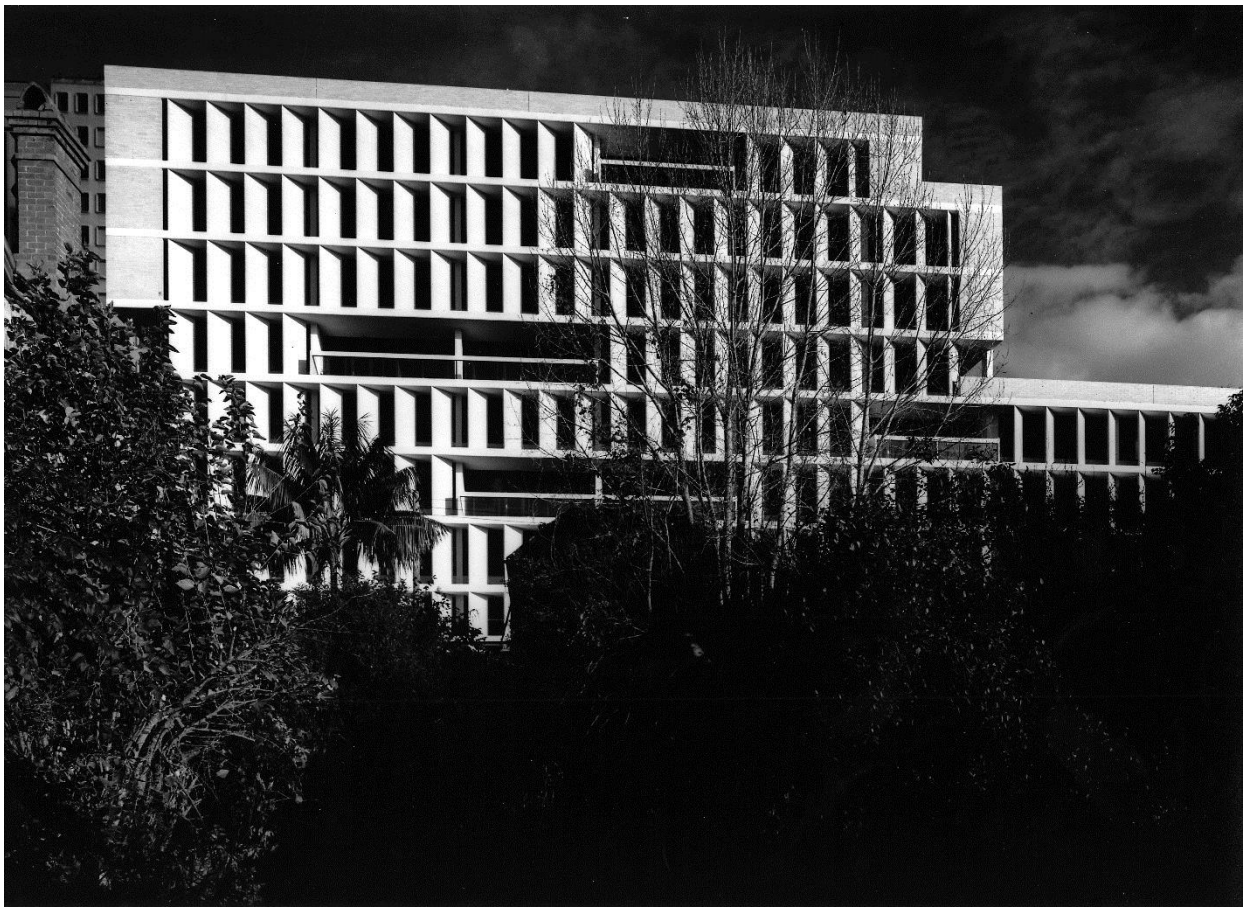
GML HERITAGE

41 McLaren Street, North Sydney

Heritage Assessment

Report prepared for Erolcene Pty Ltd and Claijade Pty Ltd

April 2017



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Report Register

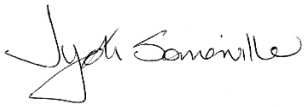
The following report register documents the development and issue of the report entitled 41 McLaren Street, North Sydney—Heritage Assessment, undertaken by GML Heritage Pty Ltd in accordance with its quality management system.

Job No.	Issue No.	Notes/Description	Issue Date
16-0040	1	Draft Report	28 February 2017
16-0040	1A	Amended Draft Report	3 March 2017
16-0040	2	Final Report	7 April 2017

Quality Assurance

GML Heritage Pty Ltd operates under a quality management system which has been certified as complying with the Australian/New Zealand Standard for quality management systems AS/NZS ISO 9001:2008.

The report has been reviewed and approved for issue in accordance with the GML quality assurance policy and procedures.

Project Director:	Jyoti Somerville
Issue No.	2
Signature	
Position:	Associate
Date:	7 April 2017

Contents Page

Appendix F
Extracts from Ward Street Precinct Masterplan, Draft, dated 5 December 2017 relevant to 41 McLaren Street, North Sydney.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Scope of Report

This heritage assessment of Simsmetal House, 41 McLaren Street, North Sydney, has been prepared by GML Heritage Pty Ltd (GML) for the owners of the site, Erolcene Pty Ltd and Claijade Pty Ltd, to provide an appropriately researched report that identifies and evaluates the heritage significance of the place and the components and attributes that contribute to its heritage values. The site is currently identified as an item of environmental heritage significance by North Sydney Council in their Local Environmental Plan 2013, as discussed in Section 1.3.

The report has been prepared to assist planning for the future of the site by:

- identifying relevant heritage-related issues to inform development options; and
- providing a framework for appropriate recommendations to mitigate potential adverse heritage impacts for proposed development as part of a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) submitted with a Development Application (DA) to North Sydney Council.

Simsmetal House was designed in 1971 by the architect Harry Seidler and it is one of a handful of small office developments he worked on in this decade, until larger multistorey commercial and institutional projects occupied more of his output.

The history of the current site development and its relationship to various themes in North Sydney's evolution are addressed in Sections 2.0 and 3.0 of this report. Section 3.0 also provides further information on the current physical fabric of the site, focusing on its key components and attributes and their condition. More detailed supporting documents—including samples of the original architectural and engineering drawings, contemporary accounts of the building and recent measured drawings of the site—are included as appendices.

Section 4.0 includes an assessment of the heritage significance of the site and Section 5.0 concludes with recommendations for future action.

1.2 The Site

The location and site layout of Simsmetal House, 41 McLaren Street, North Sydney, is shown in Figures 1.1 to 1.3.

1.3 Heritage Status of Site

1.3.1 Background

The subject site, identified as Simsmetal House in its heritage inventory, is listed as a local heritage item on the North Sydney Local Environmental Plan 2013 (NSLEP 2013). The State Heritage Inventory (SHI) listing for Simsmetal House (included as Appendix A to this report) includes the following Statement of Significance:

> *A good example of a five storey, concrete framed office building in the Twentieth Century International style with strong horizontality in its elevations. An example of the work of the prominent Sydney architect, Harry Seidler. An office building of distinction which by its strong horizontality and the integration of much planting, is pleasant and attractive not only as streetscape as spatially as well.*

The subject site is not listed on the State Heritage Register (SHR) or the National Trust of Australia register.

A search of the AHIMS register indicates that there are currently no Aboriginal sites or places listed within the subject site.

1.3.2 Heritage Items in the Vicinity

The location of Simsmetal House in relation to adjacent heritage items—including individual sites and a Conservation Area (CA 19)—is shown in Figure 1.4.

1.4 Methodology and Terminology

The approach, methodology, assessment procedures, criteria and recommendations of the report have been prepared in accordance with current best practice methodology, requirements and standards. The site analysis and assessment of significance uses methodology and terminology consistent with the *NSW Heritage Manual* guidelines, including particularly 'Assessing Heritage Significance'[1] and the guidelines of the *Australia ICOMOS Burra Charter, 2013* (the Burra Charter).[2]

1.5 Authorship and Acknowledgements

This report has been prepared by:

- Jyoti Somerville, Associate, who wrote the report and formulated policies; and
- Sheridan Burke, Partner, who provided policy input and reviewed the report.

1.6 Acknowledgments

The assistance of the following people with the preparation of this report is gratefully acknowledged:

- Rick McEwan, Erolcene Pty Ltd (formerly Business Development Manager, Lipman Pty Ltd);
- Michael Harrison and Teasheen Chuah, Architectus Pty Ltd;
- Max Bowen, formerly Max G Bowen (Australia) Pty Ltd and Jadine, Bowen and Lipman Pty Ltd; and
- John Curro, Harry Seidler and Associates, Architects.

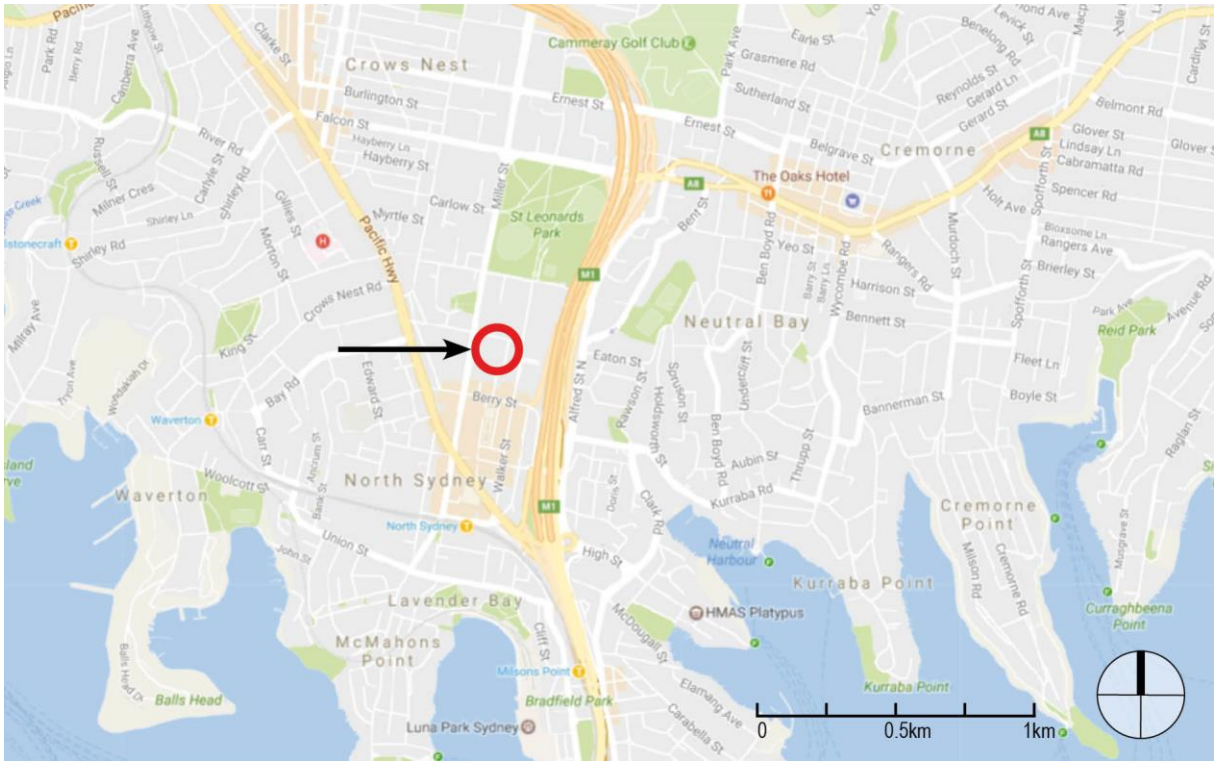


Figure 1.1 Map showing the location of 41 McLaren Street, North Sydney. (Source: Google Earth with GML additions, 2017)

Figure 1.2 Site plan showing the layout of 41 McLaren Street (bounded by the red outline) and the staggered massing of the blocks comprising Simsmetal House, the associated roof top terraces and plant-room on the southernmost roof. (Source: SIX Maps with GML additions, 2017)

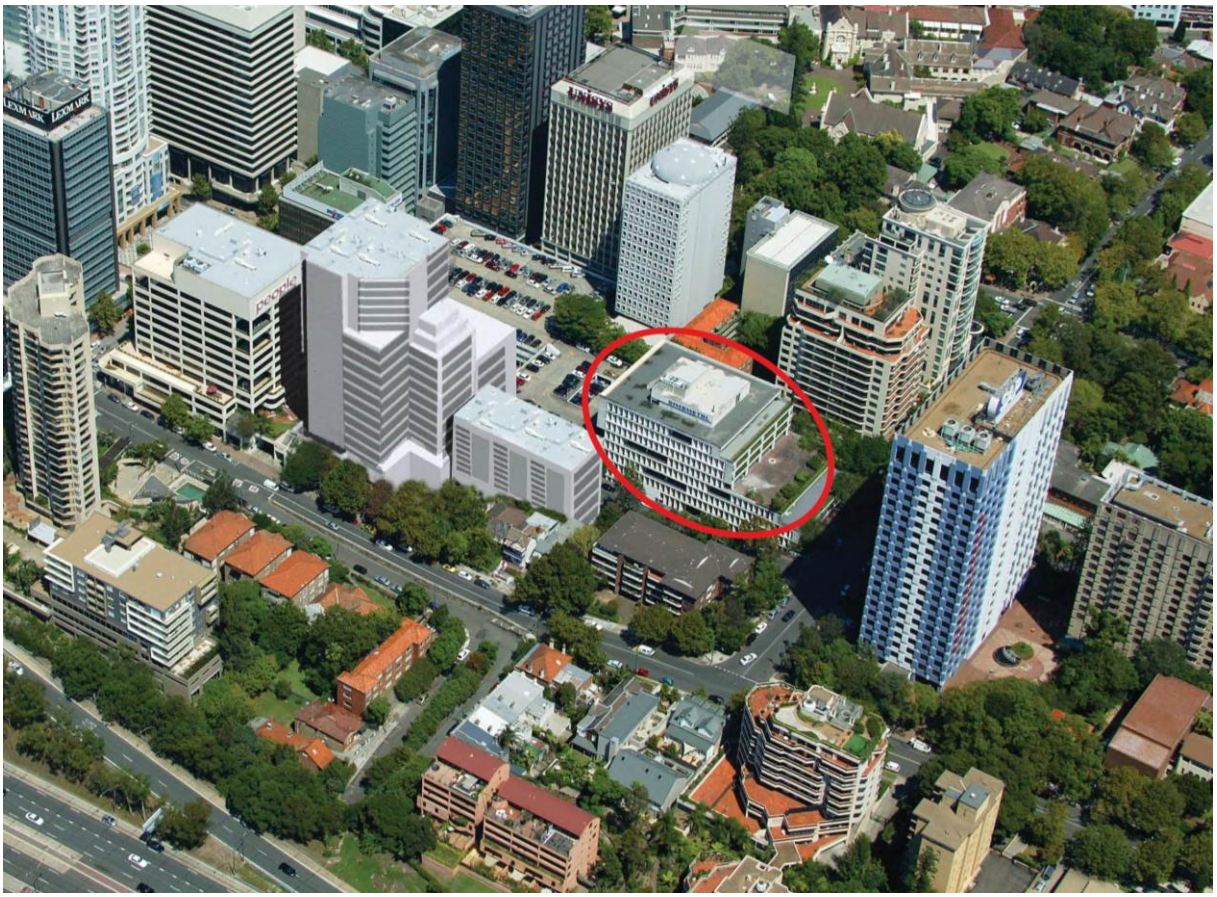


Figure 1.3 Oblique aerial view of 41 McLaren Street today (circled in red) and its setting—including the multistorey car park (to the south), the 1968 Sabemo building and red tile-roofed Vista del Mar (to the west), the two modern apartment block towers fronting McLaren Street (to the northwest), the Northside Gardens towers (on the opposite side of McLaren Street), the five-storey apartment block between Harnett and Walker Streets (to the northeast) and modern office block between Harnett Street and the rear boundary of a group of early residences fronting Walker Street (to the southeast). (Source: 41 McLaren Street Residential Concept Study, prepared by Harry Seidler & Associates for Erolcene Pty Ltd & Claijade Pty Ltd, July 2016, with GML addition, 2017)

Figure 1.4 Extract from North Sydney Local Environmental Plan (LEP) (2013) heritage map showing the site of 41 McLaren Street in North Sydney (outlined in blue) and heritage items in the vicinity. (Source: North Sydney Council with GML additions, 2017)

1.7 Endnotes

1 NSW Heritage Office 2002, 'Preparation of Conservation Management Plans', a *NSW Heritage Manual* update, Department of Urban Affairs and Planning, Sydney.

2 Australia ICOMOS Inc, *The Burra Charter: the Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance 2013*, Australia ICOMO Inc, Burwood, VIC.

2.0 Site History and Development

2.1 Early Site History

2.1.1 Origins

The township of St Leonards—the original name for North Sydney—was formally gazetted in 1838, by which stage the town centre grid had been laid out, with the present Miller and Walker Streets aligned north–south and Lavender, Blue, Mount and Berry Streets running east–west (Figure 1.1).

By 1887, when Higinbotham and Robinson published their detailed 'Map of St Leonards on the North Shore—Parish of Willoughby', this layout had been consolidated and further expanded following the boom in land sales as the popularity of the suburbs north of the harbour for suburban development grew (Figure 2.1).

The location of the subject site within the 1887 parish map—on lots 10 and 11 of Section 5, bounded by McLaren, Miller and Harnett Streets—depicts the lot layout and ownership as at 29 October 1853 when it was part of allotments granted by purchase to J Williams (Lot 10) and J Greenfield (Lot 11) (Figure 2.2).

2.1.2 Subsequent Subdivisions, Development and Consolidation

Subsequent consolidations, sales and resubdivisions of lots 10 and 11, culminating in a three-lot subdivision in 1873, saw the construction of three separate residences within the boundaries of the subject site by 1892, as shown in the detail survey plans of North Sydney dating to this year (Figure 2.3).

The centre block (Lot 5 of the 1873 subdivision) with an address of 12 Harnett Street was occupied by the Stephenson family from 1883 until it was sold to Harnett Investments (a company which included Harry Seidler and Associates, Architects, the engineers P.O. Miller Milston and Ferris and C Richards) in June 1968.

The southernmost block (Lot 7 of the 1873 subdivision), with the address 10 Harnett Street, comprised a residence known as Glenrock, which had a succession of different owners until purchased by MGB (Max G Bowen) Properties Pty Ltd in March 1971 and subsequently demolished.

The lot facing McLaren Street, which contained a spacious, single storey residence called Girton (built in 1882–83), remained relatively undisturbed until 1942 when an area of 17 ½ perches across the north frontage of the block was subdivided off (Figure 2.4) and sold to a Sydney builder (James Stewart) who erected a small block of flats (Figure 2.5). The flats remained in use until August 1970 when the site was purchased by MGB Properties.

By the early 1970s, as contemporary descriptions and views of North Sydney demonstrate, the physical character and functional role of the suburb had started its dramatic transition from residential to a business/commercial centre. In 1968, for example, the striking new multistorey Sabemo building located to the southwest of the current site (with a frontage to Miller Street) was completed, providing a foretaste of the modern commercial tower within a still largely low rise and low density setting (Figure 2.6). At that time, the context of 41 McLaren Street contained a large number and variety of residential types, ranging from substantial Victorian houses and institutional buildings set in spacious landscaped grounds, small early terraces (some of which remain today) through to a variety of interwar and postwar developments (Figures 1.3 and 2.6).

And it was in this diverse and rapidly changing physical, social and financial context that plans were made to consolidate the four lots comprising the current site and demolish the existing buildings—comprising the three nineteenth-century residences and modest 1940s block of units fronting McLaren Street, as shown in Figure 2.7—to allow for new commercial office development.

2.1.3 Securing and Developing the Site

The company responsible for the consolidation of the site lot and development of Simsmetal House, the Jardine, Bowen and Lipman Group, was formed in 1970. According to Max Bowen, one of the original directors, Jardine Matheson, provided financing for the project, Bowen himself was the project manager and was responsible for the building design and approvals (as Max G Bowen [Australia] Pty Ltd) (MGB), and Phillip Lipman (of Phillip Lipman Constructions Pty Ltd) was responsible for the building construction.[1]

In the same year the company negotiated acquisition of the former Lot 5 (in the centre of the site) from Harnett Investments to include in the consolidated site, and it was at this stage that Harry Seidler (who, along with the engineers Miller Milston and Ferris, was the then owner of Lot 5) was asked to prepare the architectural and engineering documentation for the proposed development. As Max Bowen recalled, he had known Harry Seidler since 1959 and was familiar with many of his building projects, so it was a combination of this background, as well as the ownership of the lot being negotiated, that led to this choice of architect. The structural engineering work was, however, carried out by Ove Arup and Partners, while Miller Milston and Ferris worked on Seidler's Glen Street Offices—with Luigi Nervi as consultant—which was being designed at the same time.[2]

Lot 5 was then able to be amalgamated with the small lot on the north of the site fronting McLaren Street (which contained the 1940s block units) purchased by MGB in 1970, and the former Lot 7 (10 Harnett Street) to complete the current site and allow the construction of the proposed development to proceed. The site was consolidated under its current title (Lot 1 DP 557103) in 1972 in the ownership of Jardine Bowen and Lipman Pty Ltd (Figure 2.8).

2.2 Simsmetal House—The Early Years

2.2.1 Introduction

Harry Seidler and Associates were commissioned to design the proposed new commercial office building in 1970, with Max G Bowen (Australia) Pty Ltd identified as the client on the documentation and Development Application (DA 70/10725) submitted to North Sydney Council. Amendments were made to the initial proposed development in response to various consent conditions imposed by North Sydney Council, as discussed in Section 2.2.2 below.

Detailing of, and amendments to, the documentation continued into 1972, as shown on the set of archived records (including architectural drawings) subsequently lodged with the State Library of New South Wales by Harry Seidler and Associates. A sample of original plans, including architectural and engineering documentation, is included in Appendix B (architectural documentation) and Appendix C (engineering documentation for reinforced brick sunshades).

2.2.2 Planning Controls

The design and construction of Simsmetal House coincided with a period of review of planning controls in North Sydney, with frequent and sometimes quite dramatic changes over the subsequent decades.

Under the 1963 Planning Scheme 'which allowed for larger developments and encouraged the commercial boom'[3] with its 8.5:1 floor space ratio (FSR), tall commercial tower developments were

constructed in the North Sydney CBD, the most notable in the vicinity of the subject site being the Sabemo building fronting Miller Street, adjacent to the southwest corner of the subject site, as shown in Figures 2.6 and 1.3. (The tall white Sabemo building is located to the left of both of these images, behind [to the southwest of] the site and the earlier, three-storey brick apartment block, Vista del Mar, which is located immediately west of the subject site.) By the beginning of the 1970s the State Planning Authority (SPA) was expressing its concern about the resultant 'congestion' of the CBD and 'recommended a much lower floor space ratio … a maximum of 2:1 for commercial zones'.[4] At the same time, North Sydney Council planners were:

> *working on an ambitious series of control plans … aimed at controlling individual areas … in response to the mounting protests by residents over the highrise development they saw shooting up around them … such plans would benefit residents and developers … to know what type of development they would be permitted.*[5]

In this complicated planning environment, the initial Development Application (DA 70/10725) 'to erect a 10-storey commercial office building'[6] was subject to a series of controls relating to FSR, height, site coverage, setback, provision of carparking and the 'lane on the western side of the property described as a right-of-way and said to be the property of Sabemo.'[7] While the initial conditions requested 'the building to be redesigned as a five-storey building covering 80 per cent of the site with setbacks to be discussed with the Town Planner and Building Surveyor and the overall height of the building … not to exceed RL270, and all carparking to be below Harnett Street level',[8] revised plans were finally approved for the present structure with its three-storey front and seven-storey rear sections in June 1971 subject to 'a further report regarding shadows cast on properties to the east'.[9]

Other consent conditions relevant to the final design and layout of the site included:

- widening the right of way 'to provide a carriageway width of at least 24 feet and the area of the site required for this purpose shall be dedicated free of cost to the Council';
- landscaping at ground level 'shall provide for the retention of the existing trees on the McLaren Street frontage'—which resulted in the semi-circular cut-out in the overhead awning roof and a curved concrete bench around the perimeter of the retained tree at the east end of the frontage; and
- providing, at the corner of McLaren and Harnett Streets, 'a vision cut-off splay 12 feet by 12 feet across that corner in perpetuity, such as to allow complete visibility free of buildings up to a height of 12 feet above kerb level'.[10]

The three-storey height limit of the front block of the building (to McLaren Street) also matches the planning controls placed on development (also by Max Bowen) of the adjacent site to the west (37–39 McLaren Street), submitted in June 1971 (as approved in February 1972):

> *the height of any development not exceeding 3 storeys above the mean level of the street frontage but in any case not to exceed the height of the adjacent building to the west (2UE).*[11]

By 1975, greater uniformity of planning controls was made possible with North Sydney Council's Interim Development Order (IDO) 60, which included a recommended FSR of 5:1.[12] (This control appears to have been something of a compromise between the 1963 Planning Scheme Ordinance FSR of 8.5:1 and the State Planning Authority's early 1970s recommendation for a maximum 2:1 FSR 'to limit congestion in North Sydney's CBD'.[13]) In the meantime, the significantly taller development on the north side of McLaren Street opposite the site (another of Max Bowen's developments, the twin towers of Northside Gardens) had been completed.

2.2.3 Design and Construction

Form and Massing

The building consisted of a relatively modest sized block of commercial offices, its overall height and massing reflecting contemporary planning controls. In an early published article on the building, the architects wrote of how:

> *zoning requirements dictated a low three-storey block on the northern part of the site, and a limit of seven floors on the rest. This resulted in an irregular stepped building with a section which made the roofs of the lower parts accessible to the higher parts and led to the development of terraces outside all offices.*[14]

In his own recollections, Max Bowen also recalled the role of the planning controls in limiting the building height and massing, a specified FSR for commercial sites in the North Sydney Municipality, but he was an enthusiastic advocate for the rooftop terraces. These all faced north and were located at the third, fourth and seventh levels of the building (Figure 1.3). Smaller enclosures for an air conditioning plant and lift motor room were provided in the centre of the roof to the top floor. While set back a few metres from the front (north) and rear (south) site boundaries, the new building was constructed using the full width of the site, with its east elevation facing Harnett Street and west elevation fronting a shared right of way which provided access to the rear of the Sabemo building (1968) and early twentieth-century block of apartments, Vista del Mar (which is shown in the 1968 view at Figure 2.6) which remains to the present day (Figures 1.2 and 1.3). Vehicular access to the two basement parking levels was provided off Harnett Street, with the slope of the site allowing direct access to different levels, connected internally through half-level ramps.

Layout

While a selection of the large number of archived architectural plans is included as an appendix to this report as historical records of the original layout and detailing (Appendix B), the set of presentation plans prepared for subsequent use in published articles provide a clearer and useful summary of the key attributes of the building layout (Figures 2.9a to 2.9b). As these drawings show, the building footprint had a simple, rectangular layout with a regular grid of reinforced concrete columns comprising the structural framing for the building. Angled vertical masonry fins secured between the over-sailing edges of the floor and roof slabs provided sun-shading to the glazed walls along the east and west elevations. The architect's account of the building structure and materials noted:

> *The structure generally is of reinforced concrete with prestressed flat plate floors and supporting columns set back; terraces are cantilevered out beyond them. The projecting fins, or sunbreakers, and certain areas of solid walling are of 16 in. by 4 in. [400 mm by 100mm] concrete blocks made with white cement. Continuous flower boxes of the same material form parapets to the terraces.*[15]

Asymmetrically arranged, recessed balconies on the east elevation of some of the upper floors of the building (Figure 2.10), as well as the terraces, allowed appreciation of 'the view over Sydney Harbour [which] is magnificent from the upper part of the building'.[16]

Functionally, the building complex was designed to include two self-contained and separate occupancies with the front three-storey block able to be separately owned and occupied. Access to both blocks which made up the building was provided:

> *through a freestanding concrete entrance gateway, over a wide covered concourse with a flamboyant curved design on the floor of reconstructed stone paving. A black steel sculpture on a marble pedestal, by Clement Meadmore, [created] a focal point near the entrance.*[17]

A shallow set of steps from street level provided access to the concourse at the northwest end of the McLaren Street façade (where the site's ground level was highest) with planter boxes along the west side of the walkway to provide a retaining wall against the higher ground level of the right of way/access road along the west boundary (Figures 2.9a and 2.17, 2.17a and 2.20).

The main body of offices over seven floors was entered via a spacious glazed lobby towards the south end of the ground floor concourse, with a bank of lifts serving the upper levels (Figures 2.9a and 2.20). The self-contained three-storey office fronting McLaren Street had its own smaller entry foyer off the northern end of the concourse as well as access to the large open terrace on the first floor level roof (Figures 2.9a and 2.13). Above this level, each floor had a narrow recessed balcony along the north elevation, contained within the concrete framing of the building (Figures 2.9b and 2.11).

The south elevation of the building was designed to front the multistorey 'brick and concrete parking station' on the adjacent site to the south, with only the terraces to the upper three floor levels and roof slab projecting over the alignment of the glazed wall to this elevation (Figures 2.8 and 2.10). Views of this elevation were generally restricted to the roof of the adjacent carpark, with some partial views of the upper floors from the south ends of the right of way (to the west) and Harnett Street (to the east).

Exterior Components

The three major elevations of the building (to the north, east and west) were the most visually and architecturally notable features of its design, where the simple form and massing of the structure was enlivened by the strong modulation of its façades. With over a decade of commercial building work exploiting the visually dramatic, as well as functionally practical, uses of sun-shading in the design of façades,[18] Seidler's work on the McLaren Street offices used familiar forms and elements in new arrangements and with new materials.

On the west elevation, the vertical fins (first used by Seidler at a smaller scale in the Printers Union Building in Sydney in 1959–60) are similar in form and arrangement to the Seidler Offices as Milsons Point (designed in the same year as McLaren Street), though set back within the plane of the building's façade rather than projecting from it (Figure 2.16). On the east elevation, the insertion of asymmetrically arranged recessed balconies breaks up the repeated pattern of vertical sunshades. The provision of sizable balconies on this side of the building also reflects the fact that wide-ranging views of North Sydney and the harbour were—and still to an extent are—available from the upper floors of the building. The use of cement blocks for the sunshade fins was also a change from the usual concrete construction used in Seidler's work as, for example, on the sunshades of the Milsons Point offices[19] (refer to page 12 of Appendix D for Milsons Point offices).

Set well back from angled fins (which extended from floor to ceiling height between projecting concrete slabs) were the windows which comprised:

> *sealed double-glazed units with grey tinted glass and grey plastic-covered steel frames, emphasizing the crispness of the white expressed structure. The tinted glass helps to reduce glare and heat as well as concealing office clutter from the outside.*[20]

Unlike his other commercial buildings from this time, the front (north) elevation of Simsmetal House was also intended to be softened by planting along the edges of stepped terraces as well as the street-fronting boundary and open (west) side of the entrance concourse (Figures 2.11, 12 and 13). (In this detail, as well as its relatively low height and stepped form, the new building displayed a similar character to Seidler's stepped terrace residential work, most notably the 1968 Ling Apartments in Elizabeth Bay.[21]) More unusual in both Seidler's work and contemporary commercial office developments in Sydney was

the layout of large circular garden beds on the third floor terrace intended as a recreation area for the occupants of the front (three-storey) office (Figures 2.13 and 2.22).

Contemporary records of the building, including photographic images and written reviews, also reflect the importance of the building's exterior to its overall architectural character and public presentation. This is, for example, clearly demonstrated in the early photographs of the site by Max Dupain who, with his usual skill in recording and interpreting Seidler's work, captured the key attributes of the building's form and detailing in a set of images dating to 1973 (Figures 2.11 and 2.13 to 2.17). Dupain's images also recorded the Clement Meadmore sculpture—with its large bronze twisted, angular form—originally set on a marble plinth at the south end of the entrance concourse, contrasting with the exuberant curving forms of its floor finish (Figures 2.17, 2.17a and 2.20). In his recollections of this time, Max Bowen told of how Harry Seidler had seen a marquette of this work and recommended that it be purchased for the site—this following the usual practice in many of his major buildings to include specifically chosen art works (as, for example, in Australia Square and the MLC building in Sydney CBD). Following up on this recommendation, Max Bowen viewed and then purchased the sculpture, having it installed in the concourse on the completion of the building works.[22]

Another set of undated photographs, taken before the greenery in the planting boxes along the northern edge of the roof terraces was as well established as in the 1973 images, provides additional streetscape views of the west and north elevations of the building from the north side of McLaren Street (Figures 2.12 and 2.18 to 2.19).

In his 1973 publication on the work of Harry Seidler,[23] Peter Blake discusses both the influences (via Le Corbusier and 'his teacher Marcel Breuer') and solutions reflected in the Australian architect's work, using the photograph by Max Dupain of the east elevation of the McLaren Street offices (Figure 2.15) as the key example of his use of 'fixed vertical reinforced masonry blades'[24] (sunshade fins). A more extensive article on the building, together with the contemporary Milsons Point offices of Harry Seidler and Associates, in 1975 in the English publication *Concrete Quarterly*[25] featured the Dupain photographs of both the east and west elevations (Figures 2.14 and 2.16), as well as the second and third floor terraces (Figure 2.13) and entrance concourse (Figure 2. 17), plans of the structural layout (Figures 2.9a and 9b), and rationale for the building's form and façade detailing. Given the focus of the magazine, the various uses of cement and concrete in the building were also noted, ranging from the structural system (columns, slabs, etc) to the cement blocks used for the sunshade fins and the textured, paved finish of the entrance concourse with its 'flamboyant curved design'.[26]

Interiors

The main lobby to the southern offices (at the south end of the building) comprised a rectangular space with glazed walls to three elevations, distinguished by the same 'flamboyant curved design' as the concourse on both the floor and walls of the waiting and lift areas (Figures 2.20 and 21). The self-contained three-storey office had its own small entry foyer off the northern end of the concourse which was more simply decorated, but featured a centrally located concrete stair with the half-round landing and sculptural form typical of Seidler's work. A large circular skylight through the roof terrace above provided light directly over the landing (Figure 2.17b).

More generally, the interior office layout and facilities were straightforwardly planned and simply detailed, designed to accommodate contemporary fitouts, finishes and services within the established structural grid.

