and at a time when the firm Hugo Stossel & Associates had designed multiple apartment buildings in the Elizabeth Bay and Potts Point area. Being rectangular in plan, Denison is comparable to the firm's other designs from this period including The Tor, Elizabeth Bay (1966), and The Chimes, Potts Point (1963). Other designs of this period, such as Macleay Gardens in Potts Point (1966), Bayview in Elizabeth Bay (1966–1968), and Eastbourne Tower in Darling Point (1968–1970), have T-shaped or Y-shaped plans and more modulated façades with projecting slabs providing shade to large window openings.

Like The Tor, Denison demonstrates very little façade modulation or sun shading and hence provides less amenity to its units. At a modest eight storeys, and with landscaped setback, Denison sits comfortably within its context on Macleay Street and makes a positive contribution to the streetscape. Unlike many similar projects of this period, Denison's underground carparking has allowed for landscaping around the main façades of the building, which add to its streetscape presence and amenity for residents.

Denison's entry sequence and lobby area are modest and its apartments, though well planned, do not demonstrate any noteworthy innovations in materials, planning or construction methods.

Comparative analysis

Denison can be seen as a representative example of the work of Hugo Stossel & Associates in this period but is not considered to be of high aesthetic, creative or technical achievement in its own right.

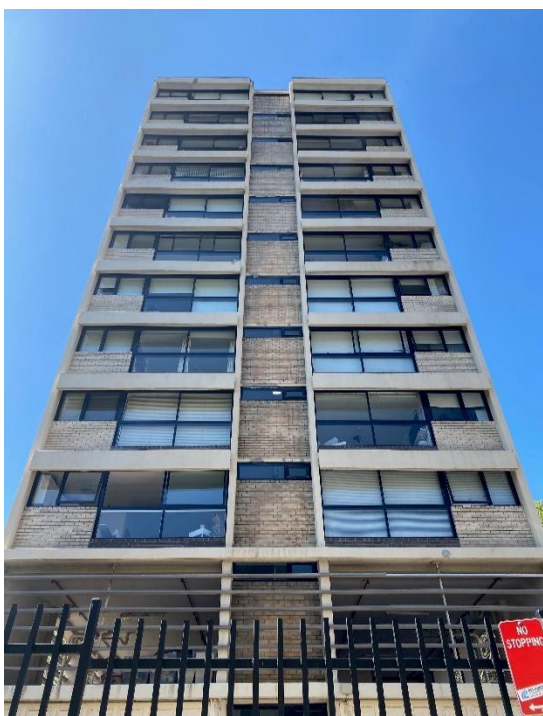


Figure 1 The Chimes on Macleay Street, Potts Point (1963), by Hugo Stossel & Associates, with its expressed structure and sun shading, is a more refined design than Denison. (Source: GML)



Figure 2 Bayview on Roslyn Gardens, Rushcutters Bay (1966–1968), by Hugo Stossel & Associates. It was built at a similar time to Denison, yet demonstrates a greater level of design innovation. (Source: GML)

Assessment of significance

Criterion A (Historic significance)

Denison is an example of a modern mid-rise residential flat building that reflects the changing development, built environment and demographics of the Potts Point and Elizabeth Bay areas through the mid-twentieth century along with others of its type. However, independently, the building is not a key example of these changes.

Denison does not meet the threshold for listing under this criterion at a local or state level.

Criterion B (Historical association)

Denison is a representative example of the work of architect Hugo Stossel, whose firm Hugo Stossel & Associates designed many residential apartment buildings in the Elizabeth Bay and Potts Point area. Hugo Stossel can be seen to have made a notable contribution to the development of Sydney's built environment.

However, Stossel was prolific in this period and Denison is not considered to have strong, unusual or extraordinary associations with the architect for this reason.

Denison has not have cultural significance at a local or state level under this criterion.

Assessment of significance

Criterion C (Aesthetic/creative/technical achievement)

Denison features common design elements including reinforced concrete frame and slab construction, face brickwork, and consistent presentation of the façades and fenestration pattern. The planning has been designed to provide compact, functional apartments with light and ventilation. These are typical characteristics of modern residential flat buildings of this period, and Denison does not display innovation or creative/technical achievement.

