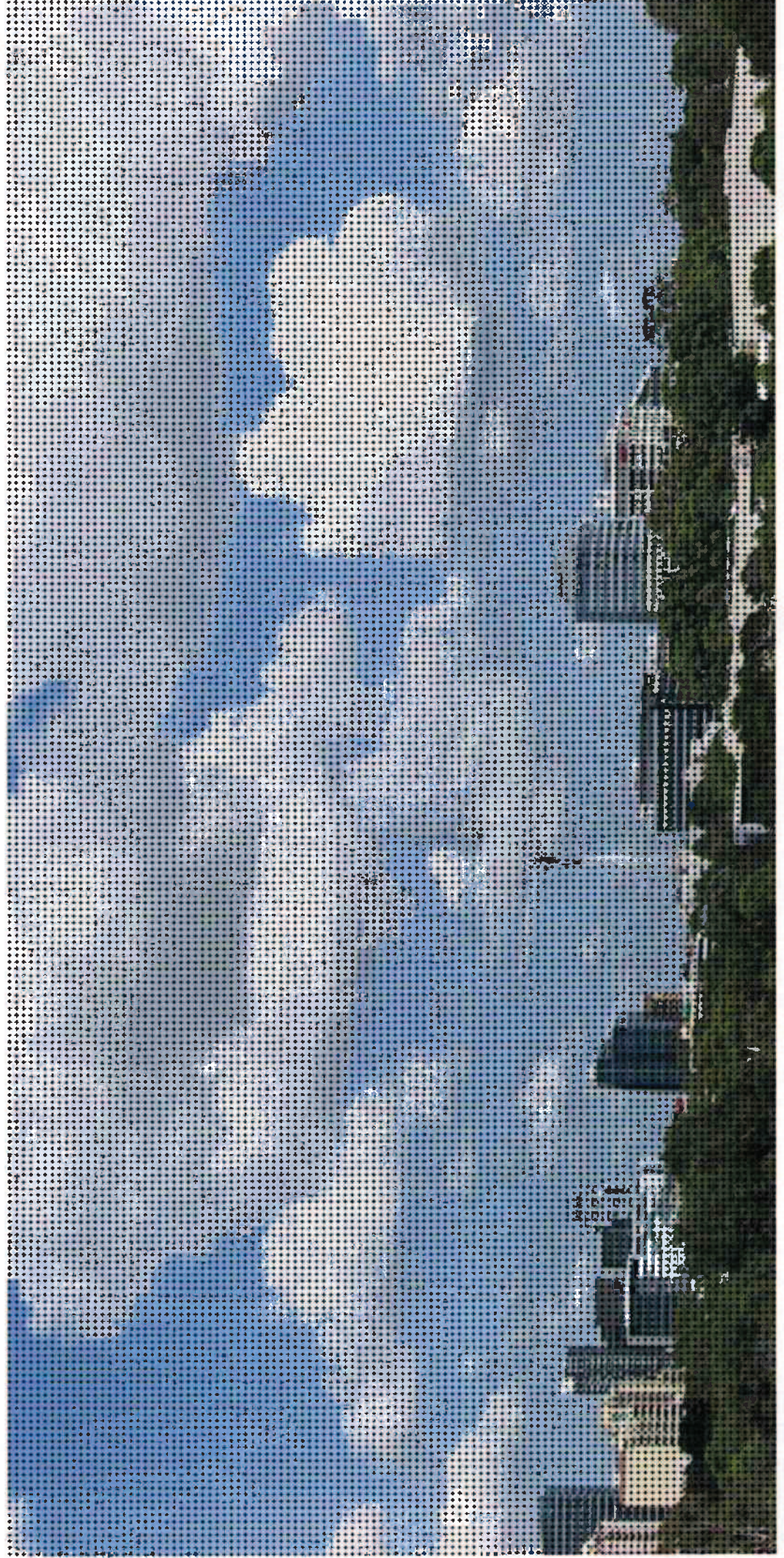


Urban Design Report

184-188 George Street, Parramatta

Prepared for:
Riverport Pty Ltd
Prepared by:
HBO+EMTB Urban and Landscape Design
April 2014 | Issue 03
HBO+EMTB



Project:
194-188 George Street, Parramatta
Project number:
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Prepared by:
HBO+EMTB Urban and Landscape Design

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Urban Design Report relates to the property identified as 184-188 George Street, Parramatta. It provides an analysis of the site and its context, proposes modifications to applicable zoning provisions and sets out draft urban design controls to guide future development on the site.

The report has been prepared for the owner of the site by HBO+EMTB Urban and Landscape Design and should be read in conjunction with various related documents, in particular the Planning Proposal prepared by Planning Ingenuity. The Planning Proposal and Urban Design Report accompany a request for a Gateway Determination under the provisions of Section 56 of the Environmental Planning & Assessment (EP&A) Act, 1979.

The primary purpose of this report is to provide an urban design assessment of the viability of the increases in height of building and permissible floor space recommended in the Planning Proposal and to generate a set of design controls which will ensure that such development responds appropriately to its site and context.

The proposed intensification of development on the site under appropriate development controls is consistent with Local and State Government Planning Strategies that are designed to drive more efficient and economic use of land whilst also achieving improved environmental, social and economic outcomes for Parramatta and the broader Sydney metropolitan area.

This Urban Design Report has been prepared in accordance with best-practice urban design principles, SEPP 65 – Design Quality of Residential Flat Development and the accompanying Residential Flat Design Code, and with reference to Council's applicable studies and planning instruments, in particular:

- Parramatta City Centre Vision Plan 2007
- Parramatta 2038 Community Strategic Plan
- Parramatta City Centre Local Environmental Plan 2007
- Parramatta City Centre Development Control Plan 2007

Reference has also been made to Development Consent DA769/2011 (13 June 2013) for the subject site, which permits construction of a 12 storey mixed use development comprising 84 apartments, 4 home offices, commercial tenancies and basement parking.

This report is presented in five sections:

- Introduction
- Analysis of site and Context
- Resulting key development parameters
- Proposed development controls and their intent
- Conclusion

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2.0 SITE AND CONTEXT ANALYSIS

2.1 LOCATION IN CBD

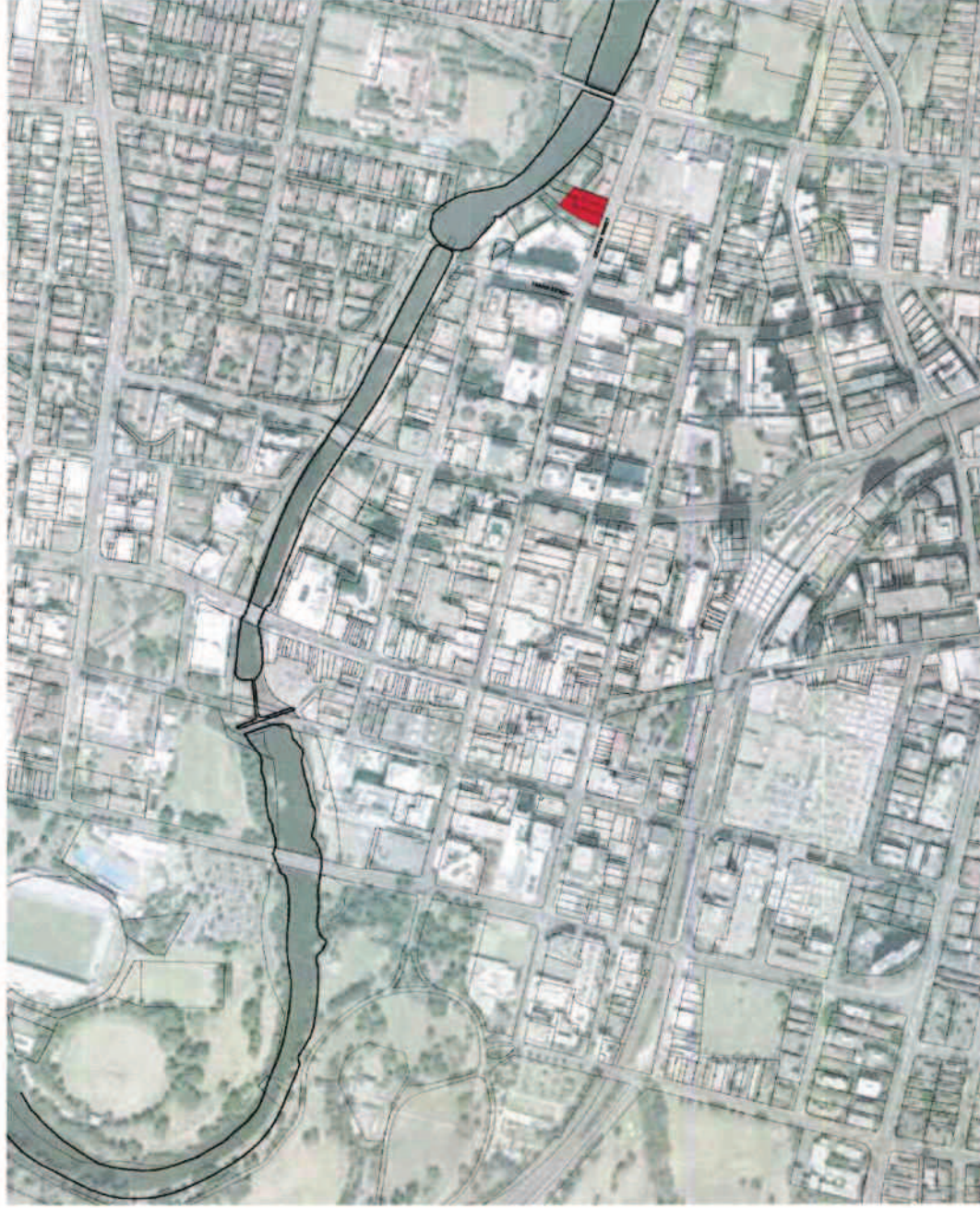
The site is located at the north eastern corner of the Parramatta CBD (Figures 2.1.1, 2.1.2 and 2.1.3).

It comprises three lots and is located between George Street and the Parramatta River. It is irregular in shape:

- The total frontage to George Street is 41.7m
- The east and west side boundaries are 48.8m and 64.3m respectively
- The boundary adjoining the river foreshore reserve to the north has a total length of 34.2m
- The total area of the site is 2,183m²

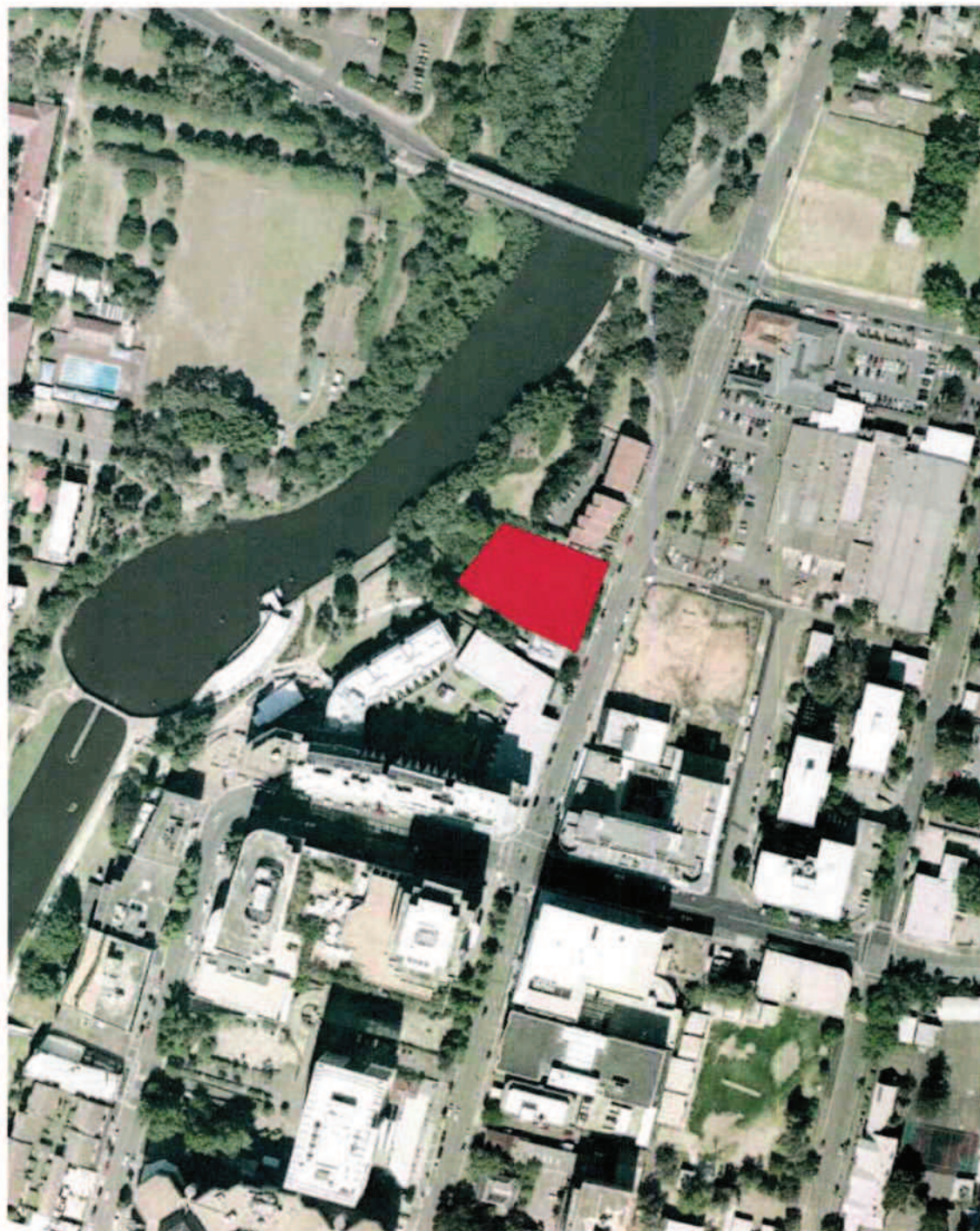
The site, which is currently vacant, is relatively flat with a slight fall to the public foreshore reserve along the Parramatta River immediately to the north. It has been identified as subject to flooding and a 3m wide overland flow path across the eastern part of the site from George Street to the Parramatta River is required. It is understood that this flow path can be built over and this option is adopted in this study. Further details are provided in the Planning Proposal.

There is also a drainage pipe beneath the surface of the site which carries storm water from George Street to the Parramatta River.



SITE

Figure 2.1.1 Site location in Parramatta CBD and surrounds



■ SITE



Figure 2.1.2 Site location in CBD neighbourhood

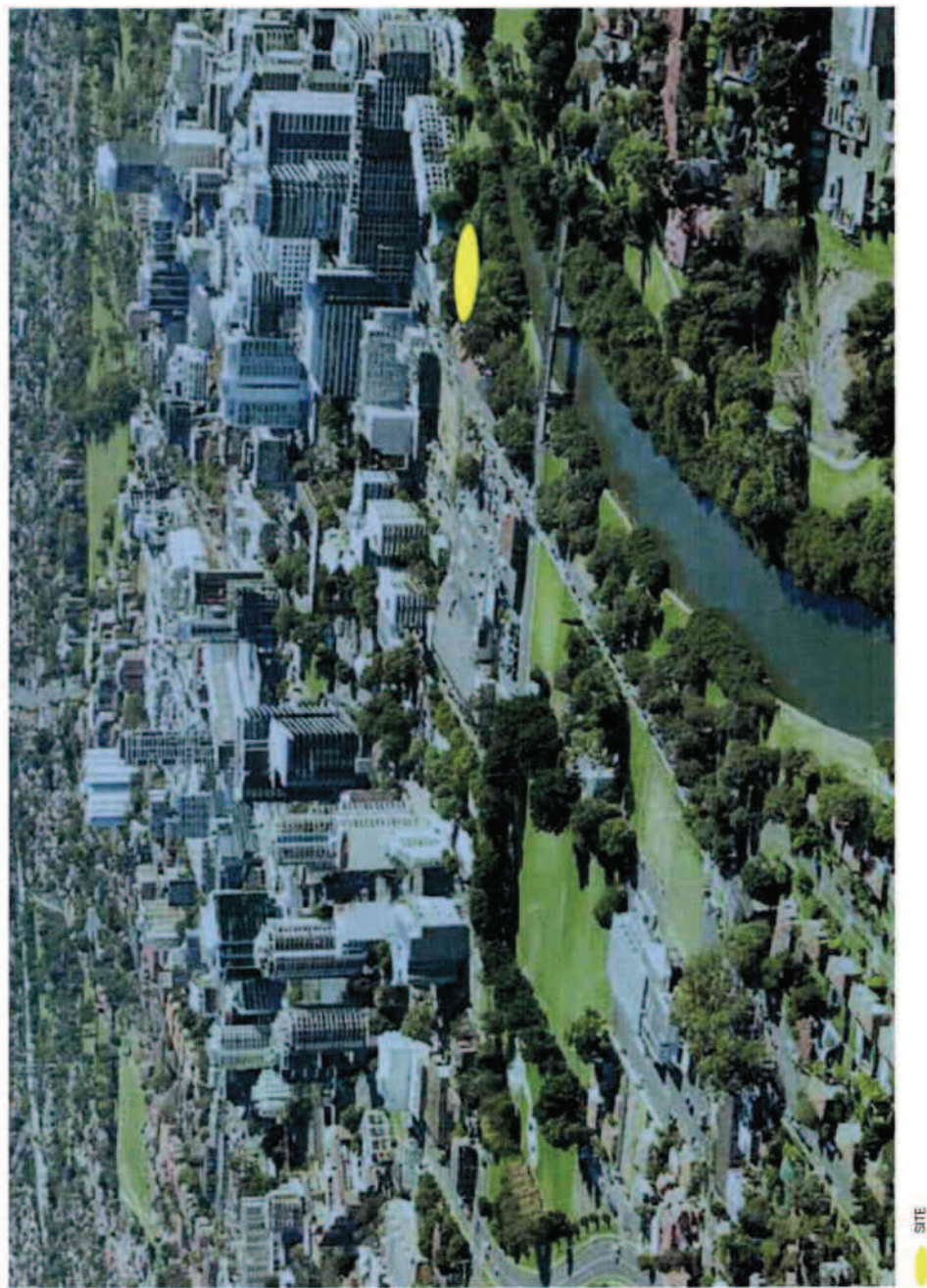


Figure 2.1.3 Site location looking to CBD from northeast

2.2 CONNECTIONS

The site enjoys excellent connectivity (Figure 2.2.1).