2.2.4 Relationship to the Work of Harry Seidler

At this stage of his career, Harry Seidler was a highly experienced architect of renown, both in Australia and internationally. From his initial mostly residential projects and smaller institutional buildings (from the late 1940s through the 1950s), by 1959–60 Harry Seidler and Associates was working on a series of substantial projects—such as Blues Point Tower Apartments, North Sydney, the CIBA Administration and Warehouse building, Lane Cove, an initial scheme for Australia Square (with IM Pei) and the Lend Lease House Offices in Sydney—and it was these 'major commissions that marked the decline of the small single house as the chief focus of the practice'.[27]

Within little over a year, major commissions—including particularly Australia Square in the heart of the Sydney CBD—established Seidler's name and reputation, both nationally and internationally. By 1971, when 41 McLaren Street was being designed, Seidler was working on three other architecturally notable office buildings, the Trade Group Offices in Canberra, the MLC Centre in the Sydney CBD and his own offices in Milsons Point. While all four buildings were unmistakably from the same design hand—sharing similar materials (primarily cement and concrete), simplicity of overall form and massing, and strongly modulated façades exploiting sun-shading components—the other three buildings featured the (also unmistakable) work of Seidler's long-term collaborator, the Italian engineer Luigi Nervi.

In comparison with these structures, the McLaren Street offices reflected a simpler and more traditional approach to structure and construction, borne out of a more limited brief and/or budget perhaps (and not recorded in the literature) and intended for a specific return on investment, as befitted its origins and purpose. In this context, the simplicity of the building's layout and interiors is a logical outcome of its role and probably also the use of cement bricks to form the sunshade fins along the east and west elevations (rather than the usual exposed concrete). At the same time, both the architect himself and those interested in his work drew attention to the particular architectural and aesthetic attributes of the building's exterior—which marked it out as the work of its architect—arising from both its formal and sculptural qualities as well as its relationship to its site and setting. In this regard, the building as a whole was another expression of his early philosophical approach to residential design:

> *... I welcomed the imposition of economy on the design of houses—I felt that it is only by making progressive design available to people of average means, that Modern design would become universally accepted. To achieve reality, buildability, meant employing direct and minimal means, which also seemed in line with the zeal instilled in us by Gropius, to help building a better world for everyone.*[28]

In the words of the current building owners, the building was 'an example of an economical developers building using the cheapest modular Calsil bricks, Plasteel Windows and no set-downs on spandrels around the perimeter'.[29]

2.2.5 Early Tenants and Use

As the building neared completion, the owners Jardine Bowen & Lipman included an artist's perspective of 41 McLaren Street (from the northeast) in an early advertisement for their various office developments in North Sydney (Figure 2.23), which described its desirable features thus: 'A unique terraced building. Balconies, gardens and views. Large floors—and ready January 1973.'[30]

Letting agents (including Jones Lang Wootten, Peter Hill Pty Ltd and Richard Stanton and Sons) also mentioned the site's landscaping features as well as the cost and availability of specific floor areas in their marketing to potential customers. Applications to North Sydney Council in the early 1970s for office partitioning (recorded in North Sydney Council Building Registers) noted a number of fitouts lodged by Moyle Partition Systems, Pty Ltd.[31] The building owners also established their own office fitout company

(Leevers Modular Services Pty Ltd) to provide design and construction services for tenants of the building and thus assist with the marketing and sale of office space.[32]

Among the original tenants, the most notable was Ove Arup and Partners, the structural engineers for 41 McLaren Street, who occupied the self-contained (three-storey) front office. As Max Bowen recalled in later years, having Over Arup as tenants, gave 'credibility' to the office as a desirable location.[33] Certainly this well-known international firm had gained local fame through their work with Utzon on the Opera House in the 1960s, as Harry Seidler, one of Utzon's vocal supporters, knew. Max Bowen and Phillip Lipman also initially set up offices of their own in the rear (seven-storey) wing, moving into other accommodation when new tenants were available to take up leases in the building. More generally, Max Bowen reported that the offices were 'easy to rent' and they 'never had a rental problem', with the building meeting the basic requirement of the brief to be 'commercially successful'.[34]

Even after five years, when Ove Arup had moved out of the front office and a computer firm (Facom) took over the tenancy of the front office, they reported that despite:

> *internal arrangements [in an office] designed for one purpose [private professional style offices] that has left some [layout] problems when converted to another [a lot of operators in an open-plan situation].*
>
> *The office qualifies as outstanding in the quality of its perimeter accommodation and the magnificent roof garden that looks like a bushland setting on the third (sic actually the second) floor in McLaren Street.*
>
> *All the executive offices and some of the reception areas have a good, airy view—some of the harbour—and the boardroom and major executive offices look out on to the roof garden.* [This was still laid out with the circular garden beds and mature tree planting].
>
> *The peace on the other side of the window makes for a quiet, creative feeling in the offices within.*
>
> *It's a good place to work, everybody says—and when Facom has occasionally checked up on what the market has to offer as an alternative, it has found nothing to equal it in the same rent bracket.*[35]

2.3 Changes to the Site

2.3.1 The 1980s and 1990s

By the early 1980s, Jardine Bowen and Lipman made plans to sell 'their' building to MEPC (Metropolitan Estate Property Company), a British-based property investment and development business.[36] Changes to both the occupants and fitouts of the tenancies followed, as well as more substantial building alterations by the final years of the decade.

When the architectural practice Travis Partners moved into the front office in 1986, they:

> *were required to add a fire escape from the north/west corner of levels 1 & 2 of Building A* [the front three-storey office] *… The* [new] *stairs and security grilles were added in 1986.*[37]

The original Clement Meadmore sculpture had also been removed from the front concourse by this date (though included with the building when sold by the original owners)[38] and circular garden beds (shown in Figure 2.22) had been removed from the Level 2 terrace.

In 1988, MEPC undertook a major refurbishment of the ground floor, colonnade, entry portico and landscaping, including the following works:

- *Metal (Luxalon) ceilings removed and replaced with fibrous cement sheeting.*
- *Exposed aggregate paving removed and replaced with pink and grey tiles.*

- *Foyer entry redesigned with segmented curved frameless glass.*
- *Curved granite garden seats installed.*
- *Main steps replaced with curved steps.*
- *All shop fronts replaced with frameless glazing.*
- *Pipe tube building name over entrance door* [installed].
- *Portico removed and replaced with a large pipe sign.*[39]

A drawing prepared for the building owners in 1987[40] shows some of these and other planned changes, though not all were implemented as shown (Figure 2.24).

2.3.2 The Present Day

Change of Ownership and Upgrading Works

In December 1999, the present owners Erolcene and Claijade bought the building from the AMP after they had procured it from MEPC.[41] Measured drawings of the building prepared in 2000 provide a useful record of the building at this time, including changes made to layout and fabric (supplemented by handwritten notes on printed copies of the plans provided by the current owners).[42] Under the new owners, a range of works were carried out and/or identified as needing to be done, included the following:

- *The tiles in the colonnade…were replaced with the current granite looking tiles.*
- *The front steps and portico were redesigned and rebuilt.*
- *The foyer was refurbished.*
- *Lifts refurbished.*
- *Waterproofing of junction between brick spandrels and slab at perimeter due to deflection.*
- *Plasteel windows being replaced with black anodised aluminium.*
- *Air-conditioning being upgraded on most floors. Ducts, coils, fans and controls.*
- *Oil boiler replaced with gas.*
- *Ceilings have been generally replaced with metric ceilings.*
- *All balcony handrails have been replaced with glass and Aluminium.*
- *Main roof membrane needs replacing.*
- *Chillers and cooling towers need replacing.*
- *Spalling concrete repairs ongoing.*
- *Sun fins, structural support ongoing.*

Planning for the Future

As part of their assessment of the building's upgrading and repair needs, the owners of the building also sought to assess the future of the site over the longer term.

In part, this forward planning was a response to the many and varied problems identified affecting the physical fabric of the building (as identified in 2.3.2 above and in Section 3.0) as well as the needs to

upgrade and update services, facilities and internal and external spaces to meet current commercial office and/or compliance requirements.

The changing physical and functional context of the subject site also needs to be considered as this has affected the physical/visual, functional and civic settings of the original Simsmetal House.

- The **long term use and viability** of the building as a relatively modest sized commercial office on a site so close to the North Sydney CBD is, at this stage of its life, uncertain given the value of land and associated density of development in the immediate vicinity. In this context, the potential to retain the building in a meaningful way is jeopardised, including the need to repair deteriorated components and fabric.

- The number and scale of **changes to the statutory planning environment** of the site since its construction are of particular relevance to planning for its future because of the significant changes to the physical and functional environments that have occurred. **No longer does Simsmetal House relate to the scale and character of its setting, as required when it was constructed.** Instead, changes to site zoning, building height, density and use, as well as the juxtaposition of dramatically different developments within the setting of the site, have increasingly isolated it, functionally and physically.

- With the growth of high density residential apartments on adjacent sites, the building's **changed physical and functional context**s need to be taken into account in future planning by, for example, providing **similarly scaled development** for residential apartments on the site and/or ensuring that any commercial or other public uses incorporate **improved links to the CBD** (including particularly the new commercial and transport hub immediately to the south of the site, as proposed in the current Ward Street Precinct Masterplan[43]).

- The adjacent high-rise residential development in the vicinity of the site (fronting McLaren Street to the west and north) has also affected **light and sun access** to Simsmetal House to the extent that the owners find that 'the Sun Fins on the western elevation are now not needed and are in fact making the building too dark'.[44] That is, a key component of the architectural response to the site's original context—and essential component of its heritage significance—has been adversely impacted on by subsequent development in the vicinity.

In this complex context, identifying measures to ensure the long term viability of the subject site, including the meaningful conservation of its heritage values, requires any assessment of heritage significance (such as provided in this report) to be set within a framework which extends beyond its architectural merits to include the use/function of the site and its setting, the physical character of the setting as an influence on the building's form and character, and the essential role in the past and future of the statutory planning environment of the place.

These issues are further discussed in Section 5.0, Conclusions and Recommendations.

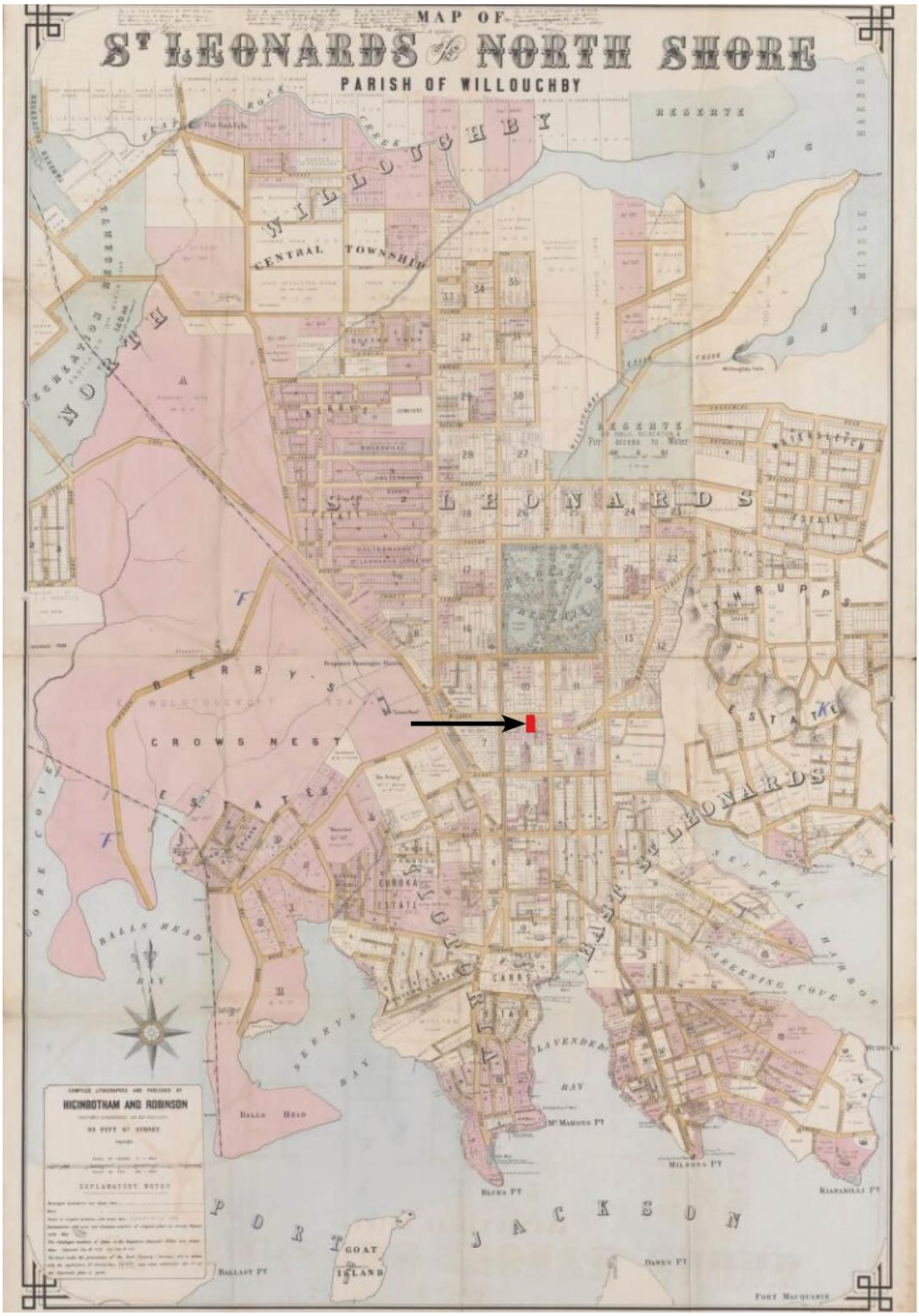


Figure 2.1 1887 map of St Leonards on the North Shore, Parish of Willoughby. The subject site is located within Section 5 (circled in red). (Source: National Library of Australia with GML additions, 2017)

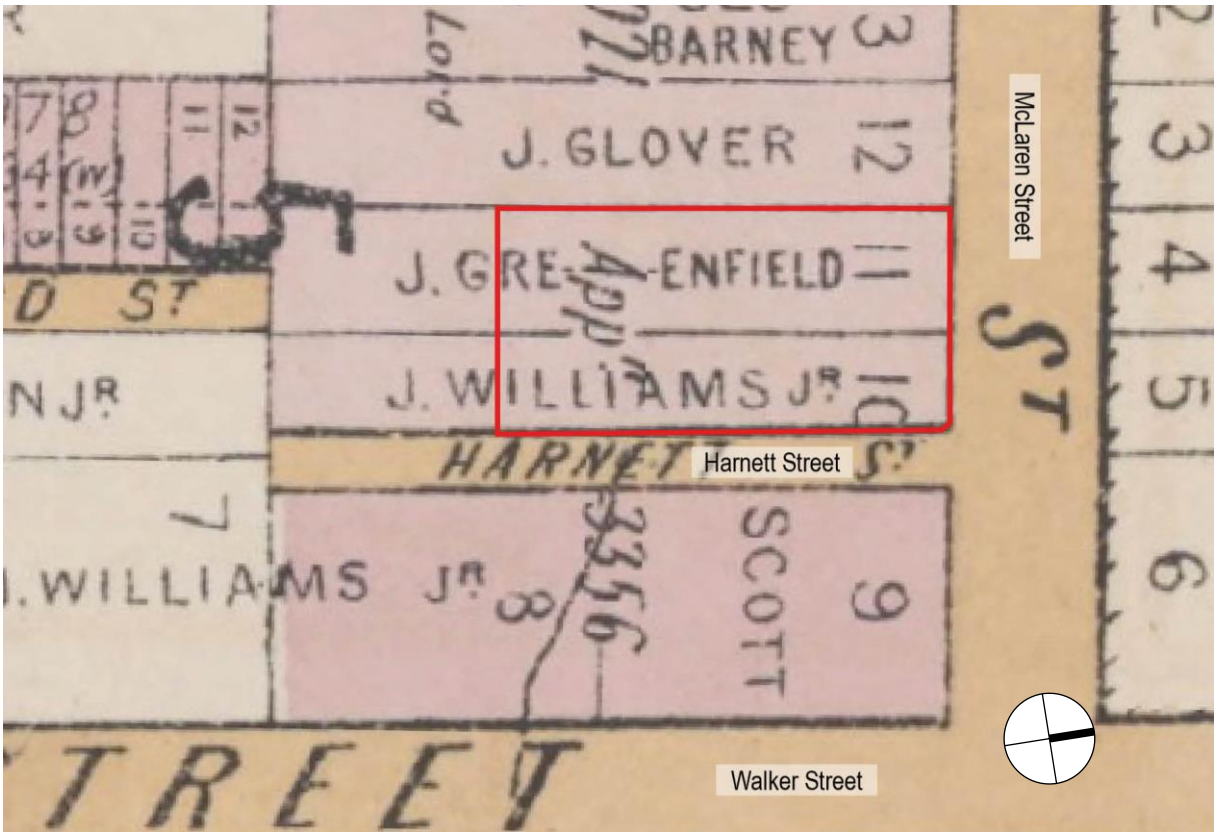


Figure 2.2 Detail of 1887 map of St Leonards. The subject site is located on Lots 10 and 11 of Section 5 (outlined in red). (Source: National Library of Australia with GML additions, 2017)

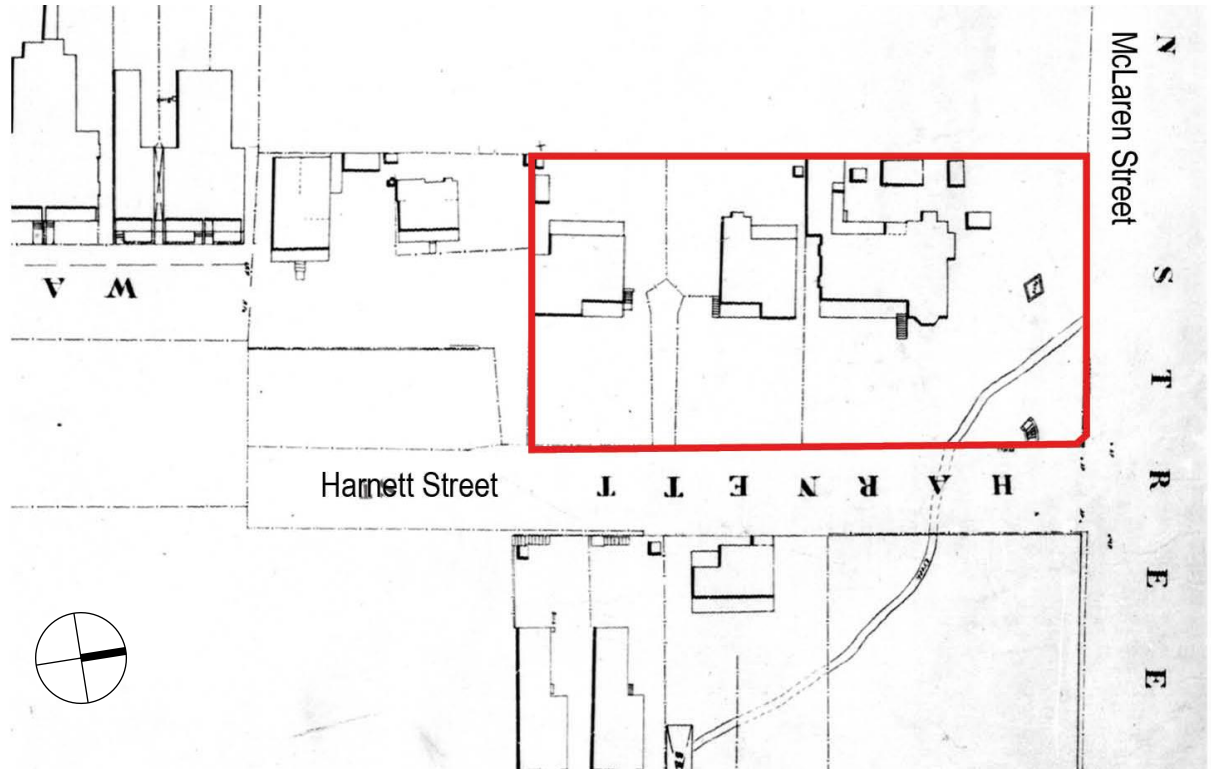


Figure 2.3 Detail of 1892 plan of the subject site (outlined in red) showing 1873 subdivisions. (Source: Stanton Library, North Sydney, with GML additions, 2017)

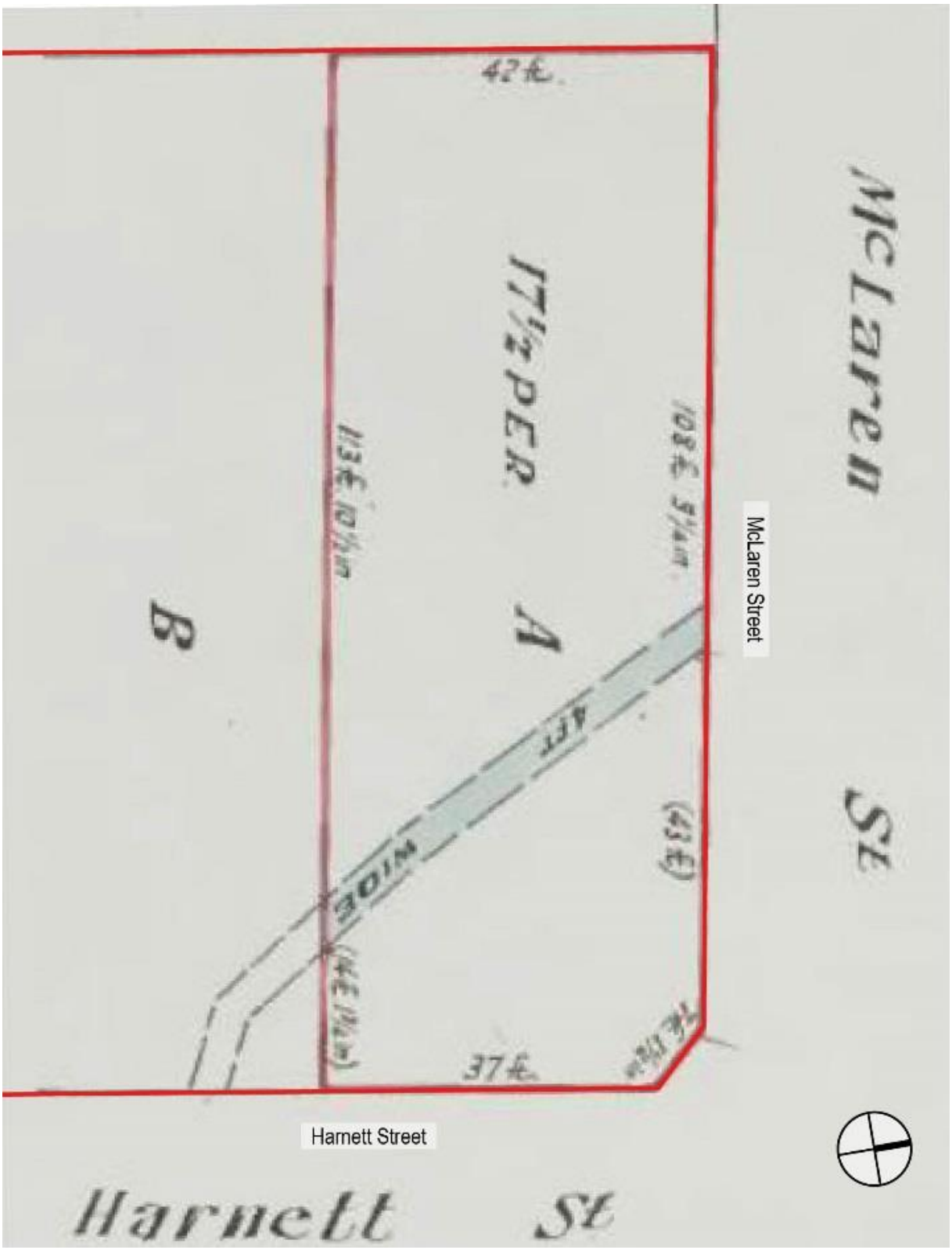


Figure 2.4 Sketch showing subdivision of north end of site to provide the new lot A, facing McLaren Street. (Source: Certificate of Title vol. 5333 fol. 212, NSW Land and Property Information)

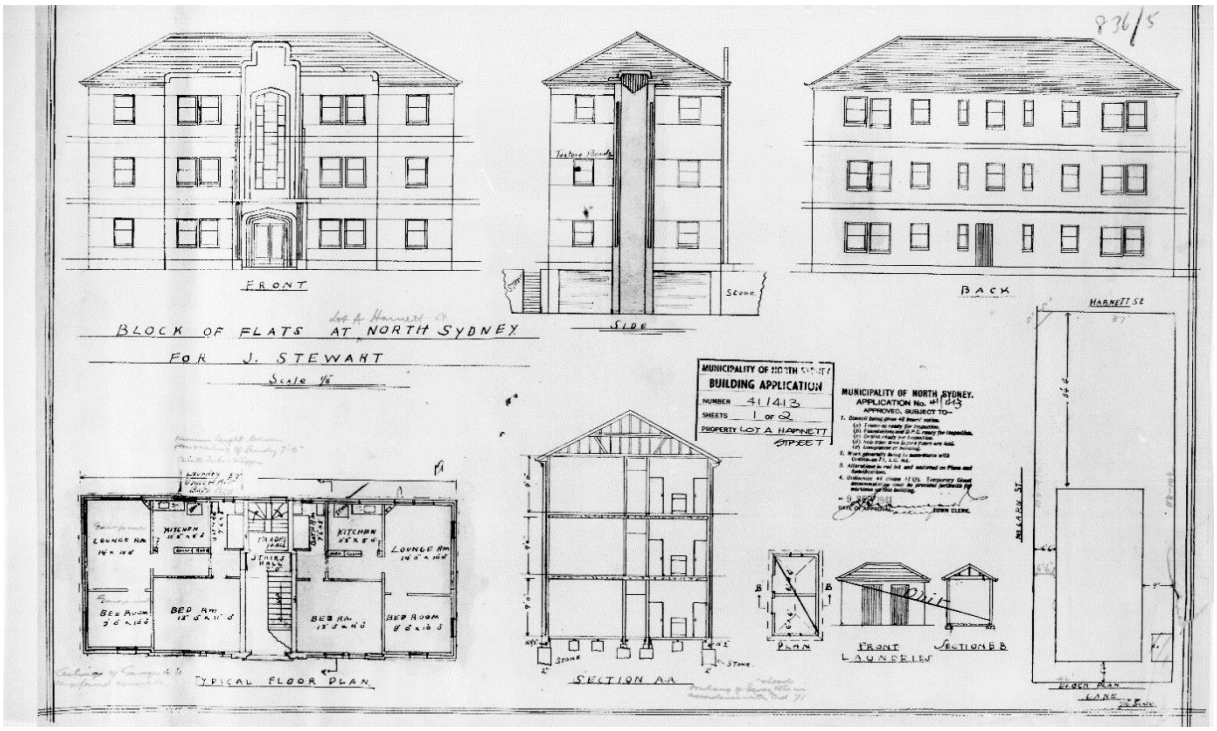


Figure 2.5 BA 41/413—Plan of block of flats for James Stewart, located on Lot A. (Source: Stanton Library, North Sydney)

Figure 2.6 View from northwest of subject site—in the centre of the left side of the image—pre-1970s development. The 1968 white Sabemo building and red brick flats (Vista del Mar) are northwest of the site. The white gable end of the Victorian residence, Girton, near the corner of McLaren and Harnett Streets is visible behind trees. Sketch overlay is for the two Northside Gardens towers on the north side of McLaren Street. (Source: Photograph by Tim Collis-Bird, Edgar St, Chatswood, provided by client from Lipman Pty Ltd files)

Figure 2.7 Plan of buildings within subject site, in preparation for demolition. (Source: Harry Seidler and Associates)

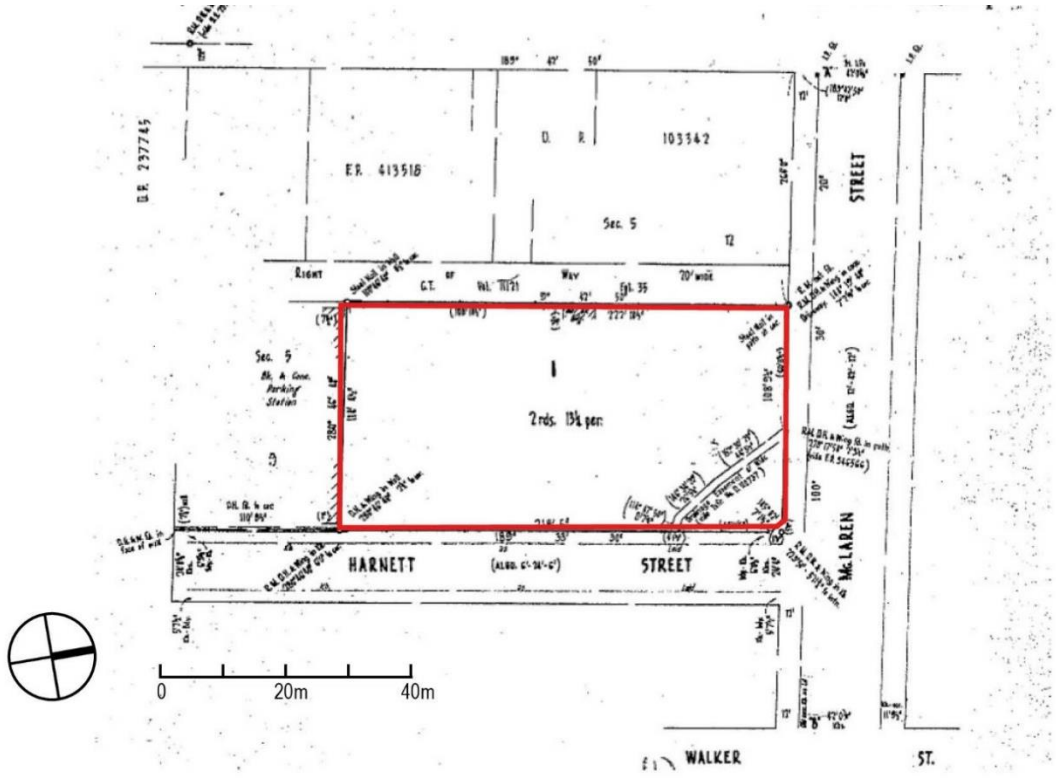


Figure 2.8 Block plan showing the site was consolidated under its current title (Lot 1 DP 557103) in 1972. (Source: Certificate of Title vol. 11956 fol. 70, NSW Land & Property Information)

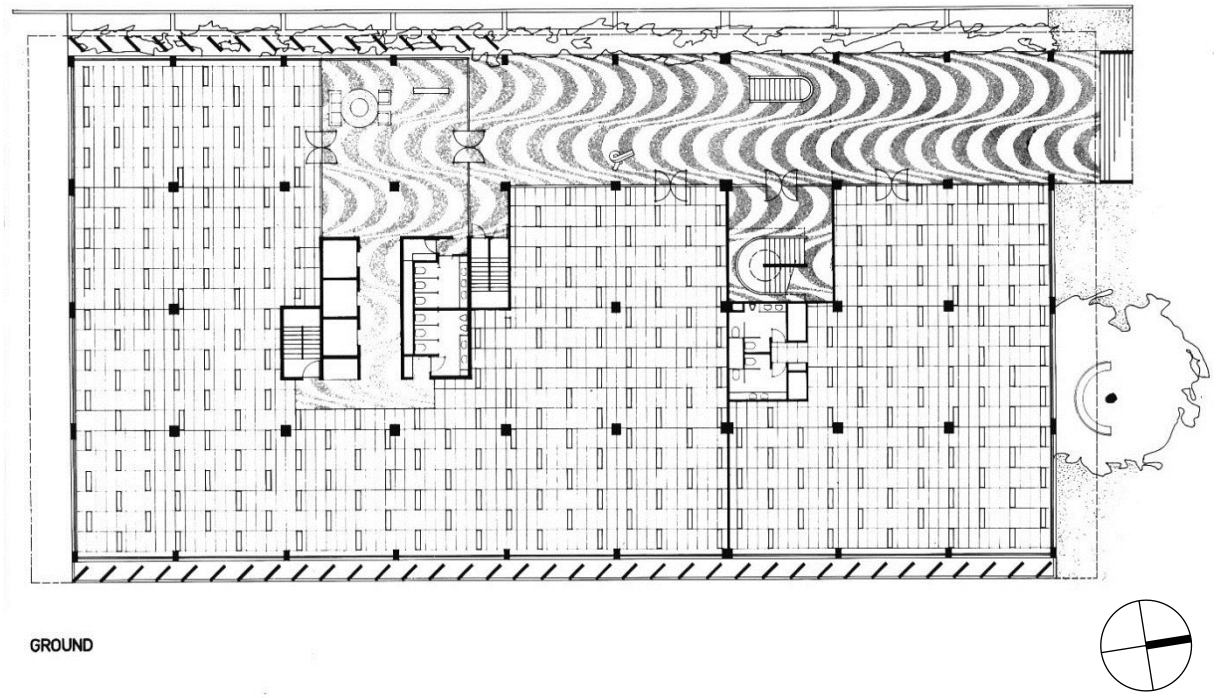


Figure 2.9a Ground floor plan of Simsmetal House. (Source: Cement and Concrete Association, 'Seidler's Office', *Concrete Quarterly* 105, Summer 1975, p 11)

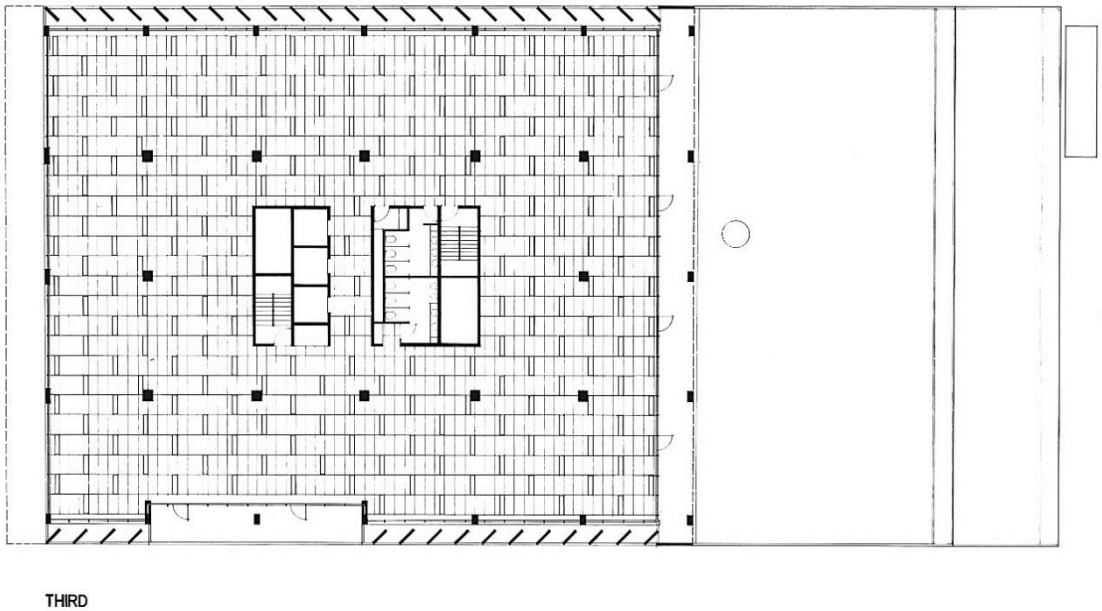


Figure 2.9b Third floor plan of Simsmetal House. (Source: Cement and Concrete Association, 'Seidler's Office', *Concrete Quarterly* 105, Summer 1975, p 11)