Denison does not have cultural significance at a local or state level under this criterion.

Criterion D (Social, cultural and spiritual significance)

Denison is not known to have special associations with a particular group or to have contemporary esteem within the local community beyond housing amenity.

Denison does not have cultural significance at a local or state level under this criterion.

Criterion E (Research potential)

Denison is not considered to have the potential to yield significant further or new information related to the work of Hugo Stossel & Associates not available elsewhere.

Denison does not have cultural significance at a local or state level under this criterion.

Criterion F (Rare)

Denison is not considered a rare example of its type in Sydney or a rare example of the work of Hugo Stossel & Associates, which was prolific in this period.

Denison does not have cultural significance at a local or state level under this criterion.

Criterion G (Representative)

Denison has representative significance as a modernist residential apartment building in Potts Point. It displays the principal characteristics of this class of cultural places, including use of expressed concrete construction, efficient structural systems, regular façade arrangements, repeated building elements and planning that provides compact studio and one-bedroom units. In this way Denison is able to demonstrate the evolution of residential apartment buildings in the Potts Point area, which are an important feature of the local built environment. Denison is able to demonstrate a way of life that has been important in the social and historical development of Potts Point.

Denison is considered to have representative significance as one of a group of 1960s apartment projects designed by Hugo Stossel & Associates in the local area and more widely, which as a group are significant.

Denison **has** cultural significance at a local level under this criterion.

Denison does not have cultural significance at a state level under this criterion.

Statement of significance

Denison is seen as typical of the 1960s development of the Potts Point area, where small residential flat buildings were built to the established height limits, providing small and efficiently planned studio and one-bedroom units. These developments continued historical and social trends that had begun before World War II and remain an important feature of the area.

Statement of significance

Denison displays the principal characteristics of modernist residential apartment buildings, including use of expressed concrete construction, efficient structural systems, regular façade arrangements, repeated building elements and efficient planning to maximise units. Denison is able to demonstrate the evolution of residential apartment buildings in Potts Point and a way of life that has been important in the social and historical development of the area.

Denison is considered to have representative significance as one of a group of 1960s apartment projects designed by Hugo Stossel & Associates in the local area and more widely, which are collectively significant.

Recommendations

Denison meets the threshold for local heritage significance under the representative criterion.

Due to the representative value of the place it is recommended that its status within the HCA be revised to contributory.

The building is able to be adapted and upgraded to ensure it remains viable for ongoing use. A Heritage Impact Statement should outline any original features and their proposed management prior to any major works being undertaken.

Information sources

Type	Author	Title	Year	Repository
Site inspection (external)	GML		2024	GML
Written	City of Sydney Council	City Building Surveyor's Department, Development Application Year 1964 No. 256	1964	City of Sydney Archives
Written	Macens Associates Pty Ltd	Proposal alterations and additions to common roof level recreation area and installation of rainwater tanks at Denison...	2014	City of Sydney Archives
Plans	Hugo Stossel & Associates			City of Sydney Archives
Archive	Hugo Stossel archive	https://mhnsw.au/whats-on/exhibitions/hugo-stossel-emigre-architect/		Museums of History NSW

Image caption	Elevations and sections.				
Image year	1964	Image by	Hugo Stossel & Associates	Image copyright holder	In copyright