It is less than 150m walking distance to the Rivercat wharf (ferries to Harbour locations including Sydney CBD), there are nine public bus stops within a 500m radius of the site and the Parramatta Railway Station and bus interchange is approximately 550m to the south west. Further details of public transport connections are provided in the Planning Proposal. The Parramatta Light Rail proposal includes stops throughout Parramatta CBD which will be within easy walking distance of the site.

Public footpaths adjoining the site are located on George Street. The Parramatta Valley Cycleway, a shared path within the Parramatta River Foreshore Reserve, runs along the north side of the site. This facility is part of a well-established network of pedestrian pathways and cycleways throughout Parramatta which connect to major regional open spaces and important centres, including Liverpool, Ryde and Rouse Hill. Future projects are included in Parramatta Council's Operational Plan for upgrades and more long distance links.

Large areas of public open space are located in close proximity: to the east, the sports fields in Robyn Thomas Reserve on Harris Street; and less than 1km to the west, the regional scale Parramatta Park on George Street.

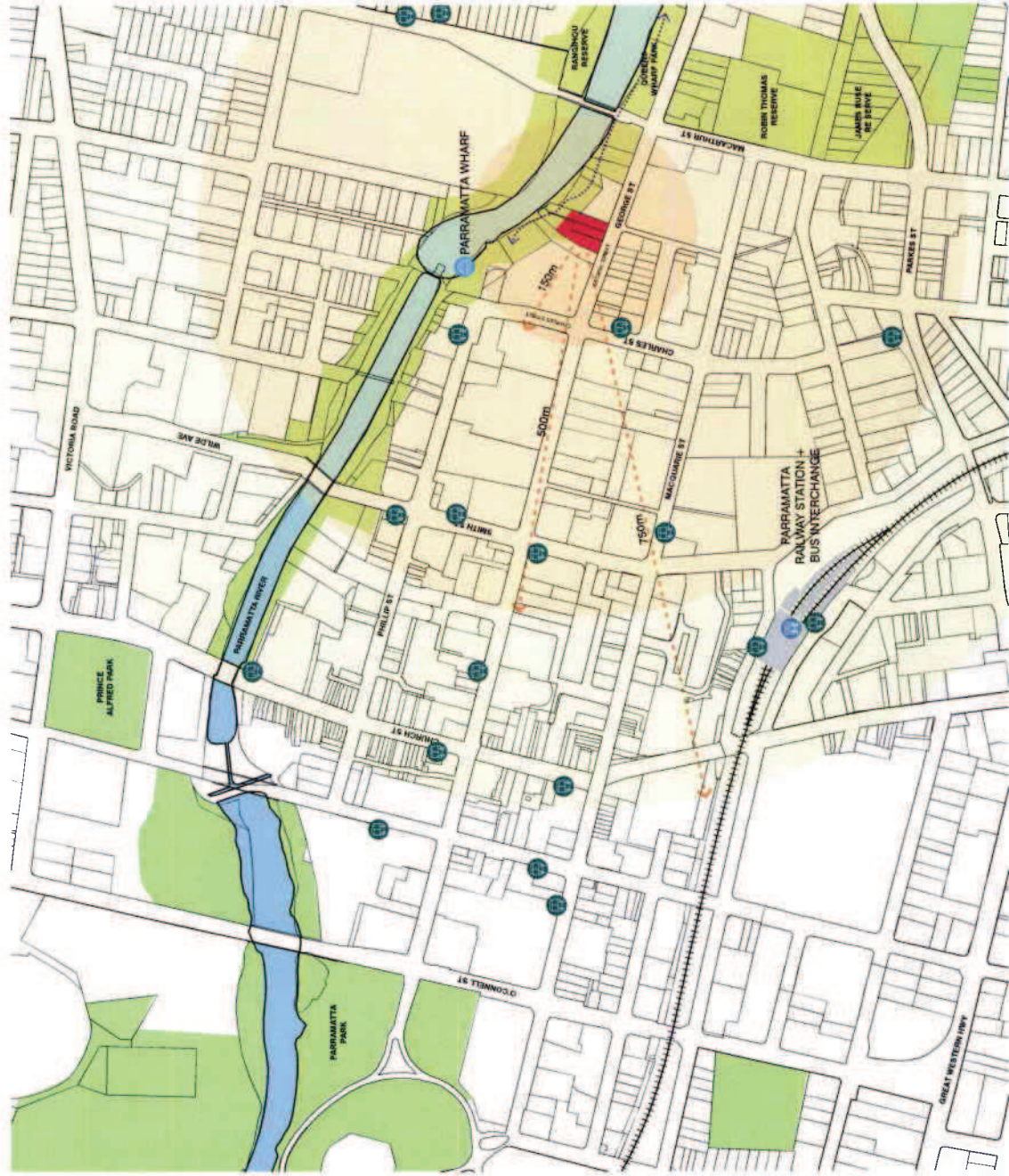


Figure 2.2.1 Connections and Immediate Context

2.3 IMMEDIATE CONTEXT

Abutting the site to the west at No.182 George Street is 'Harrisford', one of the oldest remaining former residences in Parramatta (Illustration 2a). Further details are provided in Section 2.7. Further to the west on the opposite side of "Harrisford" are the Meriton Serviced Apartments, with a two storey wing facing George Street (Illustration 2b). An approved DA will see this part of the building demolished and replaced by a 13 storey structure with a tall one storey base which is intended to relate to the heritage item (photomontage at Illustration 2c)

Immediately adjoining the site to the east at No.190 George Street is a row of two storey terrace buildings used for commercial purposes and which is understood to be in multiple ownership (Illustration 2d). The development is divided into two blocks, each containing four row houses. Those in the east block have a uniform setback from George Street of approximately 2m to 3m. In the west block they are stepped back to a maximum of about 6m on the common side boundary with the subject site. A blank brick 2 to 3 storey party wall is set on this boundary. A common at grade parking area entirely occupies the rear of the site adjacent to the foreshore reserve.

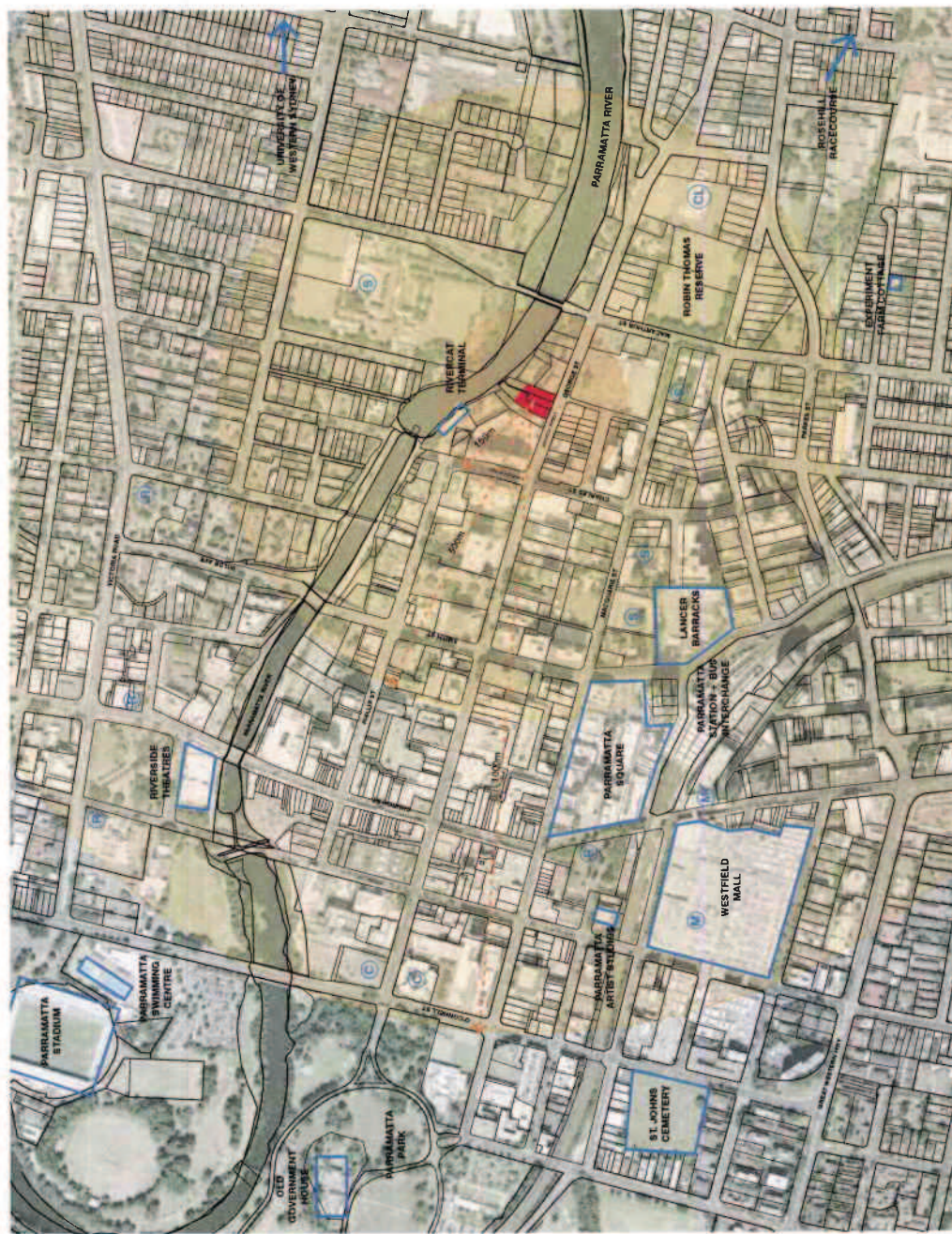
To the south of the site on the opposite side of George Street at No. 111 a new development is under construction, described in its Development Consent as a "19 storey mixed use development comprising retail/commercial space at ground level and 264 residential apartments over basement car parking" (photomontage at Illustration 2e). It presents to George Street a strongly articulated 3 storey base and two towers, at a lesser and greater setback. Abutting the western boundary of 111 is a three storey commercial building and beyond that a mixed-use development that rises to 9 stories at the southeast corner of George and Charles Streets (Illustration 2f).

To the north of the site is the Parramatta River. The public area between the site and the riverbank is part of the Parramatta River Foreshore Reserve, owned by the NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure (Illustrations 2g and 2h). This attractive riverside open space is of high design quality and amenity. It is turfed and contains mature trees, public seating, lighting, artworks and the Parramatta Valley Cycleway, a shared pedestrian/cycling pathway. The vegetation at the river bank has local heritage significance and is listed as the Parramatta River Wetlands. The Rivercat ferry terminal and a restaurant and bar are located to the west of the subject site, at the foot of Charles Street (Illustration 2i). The quality of the existing built edge to the Parramatta River varies – there is a valuable opportunity for the subject site to add an active frontage of design excellence to the reserve.



2.4 DISTRICT CONTEXT

A large number of cultural, educational, recreational, religious, sporting, entertainment and government facilities are within about a kilometre and a half of the subject site (Figure 2.4.1).



- MOVIE THEATRES
- CLUBS
- COURT HOUSES
- SCHOOLS
- RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS

Figure 2.4.1 District Context

2.5 BUILDING HEIGHTS

Existing and proposed building heights within the Parramatta CBD are shown in Figure 2.5.1. Significant portions of the CBD remain developed at a low level of intensity, with heights up to three stories. This characteristic is especially evident to the north of the river. Many older developments are in the height range of 4 – 10 stories, and in the Commercial Core this scale of development is prevalent.

Of particular interest and relevance are the new generation of taller structures, some of which are built or under construction, whilst the majority are proposed and at various stages of approval. Table 2.5.1 lists 27 of these projects and provides details of their use, height and implementation status. The tallest is the “Aspire Parramatta” residential tower, which at 90 stories will be taller than any other residential building in Australia, except for the Eureka Tower in Melbourne. Other very tall projects include:

- Parramatta Square Stages 5 and 6, proposals for twin commercial towers at 53 and 45 stories
- The Altitude Apartments east and west towers at 30 and 53 stories and under construction
- The Southbank proposal (41 stories)
- V by Crown at 29 stories and under construction
- The completed B1 Tower (28 stories)

In the vicinity of the subject site at the corner of George and Charles Streets are:

- the Colonial office building (24 stories)
- the Meriton Serviced apartments (13 stories with an adjacent approved 12-storey addition)
- 103 George Street (8 stories).

Under construction directly opposite the site is the twin tower 111 George Street (17 stories).

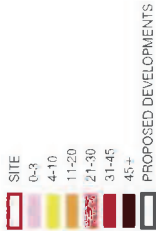
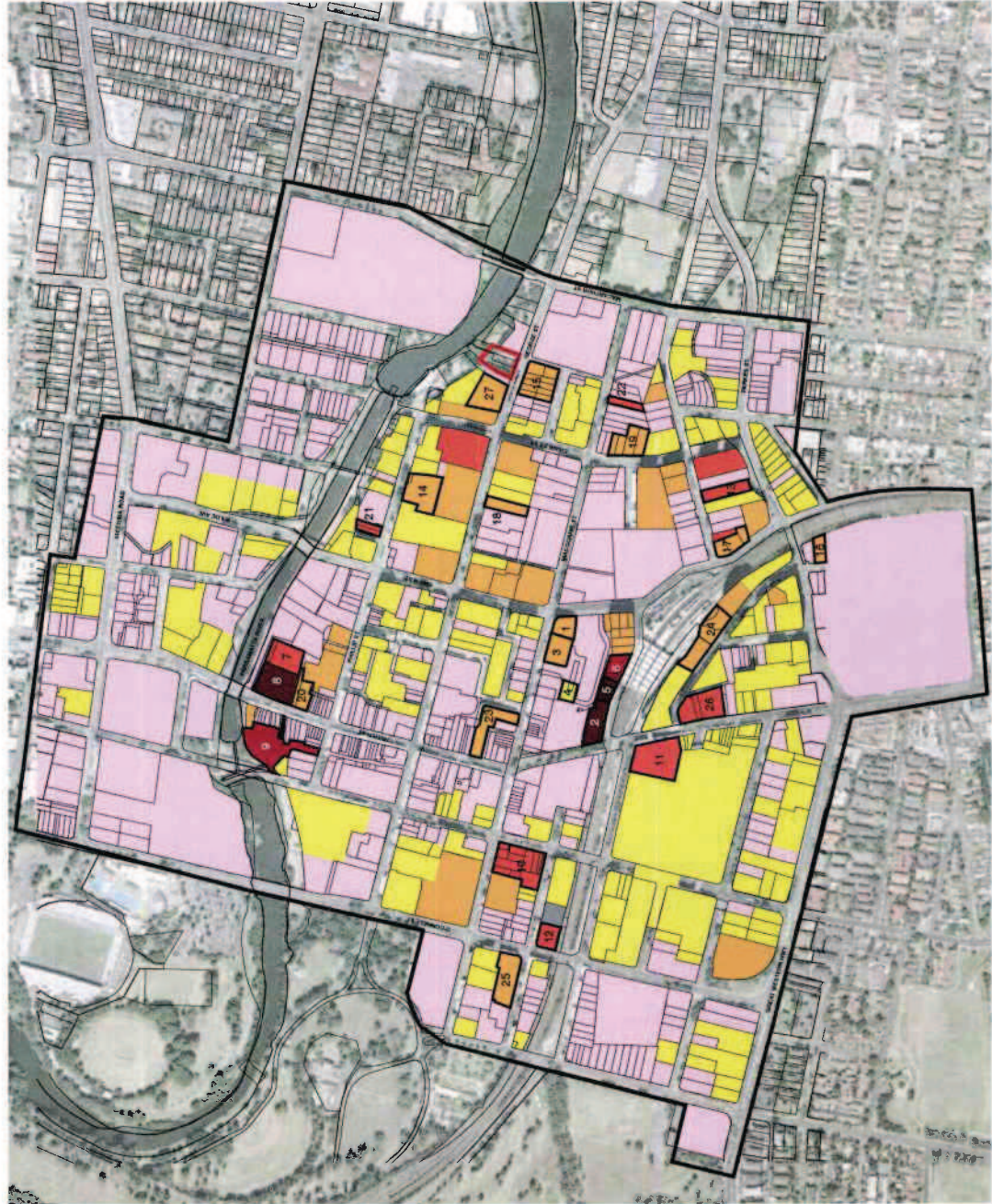