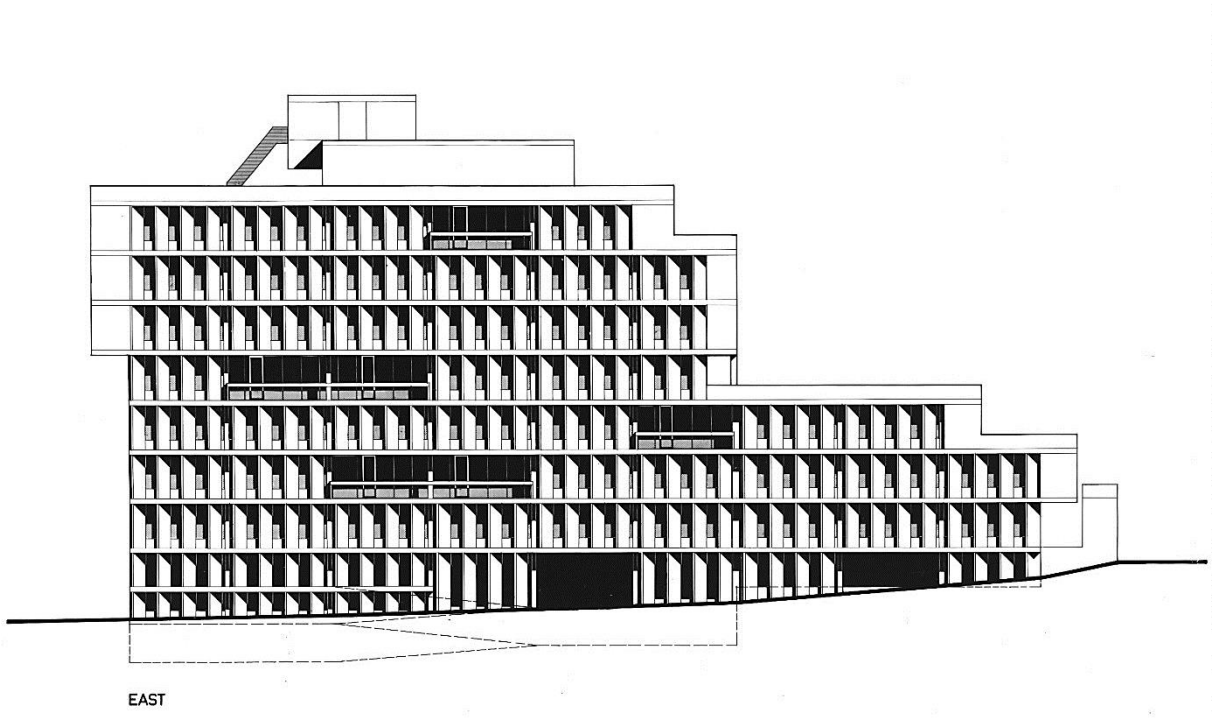


Figure 2.10 Plan of east elevation of Simsmetal House. (Source: Harry Seidler and Associates)

Figure 2.11 View of the northern and western elevation of Simsmetal House, taken by Max Dupain in c1973. (Source: Harry Seidler and Associates)

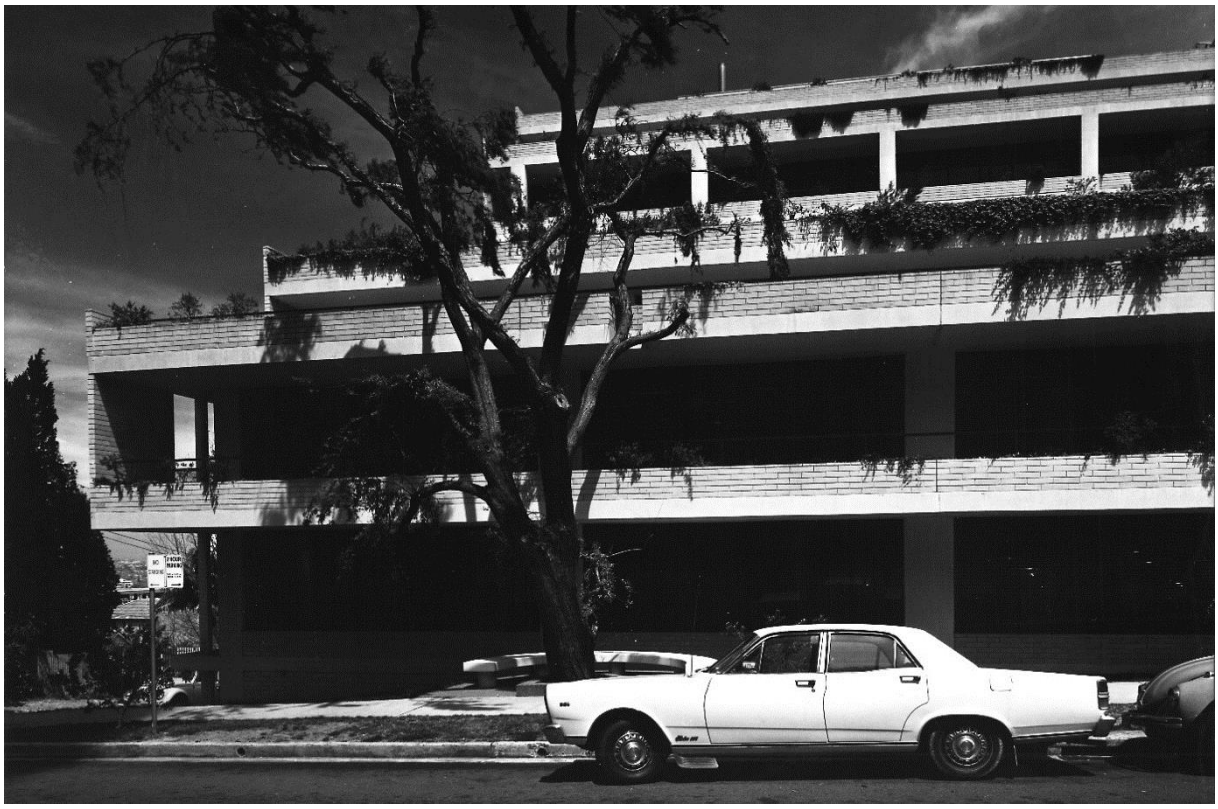


Figure 2.12 View of lower floors of Simsmetal House fronting McLaren Street (undated and unattributed). (Source: Rick McEwan, Lipman Constructions files)

Figure 2.13 Elevated view of north elevation terraces of Simsmetal House, taken by Max Dupain in c1973. (Source: Harry Seidler and Associates)

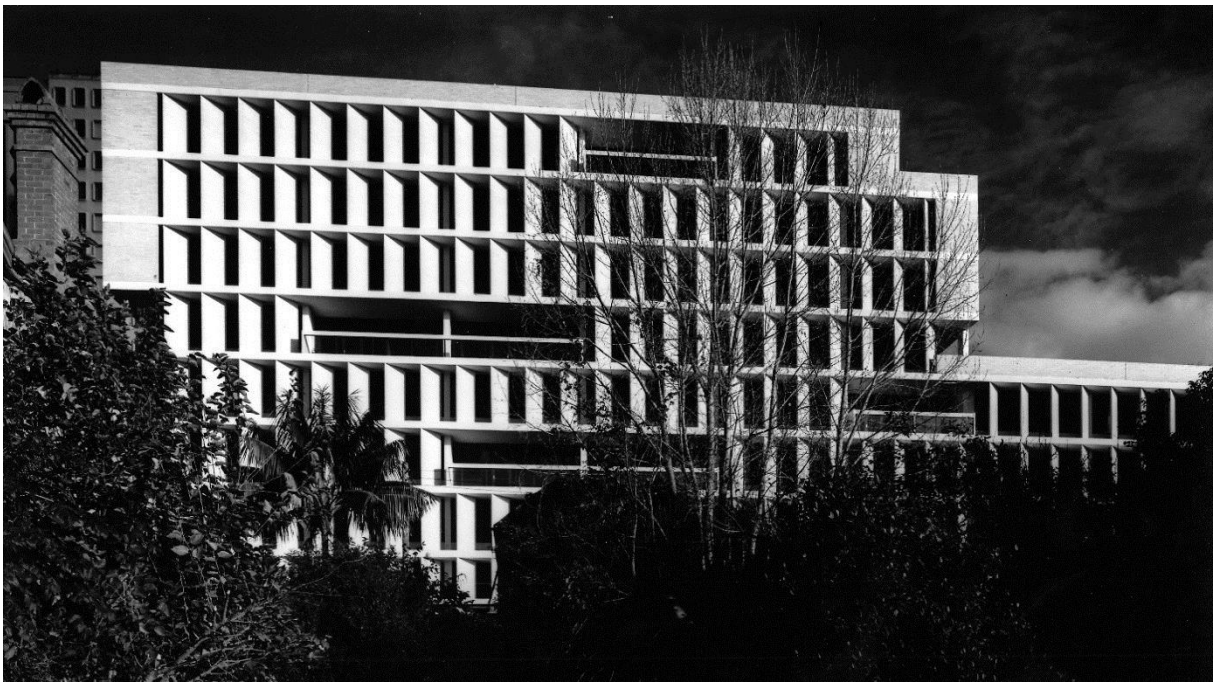


Figure 2.14 View of eastern elevation of Simsmetal House, taken by Max Dupain in c1973. (Source: Harry Seidler and Associates)

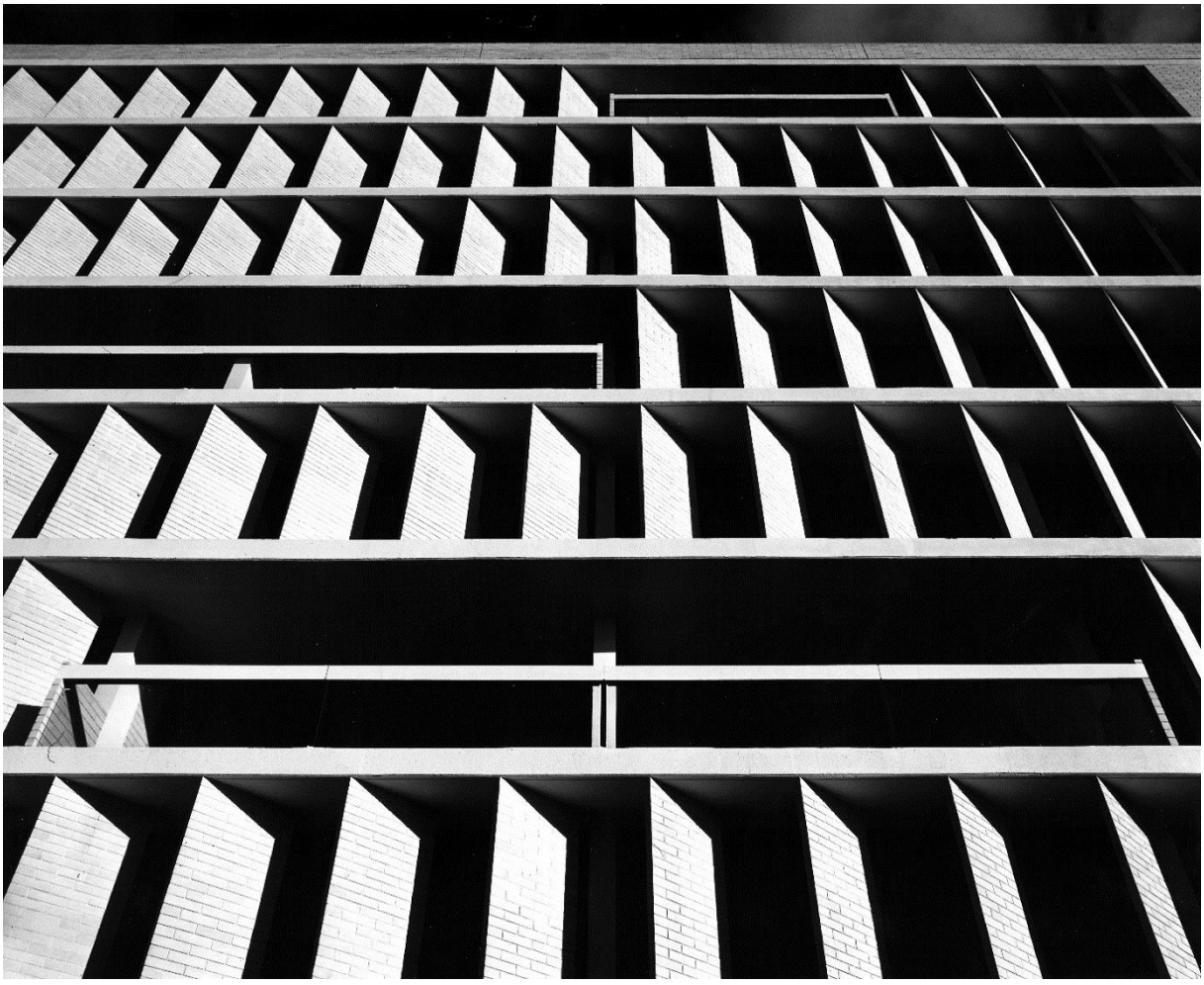


Figure 2.15 Detail of east elevation of Simsmetal House, taken by Max Dupain in c1973. (Source: Harry Seidler and Associates)

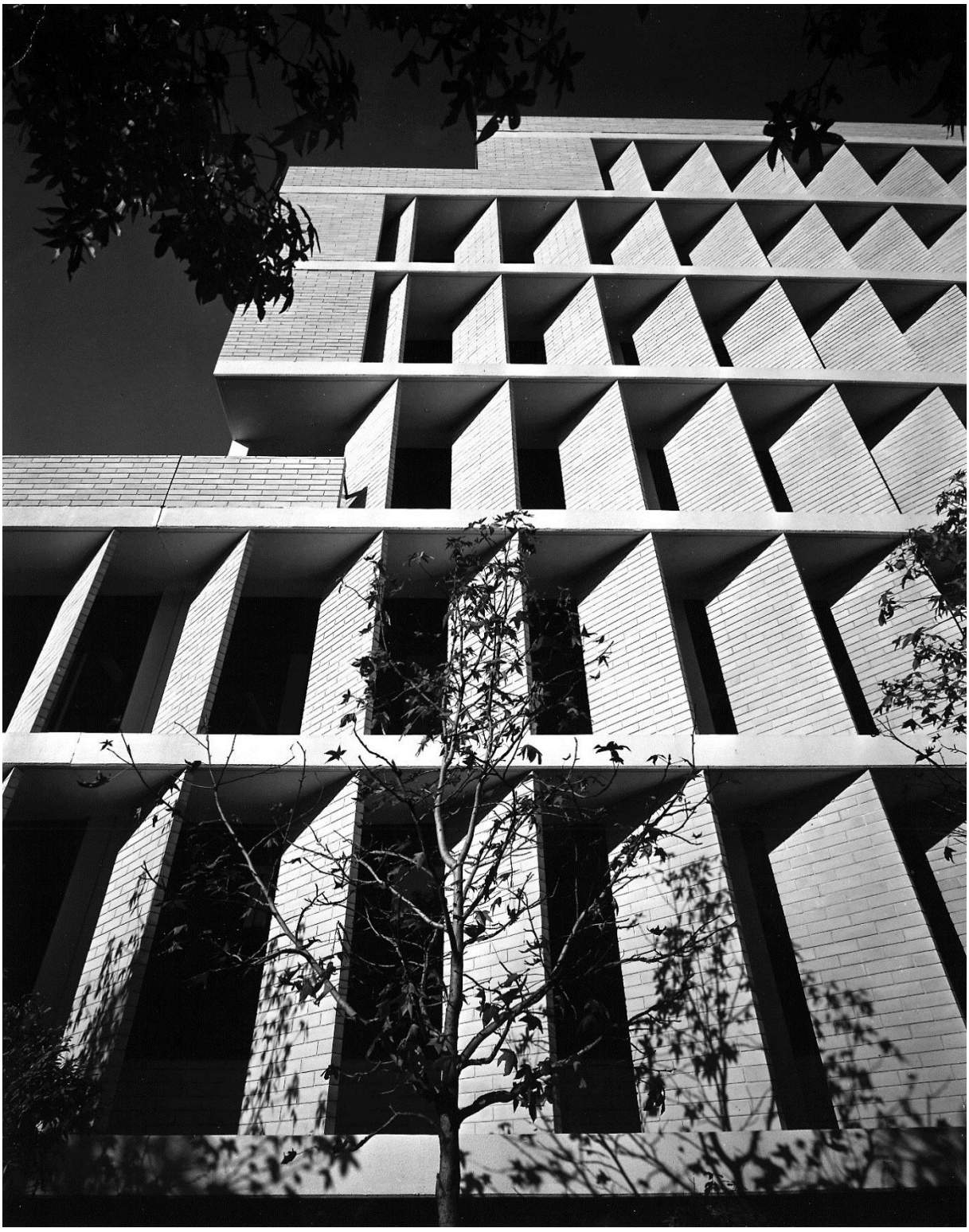


Figure 2.16 Detail of western elevation of Simsmetal House, taken by Max Dupain in c1973. (Source: Harry Seidler and Associates)

Figure 2.17 Covered entrance concourse with original 'flamboyant curved' floor design, curved enclosure around stair to basement parking and original Clement Meadmore sculpture (removed in early 1980s following change of ownership to MEPC). Image by Max Dupain, 1973. (Source: Harry Seidler and Associates)

Figure 2.17a Detail of original Clement Meadmore sculpture in entrance concourse (undated and unattributed). (Source: Rick McEwan, Lipman Constructions files)

Figure 2.17b Interior view of concrete stair and skylight to entry foyer of front offices (undated and unattributed). (Source: Rick McEwan, Lipman Constructions files) (Source: Harry Seidler and Associates)

Figure 2.18 Front elevation of Simsmetal House to McLaren Street with street tree (Willow) retained and before planting on roof terraces (undated and unattributed). (Source: Rick McEwan, Lipman Constructions files)

Figure 2.19 North and east elevations of Simsmetal House from McLaren and Harnett Streets corner. Vehicular access to basement in centre of east façade and carpark at south end (undated and unattributed). (Source: Rick McEwan, Lipman Constructions files)

Figure 2.20 South colonnade with patterned, exposed aggregate finish to concrete floor and Clement Meadmore sculpture in front of entrance foyer to rear (seven-storey) block of offices (undated and unattributed). (Source: Rick McEwan, Lipman Constructions files)

Figure 2.21 Patterned, exposed aggregate finish to floor and wall in lift lobby of entrance foyer to rear (seven-storey) block of offices. Also shows original metal deck ceiling lining and downlights (undated and unattributed). (Source: Rick McEwan, Lipman Constructions files)

Figure 2.22 View from upper balcony on front (north) elevation of Simsmetal House, showing curved/circular, concrete-edged garden beds with early planting on third floor roof terrace. (Removed in early 1980s following change of ownership to MEPC.) Planting in boxes along the edges of the terraces has only just been established (undated and unattributed). (Source: Rick McEwan, Lipman Constructions files)

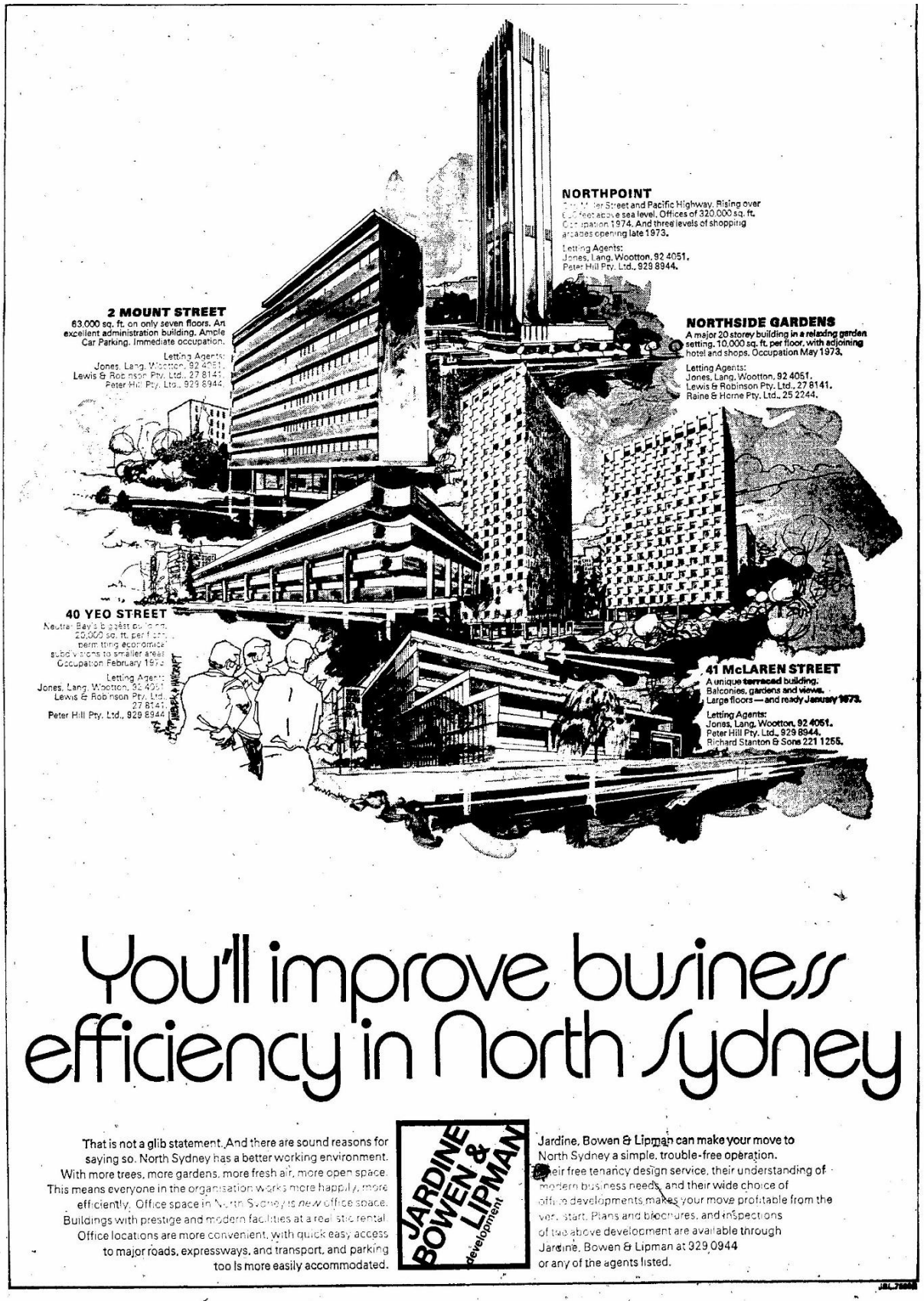


Figure 2.23 1973 advertisement for office buildings constructed in North Sydney by Jardine Bowen & Lipman showing 41 McLaren Street (centre bottom image) and Northside Gardens (immediately above McLaren Street building). (Source: Posted by Fabian Amuso, on Flickr, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/113966543@N05/12585873495>)

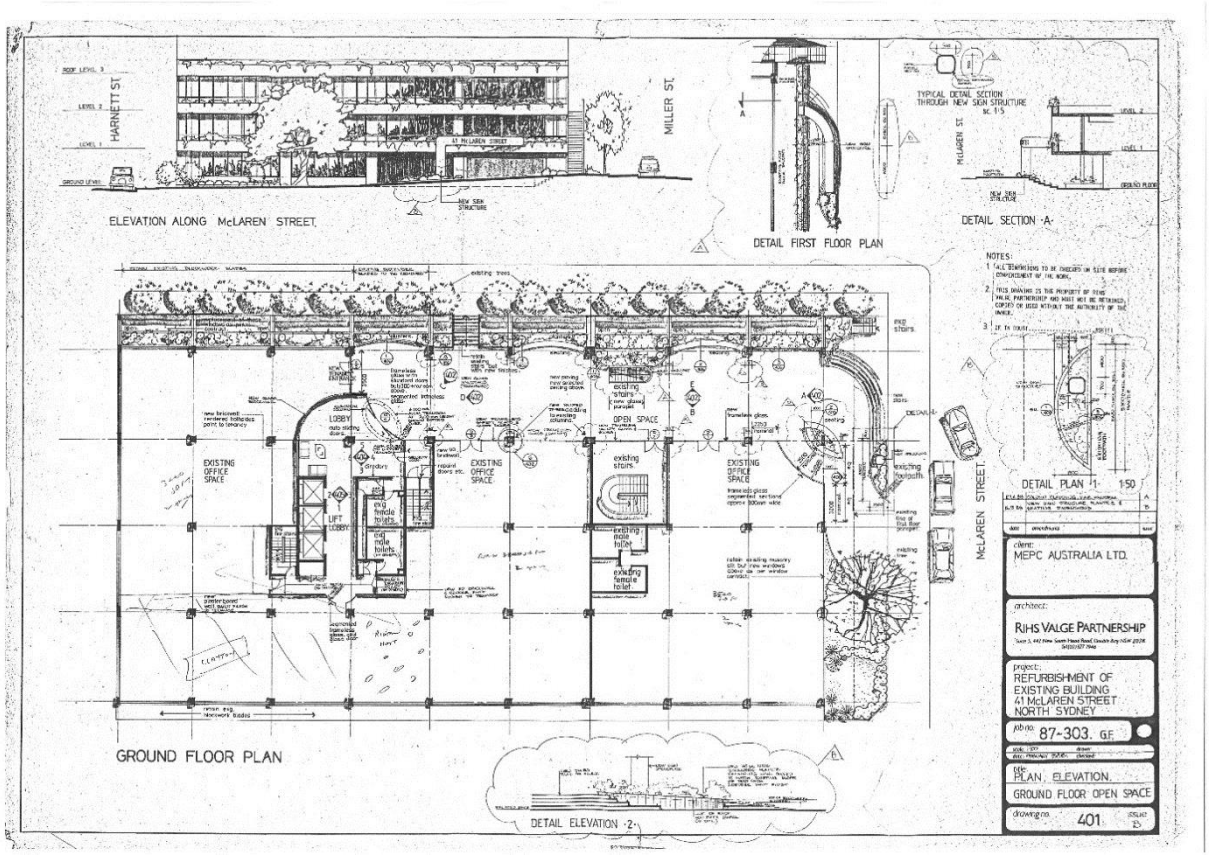


Figure 2.24 1987 proposed refurbishments of 41 McLaren Street, North Sydney—ground floor plans. Plans prepared by architects RIHS Valge Partnership for MEPC Australia. (Source: Provided by Erolcene Pty Ltd and Claijade Pty Ltd)

2.4 Endnotes

1 Max Bowen, pers comm, 1 February 2017.
2 *Concrete Quarterly*, 105, Cement and Concrete Association, Summer 1975, quoting Harry Seidler and Associates, p 10.
3 Park, M 2003, *Designs on a Landscape: A History of Planning in North Sydney*, North Sydney Council, p 116.
4 Park, M 2003, *Designs on a Landscape: A History of Planning in North Sydney*, North Sydney Council, p 116.
5 Park, M 2003, *Designs on a Landscape: A History of Planning in North Sydney*, North Sydney Council, p 116.
6 Minutes of Town Planning and Building Committee 30/3/71, p 99.
7 Minutes of Town Planning and Building Committee 30/3/71, p 100.
8 Minutes of Town Planning and Building Committee 30/3/71, p 100.
9 Minutes of Town Planning and Building Committee 6/7/71, p 205.
10 Minutes of Town Planning and Building Committee 30/3/71, p 99 and 24/4/71, p 111.
11 Minutes of Town Planning and Building Committee 29/2/72, p 48.
12 Park, M 2003, *Designs on a Landscape: A History of Planning in North Sydney*, North Sydney Council, p 116.
13 Park, M 2003, *Designs on a Landscape: A History of Planning in North Sydney*, North Sydney Council, p 116.
14 *Concrete Quarterly*, 105, Cement and Concrete Association, Summer 1975, quoting Harry Seidler and Associates, p 10.
15 *Concrete Quarterly*, 105, Cement and Concrete Association, Summer 1975, quoting Harry Seidler and Associates, p 12.
16 *Concrete Quarterly*, 105, Cement and Concrete Association, Summer 1975, quoting Harry Seidler and Associates, p 12.
17 *Concrete Quarterly*, 105, Cement and Concrete Association, Summer 1975, quoting Harry Seidler and Associates, p 12.
18 Frampton, K, and Drew, P 1992, *Harry Seidler: Four Decades of Architecture*, Thames and Hudson, London, pp 402–414.
19 Frampton, K, and Drew, P 1992, *Harry Seidler: Four Decades of Architecture*, Thames and Hudson, London, pp 402–414.
20 *Concrete Quarterly*, 105, Cement and Concrete Association, Summer 1975, quoting Harry Seidler and Associates.
21 Frampton, K, and Drew, P 1992, *Harry Seidler: Four Decades of Architecture*, Thames and Hudson, London, p 411.
22 Max Bowen, pers comm, 1 February 2017.
23 Blake, P 1973, *Architecture for the New World: The Work of Harry Seidler*, Horowitz Australia Pty Ltd, Sydney, pp 24–27.
24 Blake, P 1973, *Architecture for the New World: The Work of Harry Seidler*, Horowitz Australia Pty Ltd, Sydney, p 27.

[25] *Concrete Quarterly*, 105, Cement and Concrete Association, Summer 1975, quoting Harry Seidler and Associates, pp 10–15.
[26] *Concrete Quarterly*, 105, Cement and Concrete Association, Summer 1975, quoting Harry Seidler and Associates, p 12.
[27] Frampton, K, and Drew, P 1992, *Harry Seidler: Four Decades of Architecture*, Thames and Hudson, London, p 402.
[28] Harry Seidler quoted in Frampton, K, and Drew, P 1992, *Harry Seidler: Four Decades of Architecture*, Thames and Hudson, London, p 395.
[29] Rick McEwan, written correspondence, 2016 (quoting Phillip Lipman).
[30] Printed advertisement for Jardine Bowen and Lipman from contemporary (unnamed) source, copyright by Fabian Amuso, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/sydneyneverbuilt/12585873495>.
[31] North Sydney Council Building Registers, 1972, 1973 and 1974.
[32] Max Bowen, pers comm, 1 February 2017.
[33] Max Bowen, pers comm, 1 February 2017.
[34] Max Bowen, pers comm, 1 February 2017.
[35] *The Australian*, 17 March 1978, p 13.
[36] Max Bowen, pers comm, 1 February 2017. Rick McEwan in his written account of the building's history (2016) notes that the building was owned by Henderson's which became MEPC Australia.
[37] Rick McEwan, written correspondence, 2016.
[38] Max Bowen, pers comm, 1 February 2017.
[39] Rick McEwan, written correspondence, 2016.
[40] Refurbishment of Existing Building 41 McLaren Street North Sydney by Rihs Valge Partnership for MEPC Australia Pty Ltd, February 1988 [Drawing 401B], provided by Rick McEwan on behalf of Claijade and Erolcene.
[41] Rick McEwan, written correspondence, 2016.
[42] Measured drawings of 41 McLaren Street, North Sydney by Travis McEwan Group, November 2000 provided by Rick McEwan on behalf of Claijade and Erolcene.
[43] North Sydney Planning Strategy, Draft Ward Street Masterplan, exhibited for public comment February 2017.
[44] Rick McEwan, written correspondence, 2016.

3.0 Physical Evidence

3.1 Simsmetal House Today

3.1.1 Introduction

As noted in Section 2.0, documentary records from the 1970s, including architectural and engineering drawings and specifications, photographs and published articles (as included in Appendices B, C and D), provide a remarkably detailed account of the original Simsmetal House. Similarly, subsequent documentation and oral accounts of changes to use and fabric of the building, including the set of measured drawings prepared by the current owners in 2000 (included in Appendix E) as well as various recent reports on building structure and condition, provide an important record of the performance of, as well as changes to, original building components and fabric.

This section provides an overview of the physical character and fabric of Simsmetal House today, directed towards identifying the key aspects of its physical evidence relevant to the assessment of its significance in Section 4.0 of this report. To this end, the report identifies:

- key components and attributes (relevant to assessment of heritage values);
- alterations and/or additions to key components and attributes; and
- the condition of key components and attributes relevant to assessments of integrity and intactness.

The physical setting of 41 McLaren Street is also considered in order to identify/assess its role as part of the physical, visual, functional and statutory contexts of the subject site.

3.1.2 Key Components and Attributes

In its overall form, massing, layout, structural expression, façade modulation and materiality, Simsmetal House is little changed from the original, retaining most of the features highlighted in its earliest publicity, including photographic and written accounts. Key components and attributes include:

- the overall terraced form and stepped massing of the building, particularly in terms of its physical and visual relationship to McLaren Street (ie form, massing and layout);
- the exposed concrete framing and cement brickwork infill walls (including planter boxes) to the external elevations (ie structural expression, façade modulation and materiality);
- the cement-brickwork sun-shading fins on the east and west elevation providing sun protection to the glazing as an integral design component (ie façade modulation and materiality);
- the large areas of tinted glazing (to windows and doors) recessed back behind vertical sun-shading and/or balcony framing on the exposed elevations (ie structural expression, façade modulation and materiality);
- the original semi-enclosed concourse and its spatial and functional roles, providing protected access from a semi-public outdoor area to the separate entrance foyers of the two blocks (of three storeys and seven storeys) of the building (ie form and layout); and

- the open terraces, planter boxes and curved concrete bench at the east end of the front façade (constructed to accommodate the original tree in this location) included as integrated building components providing an opportunity for adding greenery to the streetscape and working environment (ie form, layout and materiality of plants). (This also originally included curved/ circular concrete edged planted beds on the third floor terrace [Figure 2.22] which have since been removed).

Internally, the simple building layout and structure is generally undistinguished except for the lobby to the front (three storey) office with its curved concrete stair and semi-circular skylight.

3.1.3 Alterations

Some of the many changes made to the layout, services, fittings and finishes of the building throughout its life, and the reasons why these have been made, have been identified in Section 2.0. In addition to this summary account, more detail is readily provided by comparing the original/early records (as in Appendices B, C and D) with more recent documentation (as in Appendix E), as well as the existing site conditions.