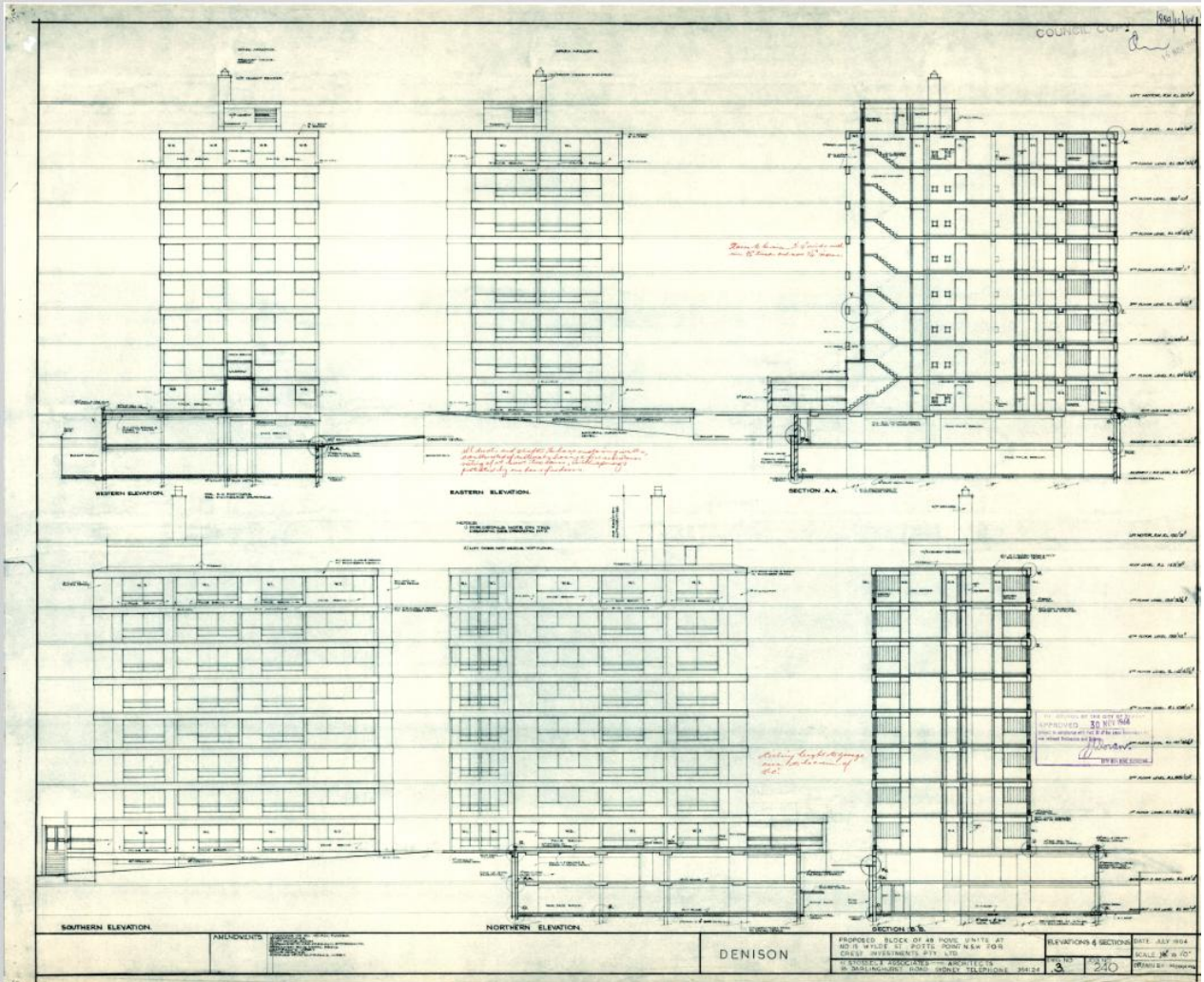


Image caption	Basement and ground floor plan and site plan.				
Image year	1964	Image by	Hugo Stossel & Associates	Image copyright holder	In copyright