Figure 2.5.1 Building Heights - Existing and Proposed

Table 2.5.1 Proposed, approved, under construction and recently completed buildings in the Parramatta CBD

Map No.	Name	Height (m)	Floors	Completion	Use	Status
1	169 Macquarie Street (Parramatta Square Stage 1)		14	2015	Commercial	Proposed
2	Aspire Parramatta 160-182 Church Street (Parramatta Square Stage 2)	336	90	TBA	Residential	Proposed
3	Commercial Office 151 Macquarie Street (Parramatta Square Stage 3)		16		Commercial	Design Competition
4	Public Domain Building Civic Place (Parramatta Square Stage 4)		4	Late 2015	Commercial/ Community Facility	Proposed
5	Office Tower 12-30 Darcy Street (Parramatta Square Stage 5)	220	53	TBA	Commercial	Proposed
6	Office Tower 12-30 Darcy Street (Parramatta Square Stage 6)	200	45	TBA	Commercial	Proposed
7	Altitude Apartments East Tower, 330 Church Street	108	30	2016	Residential	Under Construction
8	Altitude Apartments West Tower, 330 Church Street	177	53	2016	Mixed use	Under Construction
9	South Bank 12-14 Phillip Street and 333 - 339 Church Street	150	41	TBA	Residential	Proposed
10	V by Crown 45 Macquarie Street	114	29	2014	Residential	Under Construction
11	Westfield Tower	100	24	TBA	Mixed use	Proposed
12	29 Hunter Street	76	24	TBA	Mixed use	Under Construction
13	Horizon Towers A+B 9 Hassall Street	72	23	TBA	Residential	Proposed
14	105 Phillip Street	65	13	TBA	Commercial	Proposed
15	111 George Street (Towers A+B)	60	17	TBA	Mixed-use	Proposed
16	36 Cowper Street	60	19	2013	Mixed-use	Under Construction
17	Eclipse Tower 60 Station Street	89	20	August 2012	Commercial	Completed
18	89 George Street	60	14	TBA	Commercial	Proposed
19	Focus 6-10 Charles Street		12	Completed	Residential	Under Construction
20	320-328 Church Street	54	17	TBA	TBA	For Design Competition
21	66-68 Phillip Street	75	22	TBA	Mixed use	Proposed
22	189 Macquarie Street	91.3	30	TBA	Residential	Proposed
23	220-222 Church Street & 48 Macquarie Street	68m	16		Commercial	For Design Competition
24	127 Argyle Street		13 (+10%)		Commercial	Under Construction
25	4-14 Hunter Street	54 (+10%)		TBA	TBA	Potential Development
26	B1 Tower 116 Church Street	90	28		Residential	Completed
27	Meriton 180 + 180b George Street	42	12		Residential	DA approved

2.6 ACCESS TO SITE

Access to the site is straightforward and relatively constrained (Figure 2.6.1). The main address of the building will be to George Street. The majority of pedestrians will approach from the west and southwest -- the CBD, Parramatta Rail Station and bus termini and stops. George Street is one-way eastbound, so all vehicles will also approach the site from the west. The main pedestrian entry to the building should be located to the west of the vehicle entry, so that pedestrians do not have to negotiate vehicles entering and leaving the site.

The site will also be accessed by pedestrians and cyclists from the north, from the Parramatta River Foreshore Reserve.

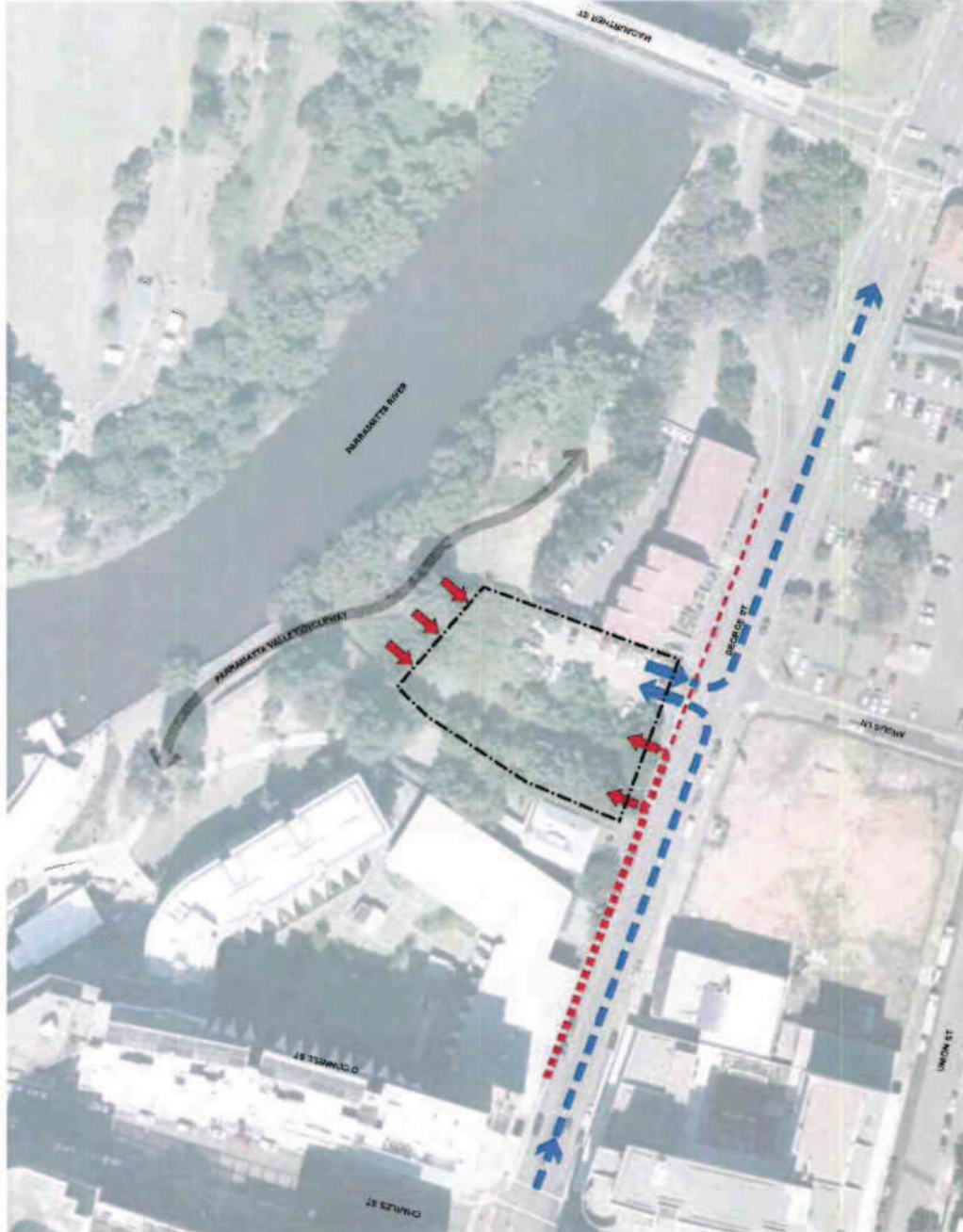


Figure 2.6.1 Access to Site

2.7 HERITAGE

Paramatta has an inventory of heritage items and precincts of national importance (Figure 2.7.1).

Abutting the site to the west at No.182 George Street is 'Harrisford', one of the oldest remaining former residences in Paramatta (Illustrations 2a and 7a). It is listed as a Heritage Item of State significance. Set back approximately 6m from its George Street boundary, Harrisford is described as a two storey Georgian style face-brick and sandstone building. It is currently used for commercial purposes. There is a public laneway along the western side boundary of the Harrisford property which provides pedestrian and cycle access between George Street and the foreshore reserve. Along Harrisford's eastern side boundary adjoining the subject site there is a driveway providing access to the northern (river) portion of the Harrisford property. It is understood that heritage entities seek a widening of this driveway, which requires an easement for part of its width within the subject site.

In close proximity to the site and within the Parramatta River Foreshore Reserve there is an area of ecological heritage referred to as the Parramatta Wetlands. Development on the subject site will have no impact on this area.



"Harrisford"

- SITE
- HERITAGE - GENERAL
- HERITAGE - ARCHEOLOGICAL
- CONSERVATION AREA
- "HARRISFORD" RESIDENCE
- PARRAMATTA RIVER WETLANDS



Figure 2.7.1 Heritage

2.8 STREETSCAPE / RIVERSCAPE

The buildings on the north side of George Street in the vicinity of the site vary widely in scale, from a one storey structure on the corner of Andrew Nash Lane to the 21 storey Colonial Tower at Charles Street (Figure 2.8.1). Travelling from west to east, building heights increase towards the subject site.

The built frontage to the southern foreshore of the Parramatta River is also variable. To the east of the site, the two storey commercial row buildings at 190 George Street are set well back from the foreshore beyond a surface car parking area and have no particular relationship to the river. Immediately to the west of the site is a five storey residential building and behind that the other wings of the Meriton Serviced Apartments, rising to 13 stories. The tower at the end of Charles Street is 9 stories. Between Charles and Smith Streets, the riverfront buildings range from 4 to 6 stories, some terracing down to the foreshore reserve. Several have parking on the lowest one or two levels, presenting a lifeless and unattractive façade to the river.

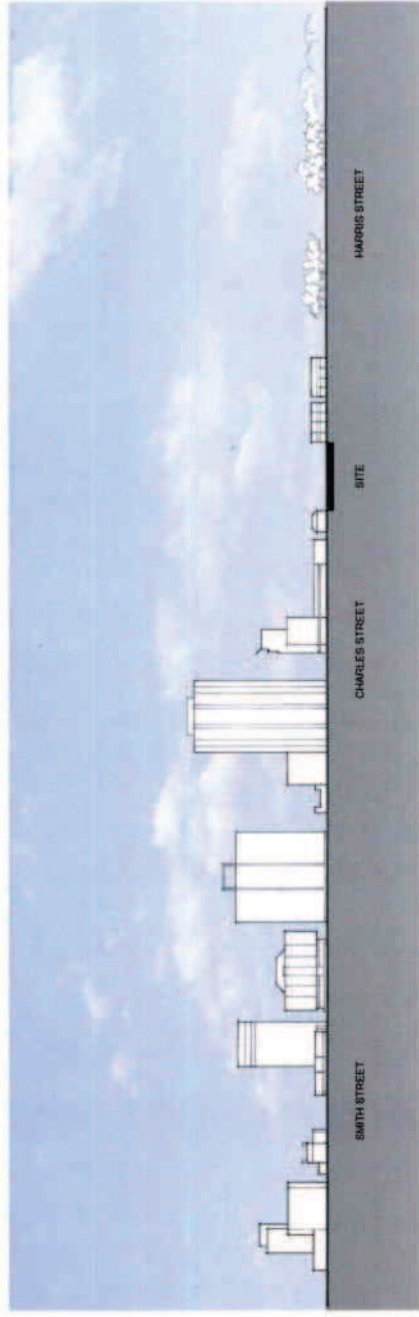


Figure 2.8.1 George Street: north side

2.9 VIEWS TO THE SITE

A tower on the site is likely to be discernable from distant points across much of western Sydney.

Views to the site from the surrounding district are shown in Figure 2.9.1 and the accompanying photographs.

A new building on the site will be seen from major roads approaching Parramatta CBD, including James Ruse Drive and the Great Western Highway, (Vegetation and noise walls generally block views to the CBD from the M4 Motorway.) There will also be clear views from Hassall Street and the bridges crossing the Parramatta River, most notably the Gassworks Bridge on Macarthur Street.

Views to the site from the precinct in which it is located are shown in Figure 2.9.2 and the accompanying photographs.

Considering its visibility from distant viewpoints and in particular as seen in approach from Hassall Street, the Gassworks Bridge and the river, the site occupies a key position within the Parramatta CBD. A new building at this location has the potential to achieve landmark status and make a significant contribution to the future image of the CBD.

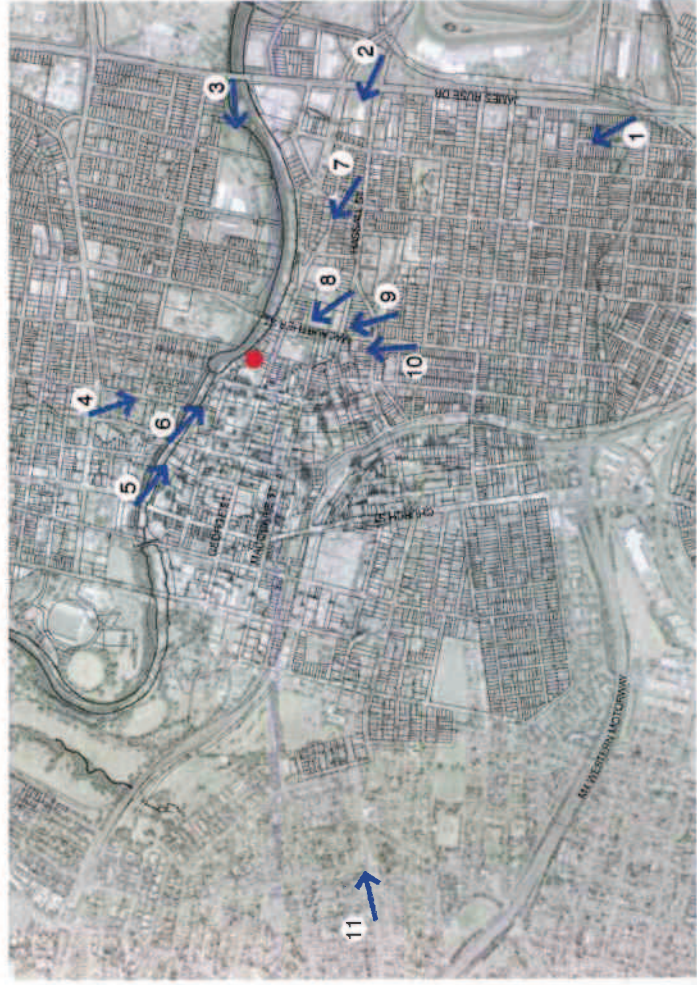


Figure 2.9.1 District Viewpoints



Figure 2.9.2 Precinct Viewpoints



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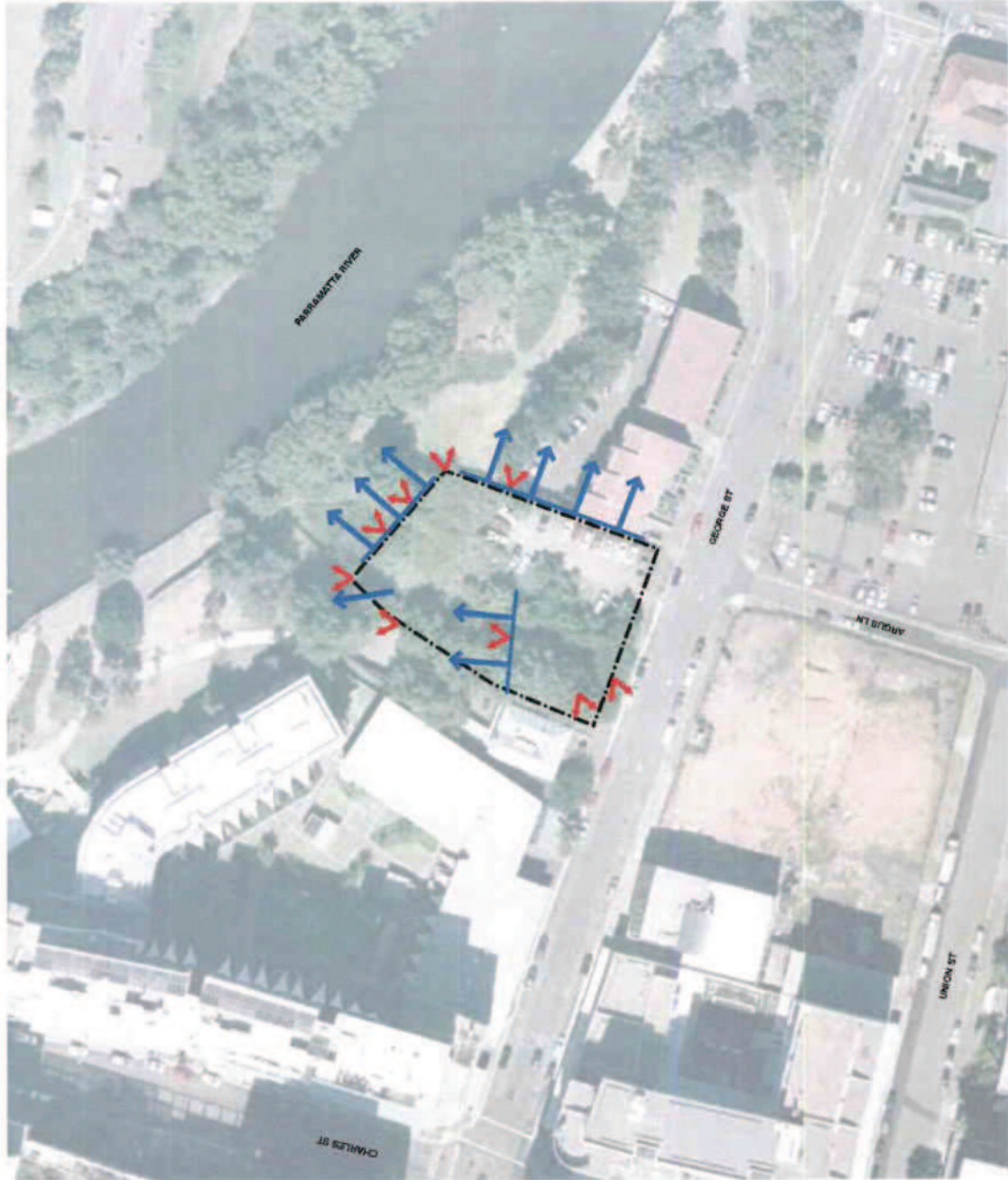


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2.10 VIEWS FROM THE SITE

Views from the site are shown in Figure 2.10.1. Views to the Sydney CBD are available from quite low elevations, although a new structure on the abutting lot could partially obscure these views, at least at lower levels. Views to northwestern Sydney and the North Shore are also an asset. There are also more intimate foreground views of the river and Parramatta CBD.