In the context of the key building components and attributes identified in Section 3.1.2, alterations of note (relevant to this report) include the following:

- alterations to the layout, fabric and detailing of the **covered entrance concourse**, including:
  - removal of the original 'flamboyant curving floor design of reconstructed stone paving',[1] ceiling lining and Clement Meadmore sculpture (noted in Section 2.0);
  - replacement of the original paving with modern tiles/pavers;
  - replacement of the original rectangular layout of the glazed walls at the northwest corners of the front block and rear block lobby with curved splayed corners;
  - replacement of the original rectilinear canopy over the main entrance with a new curved shelter and the original linear steps from the footpath with new curved steps;
  - the introduction of new steps up to street level in the centre of the west elevation and a new fire escape (from upper floors) at the northwest corner of the building; and
  - alterations to early planter boxes along the west side of the colonnade and introduction of new variously shaped planters at the northwest corner of the site, around the (newly isolated) northeast column of the walkway and along the McLaren Street frontage.
- alterations to the original **balcony balustrades**, including the addition of new glass and aluminium components;
- the addition of steel bracing to a number of the cement brick **sunshade fins** to secure and make safe following deterioration of original reinforcement and fixings; and
- alterations to the landscaping of the **roof terraces**—including the removal of the original circular bed layout on level 3 and construction of new features on level 2—and the addition of new balustrades in glass and aluminium (to supplement the original planter boxes which do not meet current height requirements) as well as security doors and grilles.

3.1.4 Condition and Intactness

Problems with the physical condition and/or performance of a number of components of the building has been a recurring theme over recent years, with a number of issues currently identified as critical.

- The majority of these issues relate to the services (including plant, lifts and lighting, etc), fittings and finishes that are commonly upgraded in commercial office buildings.
- Other areas and/components where the deterioration/damage and/or change of function has resulted in repair/replacement works include the external doors, windows and shopfront glazing, with a number of original components not proving robust enough for their required function. In most of these situations, the affected components have been sufficiently shielded from the public view to be repaired and replaced with little visual or physical change to the building as a whole because of the building's overall layout, form and modulation of the exposed elevations.

Two matters relating to the key components and attributes previously identified are, however, of importance within the context of this study.

- The deterioration of the external **sunshade fins**—through rusting of the original reinforcing securing the brickwork of these narrow blades together leading to cracking, movement and loss of structural integrity—is one of the most serious of the building's condition problems, because of:
  - the scale of the problem, given the number, size and distribution of the fins on the east and west façades;
  - the structural as well as functional performance requirements of these building components and the consequences (relating to safety, structural integrity, etc) of their failure;
  - the architectural/aesthetic role of these components, both originally and today; and
  - the essential role of the original construction materials and detailing in contributing to their deterioration.
- Water penetration thorough the **external wall-floor junctions on exposed façades** due to slab deflection.
  - This appears to have been caused by a number of potential factors including limitations of original construction materials, assessments of long term structural behaviour (eg extent of deflection of the slabs between supports), detailing of junctions (eg not including a set down or sill at the wall-floor junction) and/or construction methods.
  - The scale of this problem is also considerable, affecting numerous sections of external wall on various floors, as well as the essential function and environmental performance of the building.

3.2 Site and Setting

3.2.1 Generally

The physical setting of Simsmetal House has, in many ways, altered more dramatically than the building itself, particularly the scale, density, character and function of surrounding development. As noted in Section 2.0, planning controls in North Sydney changed frequently, and sometimes quite dramatically,

over the mid to late twentieth century. The impacts of these diverse controls are still able to be read in the physical context of the subject site today. Key examples of this changing environment that still remain—and are illustrated in Figure 1.3—include the following:

- various low to medium density developments constructed before Simsmetal House and retained de facto because of function, location, ownership and/or being hemmed in by subsequent developments, including the multistorey carpark to the south of the site and the red-brick apartment building Vista del Mar opposite the south end of the site (accessed from the western right-of-way);
- tall towers from the late 1960s and early 1970s reflecting contemporary planning controls for commercial development (such as the 1963 Planning Scheme and subsequent spot rezonings via Interim Development Orders), including the 1968 Sabemo and 1970 IBIS House buildings adjacent to the southwest corner of the site and the 1973 Northside Gardens development on the opposite side of McLaren Street;
- lower scale commercial and institutional buildings from the 1960s and 1970s similar in scale to Simsmetal House, including the 1976 North Sydney Council Offices (Wyllie Wing) by Harry Seidler and Associates (completed 1977) fronting McLaren Street (west of Miller Street) (similarly scaled buildings on the two sites immediately to the west of 41 McLaren Street, including the 2UE building on the Miller Street corner and 37–39 McLaren Street development by Max Bowen [discussed in Section 2.2.2], have since been replaced with high-density residential apartments);
- mid-height—ie five to eight storey—residential development (c1970s and1980s), as currently located to east of the subject site, across Harnett Street;
- late nineteenth–early twentieth century residences in Walker and Hampden Streets east of the site, and the various sites and conservation area (CA 19) to the west along McLaren, Miller and Church Streets (identified in Figure 1.4) retained as heritage items as part of heritage planning reforms from the 1970s through to the present;
- commercial office development of various heights from the 1980s to the present including adjacent tall towers fronting Miller Street (west of Vista del Mar) and Walker Streets (southeast of the site)—with a somewhat lower office tower (similar in height to Simsmetal House) located to the rear of the heritage listed properties fronting Walker Street; and
- a growing number of very large multistorey residential apartment buildings to the west and northwest of the site from the late twentieth century to the present, including sites currently under development (as for example on the northeast corner of McLaren and Miller Streets).

3.2.2 Key Changes

The Northside Gardens development—comprising an 18-storey commercial office and adjacent hotel tower built in 1973 on the north side of McLaren Street directly opposite number 41 (with Max Bowen and Phillip Lipman again providing project management and building construction services)—was an early and dramatic change to the physical environment in which Simsmetal House had been designed and constructed, particularly impacting on the views and solar access originally enjoyed by the north facing offices and terraces.

While similarly scaled commercial developments followed rapidly in the main CBD to the south and along Miller Street, tower developments along McLaren Street were generally more limited until the last decade

of the twentieth and early years of the twenty-first centuries witnessed a boom in multistorey residential developments throughout North Sydney. On all sides of Simsmetal House large multistorey apartment buildings have largely replaced (and are still in the process of replacing) previous commercial developments, as well as former low density residential sites, on both sides of McLaren Street.

Statutory protection for individual sites and areas/groups of sites of heritage significance in North Sydney from the 1970s and 1980s on has also contributed to the area's diverse physical and cultural environment with the retention of a wide variety of residential, commercial and civic/institutional buildings of all ages, sizes and characters. For many heritage sites, adaptation for new uses and/or increased development has provided a viable long-term outcome for conservation and the provision of modern facilities and services (as, for example, the development of the North Sydney Council Chambers site).

With these significant, and ongoing, changes to its physical, economic, functional and social contexts, Simsmetal House is effectively surrounded by a juxtaposition of old and new, large and small, commercial and residential developments, none of which alone defines the civic character or setting of the site.

3.3 Conclusions

In this brief overview of the physical fabric of Simsmetal House and its relationship to its setting, this report has sought to focus on the key components and attributes of the site relevant to assessment of its heritage significance and the consequences of this for the future of the site. This process has highlighted those aspects of its original conception and construction, together with later changes, that have made the building and its setting what it is today.

In summary, the integrity of the building's architectural conception—including form, layout, massing, materiality and relationship to its contemporary setting—developed by an experienced architect of national and international renown, remains. It also clearly displays characteristic features of Harry Seidler's design works, including the simplicity of overall form, layout and massing, the visually bold/strong exposed-concrete framing and, most notably, the use of vertical and horizontal sun-shading devices as sculptural design components of the building façades.

The site's relationship to its setting—through the arrangement of differently scaled components and greening of balconies and roof terraces, as well as the provision of views and outdoor areas for office workers—are important features of the overall design. In its retention of these key components and attributes, which were recognised as architecturally notable in contemporary accounts (as discussed in Section 2.2), the building today continues to provide meaningful evidence of its historic and aesthetic origins.

At the same time, functional and financial challenges have, from the outset to the present day, affected the extent to which the building's fabric and detailing, particularly internally, have been able to equal the architectural qualities of its external design. With the initial brief requiring a cost-effective commercial office development, and planning controls limiting the size of the building, the simplicity of structural components, standard fitout and finishes, particularly internally, was a logical outcome.

With changes to occupants and owners, alterations have also been made to the internal and external layout, components and fabric, as dictated by functional requirements, to upgrade deteriorated fabric and out of date finishes and fittings and/or in conformity with commercial office marketing practices. Changes have also been made to the original building layout and fabric to meet changing building standards and tenant expectations, including the removal of the original integrated art work (including the Clement Meadmore sculpture and colonnade floor decoration).

The essentially 'experimental nature' of the some of the building's detailing and use of materials or 'off the shelf' components for various key components—particularly the reinforced brickwork sunshade fins, the external edges of the floor slabs and windows—is also a reflection of both its original financial context as well as being typical of the still emerging postwar development of modern commercial building technologies. In the context of this study, this deterioration is of greatest concern where it has affected major building components of significance, particularly on the exterior of the building, most notably, the spalling/structural instability of the brick sun-shade fins.

The original and changing regulatory environments of the building have also directly affected the overall physical character, architectural components and fabric of 41 McLaren Street. Though originally limited in height and massing by council regulations because of its setting and previous residential use, the site has since been surrounded by tall tower developments, from the 1973 towers of Northside Gardens (on the north side of McLaren Street) to the recent residential apartment blocks immediately to the west (on both sides of the street).

The site is, in effect, located within an area of North Sydney which is notable for the complex variety of building types, functions, physical size/form with little cohesion. Within its immediate setting on McLaren Street, the architectural qualities (including materiality) of Simsmetal House as well as its physical separation from adjacent developments by vehicular laneways make it a still notable visual focus among its neighbours. More generally, however, tall residential tower developments clearly dominate the immediate streetscape, simply by means of their bulk and scale without, perhaps, establishing a more meaningful presence through quality of architectural design and contextual relationship—as, in the past, the original building at 41 McLaren Street demonstrated it was possible to do.

3.4 Endnotes

1 *Concrete Quarterly*, 105, Cement and Concrete Association, Summer 1975, p 11.

4.0 Assessment of Significance

4.1 Assessment against Standard Criteria

The following assessment of the heritage significance of Simsmetal House, 41 McLaren Street, North Sydney, is based on the standard heritage significance criteria and gradings identified in the NSW Heritage Office publication 'Assessing Heritage Significance' 2001.

The historical background and review of physical fabric in Sections 2.0 and 3.0 provide the background and supporting information for the assessment.

An assessment of the comparative significance of the site in a number of contexts, using relevant categories and issues identified in the standard criteria, is included in Section 4.2 to inform the statement of significance in Section 4.3. The statement of significance is intended to provide a summary account of the nature and degree of significance, as identified in the preceding assessments and to supplement and expand on the Statement of Significance in North Sydney Council's current heritage listing for the site (included in Section 1.3).

4.1.1 Criterion A

Relevant Guidelines for Inclusion

An item is important in the course, or pattern, of NSW's—or the local area's—cultural or natural history

- *Is associated with a significant activity or historical phase.*
- *Maintains or shows the continuity of a historical process or activity.*
- *Is of local significance under this criterion.*

- The site provides evidence of the mid to late twentieth century expansion of North Sydney as a major commercial and business hub and Sydney's second CBD, including the replacement and consolidation of previous residential sites and the burgeoning of modern office blocks from the late 1960s.
- The site in its setting provides evidence of the varied and changing planning and regulatory environment for commercial development in North Sydney following the end of World War II and the impacts of specific controls on individual sites. In particular, the site reflects the crucial role of changing attitudes to development in the 1970s within both the general population and planning administrators trying to achieve a balance between the older, lower density traditional character of the area and pressures for new development types and functions.

4.1.2 Criterion B

Relevant Guidelines for Inclusion

An item has strong or special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in NSW's—and/or the local area's—cultural or natural history.

- *Is associated with a significant event, person or group of persons.*
- *Is of local and representative state significance under this criterion.*

- Simsmetal House is closely associated with the work of Harry Seidler, an outstanding Australian architect of the postwar period, and is an important example of his smaller scale commercial office

buildings, dating to the period midway between his earliest works—including the 1959 Printers Union Building, Sydney, and CIBA Administrative Offices, Lane Cove—and his last in this particular field, the 1986 Extension and Penthouse to his Milsons Point offices.

- The building's association with Harry Seidler is demonstrated by its ready recognition as one of the architect's works, incorporating key components and attributes typical of this designer (including materiality, form, massing and façade modulation incorporating sun-shading measures). In part, this ready recognition relates to the number and range of buildings by the architect within the North Sydney local government area (including the firm's offices at Milsons Point and Council Offices in McLaren Street as well as the more widely known Blues Point Tower Apartments).

- The building's association with the architect Harry Seidler is also demonstrated by its inclusion in a number of articles/publications on both architecture of the period and Seidler's work.[1]

4.1.3 Criterion C

Relevant Guidelines for Inclusion

An item is important in demonstrating aesthetic characteristics and/or a high degree of creative or technical achievement in NSW—or the local area.

- *Shows or is associated with, creative or technical innovation or achievement.*
- *Is aesthetically distinctive.*
- *Exemplifies a particular taste, style or technology.*
- *Is of local significance under this criterion.*

- As one of a varied group of smaller scale commercial office buildings designed by Harry Seidler's office over three decades, Simsmetal House demonstrates how, by this stage of his career (1971), his design work was able to demonstrate a bold and confident hand—*a high degree of creative achievement*—through relatively modest means, including new approaches to using modern materials and standard components—*technical innovation*—even where this involved experimentation that was not always successful.

- Simsmetal House also demonstrates attributes—including form, massing, materiality and façade treatment—characteristic of Seidler's design approach and aesthetic sensibility, with the incorporation of sun-shading devices on the major façades representing a particularly *high degree of creative achievement*, as noted by both contemporary and subsequent reviews.

- The *aesthetic distinctiveness* of the site is also due, in large measure, to the low scale of the northern three-storey block with its roof terraces fronting McLaren Street and the accompanying terrace and planter box planting 'greening' the front of the building. This component of the building represents both a sympathetic streetscape component—compatible with human scale—and an historic remnant of a time when this area of North Sydney was a less densely developed commercial centre.

- Though altered and added to (particularly internally), Simsmetal House retains important evidence of original features/fabric, recognisably associated with Seidler's design work as part of its overall layout and external character. Deterioration and failure of some original materials and/or detailing has also notably affected the level of intactness of original fabric in a number of key areas, but not the aesthetic and/or technical intentions of the affected elements within the building. Some changes, including the removal of original artwork, fittings/finishes and landscaping features, are readily reversible.

4.1.4 Criterion D

Relevant Guidelines for Inclusion

An item has strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group in NSW—or the local area—for social, cultural or spiritual reasons.

- *Is of potential local significance under this criterion.*

- Although there is no evidence of the building having a particular social value to one or more groups within the North Sydney local government area, it is one of a group of postwar Modern commercial and institutional buildings of note within the city that are recognised by groups of architects, designers, and postwar Modern enthusiasts generally interested in the architecture, design and innovation of this important period. (Other buildings include the 14-storey MLC Building [1957], Sabemo House [1968] and IBIS House [1970], all of which are located fronting Miller Street.)

4.1.5 Criterion E

An item has potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of NSW's—or the local area's—cultural or natural history.

Though no detailed research has been carried out on the site's archaeological potential, no documentary or physical evidence of previous development of the site robust enough to have survived disturbance by the construction of the basement levels of Simsmetal House has been identified.

4.2 Comparative Assessment

4.2.1 Comparative Criteria

As noted in the preceding text, Simsmetal House has a range of heritage values relating to:

- the postwar commercial development of North Sydney and in particular the commercial and civic/institutional buildings of the 1960s to 1980s as the area rapidly expanded to form Sydney's second CBD;

- the changing planning and statutory regime of the postwar years relevant to development as well as the protection of local cultural/environmental values;

- the site's association with the Harry Seidler, an architect of local, national and international renown;

- the building's role as a good representative example of Seidler's mature design intentions and aesthetic, which retains important original components and fabric, particularly externally, despite various alterations and areas of damage/deterioration; and

- the building's distinctive and sympathetic contribution to its immediate setting, including particularly the frontage to McLaren Street and views to/from the northwest, north and northeast of the site, though this has been affected by a number of adjacent developments in recent decades.

Following an initial, desktop review of background material on comparative works by Seidler,[2] the following conclusions have been reached relating to the comparative significance of the site, including its potential rarity:

- Simsmetal House is one of a relatively diverse group of low-scale, commercial/institutional office buildings that feature in published records of Harry Seidler's completed architectural projects that survive today in readily recognisable form.
- The building demonstrates a progression in confidence and skill by the architect Harry Seidler from his earlier commercial structures (including the Printers Union and Lend Lease offices in Sydney and the Silvers Building in Ultimo) and is a good representative example of his skilful and competent handling of forms and façade modulation using a repertoire of elements, materials and detailing that were, by this stage of his professional life, distinctive of his work—including particularly the use of strongly defined concrete structural elements, horizontal and vertical sun-shading and a careful arrangement of geometrical forms in plan and elevation.
- The building's external design and façade treatment is also an example of the strength of notable European architects and design traditions on the forms and materials of Seidler's work in Australia—particularly Le Corbusier and Marcel Breuer—especially on the use of strong façade modulation using concrete and/or masonry incorporating sun-shading features (used particularly by Le Corbusier in his buildings at Chandigarh and Ahmedabad in India).
- The building also demonstrates Seidler's response to the imperatives of a more budget-conscious project brief, providing a still high quality of overall design with a simpler repertoire of forms and construction details, and experimenting with standard, 'off-the-shelf' building components and materials (with mixed results as to their long term quality, performance and condition). This approach was used more frequently in his early residential work as part of his desire to make 'progressive design available to people of average means'.[3] This undoubtedly contrasted with many of his contemporary and later projects that featured refined detailing and distinctively exposed structural elements (particularly the work of the Italian engineer Luigi Nervi on such buildings as his own offices at Milsons Point, the North Sydney Council offices in McLaren Street, North Sydney, and the larger MLC Centre and Australia Square in the Sydney CBD). In Simsmetal House, Seidler's work showed his fundamental belief in the importance of good, 'Modern design' so that it 'would become universally accepted'.[4]

4.3 Statement of Significance

Simsmetal House is significant because of its close association with the work of Harry Seidler, an outstanding Australian architect of the postwar period, and is an important example of his smaller scale commercial office buildings at a time when the larger, iconic developments that established his national and international reputation were establishing themselves as the major focus of the practice. It is one of a relatively small group of low-scale, commercial office buildings that feature in published records of Seidler's completed architectural projects and survive today in readily recognisable form.

The building's association with Harry Seidler is demonstrated by its ready recognition as one of the architect's works, incorporating key components and attributes—form, massing, materiality and façade treatment—characteristic of his design approach and aesthetic sensibility, with the incorporation of sun-shading devices on the major façades representing a high degree of creative achievement, as noted by both contemporary and subsequent reviews.

The building also demonstrates Seidler's response to the imperatives of a more budget-conscious project brief, providing a still high quality of overall design with a simpler repertoire of forms and construction details, and experimenting with standard, 'off-the-shelf' building components and materials (with mixed results as to their long term quality, performance and condition). This approach, used more frequently in his early

residential work as part of his desire to make progressive design available to people of average means, undoubtedly contrasted with many of his contemporary and later projects but maintained his fundamental belief in the importance of good 'Modern design'.

The aesthetic distinctiveness of the site is also due, in large measure, to the low scale of the northern three-storey block with its roof terraces fronting McLaren Street and the accompanying terrace and planter box planting 'greening' the front of the building. This component of the building represents both a sympathetic streetscape component—compatible with human scale—and an historic remnant of a time when this area of North Sydney was a less densely developed commercial centre.

More generally, the site development provides evidence of the mid to late twentieth century expansion of North Sydney as a major commercial and business hub and Sydney's second CBD, including the replacement and consolidation of previous residential sites and the burgeoning of modern office blocks from the late 1960s.

The site also reflects many aspects of the changing planning and regulatory environment for development throughout North Sydney over the latter half of the twentieth century, ranging from its own original site-specific controls (on height, density and setback) through to the present diversity of use/function, density and character within its immediate and wider settings as changing economic, social and development pressures have been reflected in the built environment.

4.4 Endnotes

1 Key references include Frampton, K, and Drew, P 1992, *Harry Seidler: Four Decades of Architecture*, Thames and Hudson, London (including the Biographical Chronology); Blake, P 1973, *Architecture for the New World: The Work of Harry Seidler*, Horowitz Australia Pty Ltd, Sydney; *Concrete Quarterly*, 105, Cement and Concrete Association, Summer 1975.

2 Frampton, K, and Drew, P 1992, *Harry Seidler: Four Decades of Architecture*, Thames and Hudson, London (including the Biographical Chronology).

3 Harry Seidler quoted in Frampton, K, and Drew, P 1992, *Harry Seidler: Four Decades of Architecture*, Thames and Hudson, London, p 395.

4 Harry Seidler quoted in Frampton, K, and Drew, P 1992, *Harry Seidler: Four Decades of Architecture*, Thames and Hudson, London, p 395.

5.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Introduction

This section provides a summary of key heritage issues relevant to planning for the future of 41 McLaren Street, North Sydney, based on the background information and heritage assessment in Sections 1 to 4. It is intended to assist with the 'Identification and Evaluation of Heritage Impacts' and 'Alternative Options Considered' sections of any future Heritage Impact Assessment application for development of the site.

The section takes as its starting point the site's statutory heritage listing and related controls under NSLEP 2013. It addresses heritage issues relevant to proposed changes to the site including measures to lessen and/or mitigate potential adverse impacts.

The use of the term 'conservation' in this report conforms with Burra Charter use and includes a range of activities from preservation (ie retention without change) through to restoration, reconstruction, adaptation (ie allowing change to areas and components within a framework that supports conservation of key heritage values) and interpretation.

5.2 Objectives, Opportunities and Constraints

5.2.1 Integration with Setting

Generally

From the preceding analysis of the development history of the site and its setting, a number of key heritage issues relevant to the future development of the Simsmetal House site can be identified:

- The overall building envelope (including height, massing and site coverage/FSR) is essentially the product of site-specific building controls based on the very different, and much more fluid, statutory planning codes operating 45 years ago within a very different physical and statutory environment.
- The skilful architectural resolution of the external form, massing and façade treatment of the original building by Harry Seidler was designed to respond to both the site's physical context and statutory controls, but even at this stage was intended to accommodate several additional storeys in height.
- In its present physical and civic context, the role of Simsmetal House as a significant architectural site within both McLaren Street and North Sydney (as identified in the assessment of significance) has been adversely impacted on by adjacent developments erected without regard to the heritage item in their vicinity.
- The change from commercial office to multistorey residential development to the majority of surrounding sites has contributed to the building's increasing isolation from the functional and streetscape roles for which it was intended.

In summary, changes to the setting of the site which formerly contributed to, but now actively detract from, appreciation of the significance of the heritage item, are relevant to the future management and development of the site.

Ward Street Precinct Masterplan

Planning for the future of 41 McLaren Street also coincides with the development of the Ward Street Precinct Masterplan, a planning framework which has the potential to impact as significantly on the future of the site and its setting as the original 1970s IDO which established the present form and layout of Simsmetal House.

Key opportunities and constraints identified in the current draft of the Masterplan (as, for example, outlined in extracts from this document included as Appendix F to this report) have the potential to support and enhance meaningful conservation of the heritage significance of the site while also supporting larger civic and planning goals.

In this context the following conclusions and recommendations are relevant to the future of the site and its setting:

- Specific decisions about the future of the site as an item of heritage significance must be based on **appropriate heritage analysis, assessment and conservation methodology**. It is not an appropriate response by the relevant heritage consent authority (ie North Sydney Council) to simply identify the site as a heritage item and develop specific development controls for its future without incorporating specific considerations as to its significance and conservation requirements.

- If the current draft Masterplan is a first step at defining Council's objectives and principles and appropriate built form, and Council specifically wants submissions on these ideas and alternatives, **this report provides an essential opportunity to present key heritage issues and objectives** (or goals) for the site for consideration and support by Council. This material has been prepared using the required information and assessment methodology with expert advice on significance and conservation objectives, as required by Council for any development of a heritage site.

- The fact that the site is an item of heritage significance—and is faced by a large number of problems with its physical fabric that need costly remediation and conservation work—should be of particular importance to the authority responsible for the listing. That is, the **future viability of the site and retention of meaningful heritage values requires support for appropriate development**, including adaptation, to provide funding for essential conservation.

- The current draft Masterplan proposal to limit both the extent and form of additional development on the site (as set out in the 'Site Specific [controls for] 41 McLaren Street'[1] **does not appropriately respond to the heritage values of the place, its relationship to its setting or its meaningful retention, adaptation and interpretation.** That is, the current proposal does not recognise or allow for an appropriate long term conservation of the site.

- In addition, the original limitations on the site's development potential are no longer meaningful within the **existing building's immediate setting**. With changes to sites to the west of Simsmetal House approved and commenced in the period of this report's preparation, 41 McLaren Street is effectively isolated, visually, functionally and physically from its surrounding development in a context where **improved through-site linkage, additional commercial and residential accommodation and public/community amenities could be readily integrated**.

- Given the proximity of the **Council's multistorey carpark** immediately south of the site, and the fact that this represents an '**intrusive' component of Simsmetal House setting** in heritage assessment terms, Council should actively review the potential for this site to be positively and

pragmatically used to give the **best outcome for both the conservation of the heritage item and civic/planning and community objectives for this area.**

- In this context, the proposed **provision of community facilities** (currently via a potential 'community hub building' immediately to the south of Simsmetal House) could also provide an opportunity to consider **new uses in, and access through, the site** and enhance the benefits of its conservation.

- With better **functional and civic integration of the heritage item**—which would allow positive exploitation of its **location, unique streetscape character and scale and architectural presence** to McLaren Street in particular—the site could add value to Council's functional, social and civic goals for this area, including the better use of an existing 'iconic built form'.[2]

- In this context, exploiting the significant **covered colonnade** along the west of Simsmetal House and **extending through to Berry Street**—with **new functions/uses** including community facilities, coffee shop, residential apartments etc—as well as commercial office spaces accessed via entry lobbies from ground floor level, as currently, would support conservation and public interpretation goals as well as pedestrian movement to areas/facilities north of the CBD.

- Similarly, the **significant components and attributes of all three streetscape frontages** (including scale, architectural character, greening, etc) of Simsmetal House (as identified and assessed above) provide an opportunity for creative adaptation and interpretation as part of a conservation project with **local streetscape benefits**. Given the architectural quality of the building's key elevations, it is a key conservation objective that they be retained, repaired and appreciated by the community as they use the thoroughfare through the site, its lower level facilities and/or pass by it on McLaren Street.

- Given the status of Seidler's architectural work generally, and Simsmetal House's significant association with his legacy, it is also important that any development on the site be of sufficiently **high design quality and presence to positively contribute to its 'iconic built form'**.

- In addition, appropriate future development of a more substantial scale, quality and visual/civic presence would provide an opportunity to reinstate the building's original **role as an architectural landmark and associations with the aesthetic and design principles of Harry Seidler.**

- These objectives essentially require **development of a substantial nature on the site**, if only to support the extensive **conservation/repair works** required and give the building **a viable future**. Without adequate support, there is little to support meaningful conservation of the heritage values of the place.

5.2.2 Conservation of Significant Building Components and Attributes

As part of future development of the site, the following recommendations are made to conserve key components and attributes and/or mitigate potential adverse impacts:

- Retain and conserve the **three-storey front block with terraced roofs** for appropriate functions—including particularly community functions which could exploit the open areas facing north—to maintain these significant functional, architectural and streetscape components of the site.

- Retain and reconstruct/adapt **green landscaping** components on north and west site frontages (including terraces and planter boxes) that is sympathetic to the significant original character.

Reinstate and/or adapt components based on original form and layout (eg plain rectangular and circular planters, etc).

- Retain and reconstruct/adapt original **covered colonnade** as the primary site and building entry from northeast corner (to covered colonnade along the east elevation) including the form and layout of steps, canopy, planter and landscape elements with appropriate architectural character based on original design principles. Any extension through to the south of the site should be consistent with these principles but would not adversely affect overall significance.

- **Entry lobbies and/or other spaces** accessed off the covered colonnade should maintain a consistency of shop-frontages, alignment, materials and detailing as originally. Public amenities (eg community centre) and/or commercial facilities such as cafés may be integrated into the lower levels of the building to support use and pedestrian movement.

- Retain with appropriate reconstruction and adaptation the **vertical sun-shading blades** on the east and west elevations, reinstating elements with complementary form, size/massing, visual character and detailing. Adaptation of materials and construction (eg using light-weight concrete pre-cast elements) could provide cost effective, longer lasting replacements.

- Replacement/upgrading of **standard structural components** (concrete slabs and columns, brick walls, metal-framed window assemblies) should use high quality modern equivalents to original materials/products and maintain visual materiality.

- Any **new/additional development** should be set back from the front three-storey block and set above the rear block to allow the clear reading of this as a separate element from the north, northeast and northwest in views along McLaren Street. Access to the additional development block should be via a similar lobby arrangement as currently for the rear (five-storey) wing.

5.3 Recommendations

On the basis of the heritage assessment carried out for this report, GML recommends a submission to Council by the owners directed towards the need for Council to positively support sufficient additional development of 41 McLaren Street to achieve appropriate long term conservation outcomes, as proposed.

The opportunity to develop an appropriate development—in terms of heritage benefits, civic–functional improvements to movement through and use of facilities in the CBD, architectural quality for the street and CBD generally, as well as provision of additional commercial and/or residential accommodation to support the appropriate repair and long term viability of the site—is currently available to an extent that is rare in any complex planning environment. With the proposed new transport hub and possibilities for development of the Ward Street precinct, a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity exists for a notable building development that also has potential civic benefits.

With the clear identification and assessment of the heritage significance of the site provided in this report, and its recommendations for the future of the site in a manner that would support conservation of its key components and attributes, there are essentially two options for Council to consider:

- to support the role of the site as an item of heritage significance to North Sydney by allowing an appropriate level and quality of development that includes meaningful conservation works and sufficient economic return to support this, as well as the return on investment; or

- to effectively lose the building's significant values through deterioration of fabric (as currently) and/or inappropriate development because of insufficient understanding and/or actions to support the heritage significance of the site.

In this context, we recommend that client and design team representatives ask for a meeting with Council to review the key issues and recommendations raised in this report specifically to address relevant heritage issues and concerns about the site in the context of planning for its future and its relationship to Council's current planning for the area. This discussion would also usefully be part of a larger review of options for achieving the best planning, architectural and civic outcomes for 41 McLaren Street as part of an economically viable development with appropriate heritage conservation outcomes.

GML would be happy to participate in any proposed meetings with Council and assist with supporting information on relevant heritage concerns, requirements for meaningful conservation of significant components and attributes (including the need to cover the costs for essential works), and measures to appropriately mitigate potential adverse impacts through appropriate adaptation and design.

5.4 Endnotes

1 Extract from Ward Street Masterplan, Draft (Attachment to SiS06—5 December 2016), p 117.
2 Extract from Ward Street Masterplan, Draft (Attachment to SiS06—5 December 2016), p 43.

6.0 Appendices

Appendix A

State Heritage Inventory (SHI) listing for Simsmetal House.

Appendix B

Examples of original architectural documentation by Harry Seidler and Associates for Simsmetal House, 1971–1972.

Appendix C

Examples of original engineering documentation by Ove Arup and Partners for sun shade fins (1971).

Appendix D

Cement and Concrete Association, 'Seidler's Office', *Concrete Quarterly* 105, Summer 1975, pp 10–14.

Appendix E

Measured drawings of 41 McLaren Street, North Sydney, by Travis McEwan Group, November 2000 provided by Rick McEwan on behalf of Claijade and Erolcene.

Appendix F

Extracts from Ward Street Precinct Masterplan, Draft, dated 5 December 2017 relevant to 41 McLaren Street, North Sydney.

Appendix A

State Heritage Inventory (SHI) listing for Simsmetal House.

Simsmetal House

Item details

Name of item: Simsmetal House
Type of item: Built
Group/Collection: Commercial
Category: Commercial Office/Building
Primary address: 41 McLaren Street, North Sydney, NSW 2060
Local govt. area: North Sydney

All addresses

Street Address	Suburb/town	LGA	Parish	County	Type
41 McLaren Street	North Sydney	North Sydney			Primary Address

Statement of significance:

A good example of a five storey, concrete framed office building in the Twentieth Century International style with strong horizontality in its elevations. An example of the work of the prominent Sydney architect, Harry Seidler. An office building of distinction which by its strong horizontality and the intergration of much planting, is pleasant and attractive not only as streetscape but spartially as well.

Heritage Inventory sheets are often not comprehensive, and should be regarded as a general guide only. Inventory sheets are based on information available, and often do not include information on landscape significance, interiors or the social history of sites and buildings. Inventory sheets are updated by Council as further information becomes available. An inventory sheet with little information may simply indicate that there has been no building work done to the item recently: it does not mean that items are not significant. Further research is always recommended as part of preparation of development proposals for heritage items, and is necessary in preparation of Heritage Impact Assessments and Conversation Management Plans, so that the significance of heritage items can be fully assessed prior to submitting development applications.

Note: There are incomplete details for a number of items listed in NSW. The Heritage Division intends to develop or upgrade statements of significance and other information for these items as resources become available.

Description

Designer/Maker: Harry Seidler

Physical description: A most interesting office building which, by means of a concrete framed structure and clever set-backs, achieves a sense of modest scale and streetscape while in fact being a most commodious structure. Almost every horizontal structural member features planting troughs and the resulting plane material screens and softens the building walling and spandrels are of pale brickwork and one is indented to accommodate a large branch of a weeping willow in the front garden. Dense landscaping makes an effective architectural foil. The slope of the McLaren Street is such that the open, large entrance foyer is below street level, producing an interesting spatial effect.

The five storey concrete framed office building with a flat roof. Concrete floor plates with white brick walls and blades with aluminium framed glazing. Planting troughs to most levels with terraces to the street with dense landscaping makes an effective architectural foil.

The open, large entrance foyer is below street level in an undercroft.

- This building is designed in the Late Twentieth century international style.