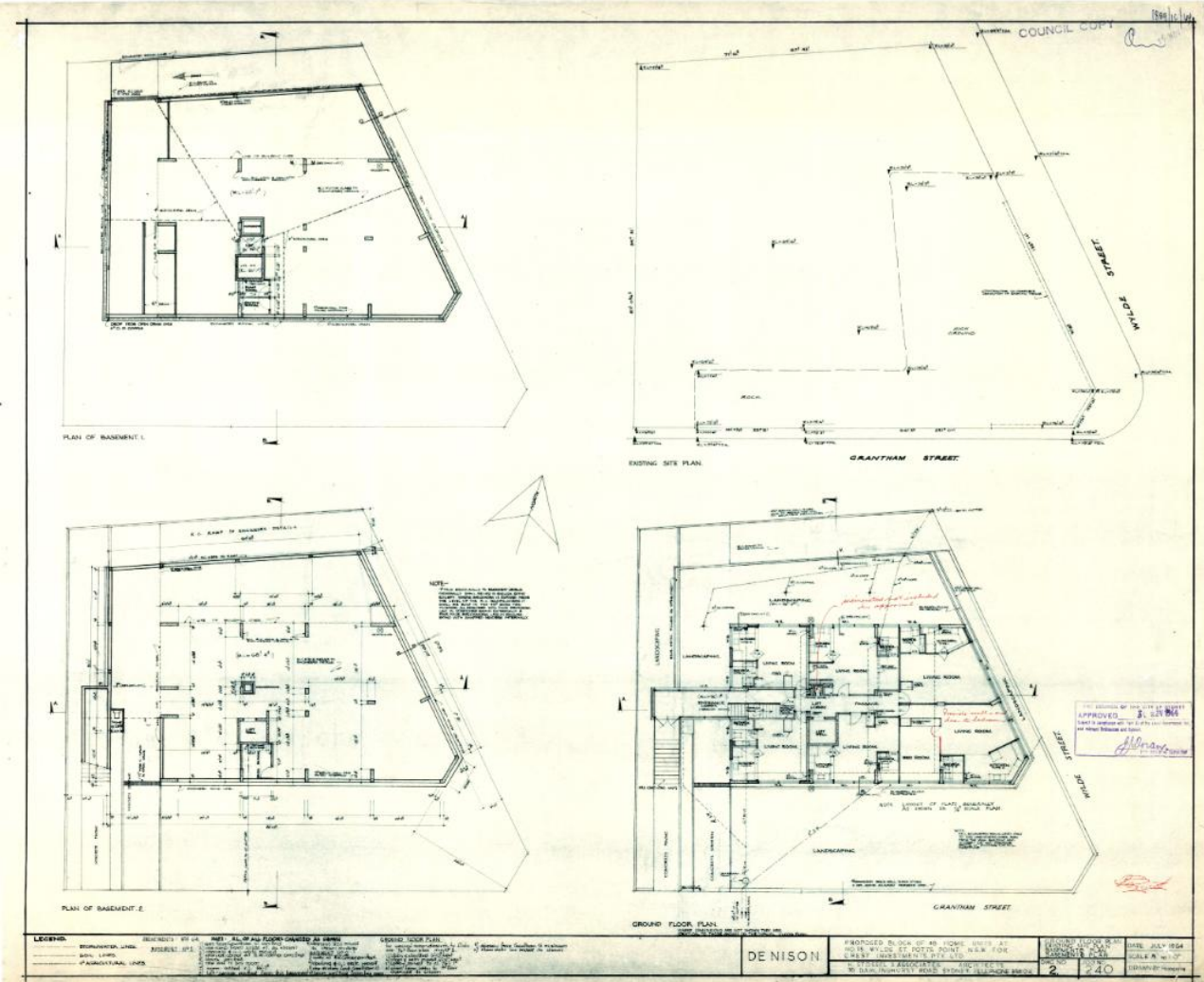


Image caption	Elevations and sections.				
Image year	1964	Image by	Hugo Stossel & Associates	Image copyright holder	In copyright