 SITE
 DISTANT VIEWS
 FOREGROUND VIEWS



Figure 2.10.1 Views from the Site

2.11 ASPECT AND MICROCLIMATE

The site enjoys a northerly aspect which can never be built out (Figure 2.11.1). This orientation is ideal for efficient solar design. The absence of intervening structures or natural features also means that a tall building will benefit from cooling northeasterly winds in summer. These attributes present an important opportunity to design a building on the site which takes full advantage of passive environmental design, thereby significantly reducing its carbon footprint and operating costs.

The building will need to manage exposure to western sun in summer (which will be reduced if the proposed Meriton buildings to the west are constructed).

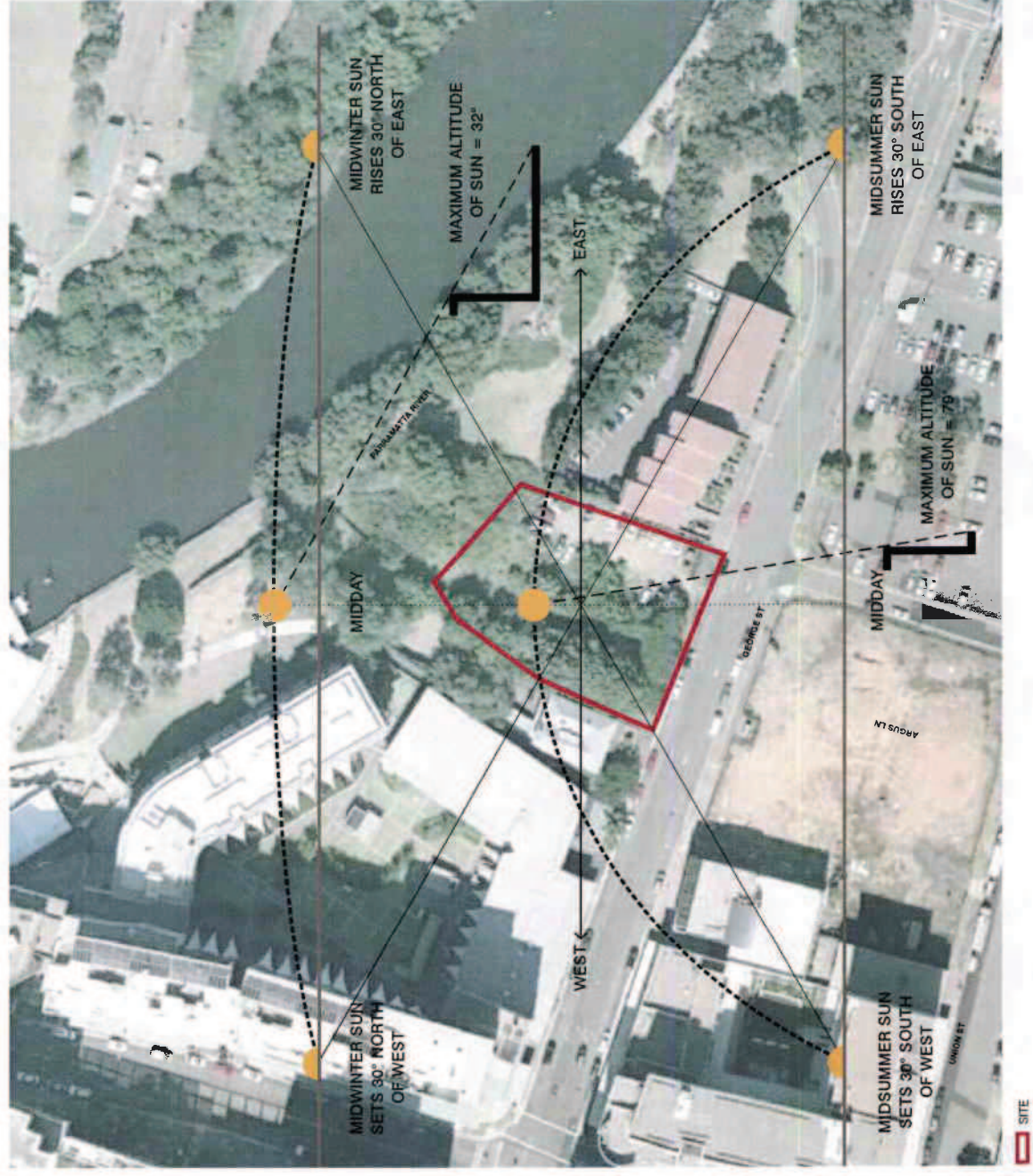


Figure 2.11.1 Solar Access

2.12 POTENTIAL SHADOW EFFECTS

The subject site lies to the south of the Parramatta River and its southern foreshore public open space. No development on the site, irrespective of its scale and massing, would cast shadows on these important public recreational resources.

There are no other public parks, squares or places to the south, east or west which would be overshadowed by a building on the site. There would of course be shadows cast on George Street in the immediate vicinity of the site, but any development of more than one or two stories would have this effect.

Figures 4.4.1.2 and 4.4.2.2 show the shadows that would be cast by a building of the scale proposed for the site.

2.13 ZONING AND URBAN DESIGN POLICIES

The area in the vicinity of the subject site can generally be described as being in transition with lower scale commercial, residential and mixed use buildings being replaced by taller multi storey mixed use developments. More widely, the Parramatta CBD is experiencing a significant upturn in the intensity of built form. There have been several Planning Proposals and Development Applications in recent years for buildings of much greater density and height than heretofore seen in Parramatta. At 90 stories, the proposed Aspire tower, for example, will be the second tallest residential building in Australia.

A substantial increase in the intensity of development in the Parramatta CBD is the corner stone of Council's Desired Future Character for the city. This vision is encouraged and supported by recent Parramatta City Council publications including:

- "Parramatta – Investing in Western Sydney"
- "Parramatta Square – think inside the square"; and
- "Design Parramatta – new ideas to shape the city."

Table 2.5.1 documents some of the more major proposed developments in the Parramatta CBD and Table 2.13.1 compares some of these projects with the tallest existing residential towers elsewhere in Sydney and in Melbourne.

Table 2.13.1 Case Study: Comparative Residential Floor-to-floor Heights

Location	Building	Height (m)	Number of stories (inc. plant rooms)	Floor-to-floor Height (average)
Parramatta CBD	184-188 George Street	120	35	3.43
	Aspire Parramatta	336	90	3.73
	Allitude Apartments West Tower	177	53	3.34
	Allitude Apartments East Tower	108	30	3.60
	South Bank	150	41	3.66
	189 Macquarie Street	91.3	30	3.04
	V by Crown	114	29	3.93
	81 Tower	90	28	3.21
	World Tower @ World Square	220	75	3.07
	Century Tower	183	50	3.66
Sydney	Meriton Tower	170	48	3.54
	Hordern Towers	156	48	3.25
	Lumière Residences	151	47	3.21
	The Peak	168	46	3.65
	The Cove	158	45	3.51
	Horizon, Darlinghurst	143.9	43	3.35
	Beau Monde Apartments N Sydney	115	36	3.19
	136-138 Walker Street N, Sydney	117	36	3.25
	Macquarie Park Village	72.7	23	3.16
	Eureka Tower	297.3	92	3.23
Melbourne	Freshwater Place North	205	60	3.42
	Zen Apartments	171	50	3.42
	Upper West Side Tower 1	155	46	3.37
	Verve 501 Swanston Tower	159	45	3.53
	Royal Domain Tower	152	43	3.53

2.14 CURRENT PLANNING AND DESIGN CONTROLS

Development in the Parramatta CBD is controlled by the Parramatta City Centre Local Environmental Plan 2007. Development beyond the CBD is controlled by the Parramatta Local Environmental Plan 2011. Maps for Land Use Zones, Maximum Permitted Floor Space Ratio and Maximum Permitted Height of Buildings from the two instruments are shown in Figures 2.14.1, 2.14.2 and 2.14.3. Parramatta City Centre Development Control Plan 2007 includes provisions to shape development and various other urban design controls. Further details of the LEP and DCP are provided in Chapter 4 of the Planning Proposal Report.

It is noted that Council has recently approved a number of developments whose density and height significantly exceed that prescribed in the LEP.

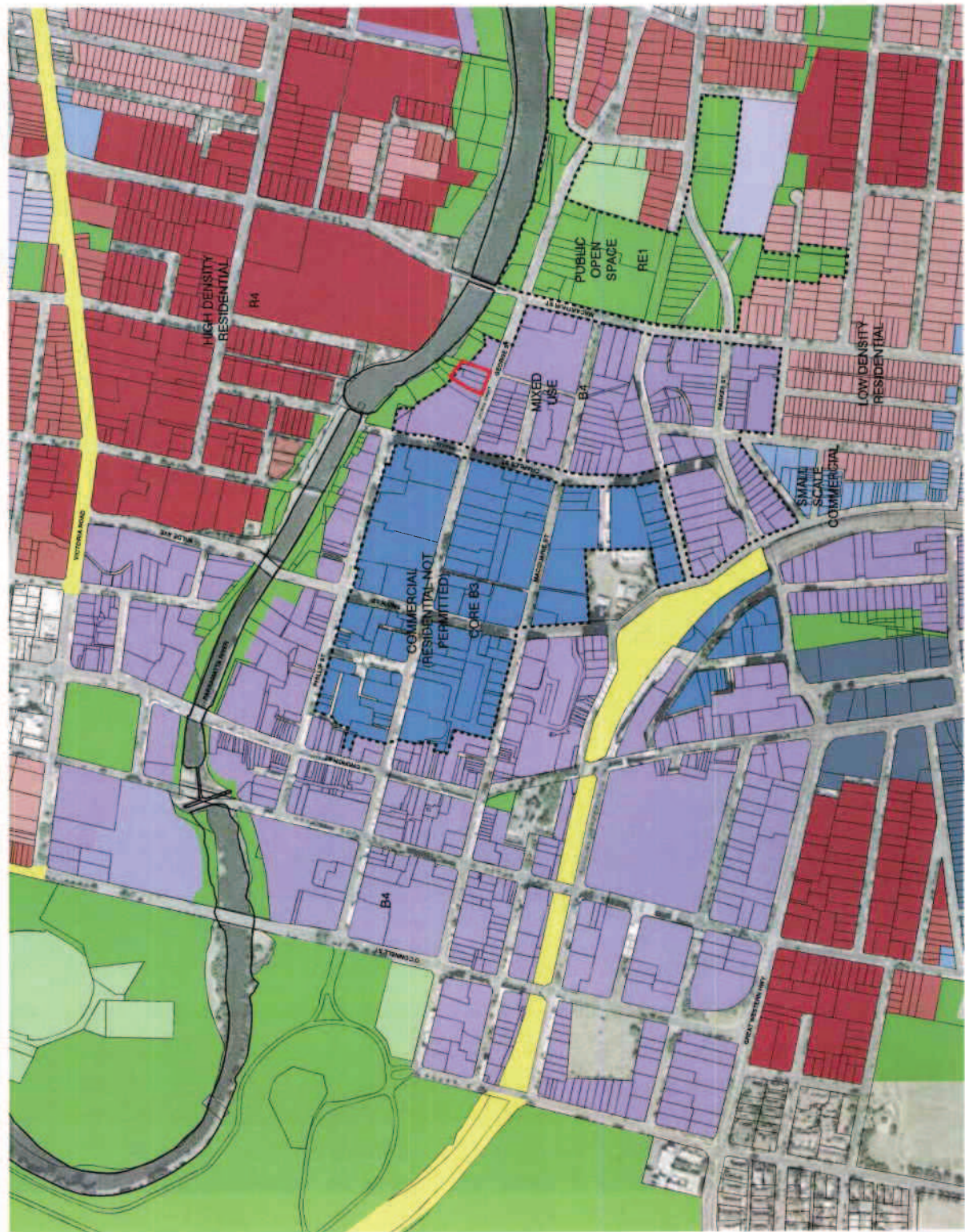


Figure 2.14.1 Land Use Zones [Parramatta City Centre LEP 2007 and Parramatta LEP 2011]

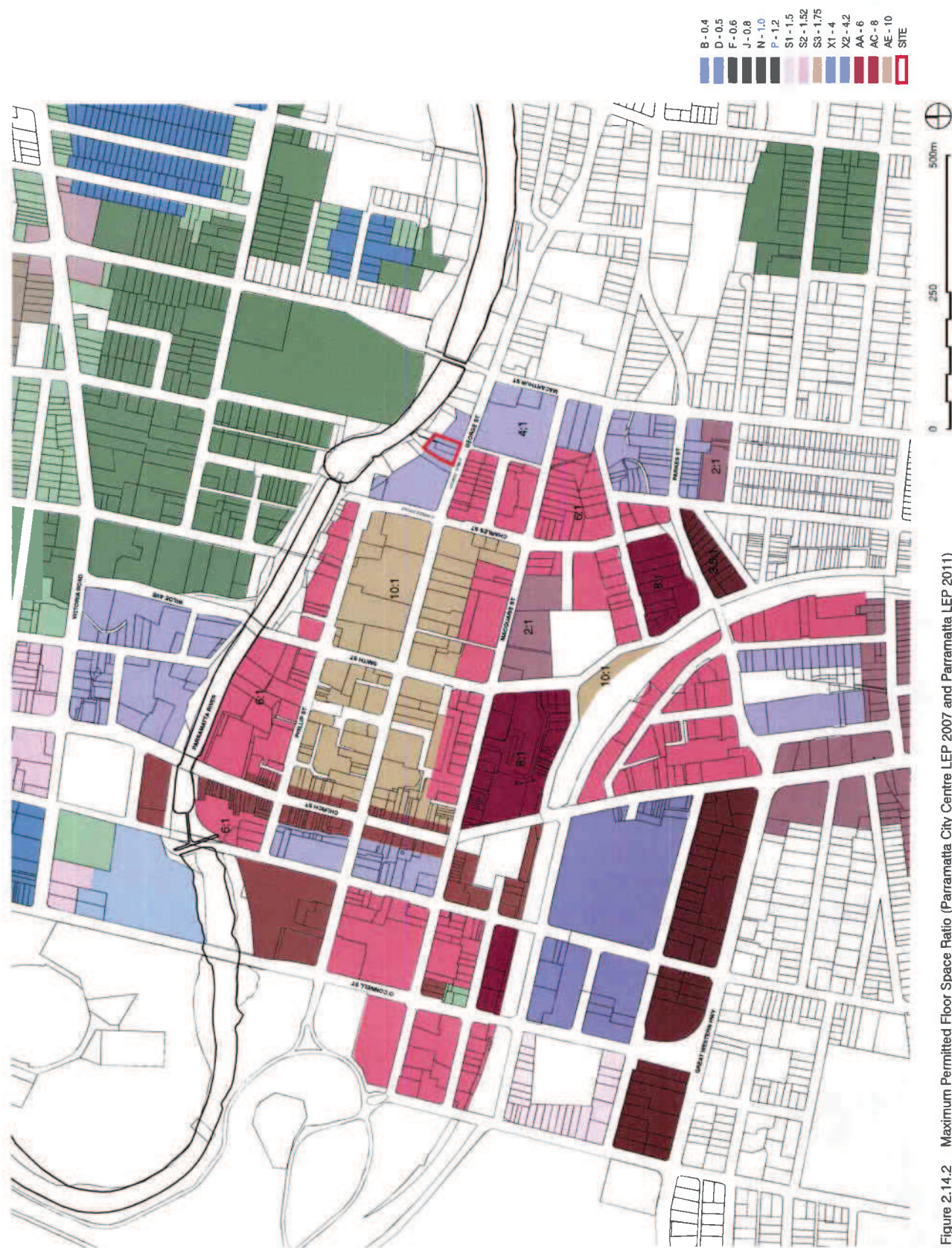


Figure 2.14.2 Maximum Permitted Floor Space Ratio (Parramatta City Centre LEP 2007 and Parramatta LEP 2011)