Physical condition and/or Intact/Good

Archaeological potential:

Modifications and dates: Glazing altered

Current use: Commercial Premises

Historic themes

Australian theme (abbrev)	New South Wales theme	Local theme
3. Economy-Developing local, regional and national economies	Commerce-Activities relating to buying, selling and exchanging goods and services	(none)-

Assessment of significance

SHR Criteria a) [Historical significance] High local significance

SHR Criteria b) [Associative significance] Local significance

SHR Criteria c) [Aesthetic significance] High local significance

SHR Criteria e) [Research potential] Potential

SHR Criteria f) [Rarity] This item is assessed as aesthetically rare locally.

SHR Criteria g) [Representativeness] This item is assessed as socially representative regionally. This item is assessed as scientifically representative regionally.

Integrity/Intactness: Good/High

-

_

Assessment criteria: Items are assessed against the **State Heritage Register (SHR) Criteria** to determine the level of significance. Refer to the Listings below for the level of statutory protection.

Listings

Heritage Listing	Listing Title	Listing Number	Gazette Date	Gazette Number	Gazette Page
Local Environmental Plan		I0889	02 Aug 13		
Heritage study					

Study details

Title	Year	Number	Author	Inspected by	Guidelines used
North Sydney Heritage Study Review	1993	1326	Tony Brassil, Robert Irving, Chris Pratten, Conybeare Morrison	RI Feb 93	Yes
North Sydney Heritage Review	2002		John Oultram		No

References, internet links & images

None

Note: internet links may be to web pages, documents or images.

(Click on thumbnail for full size image and image details)

Data source

The information for this entry comes from the following source:

Name: Local Government
Database number: 2181326

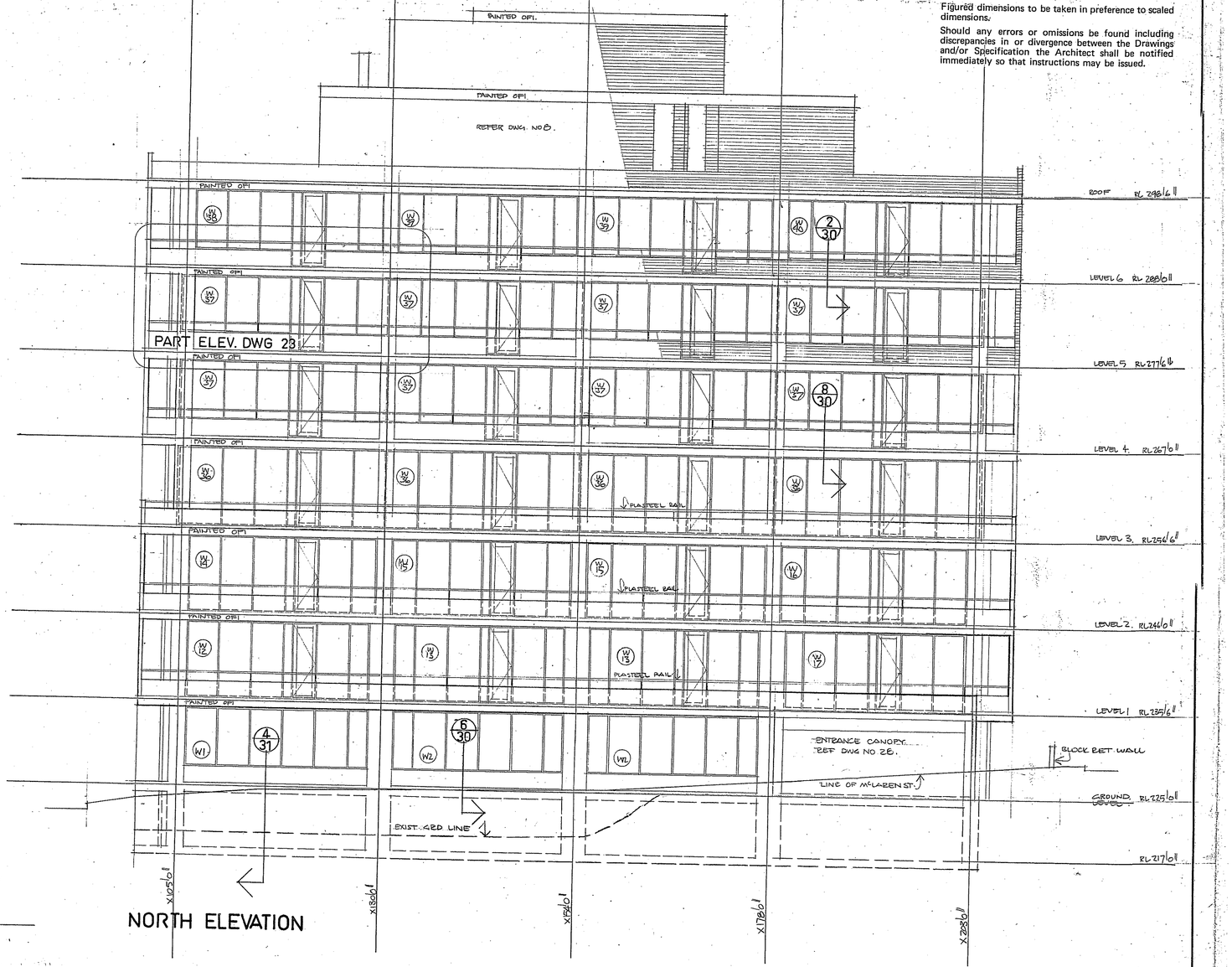
Return to previous page

Every effort has been made to ensure that information contained in the State Heritage Inventory is correct. If you find any errors or omissions please send your comments to the **Database Manager**.

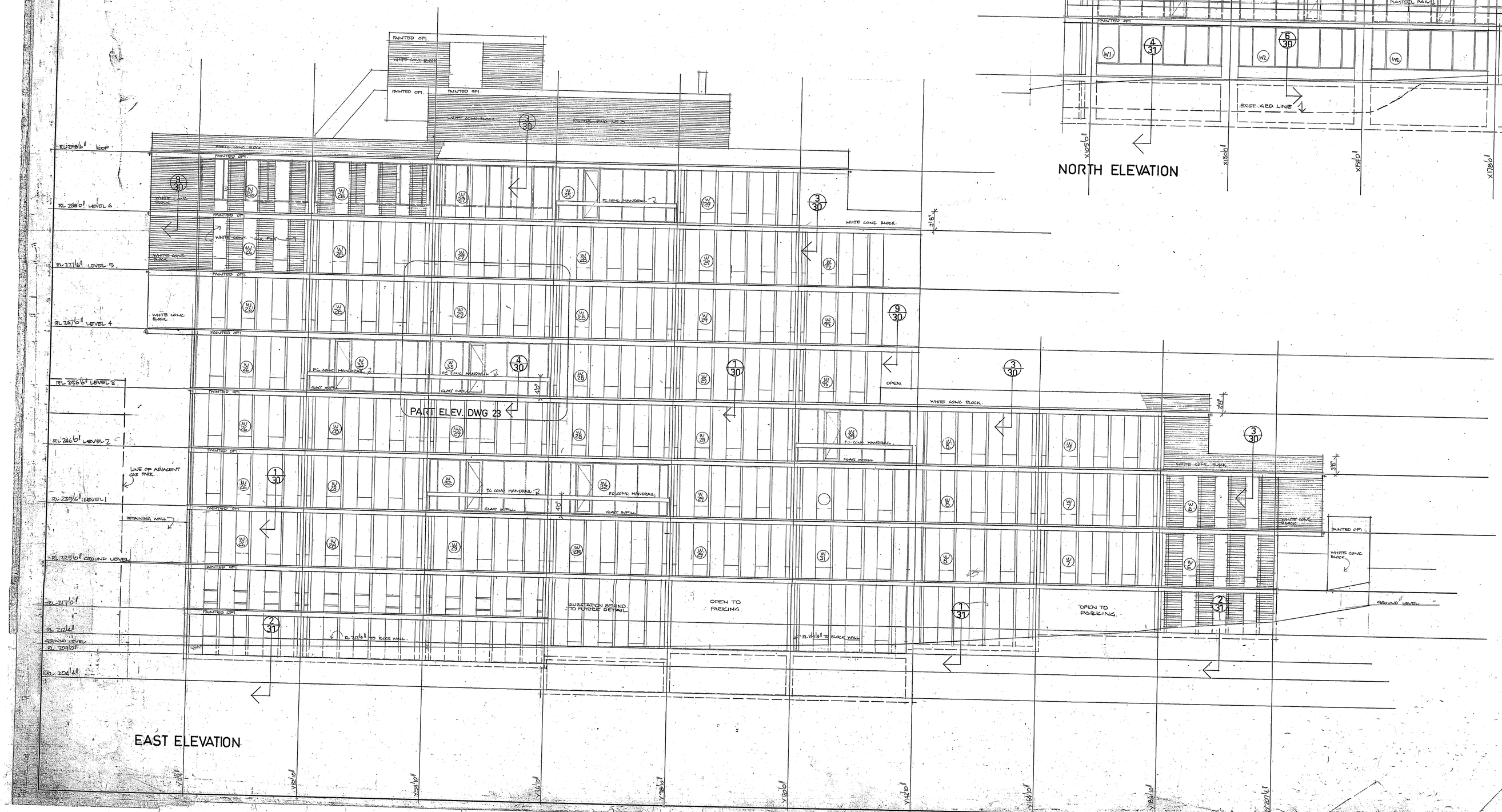
Appendix B

Examples of original architectural documentation by Harry Seidler and Associates for Simsmetal House, 1971–1972.

Verify all dimensions at the site.
Figured dimensions to be taken in preference to scaled dimensions.
Should any errors or omissions be found including discrepancies in or divergence between the Drawings and/or Specification the Architect shall be notified immediately so that instructions may be issued.



NORTH ELEVATION



EAST ELEVATION

Issue	Revision/Issued for	Date	By
C	ALTER WINDOW NUMBERS	5 JAN 71.	
B	GENERAL AMENDMENTS	DEC 71	

Harry Seidler+Associates Architects
7 Ridge Street North Sydney NSW 2060 Australia
Telephone 92 6119

Project
OFFICE BUILDING
CNR McLAREN & HARNETT STS
FOR MAX. G BOWEN (AUST.) PTY. LTD.

Project Number	Drawing Number
7106	10 C

Drawing Title
ELEVATIONS

Scales
1/8" = 1'0"

Sheet Number	Number in Set

Drawn

Approved

Verify all dimensions at the site.

Figured dimensions to be taken in preference to scaled dimensions.

Should any errors or omissions be found including discrepancies in or divergence between the Drawings and/or Specification the Architect shall be notified immediately so that instructions may be issued.

SOUTH ELEVATION

WEST ELEVATION

Issue	Revision/Issued for	Date	By
C	ALTER WINDOW NUMBERS.	4 JAN. 72.	
B	GENERAL AMENDMENTS.	DEC. 71.	

Harry Seidler + Associates Architects
7 Ridge Street North Sydney NSW 2060 Australia
Telephone 92 6119

Project
OFFICE BUILDING
CNR McLAREN & HARNETT StS
MAX-G BOWEN (AUST.) PTY. LTD.

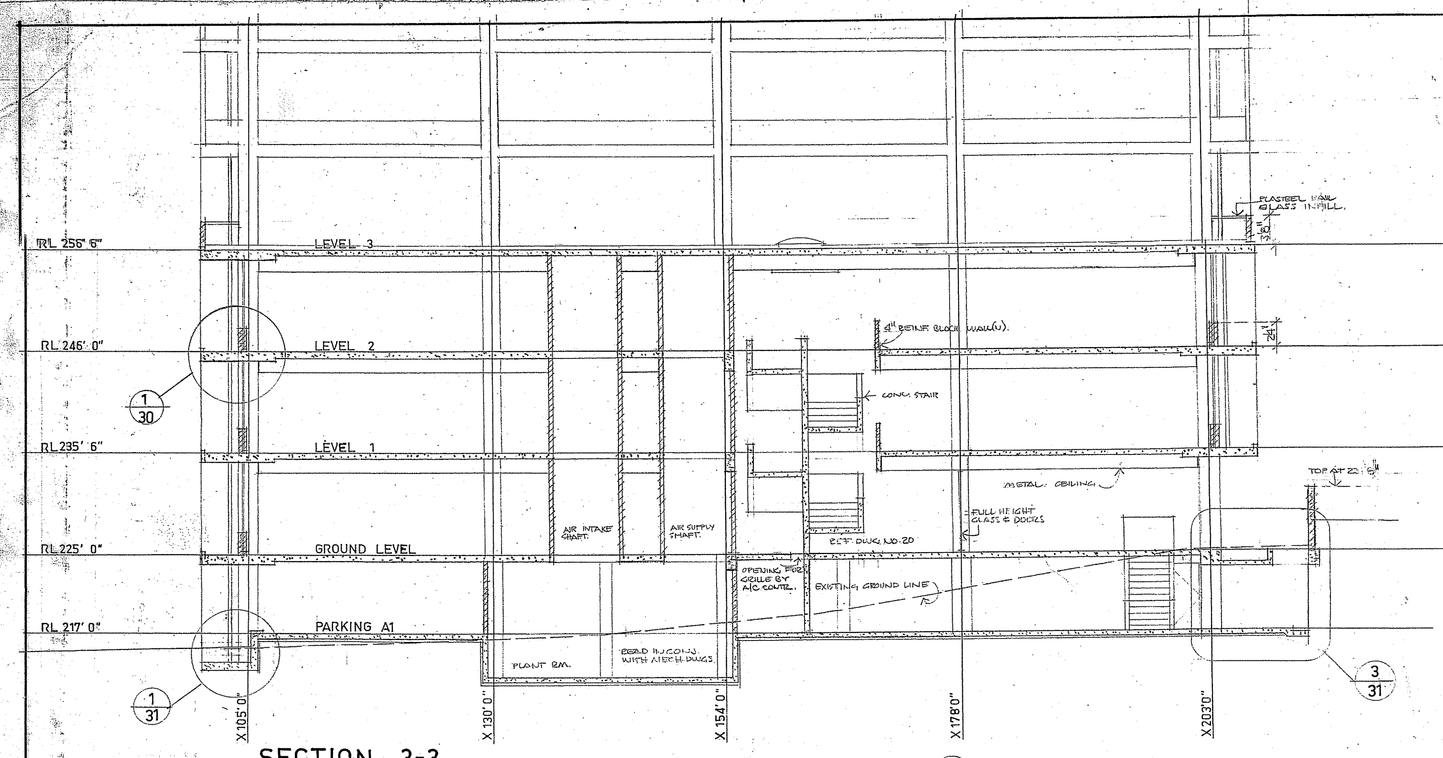
Project Number	Drawing Number
71·06	11c

Drawing Title
ELEVATIONS

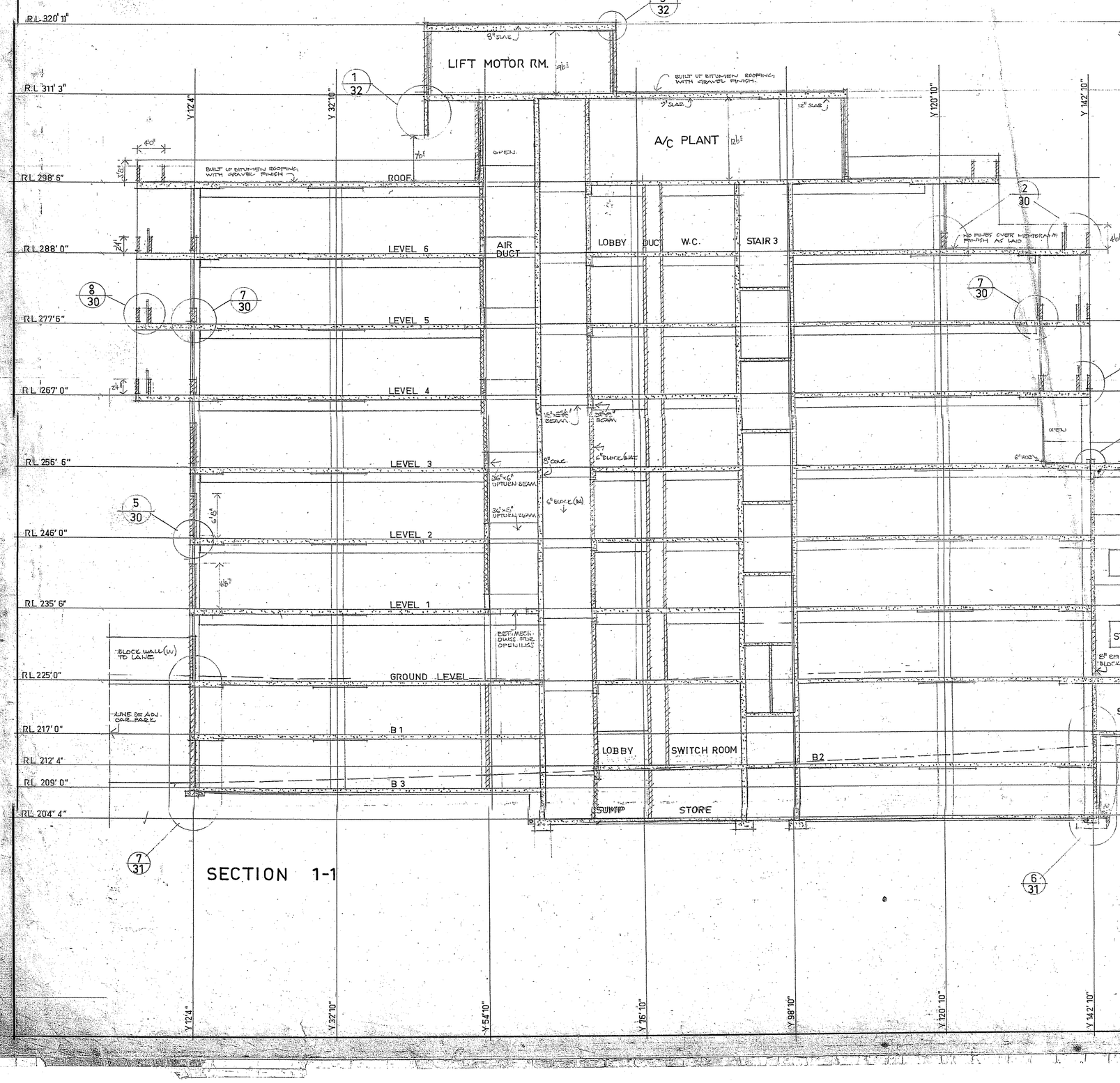
Scales
1/8" = 1'0"

Sheet Number	Number in Set

Drawn | Approved



SECTION 3-3



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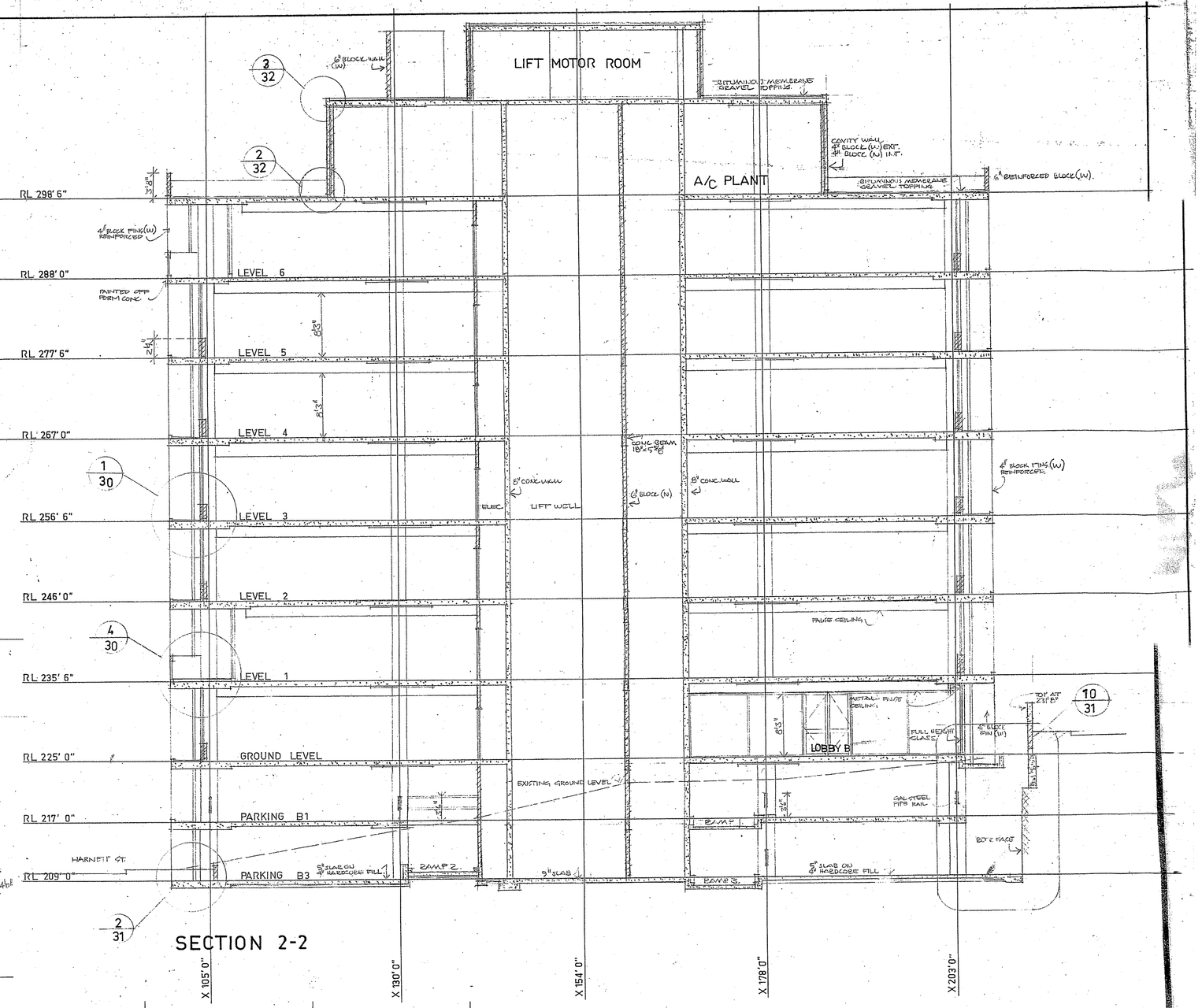
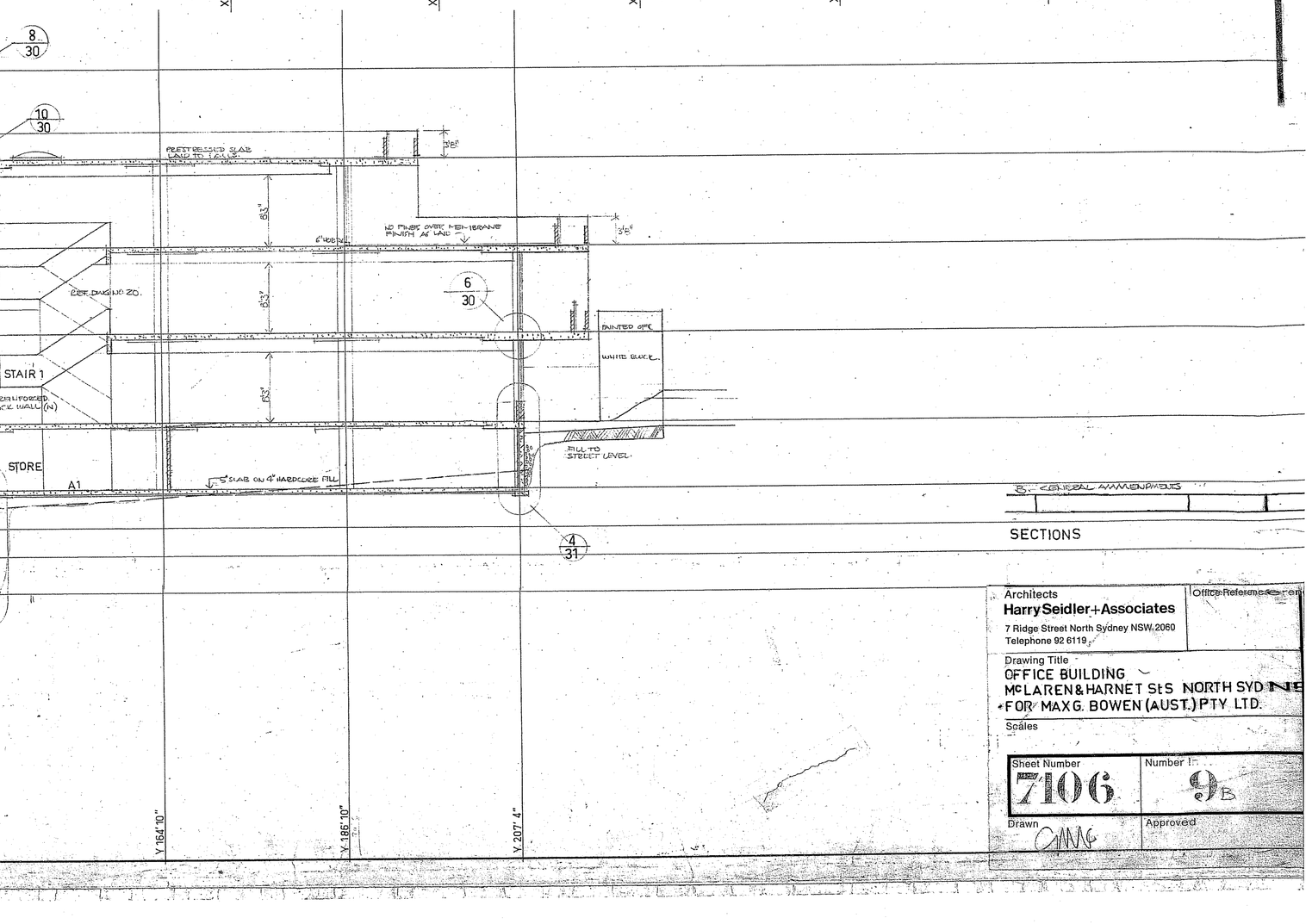


SECTION 2-2



SECTIONS

Architects
Harry Seidler + Associates
7 Ridge Street North Sydney NSW. 2060
Telephone 92 6119

Office Reference

Drawing Title
OFFICE BUILDING
McLAREN & HARNETT Sts NORTH SYDNEY
FOR MAX G. BOWEN (AUST.) PTY LTD.

Scales

Sheet Number 706

Number 9B

Drawn

Approved

Verify all dimensions at the site.
Figured dimensions to be taken in preference to scaled dimensions.

Should any errors or omissions be found including discrepancies in or divergence between the Drawings and/or Specification the Architect shall be notified immediately so that instructions may be issued.

NOTES
SCUPPER — FALL SLAB TO ALL FLOOR WASTES

SECTION AA

SECTION BB

SECTION CC

SECTION DD

SECTION EE

ROOF PLAN - PLANT ROOM LEVEL

ROOF PLAN L.M.R.

LIFT MOTOR ROOM PLAN LEVEL

Issue	Revision/Issued for	Date	By
C	RE-ISSUE TO SITE AMENDED ELEVATIONS TO CONFORM WITH DWG. NO. 54-55.	6-1-72 6-1-72	
B	CHANGE SIZE LIFT WELL TO MATCH. RELOCATE HOIST TO SUIT REVISED CAVITY BLOCK WALL TO PLANT RM. AND LIFT MOTOR ROOM.	10-12-71	

HarrySeidler+Associates Architects
7 Ridge Street North Sydney NSW 2060 Australia
Telephone 92 6119

Project
OFFICE BUILDING
Mc LAREN & HARNETT Sts. NORTH SYDNEY
FOR MAX G. BOWEN (AUST) PTY. LTD.

Project Number	Drawing Number
7106	8B

Drawing Title
ROOF PLAN
PLANT ROOM & LIFT MOTOR ROOM
Sep 71.

Scales
3/8" = 1'0"

Sheet Number	Number in Set

Drawn | Approved

Verify all dimensions at the site.
Figured dimensions to be taken in preference to scaled dimensions.
Should any errors or omissions be found including discrepancies in or divergence between the Drawings and/or Specification the Architect shall be notified immediately so that instructions may be issued.

FLOOR PLAN PLANT ROOM

FLOOR PLAN LIFT MOTOR ROOM

Issue	Revision/Issued for	Date	By
E.	RE-ISSUE TO SITE & CONSULTANTS.	6-4-72.	
D.	RAISE GRILLES. ADD OPENINGS IN SLAB AROUND COOLING TOWER ENCLOSURE. SCHEDULE GROUP COOLING TOWER CONTAINING INLOAD ADJ. BG. RELOCATE DOOR D4, ADD DOOR D9. ENCLOSE SMOKE VENT OPENINGS.	6-4-72.	
C.	RE-LOCATE OPENING FOR SMOKE VENT. AMEND DIMENSION STAIR 7.	14-3-72.	
B.			
A.	ISSUE TO SITE & CONSULTANTS	7-3-72.	

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7 Ridge Street North Sydney NSW 2060 Australia
Telephone 92 6119

Project
OFFICE BUILDING.
Mc LAREN & HARNETT ST. N. SYDNEY.
FOR MAX C. BOWEN (AUST) PTY. LTD.

Project Number	Drawing Number
7106.	54 C.

Drawing Title
PLANT ROOM.
LIFT MOTOR ROOM.

Scales
1/4" = 1'0"

Sheet Number	Number in Set

Drawn | Approved

Verify all dimensions at the site.

Figured dimensions to be taken in preference to scaled dimensions.

Should any errors or omissions be found including discrepancies in or divergence between the Drawings and/or Specification the Architect shall be notified immediately so that instructions may be issued.

R.L. 320'11"

R.L. 311'3"

R.L. 298'6"

BITUMINOUS MEMBRANE GRAVEL OVER

8" SLAB

8"(N) BLOCK INT. 4"(W) BLOCK EXT.

3/32

1/32

2/32

LIFT MOTOR ROOM
BEAD IN CONJ. WITH LIFT CONT. PRINGS.

12" SLAB

9" SLAB

30"x9" BEAM

5'0"

8"(N) BLOCK INT. 4"(W) BLOCK EXT.

8" CONC. WALL

8"(N) BLOCK WALL

AIR DUCT

LIFT WELL

PLANT ROOM
BEAD IN CONJ. WITH MECH. DUCT.

12" SLAB

4" (EXT.) BLOCK

4"(W) BLOCK FINS

GRILLES MESH BY MECH. CONTRACTOR

4/32

4"(W) BLOCK WALLS

6"(N) BLOCK PARAPET WALL

36"x8" UPSTAND BEAM

24"x9" BEAM

SECTION AA 54

Y 12'4"

Y 32'10"

Y 54'10"

Y 76'10"

Y 98'10"

Y 120'10"

R.L. 320'11"

PAINTED CONC.

WHITE BLOCK

7'0"x2'0" GRILLE

6" WHITE BLOCK RETNF. WALL

COOLING TOWER ENCLOSURE

20'0"x2'0" GRILLE

10'0"

3'0"

E6 26

6"x6" HOE

MEMBRANE GRAVEL OVER

BITUMINOUS MEMBRANE GRAVEL OVER

12" SLAB

9" SLAB

12" SLAB

4" WHITE BLOCK 4" NAT. BLOCK

R.L. 311'3"

5'0"

STAIR 7
REF. DWG. NO. 32.

4" WHITE BLOCK 4" NAT. BLOCK

21 26

PLANT ROOM

12'0"

4" NAT. BLOCK WALL

AIR DUCT

4'0"

6"(W) BLOCK PARAPET WALL

6" HIGH HOB.

BITUMINOUS MEMBRANE GRAVEL OVER.

3'6"

2'6"

R.L. 298'6"

SECTION BB 54

9/32

2/32

R.L. 320'11"

LIFT MOTOR ROOM

9'0"

ME GRILLE

6" WHITE BLOCK RETNF. WALL

COOLING TOWER ENCLOSURE

BITUMINOUS MEMBRANE GRAVEL OVER

OPENING FOR SMOKE EXHAUST

OPENING FOR SMOKE EXHAUST

30"x9" BEAM

4" BLOCK FINS

WIRE MESH & FILTER BY MECH. CONT.

PLANT ROOM

8" CONC. WALL

8" CONC. WALL

12" NOT. BLOCK WALL

18"x5'6" BEAM

24"x9" BEAM

R.L. 311'3"

3'6"

BITUMINOUS MEMBRANE GRAVEL OVER

6"x6" HOE

BITUMINOUS MEMBRANE GRAVEL OVER

6"(W) BLOCK RETNF. PARAPET WALL

R.L. 298'6"

SECTION CC 54

4/32

Issue	Revision/Issued for	Date	By
	RE-ISSUE TO SITE & CONSULT.	6-4-72	
B.	WALLS AROUND SMOKE VENTS	6-4-72	

HarrySeidler+Associates Architects

7 Ridge Street North Sydney NSW 2060 Australia
Telephone 92 6119

Project

OFFICE BUILDING
McLAREN & HARNETT STS. N. SYDNEY.
FOR MAX & BOWEN (AUST) PTY LTD.

Project Number	Drawing Number
7106	55 B.

Drawing Title

SECTIONS
LIFT MOTOR ROOM & PLANT ROOM.

Scales

1/4"=1'0"

Sheet Number	Number in Set

Drawn | Approved

Verify all dimensions at the site.
Figured dimensions to be taken in preference to scaled dimensions.
Should any errors or omissions be found including discrepancies in or divergence between the Drawings and/or Specification the Architect shall be notified immediately so that instructions may be issued.

▨ PORTIONS TO BE DEMOLISHED SHOWN THUS

CLEAR THE SITE OF ALL PATHS, SCRUB TREES, RUBBISH ETC.

LOCATE & SEAL OFF ALL DISUSED SERVICE LINES.

Issue	Revision/Issued for	Date	By

Harry Seidler+Associates Architects
7 Ridge Street North Sydney NSW 2060 Australia
Telephone 92 6119

Project
OFFICE BUILDING AT Nº41
MCLAREN ST NTH SYDNEY
FOR MAX G. BOWEN PTY. LTD.