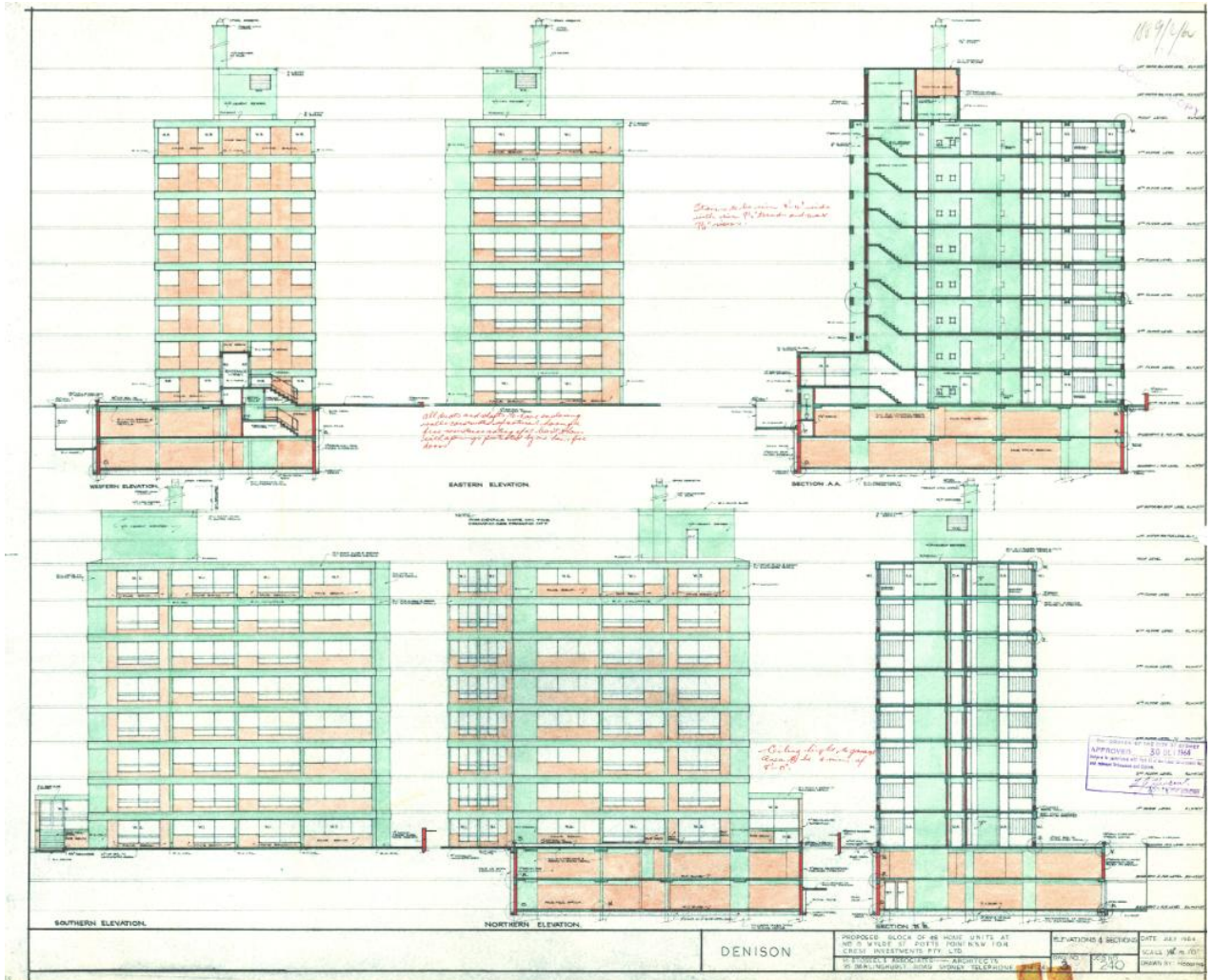


Image caption	Floor plan and site plan.				
Image year	1964	Image by	Hugo Stossel & Associates	Image copyright holder	In copyright