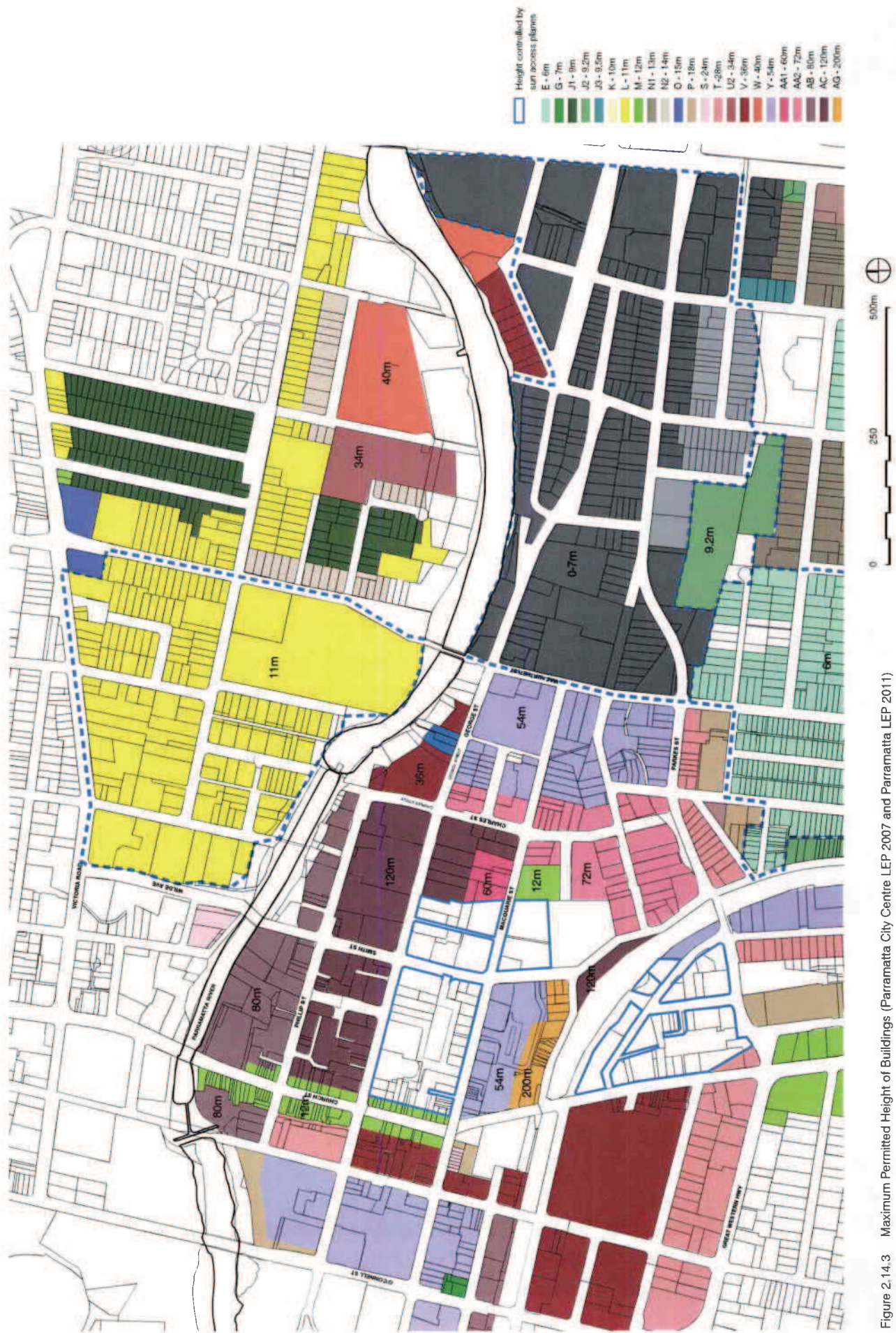


Figure 2.14.3 Maximum Permitted Height of Buildings (Paramatta City Centre LEP 2007 and Paramatta LEP 2011)

At a higher density, the site would also make a greater contribution to the ambitious employment and housing targets contained in the "Parramatta City Centre Vision Plan". In addition, a larger number of residents would assist in implementing the Plan's more specific actions by:

- increasing usage of the river and its foreshore open space and associated active uses, thereby encouraging its further improvement
- adding to the CBD's diversity by strengthening the mixed use character of its precinct
- supporting job creation in the Commercial Core by reducing pressure for residential development there through the provision of more dwelling units on the site
- increasing the market for broader retail opportunities
- expanding the city's tax base and thereby its capacity to improve the CBD public domain.

Parramatta City Council has similar long term planning strategies which are put forward in various documents, including:

- The "Parramatta 2038 Community Strategic Plan" (Parramatta City Council, 2013) aims to guide the decisions of Council towards strategic objectives and measurable goals. The long-term vision for Parramatta CBD includes the following themes that are relevant to the subject site:
 - » expansion of the traditional CBD to places including the Parramatta River foreshore;
 - » land near the Parramatta River evolving into a key cultural precinct facilitating and promoting history, the arts, entertainment and recreation;
 - » new development of increased density along the Parramatta River to take advantage of the views along the river corridor;
 - » potential contribution to an Integrated Transport Plan including providing additional housing within walking distance of the Rivercat terminal and adjacent to the shared pathway network;
 - » a target to create an additional 50,000 jobs in the Parramatta locality within 25 years (which exceeds the target set by the Draft Metropolitan Strategy 2031).

- The Parramatta Corporate Plan 2013/14 – 2016/17 identifies the specific actions Council proposes to undertake to help realise Parramatta's 2038 vision. The following principles are relevant to the development potential of the subject site:

- » *Property Principle Activity A4.3 Activating the CBD Property Market*
Actions include a review of the planning framework and regulation in partnership with stakeholders to encourage commercial development in the CBD.
- » *Urban Vitality Principle Activity A5.1 Developing the strategic vision and improvement plans for the river foreshore*
Actions include the development and implementation of a CBD River Master Plan.
- » *Principle Activity A5.3 Activating lanes, retail precincts and riverbank foreshore.*
Actions include the redesign, redevelopment and activation of the river foreshore.
- » *Principle Activity A5.5 Delivering 'Design Parramatta' Program (annual)*
to enhance the Parramatta Central Business District as a high quality, attractive, distinctive and viable regional city.

- "Parramatta – Investing in Western Sydney" (Parramatta City Council, 2013) confirms that Council's strategic direction for the CBD is to increase the amount of commercial (retail and office) floor space within the central CBD and provide mixed use developments incorporating cultural and recreational opportunities along the CBD edges and in particular along the river foreshore. The document acknowledges that higher density development opportunities may be required to attract and maintain the scale of growth required to accommodate an additional 30,000 new jobs and 3,350 new dwellings.

Increasing residential density on the subject site is consistent with Council's Plans for the CBD, for similar reasons to those enumerated above in relation to the state government's Plans and Strategies. In addition to more jobs and residences, there is a greater emphasis on improvements to the Parramatta River and its foreshores, including new development of increased density along the river and providing additional housing within walking distance of the Rivercat terminal and adjacent to the foreshore shared path network. Increased density on the site will support commercial development in the CBD and contribute to the realization of Council's vision for the city of Parramatta.

3.2.2 Local Planning Considerations

Increasing the permitted density on the subject site will promote the overall Aims (Clause 2) of Parramatta City Centre Local Environmental Plan 2007. In particular:

- A larger resident and working population on the site will help to promote the economic revitalization of the Parramatta city centre ... enhance the vitality, identity and diversity of the centre ... promote employment, residential, recreational, arts, social, cultural and tourism opportunities ... and contribute to sustainable social, economic and environmental outcomes
- The presence of more residents will help to ensure the public domain is safe and attractive and support public transport, walking and cycling
- The larger resulting tax base will, for example, help Council to emphasise and interpret the role of the Parramatta River and its foreshore as an important natural focus and link.

The proposed increase in FSR will bring the site into alignment with those other important sites where Council has increased densities; thereby satisfying objective (a) for the control of floor space ratios (Clause 22) in Parramatta City Centre Local Environmental Plan 2007:

- to ensure a degree of equity in relation to development potential for sites of different sizes and for sites located in different parts of the Parramatta city centre.

The proximity of the subject site to the commercial core of the CBD is an important factor in considering the appropriate density of development on the subject site (Figure 2.14.1). The core is zoned B3 Commercial Core. The first objective of the zone is:

To provide a wide range of retail, business, office, entertainment, community and other suitable land uses which serve the needs of the local and wider community, including:

- commercial and retail development;
- cultural and entertainment facilities that cater for a range of arts and cultural activity, including events, festivals, markets and outdoor dining,
- tourism, leisure and recreation facilities,
- social, education and health services.

Residential development is not permitted in this zone and mixed use developments must not include residential accommodation.

The subject site is located in a B4 Mixed Use zone whose objectives include: To support the higher order Commercial Core Zone ... with uses including ... high density residential development. The subject site is one of only two or three significant sites adjoining the eastern half of the B3 zone which remain available for residential development. In order to further relevant strategic planning objectives and support the B3 Commercial Core, it is appropriate to increase the Maximum FSR permitted on the subject site to the same level of 10:1 as that applicable to other B4 sites in the areas which are proximate to the southern and western sides of the Core.

Clause 22E of Parramatta City Centre Local Environmental Plan 2007 addresses Ecologically Sustainable Development. All new developments, irrespective of site location and characteristics, should meet current expectations in regard to several of this Clause's objectives. In addition, however, the location, shape and orientation of the subject site are such that a well-designed building here will achieve superior performance against a number of the objectives of this Clause:

- building design and orientation
- passive solar design and day lighting
- natural ventilation
- reduction of car dependence

Increasing density on the site will allow these environmental benefits to accrue to a larger number of individuals.

3.2.3 Urban Design Considerations

Activation of urban precincts is a fundamental tenet of urban design. More residents and workers create a larger economic "engine" and support greater opportunities for social, cultural and recreational activity. A significant increase in floor area on the subject site will contribute to the realization of these outcomes in Parramatta.

For a given urban area and all else being equal, a larger population allows greater efficiencies in the provision of utilities and services and thus higher levels of sustainability.

From an urban design perspective, the site is considered strategically important because of its location at the northeast corner of the CBD and on the riverfront. Increased building bulk and hence height will allow a building on the site to more emphatically mark the eastern end of the CBD's river frontage and the point of entry to the CBD from the north-east.

The site enjoys a number of particular advantages:

- immediate proximity to the Commercial Core of the CBD
- excellent access to multiple transport options, especially the Rivercat ferry service
- a visually prominent location
- absolute frontage to the Parramatta River Foreshore Reserve
- Perpetually unobstructed northerly and northeasterly aspect, facilitating passive solar building design
- Open space around the site (George Street, the "Harrisford" heritage item and the foreshore reserve) which is inalienable and allows a building on the site to maximize natural cross-ventilation
- Outstanding views

It is logical and prudent to allow more residents to enjoy these benefits by increasing the permitted density on the site. As described in Section 2.12, shadows cast by a bulkier building on the site will not add to the overshadowing of George Street or public open spaces.

3.3 HEIGHT

It is proposed to increase the maximum permitted building height on the subject site from 36m to 120m, with a substantial setback from the Parramatta River Foreshore Reserve of approximately half the depth of the site at 70m.

If the maximum permitted density on the site is increased substantially for sound planning reasons, it is essential that the maximum permitted building height be correspondingly raised. Without this change, it may not be possible to provide the amount of floor space on the site which the density control contemplates, or to only accommodate it with adverse impacts on neighbours and the desired urban design character of the precinct. If it can be demonstrated that increased height will have beneficial consequences without significant negative impacts, it is logical to increase the height sufficiently to allow the maximum permitted FSR to be realized.

It is noted that one of the objectives for the control of floor space ratios (Clause 22) in Parramatta City Centre Local Environmental Plan 2007 is:

to encourage increased building height and site amalgamation at key locations.

3.3.1 Strategic Planning Considerations

The strategic planning documents cited in Section 3.2.1 do not in general specifically address the issue of the height of development. As noted above however, where they advocate increased intensity of development to meet strategic planning goals, increased building bulk and height are an implicit and inevitable consequence of these policies.

Modern cities typically establish their presence in part through the height and design of the buildings in their cores. With Parramatta clearly established as Sydney's "Premier Regional City" tall buildings of distinctive design will increasingly play a role in establishing the city's landmark status and making it recognisable across western Sydney. Located on the river at the northeast corner of the CBD, the subject site is particularly well positioned to clearly demarcate one of the key entry points to the CBD.

3.3.2 Local Planning Considerations

Increasing the permitted height on the subject site will promote the overall objectives for the control of the height of buildings (Clause 21) of Parramatta City Centre Local Environmental Plan 2007. In particular:

- Current zoning has a ratio of height to FSR of $9 (36 \div 4 = 9)$, whereas the proposed zoning has a ratio of $12 (120 \div 10 = 12)$. A larger ratio implies smaller floor plates and thus allows for a more slender tower and larger setbacks, contributing to a high quality urban form for all buildings [objective (b)] and the maintenance of satisfactory sky exposure and daylight to existing buildings, to the sides and rear of tower forms and to public areas [objective (c)]

- The urban design analysis in this report confirms that the proposed taller building will occur on a site capable of providing appropriate urban form and amenity [objective (d)]

- The proposed stepping down of the building mass towards the river will provide a transition in built form and land use intensity [objective (e)], whilst the emphatic height of the building in the broader context fulfills an important urban design function as described in Section 3.3.3.

In relation to the same set of height objectives:

- As shown in the shadow diagrams in Figures 4.4.1.2 and 4.4.2.2, the shadows that would be cast by a 120m tall building envelope achieve consistency with the LEP by ensuring that further overshadowing of parks, the river and community places is avoided [objective (a)]

- The increased height has no effect on the abutting heritage item's views and visual interconnections [objective (f)]. Because the proposed height and density controls, taken together, allow a more slender tower with greater setbacks, the proposed changes may actually provide greater regard to the "Harrisford" heritage site and its setting.

- The increased height has no effect on historic views shown in the City Centre Development Control Plan [objective (g)]

3.3.3 Urban Design Considerations

In a decision which has beneficial urban design outcomes, Council has substantially increased heights for the new developments flanking Church Street at the Parramatta River:

- 177m (53 stories) and 108m (30 stories) for the twin Altitude Apartment towers, on the east side of Church Street (under construction - Nos. 7 and 8 on Figure 2.5.1)

- 150m (41 stories) for South Bank, to the west of Church Street (proposed - No. 9 on Figure 2.5.1)

In its publication "Think Inside the Square", Council provides an aerial photomontage which shows these developments prior to the most recent height increases (Figure 3.3.3.1). For the purposes of this report, this image has been adjusted to show the estimated current heights (Figure 3.3.3.2). Council's aerial photomontage describes these Church Street developments as the "Lennox Bridge Portals". They also serve to emphatically demarcate the western end of the CBD's river frontage.

Increasing the height of a future building on the subject site will compliment this urban design strategy (Figure 3.3.2). A building of approximately 120m on the subject site, although somewhat lower than the "Portals", will similarly register the eastern end of the CBD's river frontage and serve as a distinct marker of the entry to the CBD from the Macarthur Bridge, Parramatta River (notably on the Rivercat ferry) and the Parramatta Valley Cycleway.

As described in Section 3.2.2, with an FSR of 10:1, increasing the height limit to 120m allows for smaller floor plates and a more slender tower with larger setbacks. The resulting increase in separation distances to neighbouring buildings increases day light and visible sky at ground level in the public realm and enhances views past the tower from other buildings. Smaller floor plates also improve internal amenity within the tower by ensuring more daylight and sunlight penetration and facilitating natural cross-ventilation.

The proposal will also enhance the built-form character of George Street (Figure 3.3.3.3). It reinforces the importance of the diverse building elements at and close to ground level, and completes the progression of tower heights from west to east.