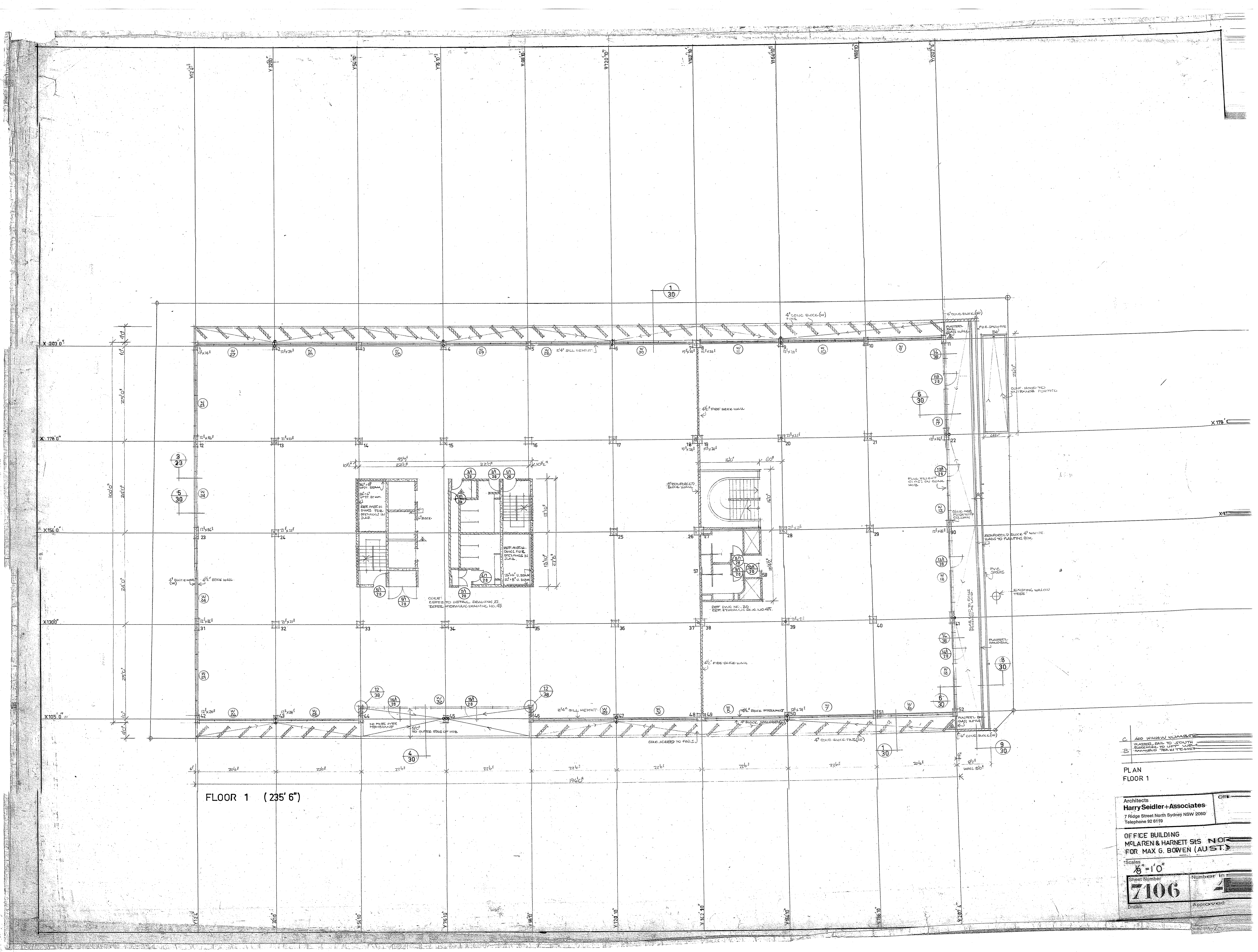
Project Number	Drawing Number

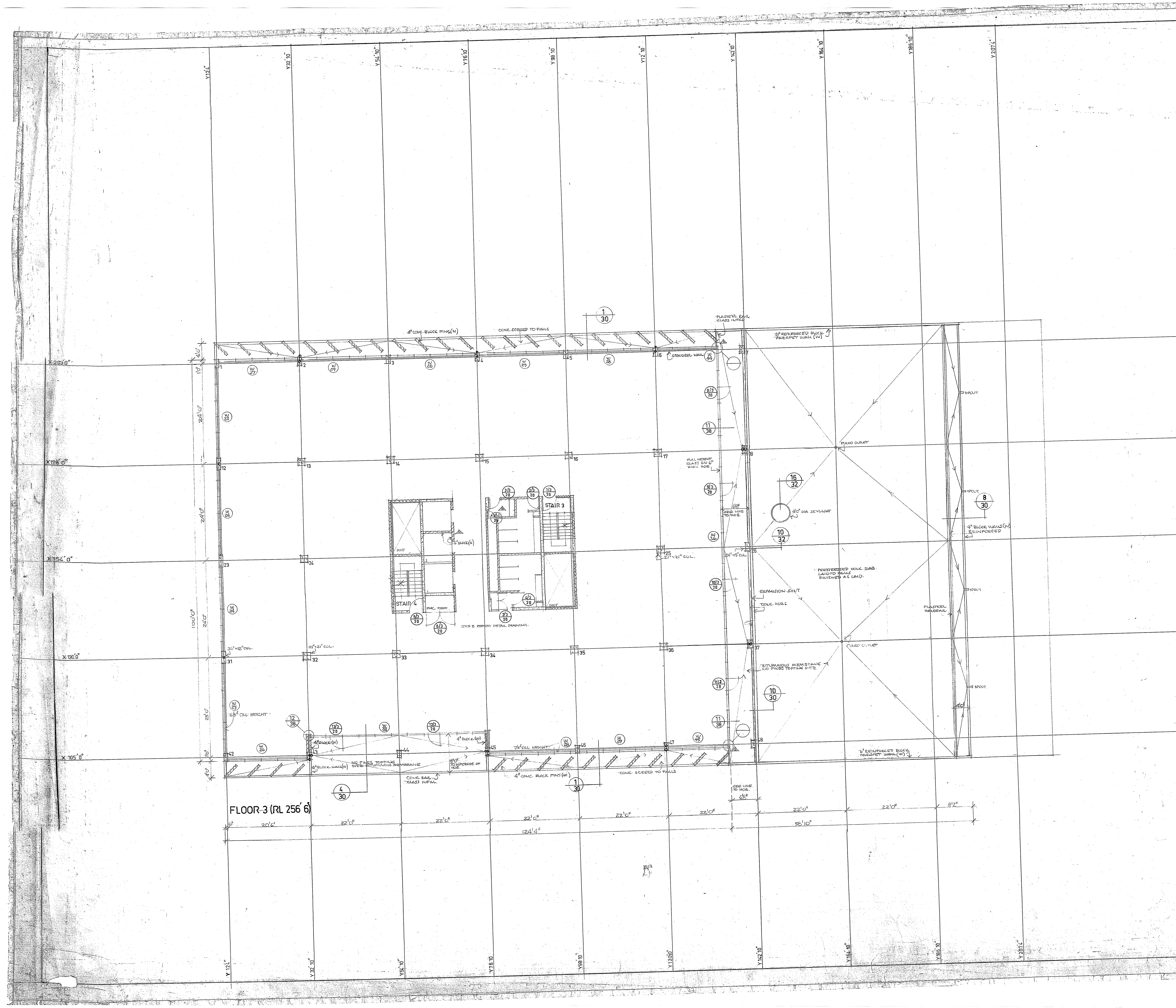
Drawing Title
DEMOLITION + SITE CLEARING CONTRACT

Scales
1/8" = 1'0"

Sheet Number	Number in Set
1	1

Drawn	Approved


FLOOR 1 (235' 6")
C ADD WINDOW NUMBERS
B PLASTEEL RAIL TO SOUTH
PLAN
FLOOR 1
Architects
Harry Seidler + Associates
7 Ridge Street North Sydney NSW 2060
Telephone 92 6119
OFFICE BUILDING
McLAREN & HARNETT StS NOR
FOR MAX G. BOWEN (AUST.)
Scales
1/8" = 1'0"
Sheet Number
7106
Drawn
Approved



C ADD WINDOW NUMBERS 4 JAN. 72
B PLASTEEL RAIL TO SOUTH LIFT TERRACE. BLOCKWORK TO LIFT WELL. AMMEND TEA KITCHEN. DEC. 71

PLAN
FLOOR 3

Architects
Harry Seidler + Associates
7 Ridge Street North Sydney NSW 2060
Telephone 92 6119

OFFICE BUILDING
McLAREN & HARNETT STS NORTH SYDNEY
FOR MAX G. BOWEN (AUST) PTY LTD

Scales 1/8" = 1'0"

Sheet Number 7106 | Number in set 6 C

Drawn | Approved

FLOOR 4 (RL 267'0") AND 5 (RL 277'6")

FLOOR 6 (RL 288'0")
REMAINDER AS FLOOR 4 & 5

C. ADD WINDOW NUMBERS. 4 JAN. 72.
B. PLASTERED RAIL SOUTH SIDE OF TERRACE. AMENDED TO KITCHEN BLOCK TO LIFT WELL. DEC. 71.

PLANS
FLOORS 4+5

Architects
Harry Seidler + Associates
7 Ridge Street North Sydney NSW 2060
Telephone 92 6119

Office Reference

OFFICE BUILDING
McLAREN & HARNETT Sts NORTH SYDNEY
FOR MAX G. BOWEN (AUST.) PTY LTY.

Scales
1/8" = 1'0"

Sheet Number 7106
Number in set 17 C

Drawn
Approved

FLOOR 2 (RL 246' 0")

PLAN.
FLOOR-2

D	ADD WINDOW NUMBERS.	4 JAN. 72.
C	PLASTEL RAIL SOUTH SIDE OF TERRACE. ADDITIONAL DIFFERENCES. 6" BLOCK WALL TO LIFT WELL. AMMEND TEA KITCHEN.	DEC. 71.
B	AMMEND OVERALL DIMENSION	22.11.71.

Architects
Harry Seidler+Associates
7 Ridge Street North Sydney NSW 2060
Telephone 92 6119

Office Reference

OFFICE BUILDING
McLAREN & HARNETT STS NORTH SYDNEY
FOR MAX G. BOWEN (AUST.) PTY. LTD.

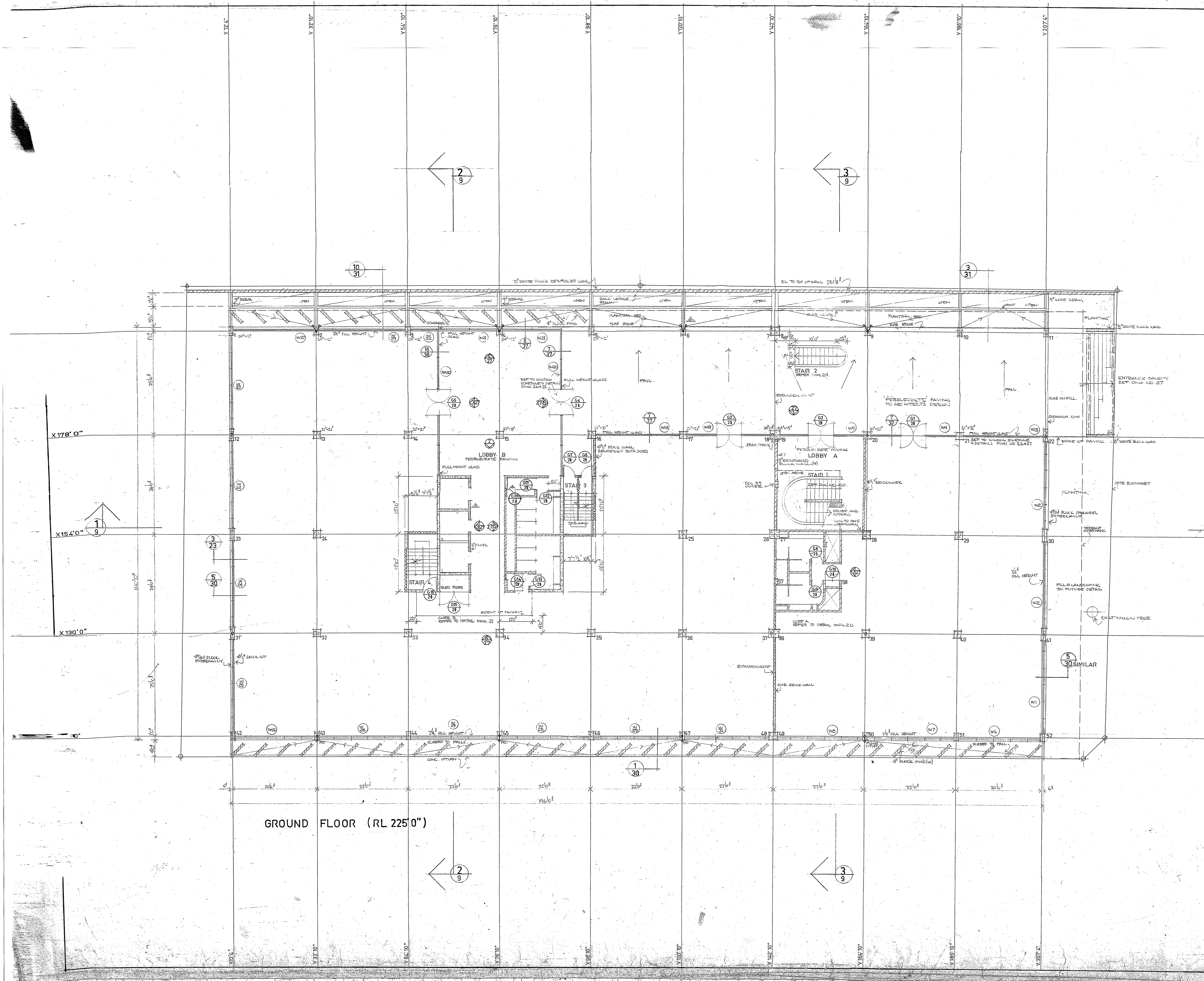
Scales
1/8" = 1'0"

Sheet Number 706

Number in set 5

Drawn

Approved



C.	ADD WINDOW NUMBERS.	4 JAN 72
B	BRICKWORK TO BLOCKWORK IN LIFTWELL. AMMEND TEA KIT. CORES. ADD ROCK LEDGE WEST BOUNDARY. FALL PLANTING BOX TO D.P.)	DEC. 71

PLAN
GROUND FLOOR

Architects
Harry Seidler+Associates
7 Ridge Street North Sydney NSW 2060
Telephone 92 6119

Office Reference

OFFICE BUILDING.
McLAREN & HARNETT StS NORTH SYDNEY
FOR MAX G. BOWEN (AUST.) PTY. LTD.

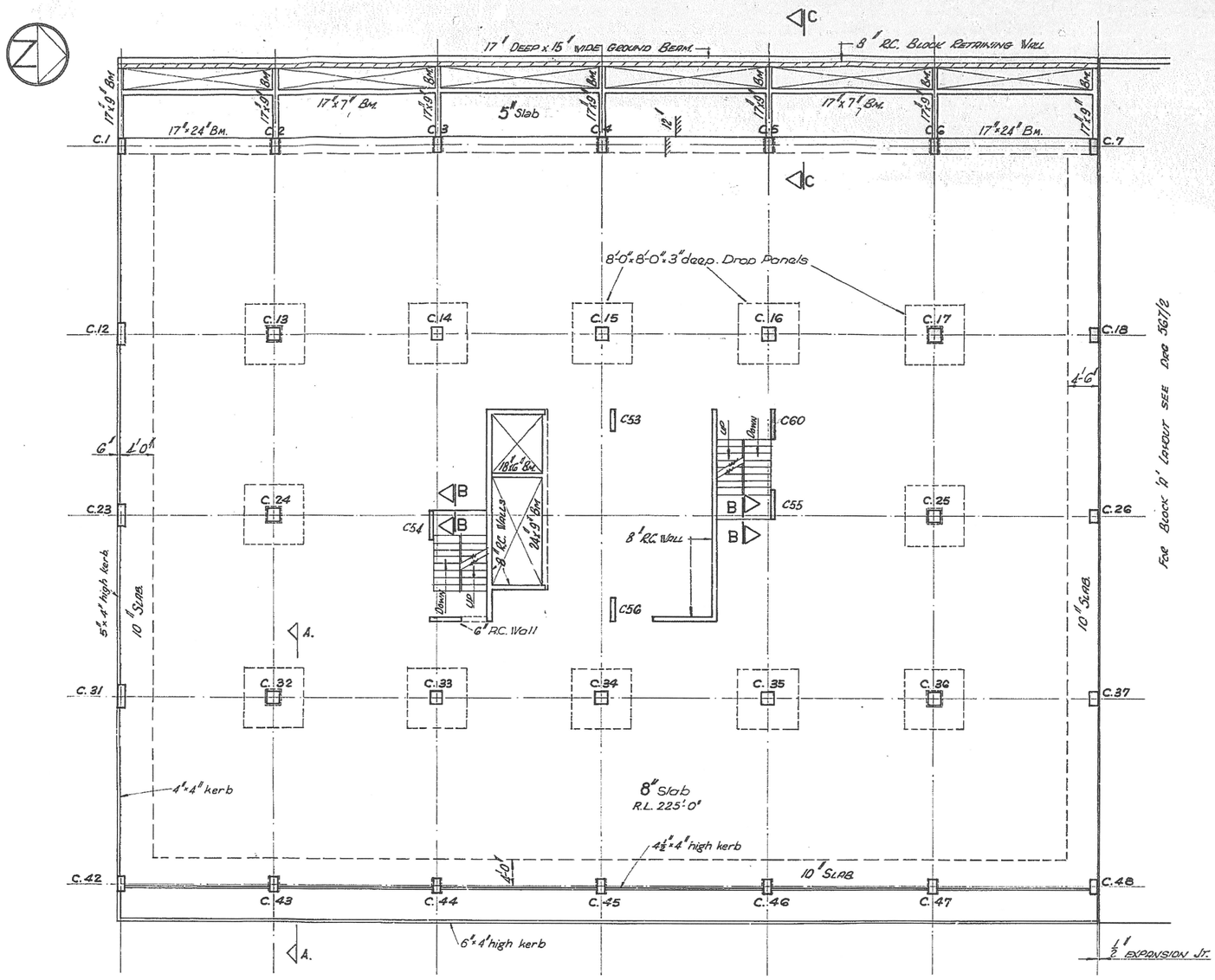
Scales 1/8" = 1'0"

Sheet Number 7106
Number in set 5 C

Drawn
Approved

Appendix C

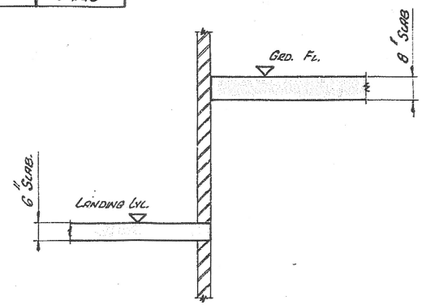
Examples of original engineering documentation by Ove Arup and Partners for sun shade fins (1971).



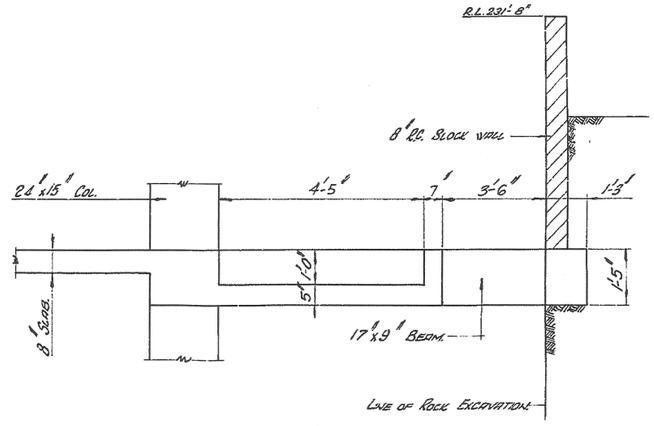
Note: For Section A-A Refer Drg. No 10

GROUND FLOOR PLAN

COL. SCHEDULE	
NUMBER	SIZE
1-7, 42-48	12"x24"
13-17, 24, 25, 32-36	21"x21"
12, 23, 31	12"x36"
18, 26, 37	15"x24"
53, 56	8'x36"
54, 55, 60	6'x48"



SECTION B-B



SECTION C-C

WORKING DRAWING

Mark.	Date.	Made by.	Revision.
A	11-1-72	J.H	Kerb sizes amended.

General Note

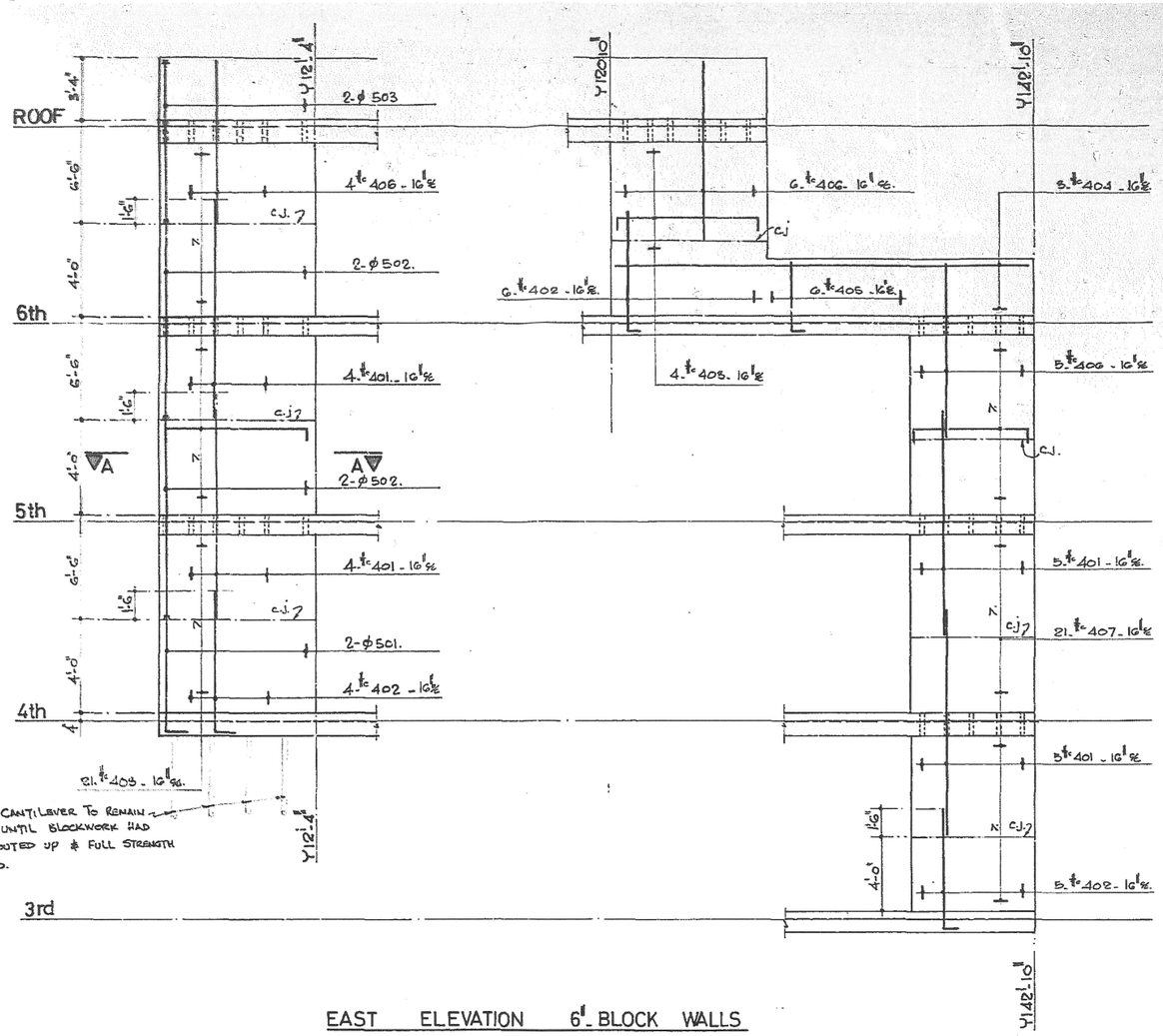
1. All setting out to Architects drawings.
2. Concrete design strength Fc at 28 days to be:- Cols 6000 psi, Slabs, Walls & Remainder 3500 p.s.i. 3" MAX SLUMP, ¾" MAX AGGREGATE.

OFFICE BUILDING - BLOCK B
CRN. HARNETT & MCLAREN STREETS
GROUND FLOOR LAYOUT

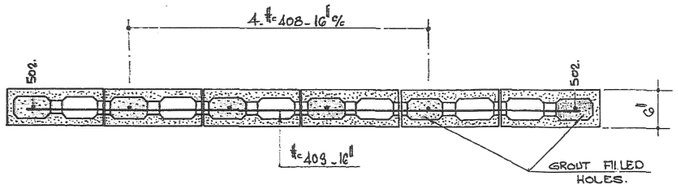
OVE ARUP & PARTNERS
CONSULTING ENGINEERS

Job No. 567

Drawn.	Checked.	Approved.
Don.C	S.C.	
Scales. 8'=1'-0"	Date. 9·8·71	
Drawing No. 9		Revision A



EAST ELEVATION 6"- BLOCK WALLS
WEST ELEVATION SIMILAR BUT HANDED.



SECTION A-A

Date.	Made by.	Revision.
6/3/77	SC	THREADED BARS ON EDGES OF BLOCKWORK ON SOUTH WALL, POSITIONS OF SPLICING

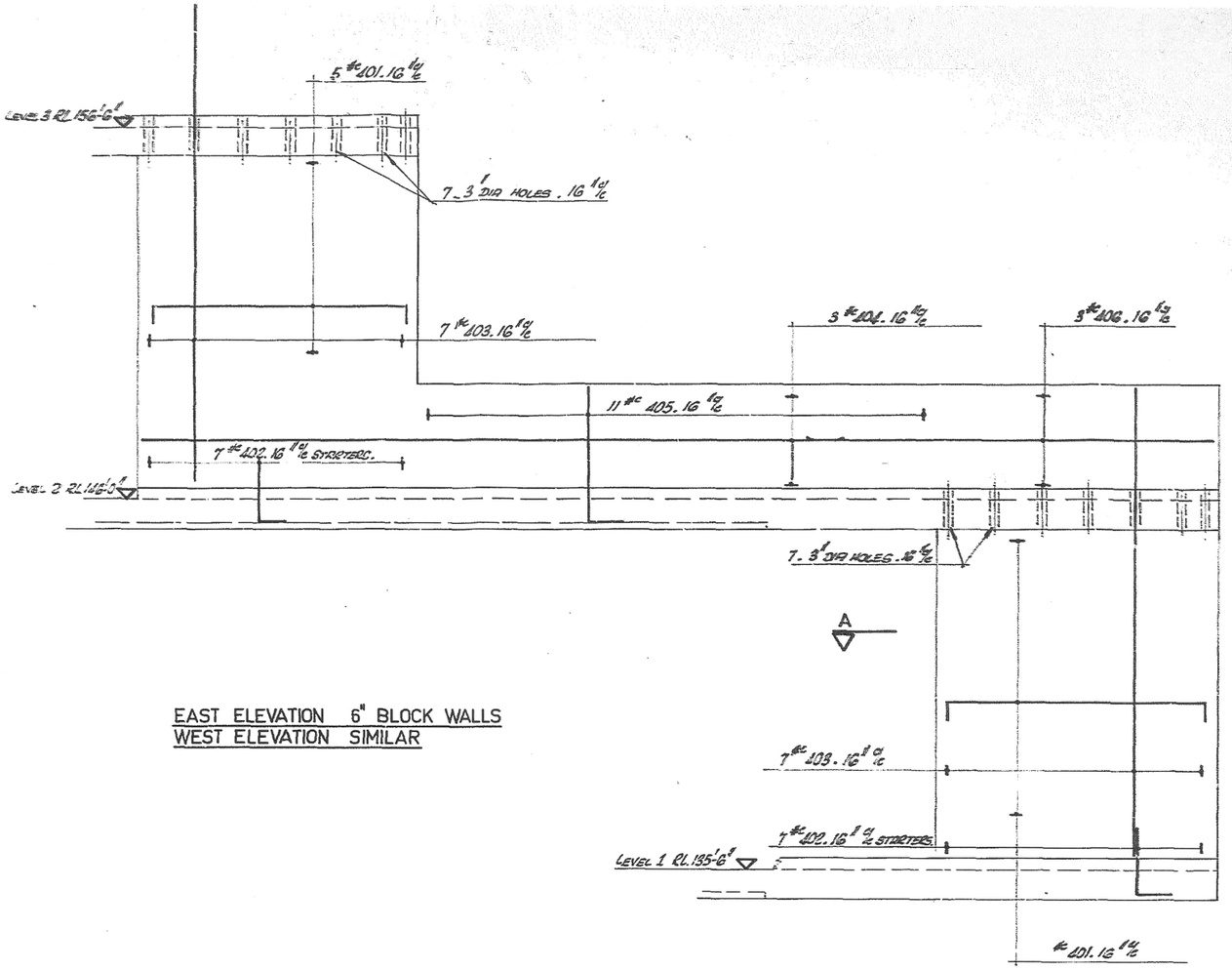
NOTES:
1. CONCRETE MASONRY BLOCKS SHALL HAVE A COMPRESSIVE STRENGTH OF 1,800 P.S.I.
2. CORE FILLING GROUT SHALL HAVE A SLUMP OF 5" & A MINIMUM STRENGTH OF F'c 2,000 P.S.I.
3. FOR GENERAL NOTES ON MASONRY BLOCKWALLS SEE DRG. 567/1/R2.
4. FOR BENDING SCHEDULE SEE B.S. 567/10/R9 PAGE 1.

OFFICE BUILDING - BLOCK 'B'.
CNR. HARNETT & McLAREN STREETS.
6" BLOCK WALLS - REINFORCEMENT DETAILS

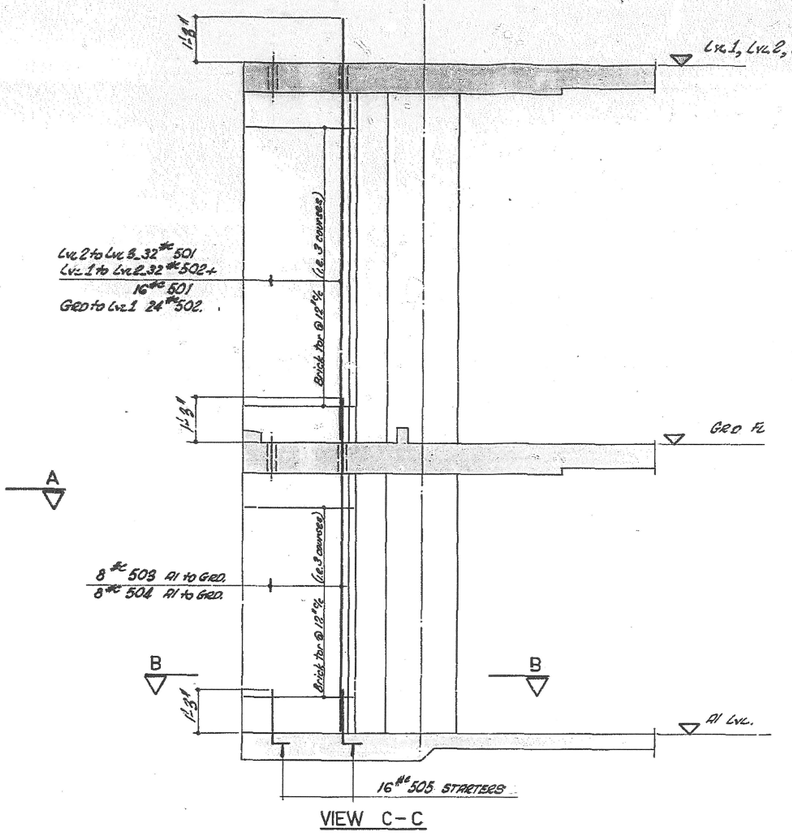
OVE ARUP & PARTNERS
CONSULTING ENGINEERS

Job No. 567

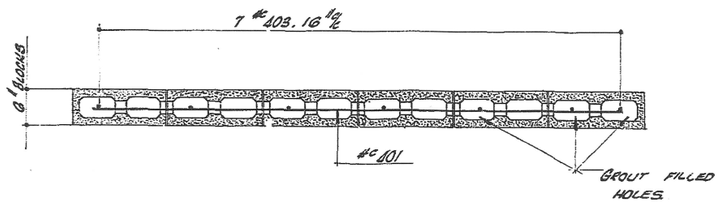
Drawn.	Checked.	Approved.
A.C.	S.C.	
Scales. 4'-1" - 1'-0"	Date. NOVEMBER 1977	
Drawing No. 10/R9		Revision A



EAST ELEVATION 6" BLOCK WALLS
WEST ELEVATION SIMILAR

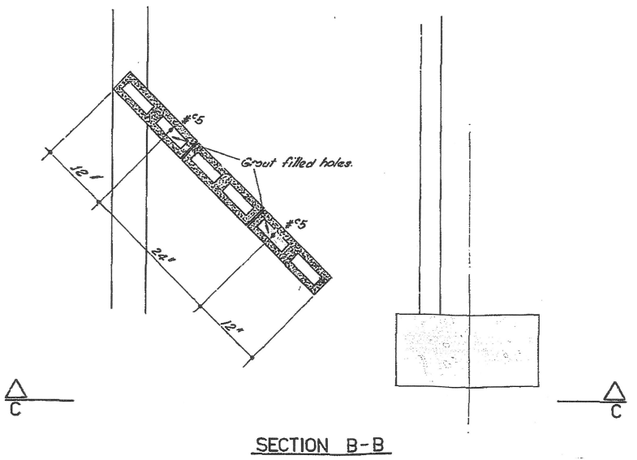


VIEW C-C



SECTION A-A

FLOORS	No. of FINS.
Al Lvl. to Grd Fl.	8
Grd. Fl. to Lvl. 1	12
Lvl. 1 to Lvl. 2	24
Lvl. 2 to Lvl. 3	16



SECTION B-B

Mark.	Date.	Made by.	Revision.
A	22-12-71	J.H.	Reinforcement in conc. block fins amended.

NOTES
1 CONCRETE MASONRY BLOCKS SHALL HAVE A COMPRESSIVE STRENGTH OF 1800 PSI
2 CORE FILLING GROUT SHALL HAVE A SLUMP OF 5" AND A MIN. STRENGTH OF F'c 2000 PSI
3 FOR GENERAL NOTES ON MASONRY BLOCKWALLS SEE DRG 567/1/R2.

OFFICE BUILDING BLOCK A
CNR. HARNETT & McLAREN STREETS.
6" BLOCK WALLS & SUN SCREEN REINFORCEMENT.