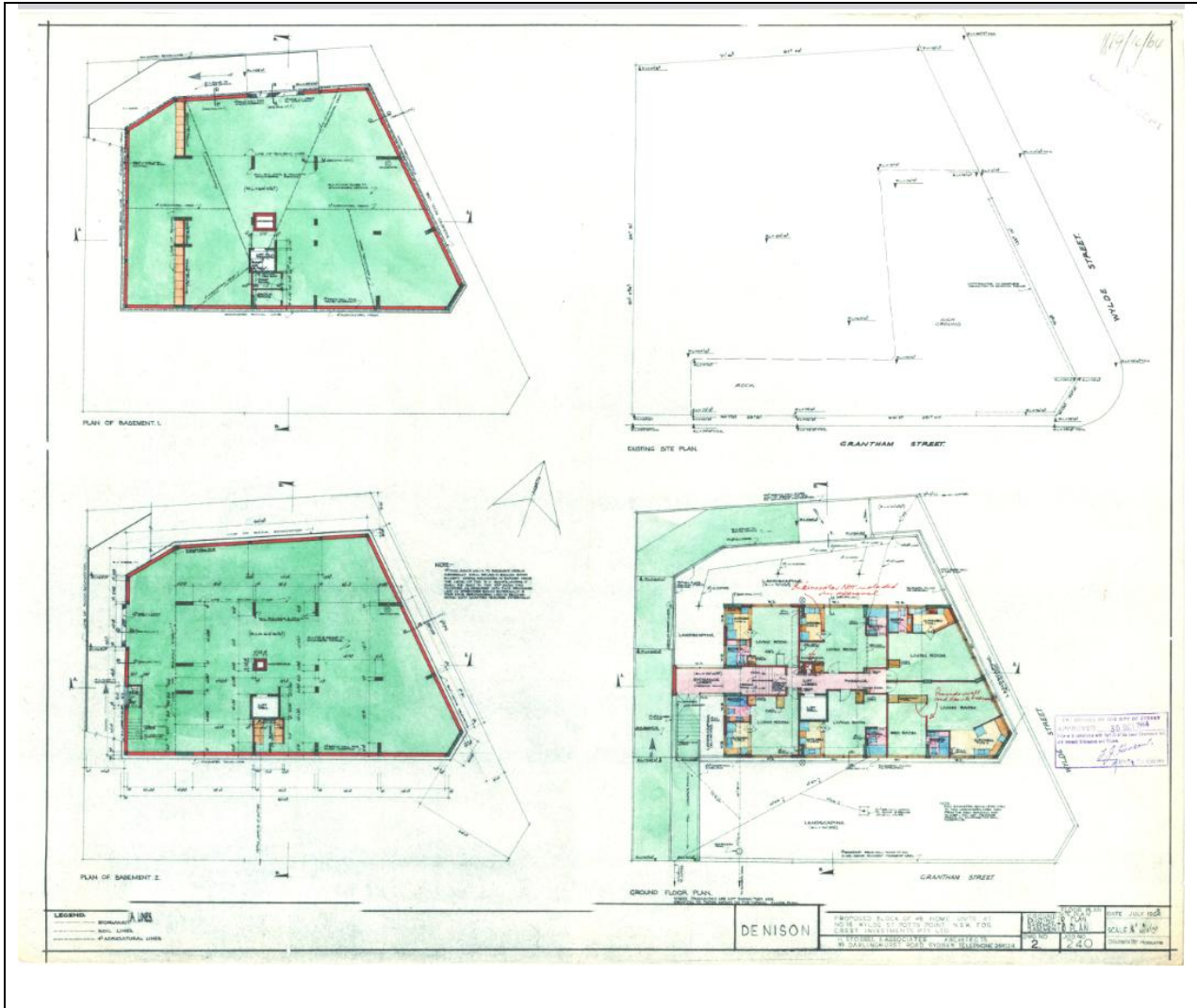


Image caption	View of Denison from Wylde Street, looking west.				
Image year	2024	Image by	GML	Image copyright holder	GML



Image caption	View of Denison's south-facing elevation.				
Image year	2024	Image by	GML	Image copyright holder	GML



Image caption	Northern side of Denison, showing the ramp from Wylde Street to a lower level of carparking.				
Image year	2024	Image by	GML	Image copyright holder	GML



Image caption	View of southern and west-facing elevation of Denison.				
Image year	2024	Image by	GML	Image copyright holder	GML



Image caption	Entry from Grantham Street.				
Image year	2024	Image by	GML	Image copyright holder	GML



Image caption	Metal balustrade along the stairwell.				
Image year	2024	Image by	GML	Image copyright holder	GML



Image caption	Metal balustrade along the stairwell.				
Image year	2024	Image by	GML	Image copyright holder	GML