Figure 3.3.3.1 Existing and Proposed Developments shown in "Think Inside the Square". (A number of projects have been increased in height since this image was prepared)

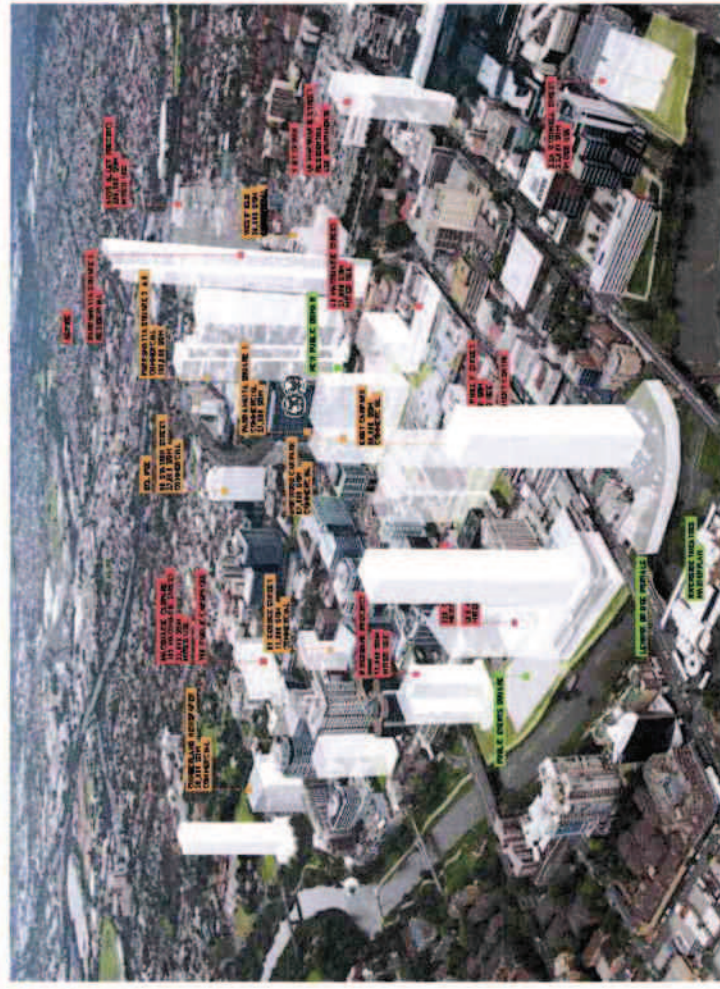


Figure 3.3.3.2 The image from "Think Inside the Square" adapted to show the current heights of the Lennox Bridge Portal buildings and the proposal for the subject site.

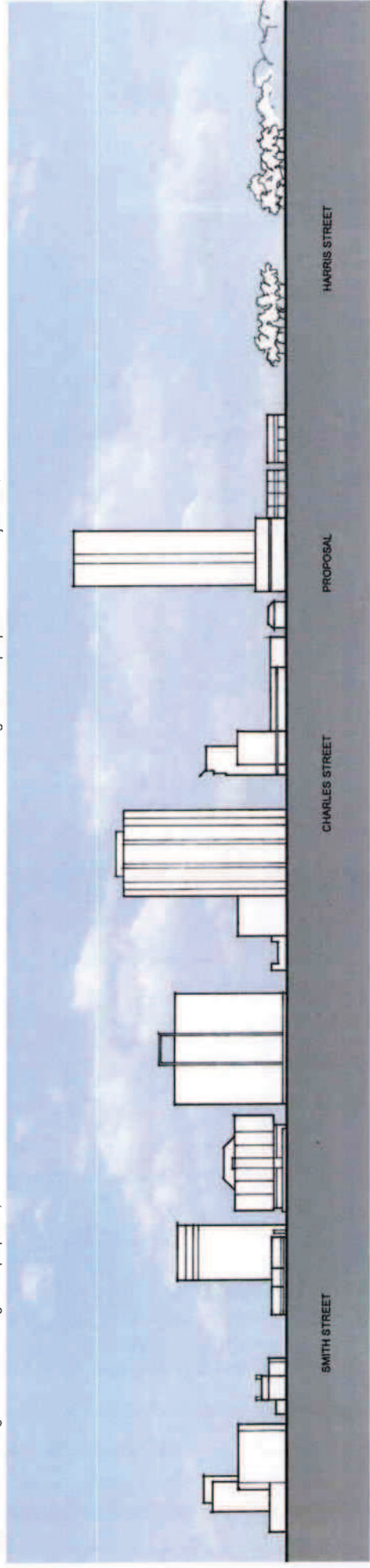


Figure 3.3.3.3 George Street: north side with envelope of proposed development inserted.

4.0 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT CONTROLS AND THEIR INTENT

4.1 GROUND FLOOR CONFIGURATION

In order to ensure that the ground floor interface of the building with the public realm is functional, safe, appropriate and consistent in intention with Council's Parramatta City Centre DCP 2011, the following controls are proposed.

4.1.1 George Street

- Access to the main lobby of the building shall be directly off George Street. Steps are not permitted. Sloping of the ground plane shall not exceed 1V:20H. Lobby doors shall be clear glass. The area of lobby walls facing George Street shall be at least 80% clear glass. The interior of the lobby between the street and the farthest point of any elevator door shall be clearly visible from the street.
- Habitable Ground Floor space fronting George Street shall comprise active retail uses, which may include cafes and restaurants. Office-type uses such as banks, travel agents, insurance agencies, medical-related uses and professional services may be located at ground level, but must not face George Street. The area of walls of Habitable Ground Floor space fronting George Street shall be at least 70% clear glass. The main entry to each retail space shall be directly off George Street.
- Only one entry into the building for vehicles is permitted. This entry must be located at the eastern end of the George Street frontage, so that pedestrians approaching the building from the CBD do not have to cross the entry driveway. The width of the kerb crossing and opening in the George Street façade of the building for vehicle access shall not exceed 7.0m.

4.1.2 River Foreshore

- The floor level of the ground floor adjacent to the northern boundary of the site shall be within 1.0m of the natural ground level of the Parramatta River Foreshore Reserve at all points along that boundary. Barrier free access, which may include one or more mechanical elevators, must be provided between pathways leading from the Foreshore Reserve to the building and the adjacent ground floor.
- Active uses such as cafes and/or restaurants must front onto the Parramatta River Foreshore Reserve and occupy at least 80% of the length of the building frontage. Car parking shall not abut the external building wall facing the Reserve.
- Habitable space facing the Reserve shall be open to it, with large areas of glass, large operable openings, terraces and the like.
- Direct access must be provided:
 - » for the public from George Street to the active uses fronting the river
 - » for occupants of the building to the Foreshore Reserve

4.2 PODIUM CONFIGURATION

The envelope controls in Section 4.3 require a podium or base to the building between 12m and 18m in height. Floors in this podium above ground level must relate positively to their adjacent context. For each such floor, the following controls are proposed:

- For at least 80% of the length of the streetwall facing George Street, the wall must enclose habitable space, either commercial (including retail) or residential. A minimum of 50% of the wall area shall be glazed.
- For at least 80% of the length of the external wall facing the Foreshore Reserve, the wall must enclose habitable space, either commercial or residential. A minimum of 50% of the wall area shall be glazed.

4.3 BUILT FORM ENVELOPES (BUILDING MASSING)

4.3.1 Aims

The proposed built form envelopes reflect the following aims:

- Provide sufficient flexibility to allow a range of architectural solutions within acceptable limits
- Subject to specifying all necessary controls and providing adequate flexibility, make controls as clear, direct and simple as possible
- On George Street, respond appropriately to the adjoining Harrisford House heritage item immediately to the west, the proposed Meriton development beyond, the existing townhouses immediately to the east, the likely form of new development on that site and the new development opposite which is under construction
- Facing Parramatta River, achieve an appropriate scale, considering existing and proposed buildings along the riverfront and shape the massing to acknowledge the presence of an important public open space asset
- On the western boundary, respond appropriately to the adjoining Harrisford House heritage item and enable new vehicular access along the side of the house
- On the eastern boundary, acknowledge the potential for a new tall building on the adjoining site

4.3.2 Controls

All setbacks and Floor Plate Areas include balconies. Council's definition of Gross Floor Area for FSR calculations excludes balconies, which is consistent with the Department of Planning's Standard Instrument. Balconies are included in these controls because they have a physical and visual presence which could be significant on this site, with its sensitive adjacencies.

Base

(Minimum 12m to maximum 18m above ground level) (Figures 4.3.1, 4.3.2, 4.3.5 and 4.3.6)

The 6.0m minimum setback from George Street adjacent to Harrisford House ensures that the base will not project forward of the alignment of the street façade of the heritage item. The 3.0m minimum side setback from the western boundary adjacent to Harrisford House provides as much separation from it as can reasonably be provided at this location. It is understood that the proposed setbacks have been discussed with various entities and are considered acceptable. With reference to Meriton's DA application for 180+180B George Street, on the far side of Harrisford House, it appears that the side setback provided is also 3.0m, but the fronts of balconies are setback approximately 2.4m.

For the eastern half of the George Street frontage, a minimum setback of 3.0m is proposed, allowing greater flexibility in the design of the base as it faces George Street, and establishing an appropriate minimum setback for any redevelopment immediately to the east of the subject site.

A maximum setback from George Street of 9.0m is also proposed. This allows for further flexibility in the design of the base, accommodating, for example, a recessed forecourt area at the main building entry. A maximum setback is considered necessary to ensure an active ground floor frontage within reasonable proximity to George Street.

It is important that the base of any new building responds to the scale of Harrisford House and this is best achieved with an acknowledgment of the height of the heritage building. In Option 1 for the base this takes the form of a clear and pronounced horizontal expression line or architectural element in the new façade. In Option 2 for the base, the horizontal expression is achieved by setting back the uppermost two floors of the base by 2.0m. Option 1 is preferred:

- It provides a clearer and stronger expression of the totality of the base, which is important for the proportional relationship between the base and the tower above, which rises 30 or so stories
- It allows larger floor plates for the upper levels of the base, which may be important depending on the use allocated to them.

Along the northern half of the western boundary, well to the north of Harrisford House, an average minimum setback of 3.0m is maintained, but one or more encroachments, limited in length and to an absolute minimum setback of 1.5m, are permitted, providing there are one or more compensating recesses of equal or greater total area. The purpose of this control is to allow greater flexibility in the design of the base.

No setback of the base is required along the eastern side boundary of the site. This allows greater floor plates to be achieved in the base, which may be beneficial for certain uses. The existing townhouses on the adjoining site are built to the boundary with a blank wall. It is expected that any future development on their site would seek to have a base which also extends to the common side boundary.

Along the riverfront, there is an extensive band of public open space between the subject site and the shared path along the riverbank. Active uses and overlooking of the foreshore and pathway from a new building is desirable for social interaction and public safety. Up to four floors of building mass built close to the boundary is considered appropriate. The controls are identical to those along the northern half of the western boundary, except for a somewhat greater length of permitted encroachment (with one or more compensating recesses).

Lower Tower

(Up to 70m above ground level) (Figures 4.3.3 and 4.3.7)

A maximum Floor Plate Area of 1,050m² is specified for the lower-section tower. This is smaller than the area within the minimum permitted setbacks to ensure that the tower is not excessively bulky, whilst allowing choice in the configuration of the floor plate. Adopting a maximum Floor Plate Area simplifies the controls by eliminating the need for compensating recesses whilst still permitting limited encroachments for greater design variability.

Along the George Street frontage, a minimum average setback of 8.0m is specified, so that the tower will appear as distinct and recessive from the more prominent base below. To allow flexibility in the design of the tower, one or more encroachments, limited in length and area, are permitted, but with absolute minimum setbacks equal to those of the base below. Limiting the total length of encroachment ensures that the base appears distinct from the tower. This distinction could be enhanced with a horizontal expression line or architectural element where base and tower meet.

Along the western boundary in proximity to Harrisford House, an average minimum setback of 6.0m is required, with only very minor encroachment set back at least 3.5m permitted. On the less sensitive northern half of this boundary, the same average minimum setback applies, with a larger encroachment up to 2.0m from the boundary allowed.

On the eastern side boundary an absolute minimum setback of 6.0m, with no encroachments, is proposed. It is likely that the tower will have habitable rooms and balconies facing this boundary, to take advantage of distant views to the Sydney CBD. If the adjoining site is redeveloped, its size and shape is such that any tower on that site would likely be a slab facing George Street and the river, with an end elevation facing the subject site. If this end elevation were also set back 6m and did not include balconies or significant openings to habitable rooms, it is suggested that an acceptable relationship between the two towers would result (even though at higher levels the recommended separation distances in the SEPP65 Residential Flat Design Code would not be achieved). Furthermore, a side setback greater than 6.0m may be realistic for the adjoining site, resulting in a greater future building separation.

Along the riverfront, an average minimum setback of 6.0m is proposed with modest encroachment of limited total length allowed up to an absolute minimum setback of 4.5m. Assuming the base is built to its minimum setbacks (which seems probable given the likely preference for large floor plates in the base and the value of the northerly riverfront prospect), a significant stepping back of the tower will result. This is considered important in mediating the scale of the mid-section of the tower as perceived from the adjoining riverfront public open space.

Upper Tower

(Up to 120m above ground level) (Figure 4.3.4 and 4.3.8)

A maximum Floor Plate Area of 650m² is specified for the upper-section tower. Again, this is smaller than the area within the minimum permitted setbacks to ensure that the tower is slender, whilst allowing flexibility in the configuration of the floor plate.

A major setback from the riverfront boundary to almost half the depth of the site is mandated for the upper section of the tower, beyond 70m above ground level. With the tower rising another 50m on George Street, this significant gesture ensures that the overall massing of the building will be perceived as being appropriately deferential to the river and its public foreshores.

On the other frontages, the proposed setbacks are the same as those for the mid-section of the tower below.

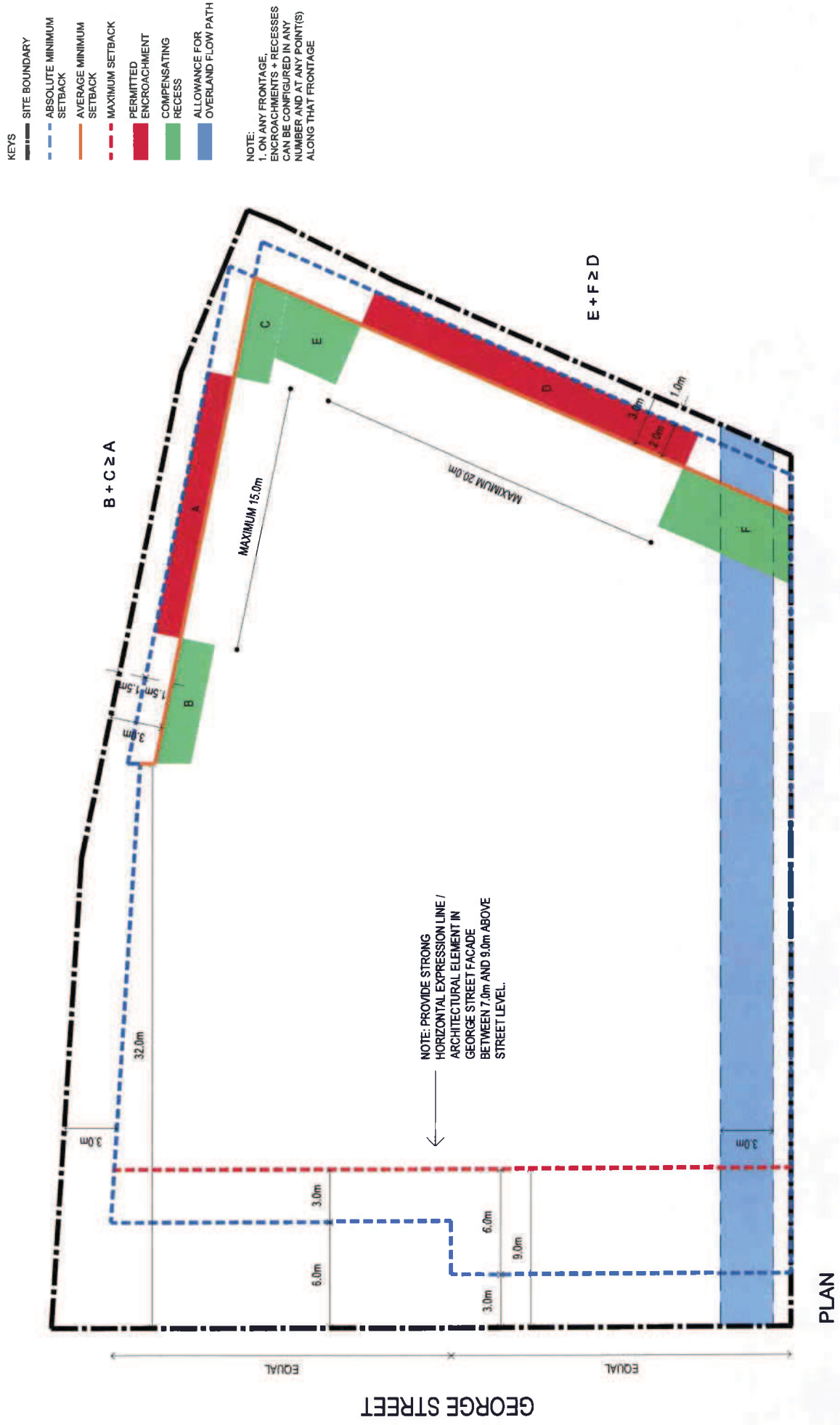


Figure 4.3.1 Proposed Building Envelope Controls: Base Option 1 (Base - height minimum 12.0m/maximum 18.0m)

- KEYS
- SITE BOUNDARY
 - - - ABSOLUTE MINIMUM SETBACK
 - - - AVERAGE MINIMUM SETBACK
 - - - MAXIMUM SETBACK
 - PERMITTED ENCROACHMENT
 - COMPENSATING RECESS
 - ALLOWANCE FOR OVERLAND FLOW PATH
 - STREET WALL FACING GEORGE STREET