OVE ARUP & PARTNERS
CONSULTING ENGINEERS

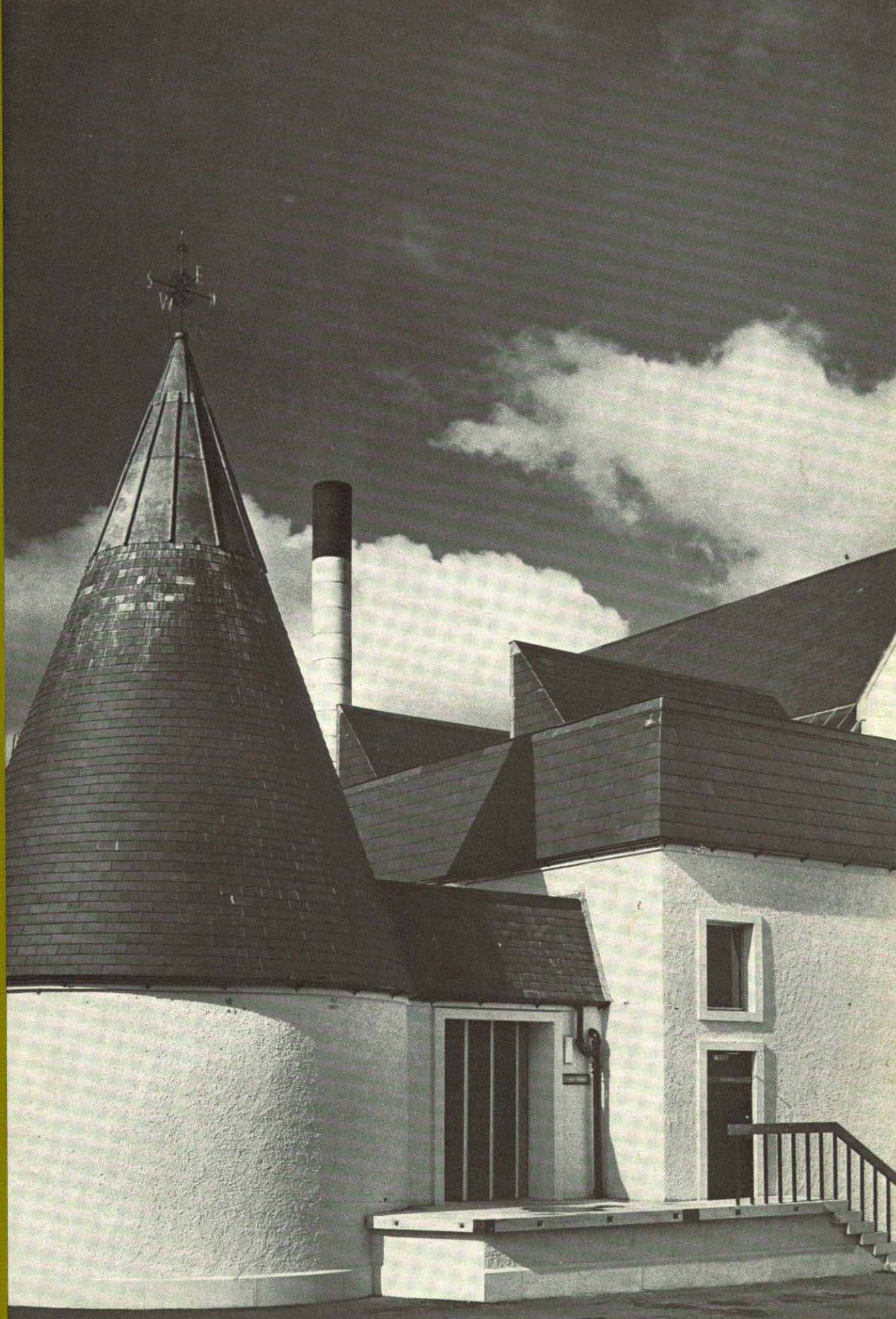
Job No. 567

Drawn.	Checked.	Approved.
D.M.C.	S.C.	
Scales. 1/2" = 1'-0"	Date. 27/10/71	
Drawing No. 4/R2		Revision A

Appendix D

Cement and Concrete Association, ‘Seidler’s Office’, *Concrete Quarterly* 105, Summer 1975, pp 10–14.

CONCRETE QUARTERLY 105



Cement and Concrete Association April – June 1975 Price 50p

The office terraces of 41 McLaren Street, Sydney.

Seidler's offices

Two Sydney office blocks—with comments by the architects

Architects:	Harry Seidler and Associates
Structural engineers:	Ove Arup and Partners (McLaren Street) Miller Milston and Ferris (Glen Street) Consultant: Pier Luigi Nervi, Rome

At a time of economic uncertainty, it perhaps does us no harm to take a look at two buildings which appear to be the last word in sophistication. The work of the Sydney architects Harry Seidler and Associates has been shown before in this journal, demonstrating a skilful and original use of structural concrete to achieve dramatic spatial effects. These two office blocks seem to be in the same spirit, with the extra benefit – one notes – of well-known structural engineers. The comments and descriptions come from the architects.

Offices, 41 McLaren Street, North Sydney

Office building in recent times, particularly in Sydney, has been very stereotyped. Invariably there are the rectangular boxes placed in the centres of their sites, distinguishable from each other only by minor differences in essentially flat facades. These range from bland curtain walls to the 'pock markings' of slight protuberances, all desperately competing with each other and rarely, if ever, arrived at by considerations of logic or geniune aesthetic intent.

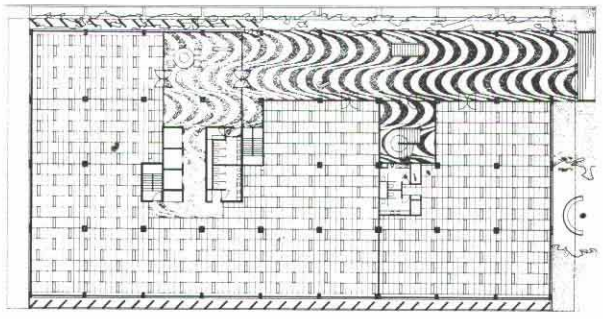
In the McLaren Street office complex, the usual formula for yet another rectangular 'high rise' block was abandoned for specific reasons.

Zoning requirements dictated a low three-storey block on the northern part of the site, and a limit of seven floors on the rest. This resulted in an irregular stepped building with a section which made the roofs of the lower parts accessible to the higher parts and led to the development of terraces outside all offices.

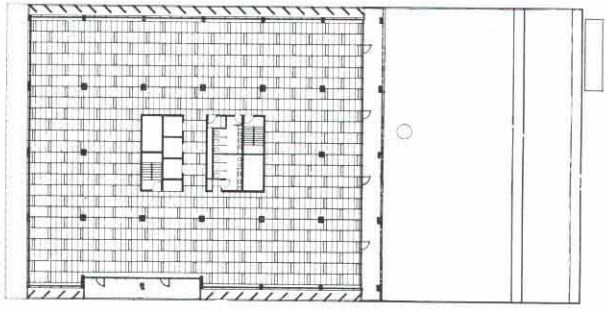
The view over Sydney Harbour is magnificent from the upper parts of the building. In the design of flats, terraces are nowadays provided almost as a matter of course. Why should the same not apply to offices? In this building they are provided amply and even luxuriously, in some cases bigger in area than the floors they serve, and in others either built continuously along the facade or recessed. These landscaped terraces provide opportunity for recreation, and relief from the monotony of the conventional 'sealed' office environment. They also afford excellent sun protection.

Sydney enjoys a warm climate by western standards. It seemed inappropriate therefore to copy the flat glass facades of Britain or the USA. The inevitable

Ground floor plan.

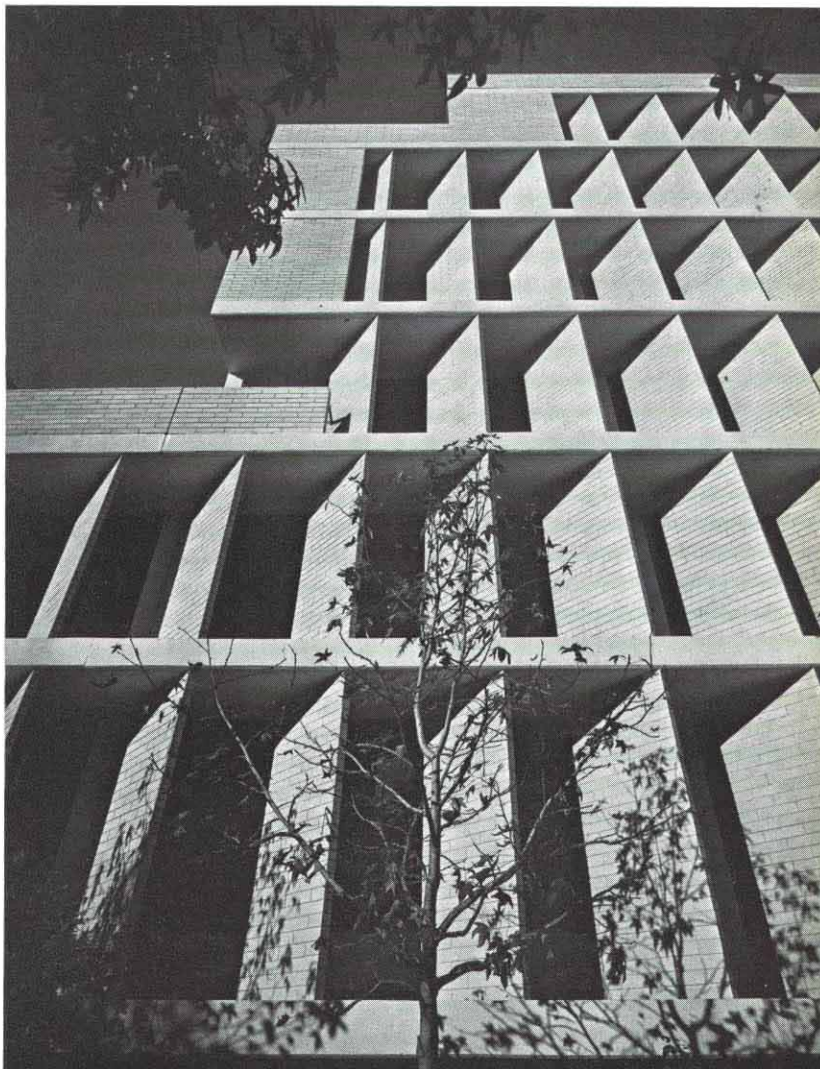


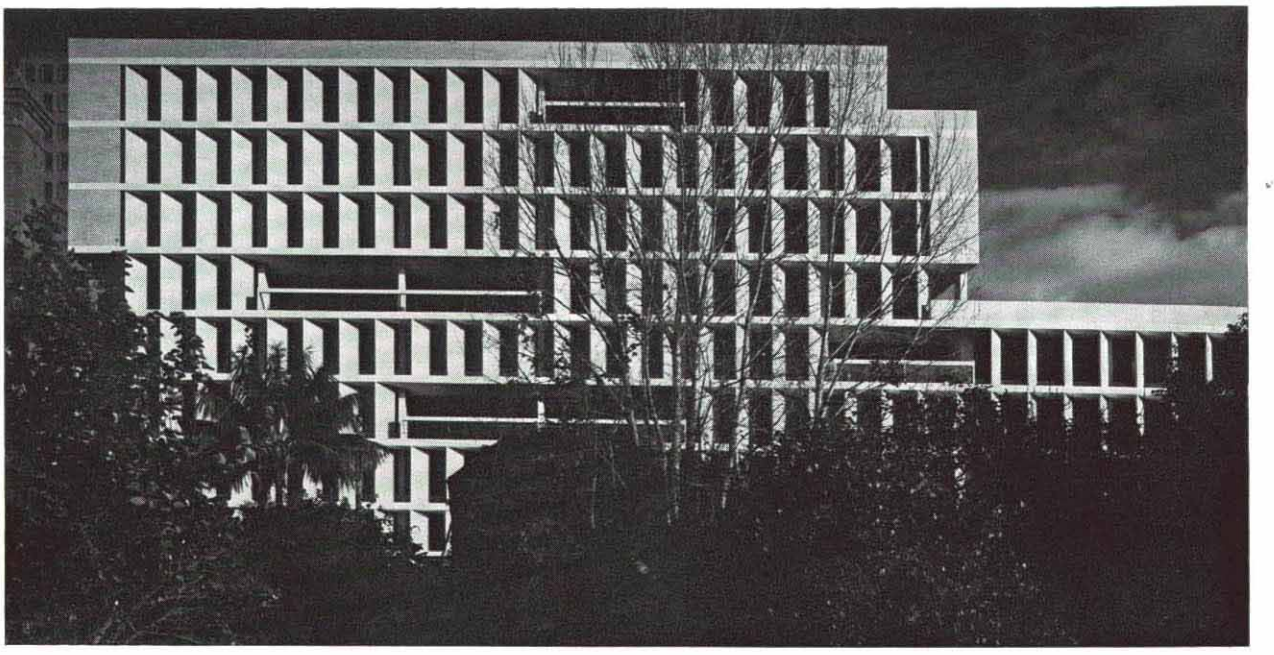
Third floor plan.



Covered entrance concourse to 41 McLaren Street with a flamboyant curving floor design of reconstructed stone paving.

Projecting fins of white concrete blocks forming sunbreakers, McLaren Street.

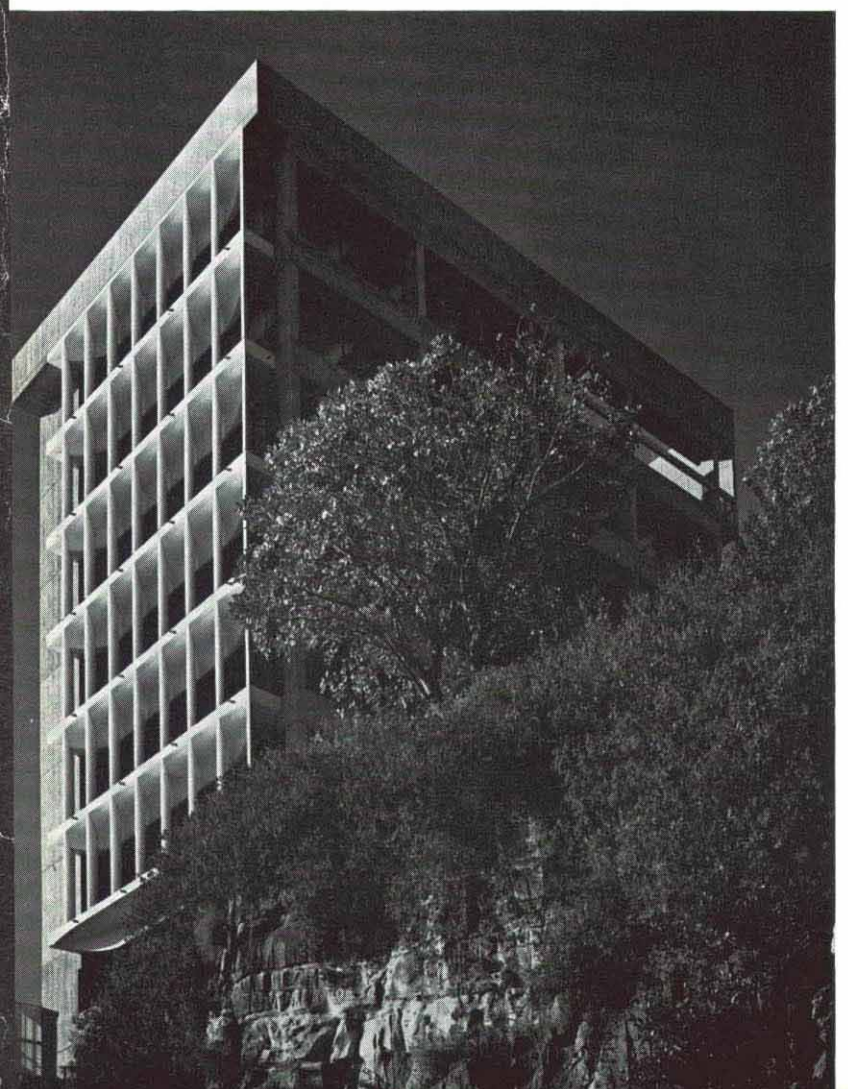




Elevation, 41 McLaren Street, showing the deep modelling given by sunbreakers.

SEIDLER'S OFFICES *continued*

The Milsons Point office block on its clifftop.



venetian blinds in buildings that use excessive unprotected glass transform so many office interiors into artificially lit synthetic spaces which, even if they have a view, do not allow full enjoyment of it. Glass can be a joy so long as it is properly shaded without recourse to devices which block the view. In the case of this building, deep and widely spaced fins on the east and west facades allow views over the harbour at all times, at the same time shading interiors by stopping the sun's radiant heat before it enters the building. Their cost is offset by savings in air-conditioning capital and running costs.

The structure generally is of reinforced concrete with prestressed flat plate floors and supporting columns set back; terraces are cantilevered out beyond them. The projecting fins, or sunbreakers, and certain areas of solid walling are of 16 in. by 4 in. concrete blocks made with white cement. Continuous flower boxes of the same material form parapets to the terraces.

Windows are sealed double-glazed units with grey tinted glass and grey plastic-covered steel frames, emphasizing the crispness of the white expressed structure. The tinted glass helps to reduce glare and heat as well as concealing office clutter from the outside.

The whole complex is really two buildings in one: the three-storey north block is a separately-owned unit. Approach to it and the seven-storey south block is through a freestanding concrete entrance gateway, over a wide covered concourse with a flamboyant curved design on the floor of reconstructed stone paving. A black steel sculpture on a marble pedestal, by Clement Meadmore, creates a focal point near the entrance.

Cars enter the building along a side street with the slope of the site allowing direct access to different levels, connected internally by half-level ramps.

Milsons Point office interior – the harbour view from Harry Seidler's office.

Offices, 2 Glen Street, Milsons Point, Sydney

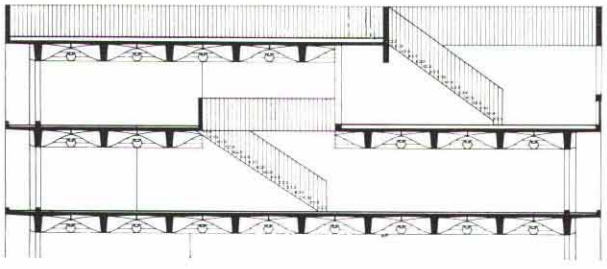
This is the architects' own building, completed at a time when the office celebrated its 25th anniversary, which also coincided with Harry Seidler's 50th birthday. The building contains five-storeys of offices, an executive mezzanine floor and two car-parking levels.

The site is really dramatic. Located on Sydney Harbour's northern shore on top of a high cliff, it commands panoramic views over the harbour bridge and the city skyline in the distance, with an amusement park below the cliff and large trees in the foreground.

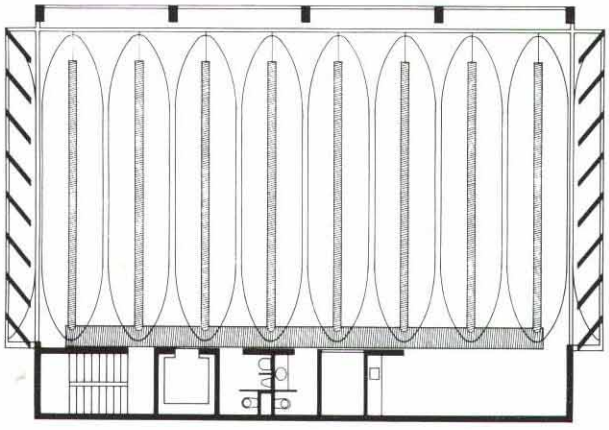
The architects occupy two floors and the mezzanine, the remaining floors being rented out. The entire office space is column free, lending itself ideally to open office landscaping, which was adopted by the architects for their own floors. Divisions consist of free-standing storage and furniture units 5 and 6 ft. high. At the top of the building, the mezzanine floor houses the principal's office and boardroom with a concrete bridge connection to the landscaped and sheltered outdoor terrace.

The structure is of reinforced and prestressed concrete. Between the circulation core on the north side and a system of beams and columns on the south

Typical cross section.



Typical floor plan showing ceiling arrangement.

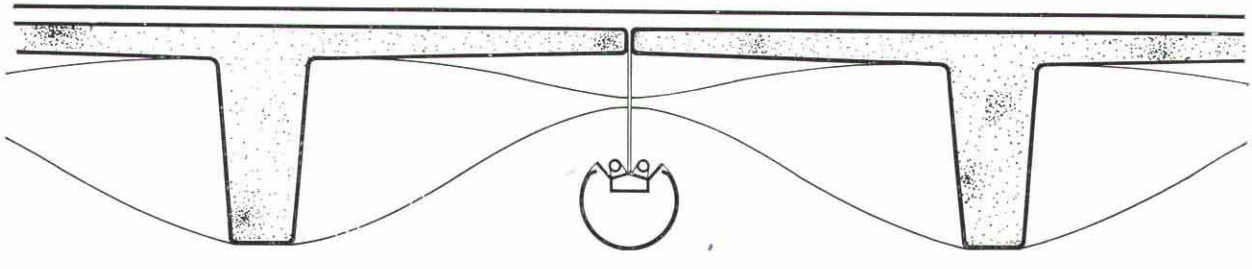


Milsons Point office interior, showing the integration of air-conditioning ducts, lighting and precast prestressed concrete floor units.

SEIDLER'S OFFICES *continued*

side, precast prestressed concrete floor units 8 ft. wide span the 37 ft width of the building. The units vary in profile from a T section in the centre, sweeping up to a rectangular section at the supports, expressive of the stress pattern within them. The shape of the units allows integration of the air-conditioning ducts

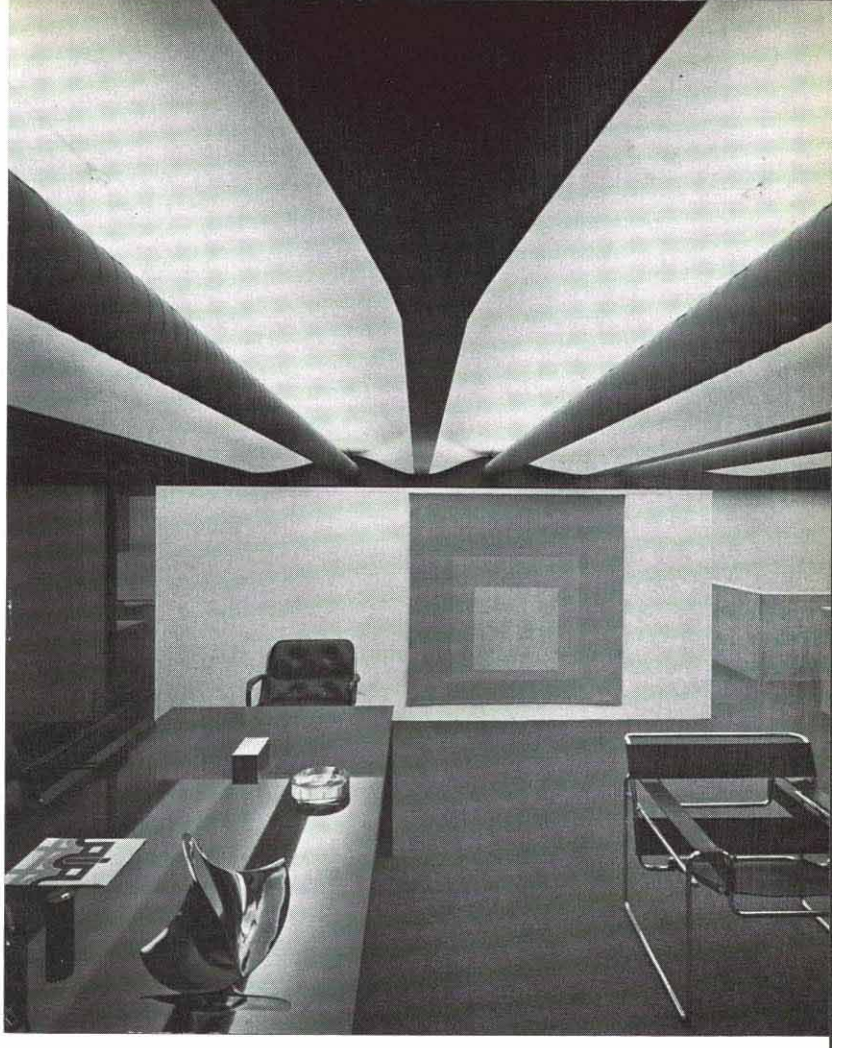
Detail showing the exposed air-conditioning duct and lighting between the T beams.



and lighting: spiral tubes are exposed between them which casts indirect light onto the soffits between the T's. The swept-up shape of the floor units allows the passage of exposed longitudinal oval ducts on typical floors (a similar concept is used for the Trade Group offices in Canberra; Pier Luigi Nervi of Rome was consulted for the beam design in both buildings).

On the east and west sides, the T beams project beyond the glass walls to support fixed precast concrete sunbreakers. All the precast elements were cast in smooth steel forms and are of white concrete. The in situ concrete supporting structure has an exposed boardmarked finish.

In the offices, all surfaces are white, the carpet charcoal grey and the ducts light grey. Boardroom and other special tables are of polished black granite. Chairs are covered in matt black leather. The focal point of the two-storey space at the top of the building, where the mezzanine occurs, is a large painting by the well-known New York artist Morris Louis. Other works of art include tapestries by Josef Albers on the mezzanine floor, and by Alexander Calder in the ground floor entrance.

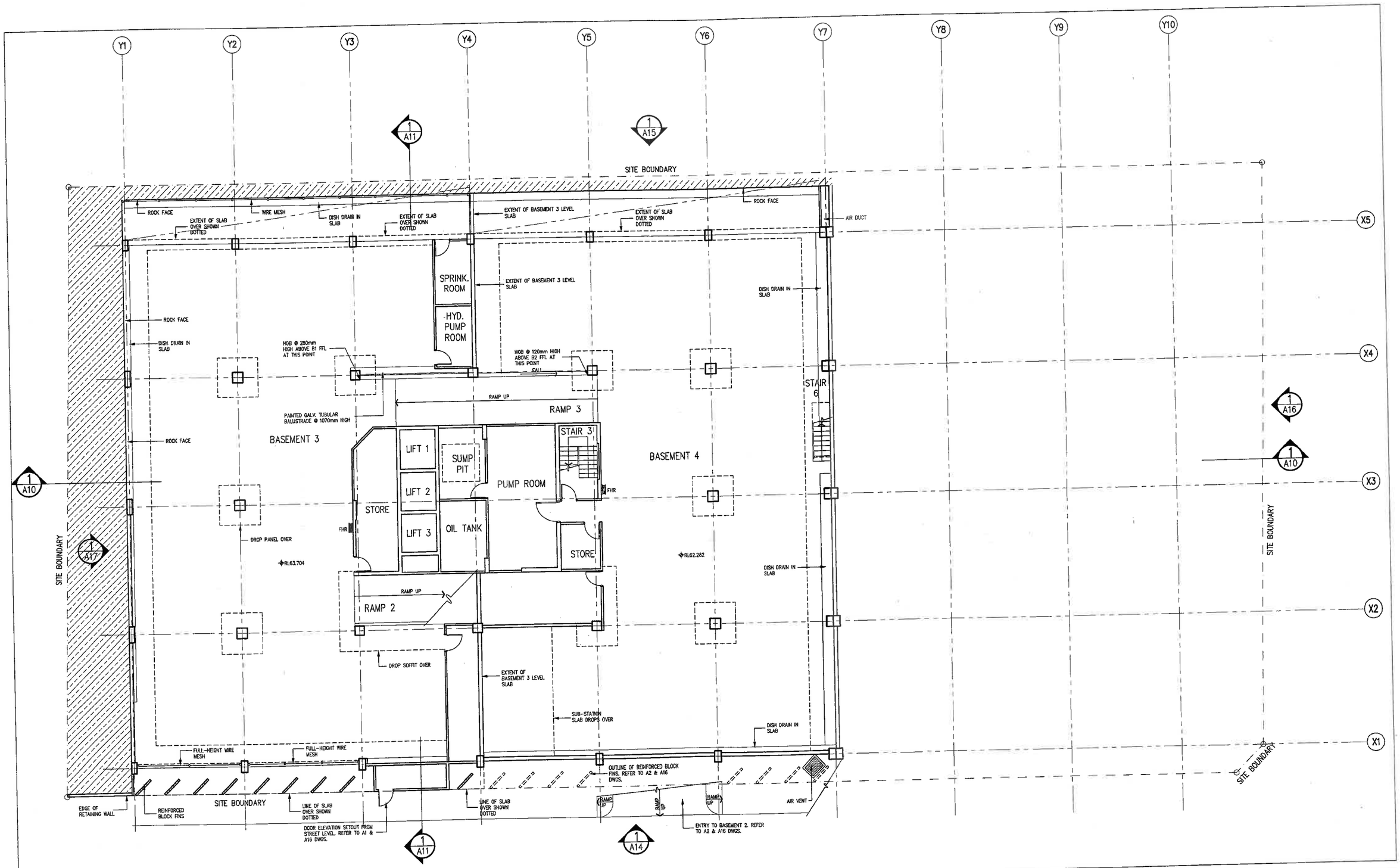


Milsons Point interior showing Harry Seidler's office with Josef Albers' tapestry.

Milsons Point interior view from below the stairs to the mezzanine, with a glimpse of the painting by Morris Louis.

Appendix E

Measured drawings of 41 McLaren Street, North Sydney, by Travis McEwan Group, November 2000 provided by Rick McEwan on behalf of Claijade and Erolcene.



Do not scale drawings.
Verify all dimensions on site.

Issue	Amendment	Date	Issue	Amendment	Date
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Brisbane
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Travis McEwen Group

Travis McEwen Group Pty Ltd
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North Sydney NSW 2060
Facsimile (61 2) 9929 5765
Telephone (61 2) 9929 0522

PROJECT	
OFFICE BUILDING 41 McLAREN Street N.SYDNEY	
DRAWING TITLE	
MEASURED DRAWING: BASEMENT 3 & 4 FLR. PLANS	

SCALE	1:100
DRAWN	AW
CHECKED	RMcQ
JOB No.	3368
REF No.	
DWG No.	A 1
ISSUE	-

SDRS PARH NAME: R:\INTERIOR\3368\PLOT\A1.DWG DATE: NOV 09, 2000 TIME: 4:33 PM

Y1 Y2 Y3 Y4 Y5 Y6 Y7 Y8 Y9 Y10

X5 X4 X3 X2 X1

1 A11 — 1 A15 — 1 A16 — 1 A10 — 1 A17 — 1 A14

SITE BOUNDARY

ROCK FACE — LINE OF REINFORCED CONCRETE BEAM OVER SHOWN DOTTED — LINE OF GRATED DRAIN OVER SHOWN DOTTED — OPEN BELOW — AIR DUCT

PAINTED GALV. TUBULAR BALUSTRADE @ 1070mm HIGH — FULL-HEIGHT WIRE MESH — PAINTED GALV. TUBULAR BALUSTRADE @ 1070mm HIGH ON BASEMENT 2 LEVEL — EXTENT OF BASEMENT 1 LEVEL SLAB

HOB @ 280mm HIGH ABOVE B1 FFL AT THIS POINT — HOB @ 320mm HIGH ABOVE B2 FFL AT THIS POINT — FALL — RAMP UP

LINE OF HOB EXTENDING TO RETAINING WALL @ 150mm HIGH — RETAINING WALL

BASEMENT 1 — BASEMENT 2 — RAMP 1 — RAMP 2

STORE — LIFT 1 — LIFT 2 — LIFT 3 — STAIR 3 — STAIR 4 — ELEC. — SWITCH ROOM — PL. D. — LOBBY — PMG — STORE — STAIR 5 — STAIR 6 — STAIR 2 — PLANT ROOM — SWITCH ROOM — AIR VENT — BASIN — FHR — FH

RL66.142 — RL64.72 — RL66.142

160mm WIDE HOB @ 140mm HIGH — SUB STATION

BLOCK WALL UNDER — FULL-HEIGHT WIRE MESH — SMALL OPENING — ROLLER SHUTTER DOOR — SECURITY SLIDE GATE — EDGE OF RETAINING WALL

REINFORCED BLOCK FINS — LINE OF SLAB — LINE OF SLAB OVER SHOWN DOTTED — RAMP UP — 310mm WIDE GRATED DRAIN CHANNEL

DOOR ELEVATION SETOUT FROM STREET LEVEL. REFER TO A1 & A16 DWGS.

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Verify all dimensions on site.