NOTE:
1. ON ANY FRONTAGE, ENCROACHMENTS + RECESSES CAN BE CONFIGURED IN ANY NUMBER AND AT ANY POINT(S) ALONG THAT FRONTAGE

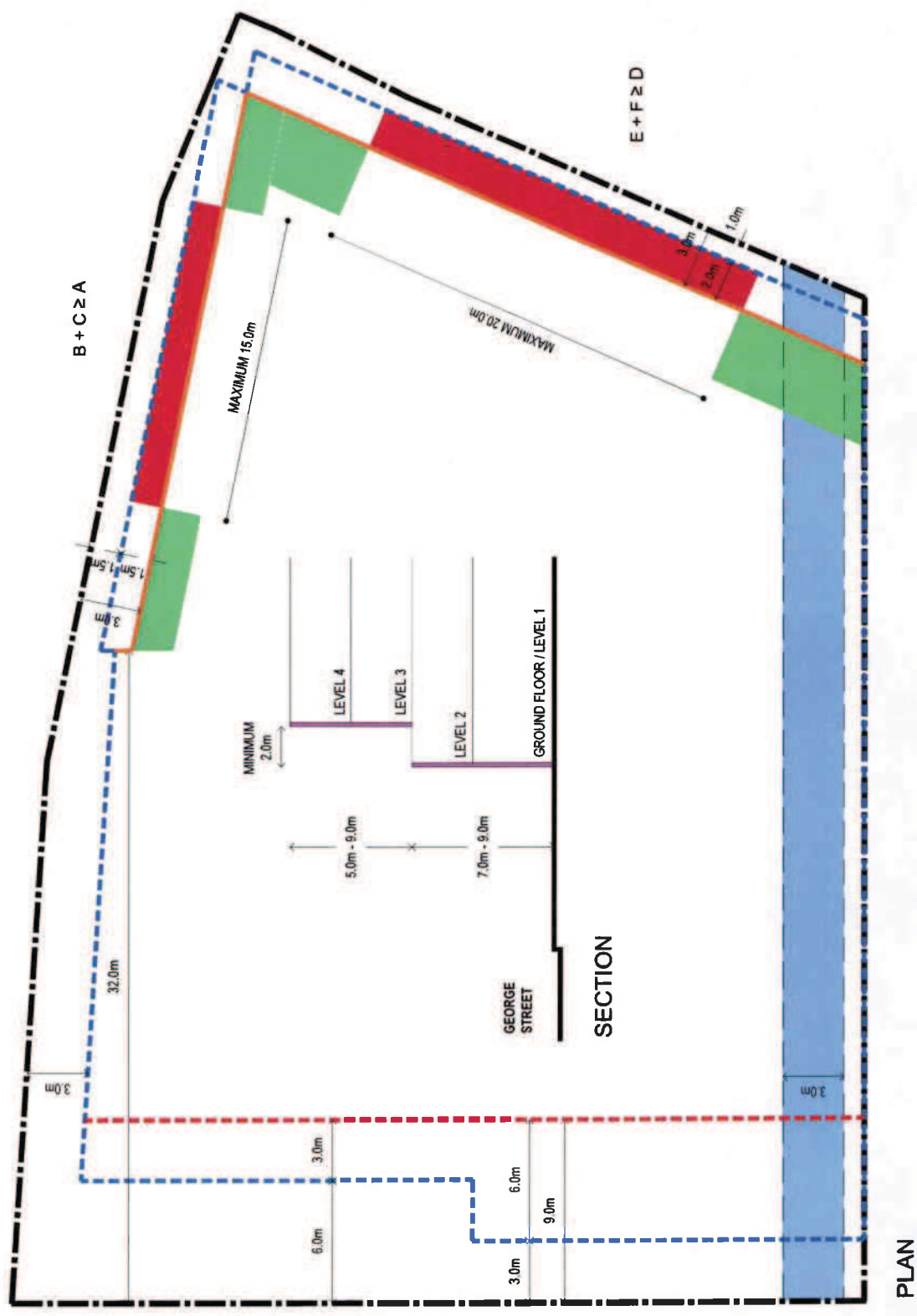


Figure 4.3.2 Proposed Building Envelope Controls: Base Option 2 (Base - height minimum 12.0m/maximum 18.0m)

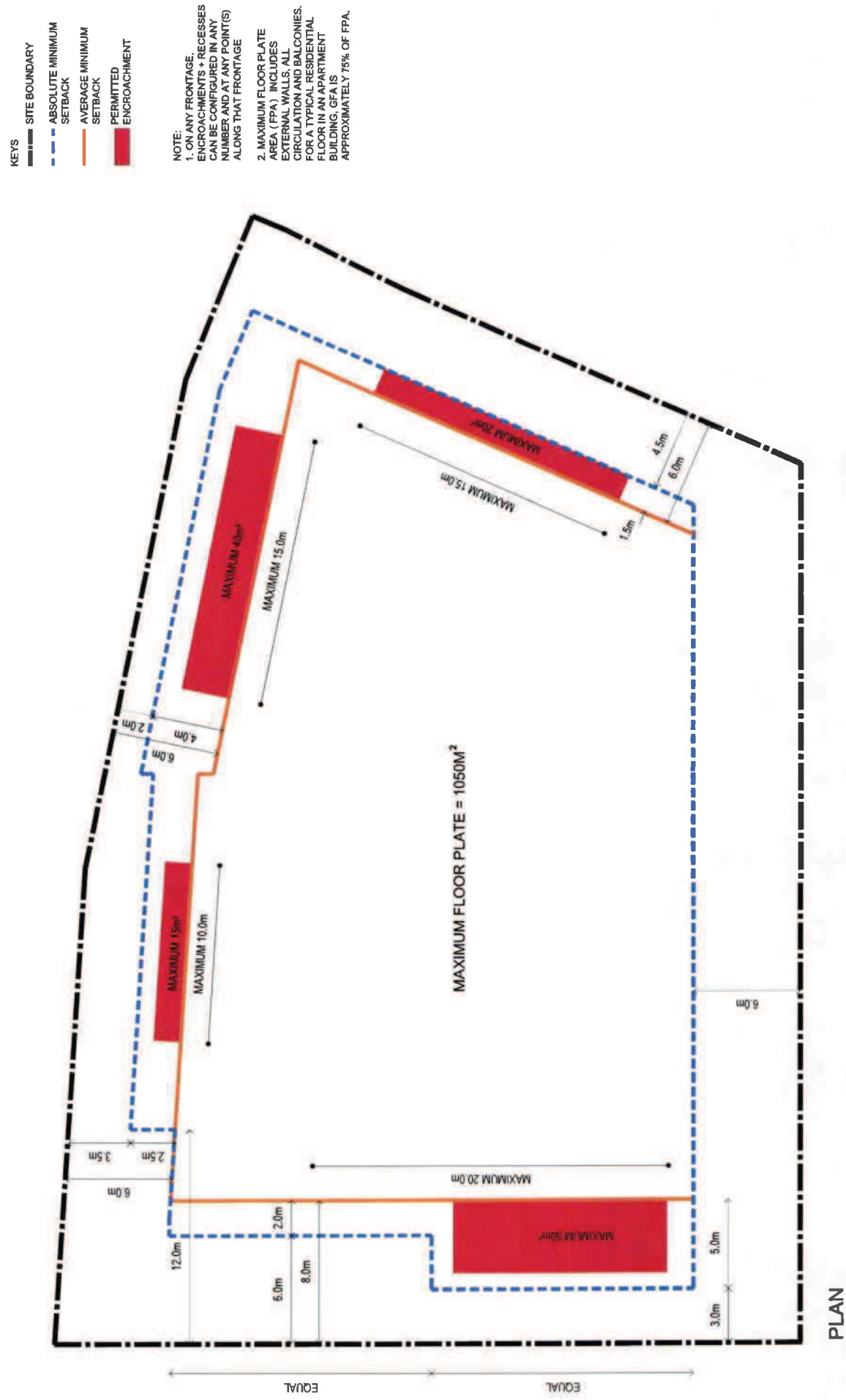
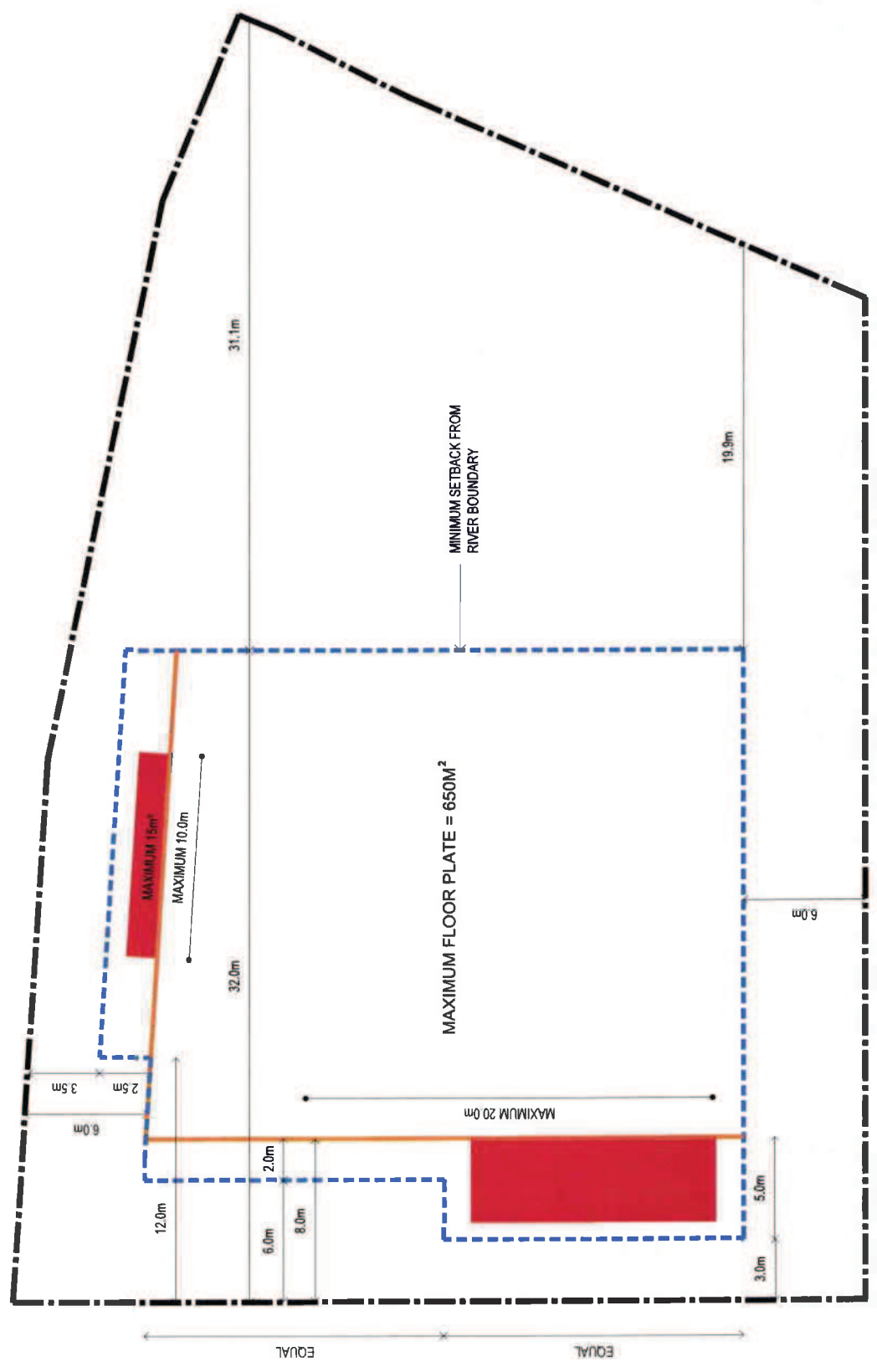


Figure 4.3.3 Proposed Building Envelope Controls: Lower Tower (Maximum height above ground 70m)

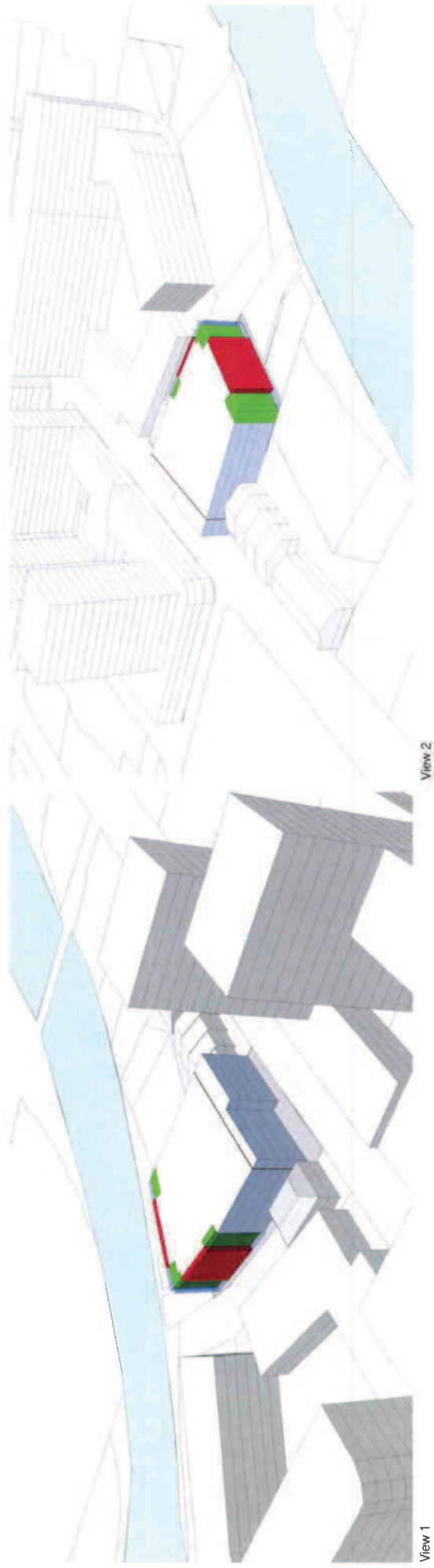
- KEYS
- SITE BOUNDARY
 - ABSOLUTE MINIMUM SETBACK
 - AVERAGE MINIMUM SETBACK
 - PERMITTED ENCROACHMENT
- NOTE:
- ON ANY FRONTAGE, ENCROACHMENTS + RECESSES CAN BE CONFIGURED IN ANY NUMBER AND AT ANY POINT(S) ALONG THAT FRONTAGE
 - MAXIMUM FLOOR PLATE AREA (FPA) INCLUDES EXTERNAL WALLS, ALL CIRCULATION AND BALCONIES, FOR A TYPICAL RESIDENTIAL FLOOR IN AN APARTMENT BUILDING. GFA IS APPROXIMATELY 75% OF FPA.



PLAN



Figure 4.3.4 Proposed Building Envelope Controls: Upper Tower (Maximum height above ground 120m)





View 1

Figure 4.3.7 Lower Tower Controls



View 1

Figure 4.3.8 Upper Tower Controls

4.4 ILLUSTRATIVE BUILDING DESIGNS

In order to test the proposed building controls in Sections 4.1 to 4.3, and explore the typical range of architectural designs that they permit, two illustrative concept designs have been prepared.

4.4.1 "Perpendicular"

This concept is broadly similar in its plan arrangement to the approved Development Consent for the subject site. (Figures 4.4.1.1, 4.4.1.2 and 4.4.1.3) The plan for the lower portion of the tower is T-shaped, with a relatively broad façade to George Street and the long dimension of the plan perpendicular to George Street and the river. As required by the controls, the tower sets back an average of 20m at Level 22. Except at the river frontage, the essence of the architectural language is straight lines at right angles.

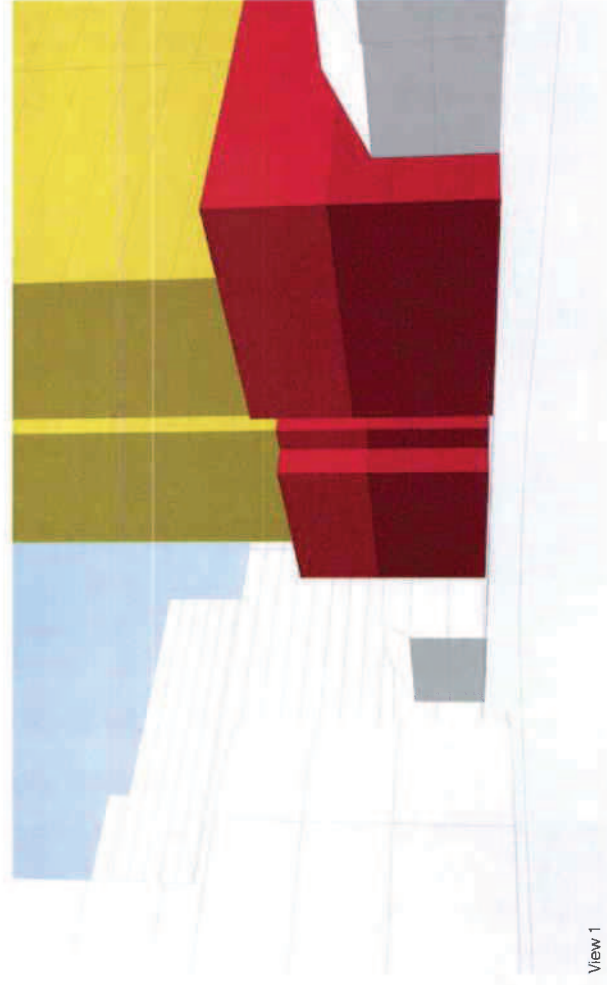


Figure 4.4.1.1 Illustrative Building Concept 1 - George Street View 1 (looking west) and View 2 (looking east)

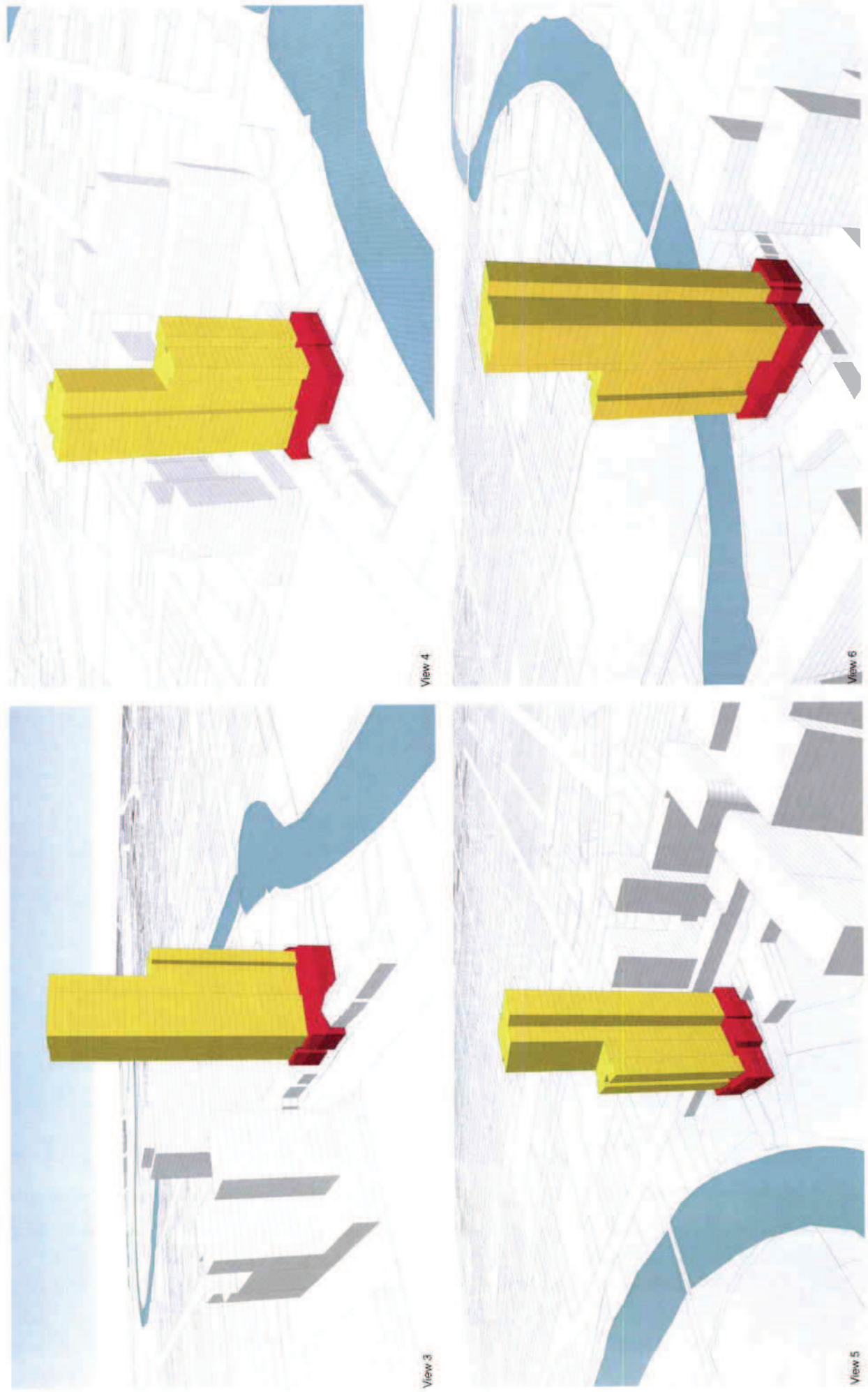


Figure 4.4.1.2 Illustrative Building Concept 1 - Views 3 to 6

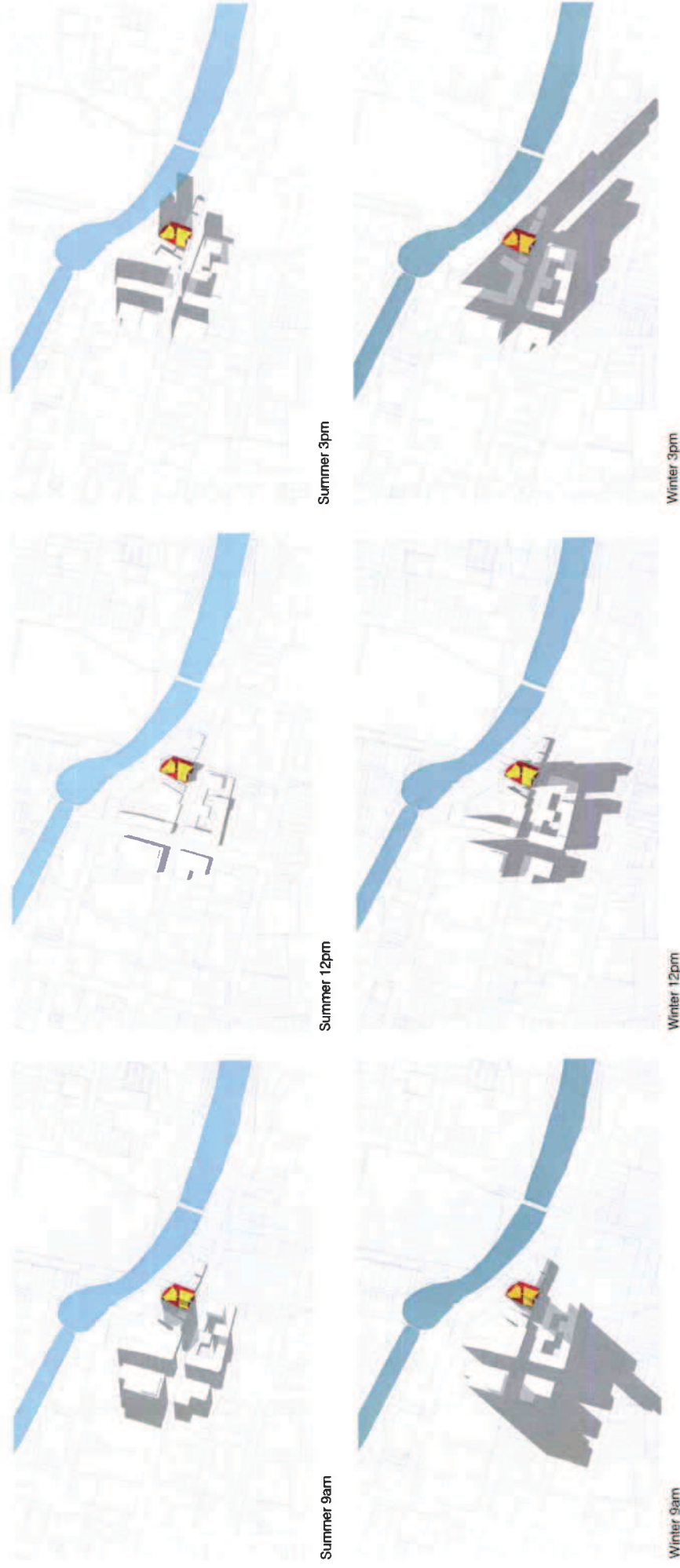
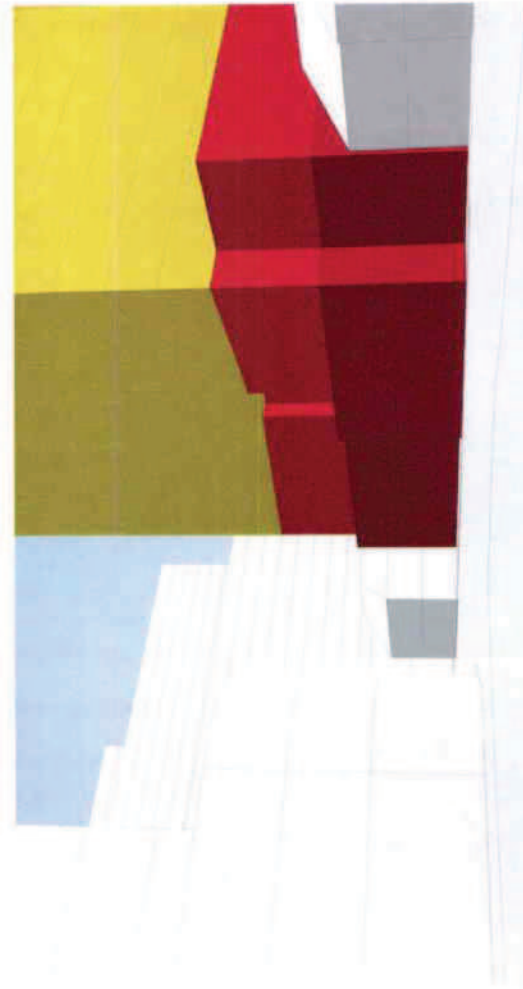


Figure 4.4.1.3 Shadow Analysis Concept 1

4.4.2 "Free-form"

This concept addresses each of the principle frontages of the site (including the easterly view orientation to the Sydney CBD) in a specific way (Figures 4.4.2.1, 4.4.2.2 and 4.4.2.3). The tower is articulated as two connected elements, the "river" tower rising to 22 stories and the "city" tower reaching 35 stories. Curves and sharpened angles characterize the architectural language.



View 1

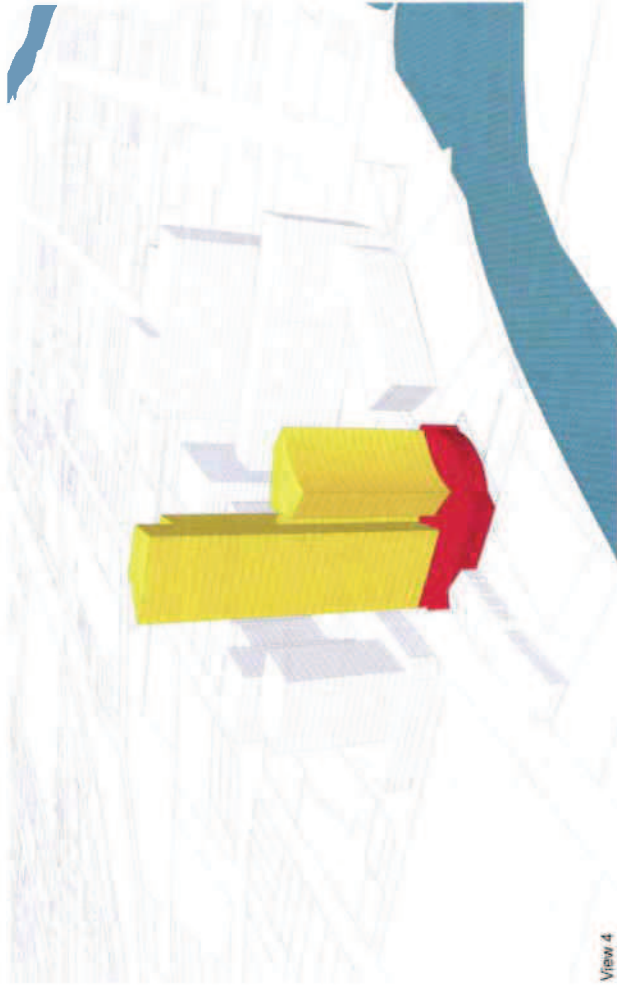
Figure 4.4.2.1 Illustrative Building Concept 2 - George Street View 1 (looking west and View 2 (looking east)



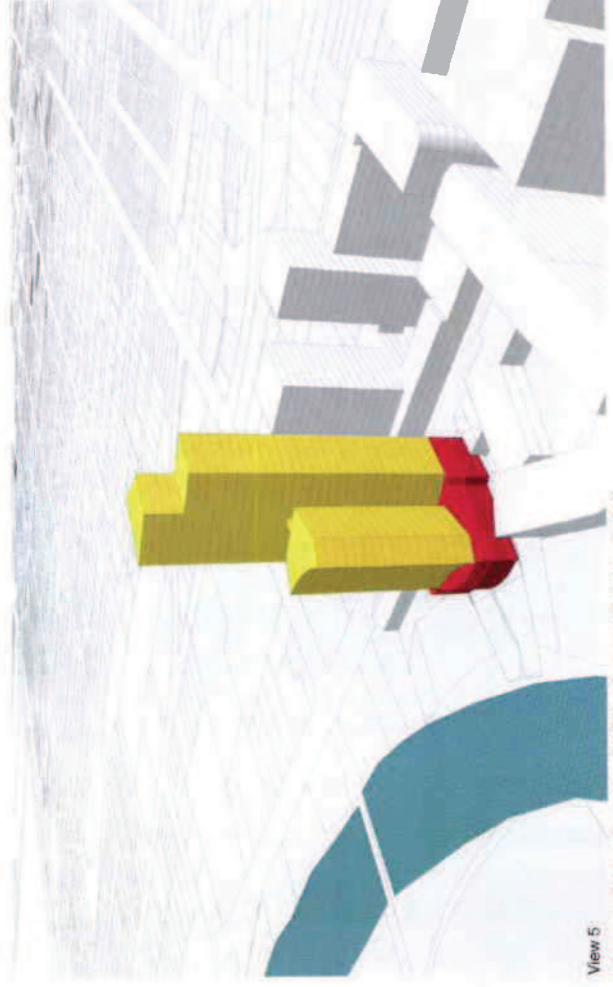
View 2



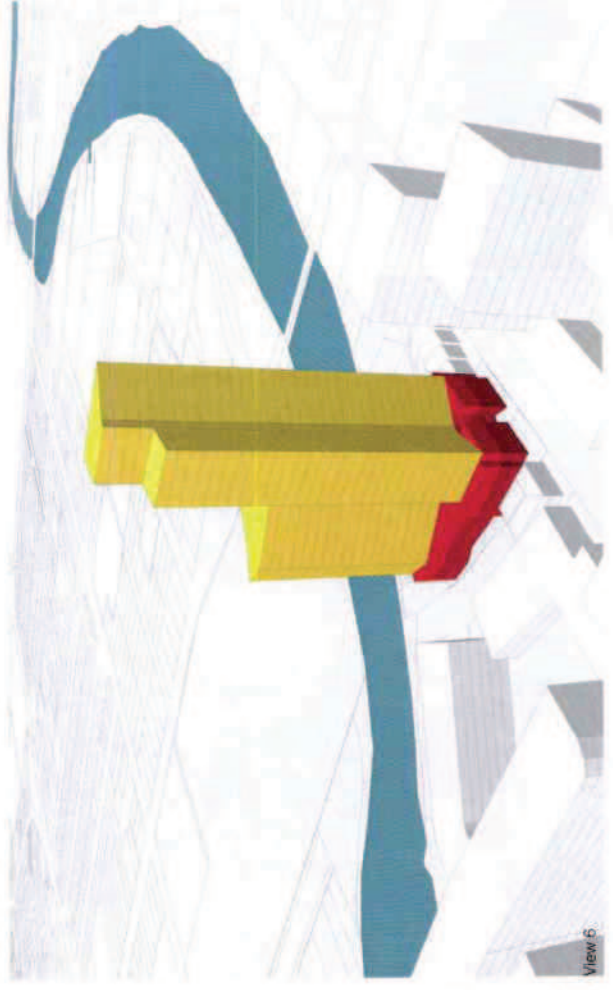
View 3



View 4



View 5



View 6

Figure 4.4.2.2 Illustrative Building Concept 2 - Views 3 to 6



Figure 4.4.2.3 Shadow Analysis Concept 2

5.0 CONCLUSION

The strategic location of the subject site makes it suitable for a new building which can contribute to the actualization of the State and Council's high level plans and strategies for the Parramatta CBD. There is real potential to deliver an outstanding urban design outcome for the northwest corner of the CBD. This report argues that the current limits on floor space and height should be increased significantly, so that these objectives can be more fully realized. There are no significant negative impacts arising from more intense development on the site which might offset the planning and urban design benefits.

With greater floor space and height comes a greater need to ensure appropriate building massing, form and ground level performance. To this end, controls for development on the site are proposed which include ground floor and podium configuration, primarily in relation to George Street and the Parramatta River Foreshore Reserve, and built form envelopes for the building base (podium), lower tower and upper tower. The envelope controls ensure adequate setbacks and separation from adjacencies and limit floor plate sizes to create a slender building.

Two design concepts for a building satisfying these proposed controls are presented, demonstrating that considerable architectural flexibility exists under the controls. This is important in ensuring that an outstanding work of architecture is constructed on the site.