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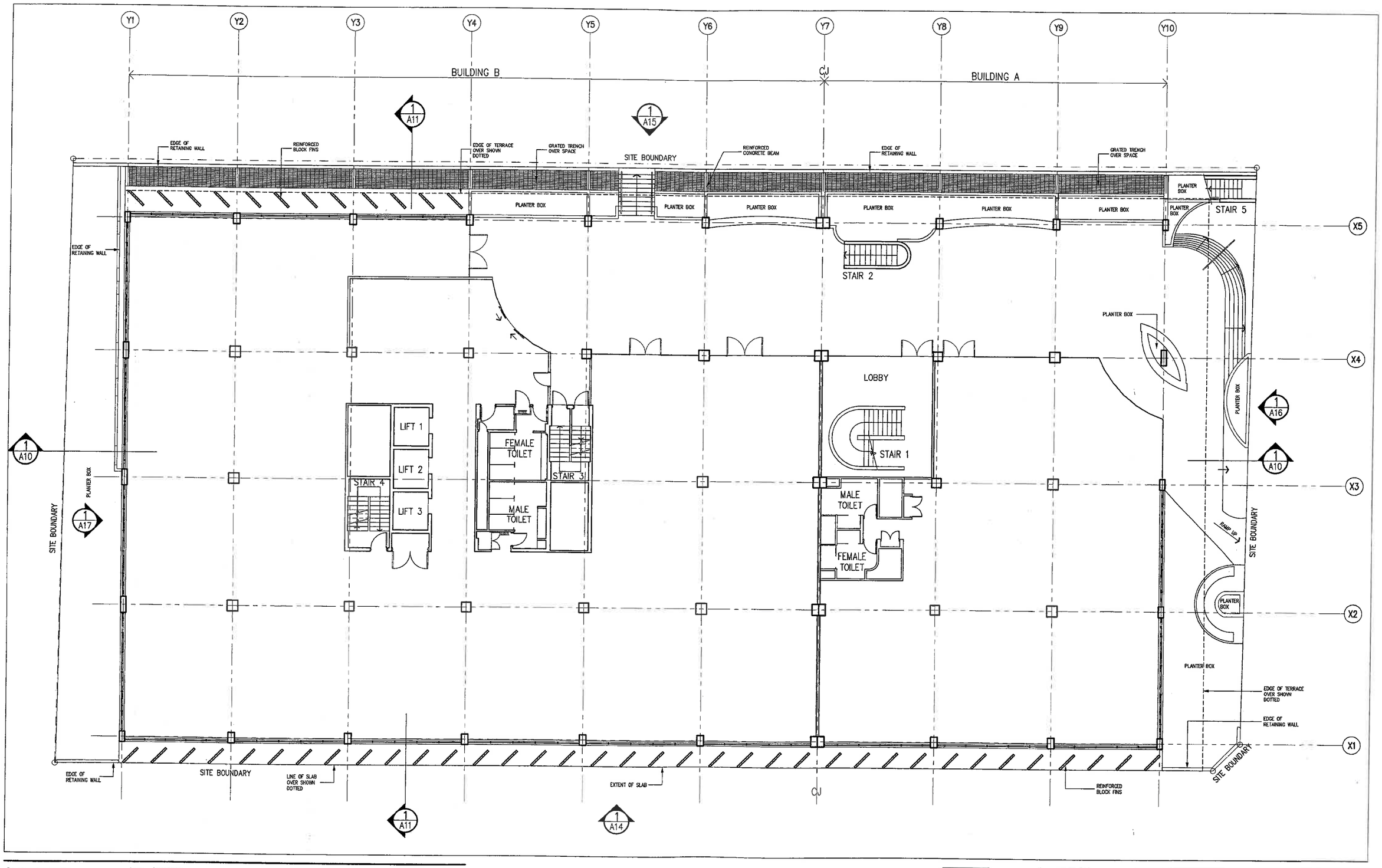
PROJECT	
OFFICE BUILDING 41 McLAREN Street N.SYDNEY	
SCALE	1:100
DRAWN	AW
CHECKED	RMcQ
JOB No.	3368
DRAWING TITLE	
MEASURED DRAWING: BASEMENT 1 & 2 FLR. PLANS	
REF No.	
DWG No.	A2
ISSUE	-



Do not scale drawings.
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PROJECT	
OFFICE BUILDING 41 McLAREN Street N.SYDNEY	
DRAWING TITLE	
MEASURED DRAWING: GROUND FLOOR PLAN	

SCALE	1:100
DRAWN	AW
CHECKED	RMcQ
JOB No.	3368
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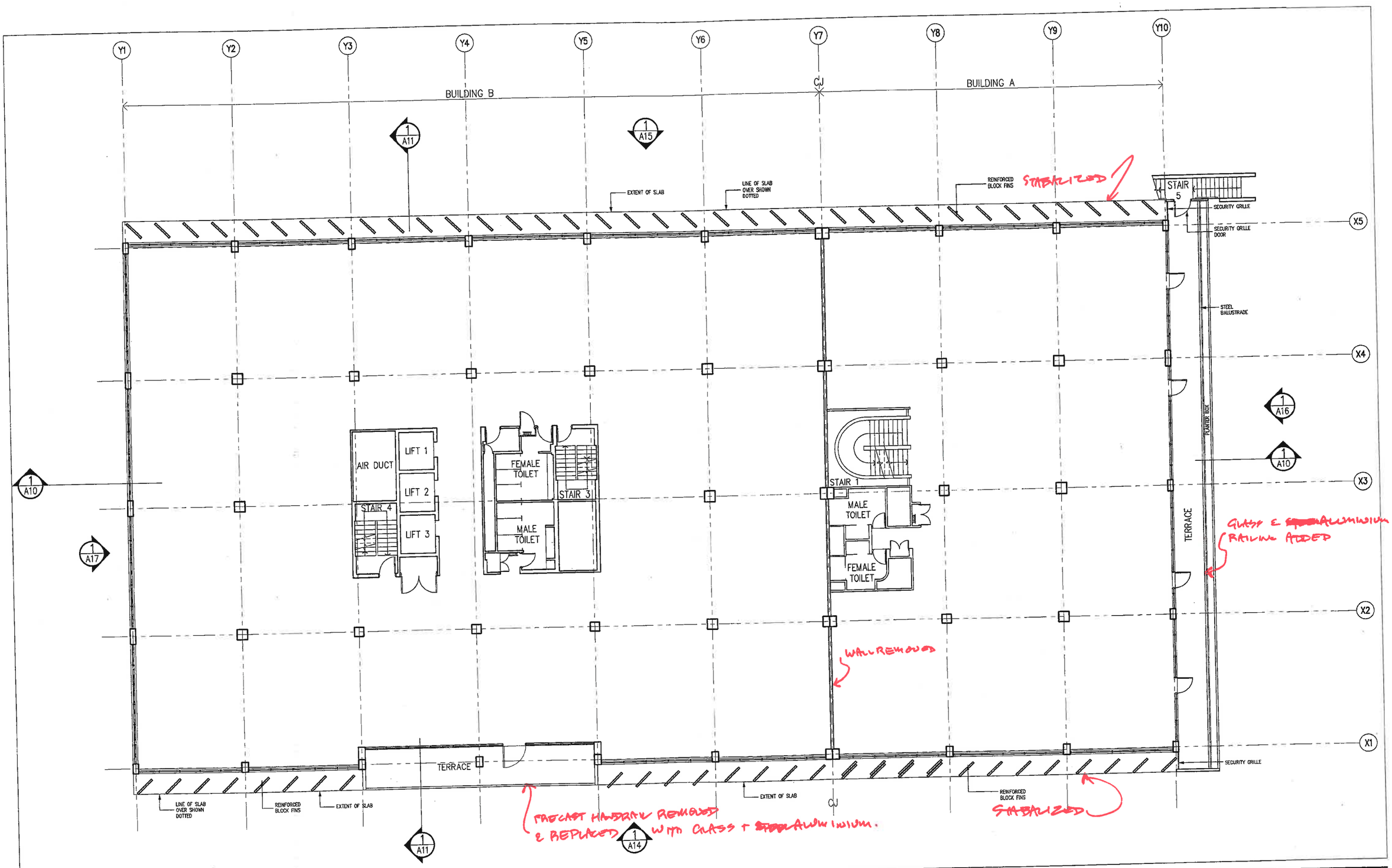

Do not scale drawings.
Verify all dimensions on site.

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PROJECT	SCALE 1:100
OFFICE BUILDING 41 McLAREN Street N.SYDNEY	DRAWN AW
	CHECKED RMcQ
	JOB No. 3368
DRAWING TITLE	REF No.
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	ISSUE -

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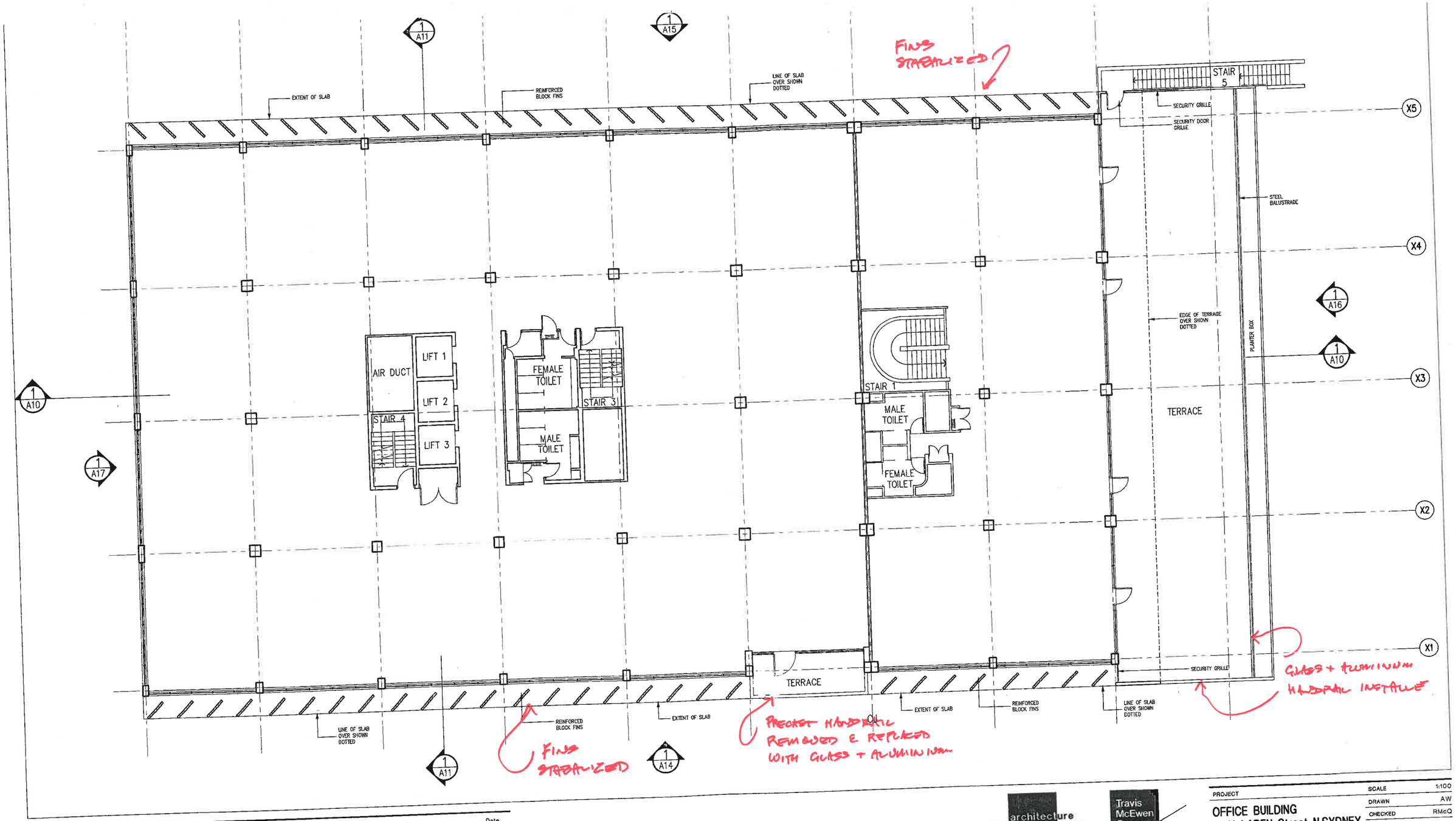

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Verify all dimensions on site.

Issue	Amendment	Date	Issue	Amendment	Date
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PROJECT	
OFFICE BUILDING 41 McLAREN Street N.SYDNEY	
DRAWING TITLE	
MEASURED DRAWING: LEVEL 2 FLOOR PLAN	

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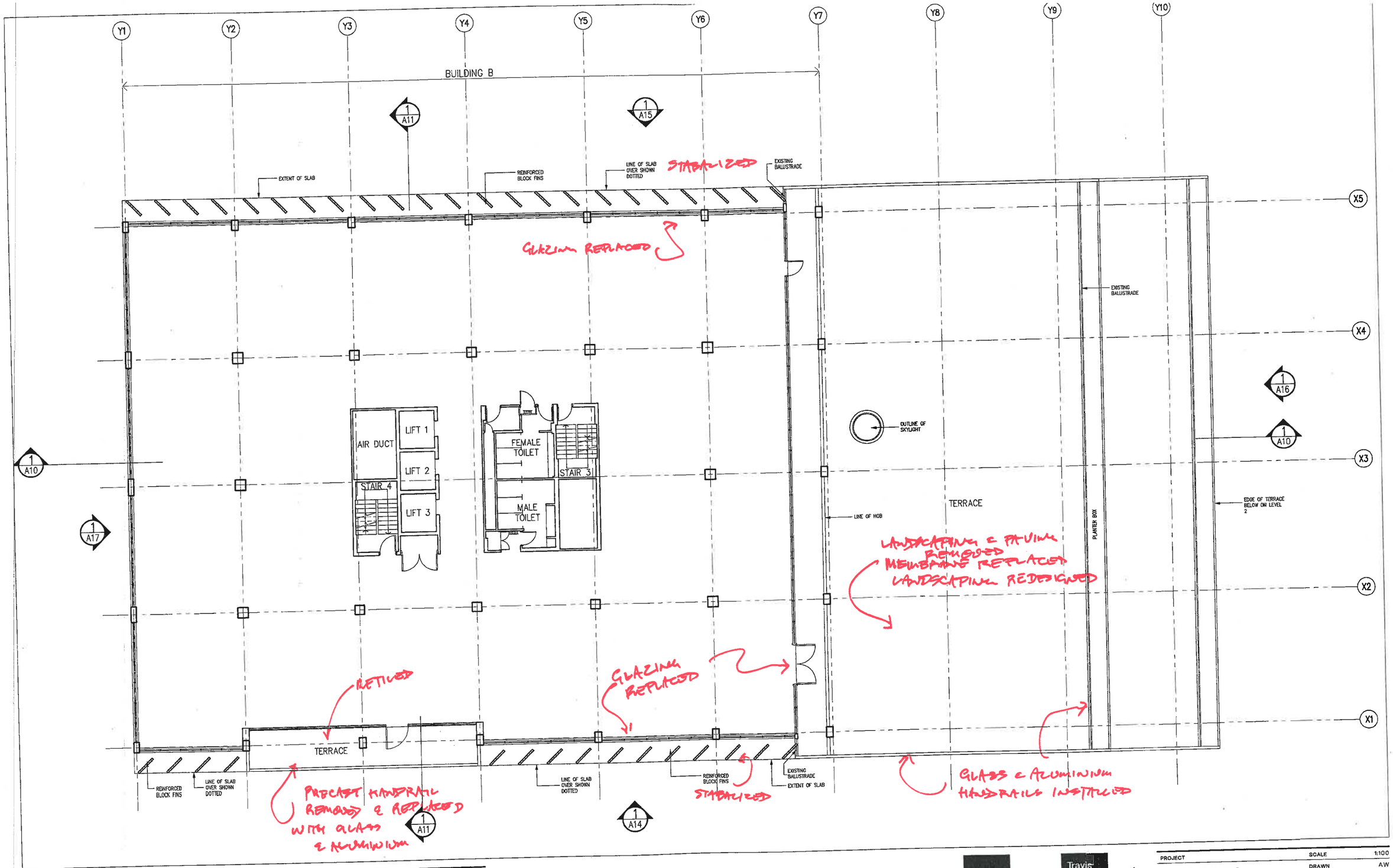

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PROJECT	
OFFICE BUILDING 41 McLAREN Street N.SYDNEY	
DRAWING TITLE	
MEASURED DRAWING: LEVEL 3 FLOOR PLAN	

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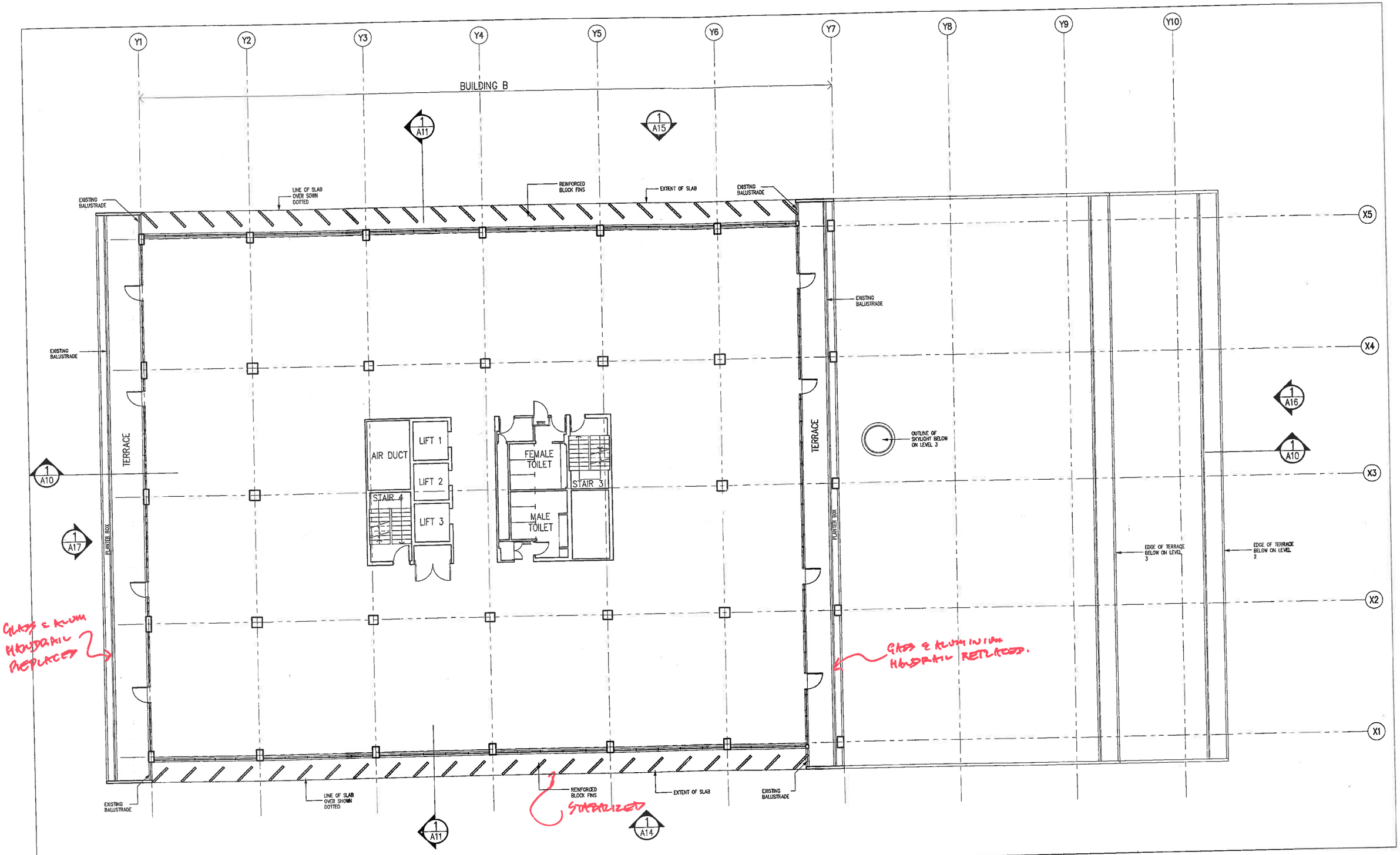

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PROJECT	
OFFICE BUILDING 41 McLAREN Street N.SYDNEY	
DRAWING TITLE	
MEASURED DRAWING: LEVELS 4 & 5 FLOOR PLANS	

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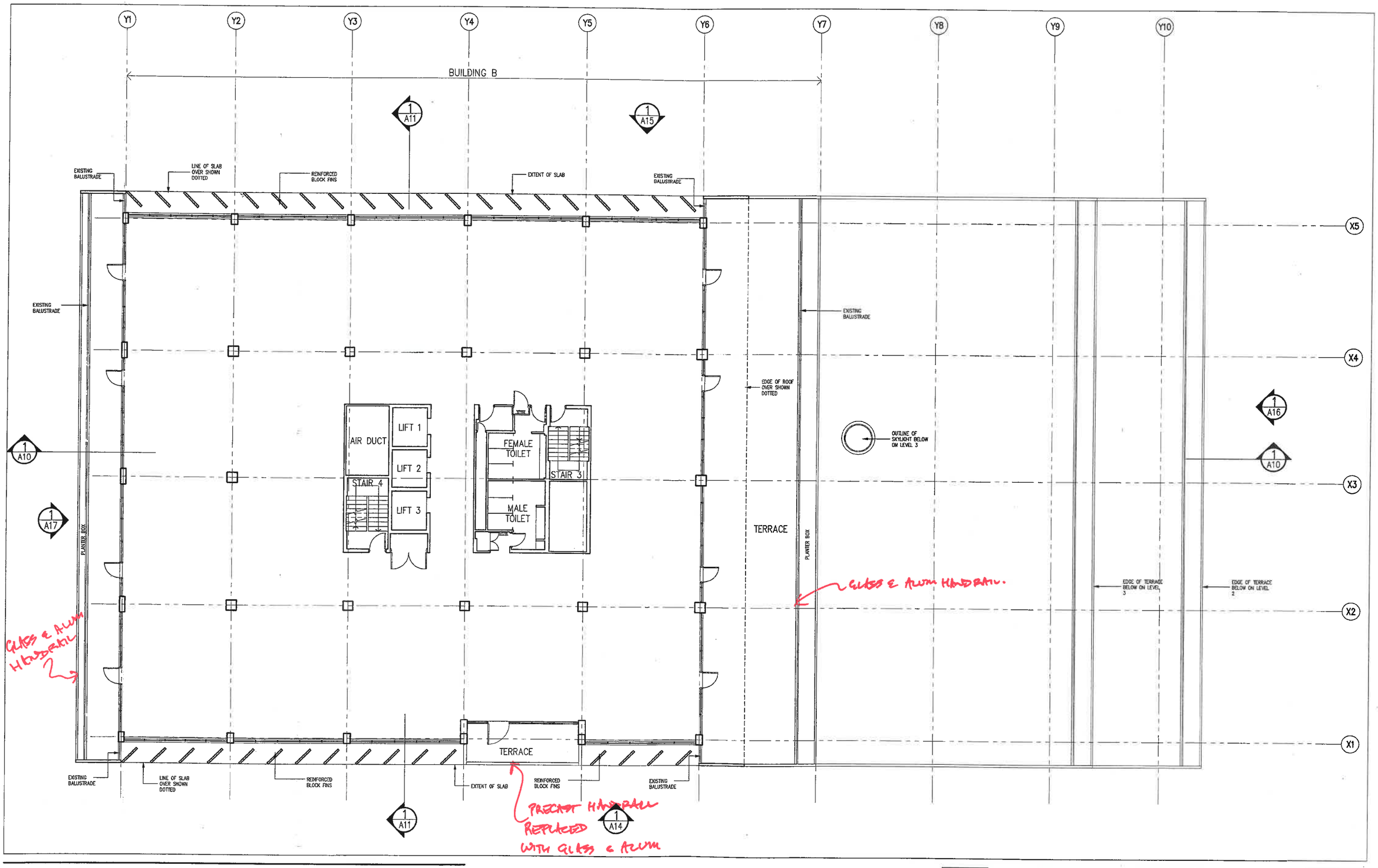

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Verify all dimensions on site.

Issue	Amendment	Date	Issue	Amendment	Date
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PROJECT		SCALE	1:100
OFFICE BUILDING 41 McLAREN Street N.SYDNEY		DRAWN	AW
		CHECKED	RMcQ
		JOB No.	3368
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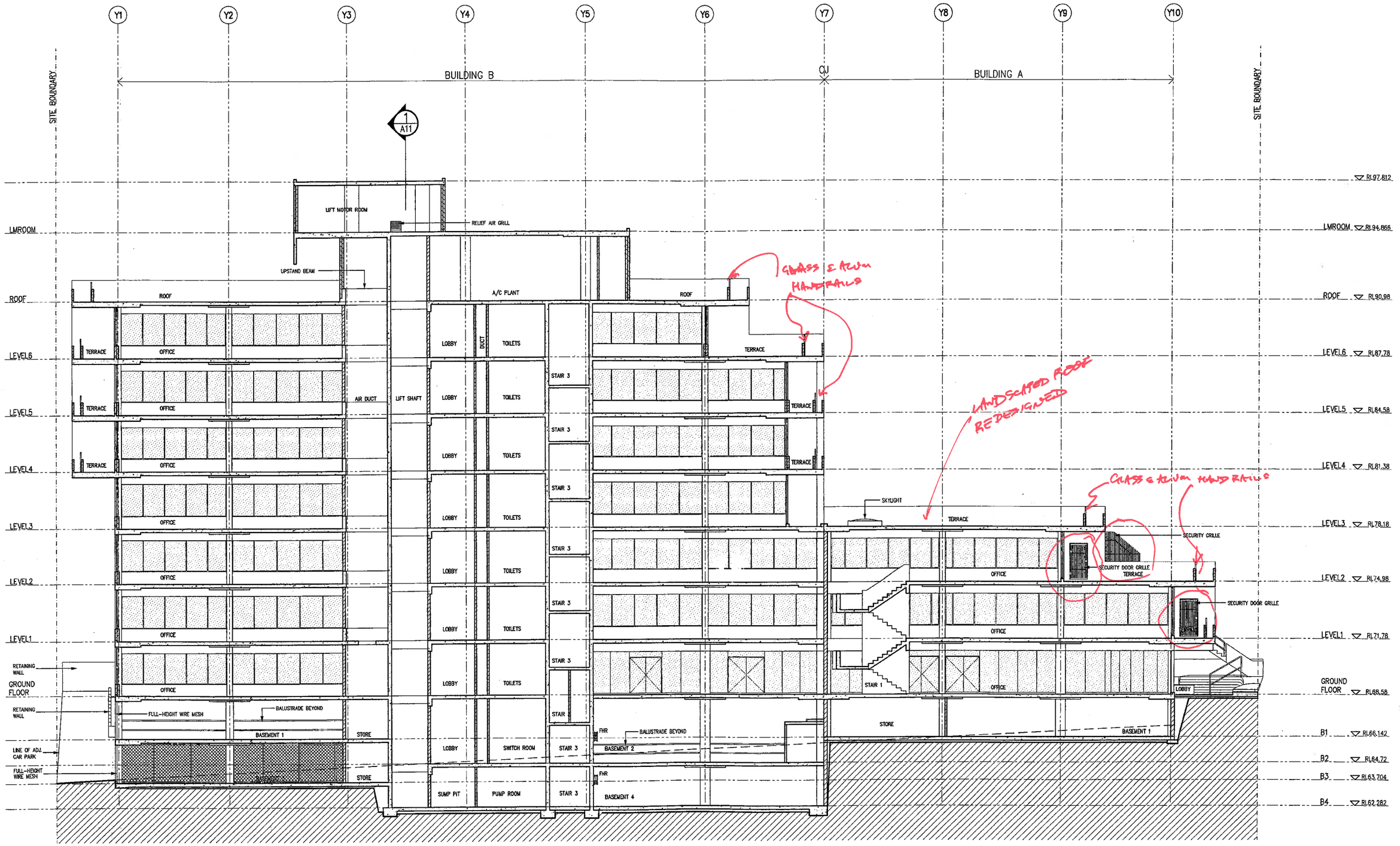

Do not scale drawings.
Verify all dimensions on site.

Issue	Amendment	Date	Issue	Amendment	Date
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Telephone (61 2) 9929 0522

PROJECT	
OFFICE BUILDING 41 McLAREN Street N.SYDNEY	
SCALE	1:100
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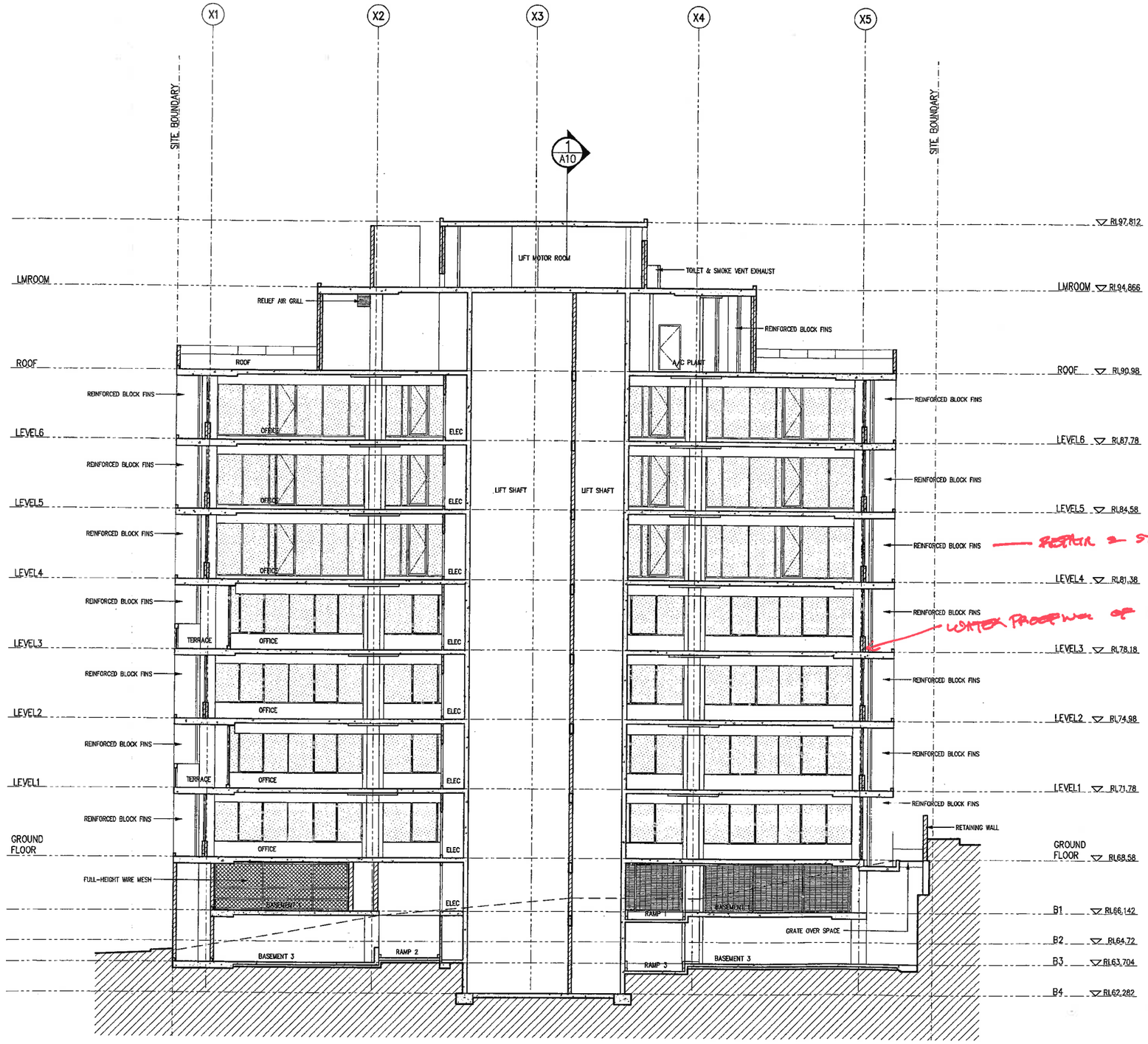

REPAIR & STRENGTHENING OF FINS.

WATERPROOFING OF ALL JUNCTIONS OF SPANDREL WALL & SLAB DUE TO DEFLECTION.

Do not scale drawings.
Verify all dimensions on site.

Issue	Amendment	Date	Issue	Amendment	Date
A					

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Haysom Spender Architects

Travis McEwen Group

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North Sydney NSW 2060
Facsimile (61 2) 9929 5765
Telephone (61 2) 9929 0522

PROJECT	OFFICE BUILDING 41 McLAREN Street N.SYDNEY
SCALE	1:100
DRAWN	AW
CHECKED	RMcQ
JOB No.	3368
DRAWING TITLE	MEASURED DRAWING: SECTION 2
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ISSUE	-

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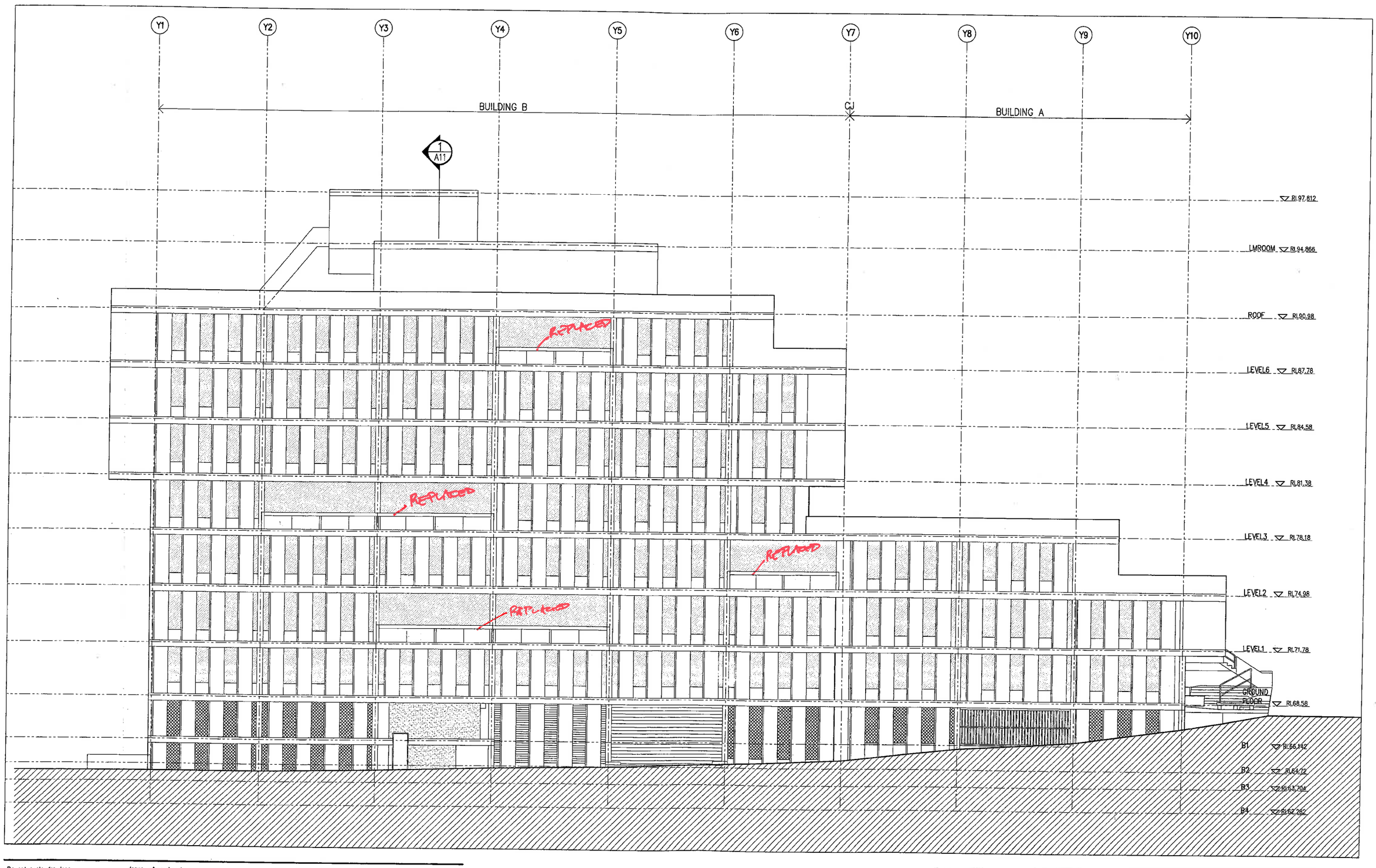

Do not scale drawings.
Verify all dimensions on site.

Issue	Amendment	Date	Issue	Amendment	Date
A					

architecture alliance

Sydney
Travis McEwen Group
Melbourne
The Sainsbery Reed Group
Auckland
Swan Railey Clapham and Associates
Brisbane
Haysom Spender Architects

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ACN 001 443 618
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Facsimile (61 2) 9959 5765
Telephone (61 2) 9929 0622

PROJECT		
OFFICE BUILDING 41 McLAREN Street N.SYDNEY	SCALE	1:100
	DRAWN	AW
	CHECKED	RMcQ
	JOB No.	3368
DRAWING TITLE	REF No.	
MEASURED DRAWING: EAST ELEVATION	DWG No.	A14
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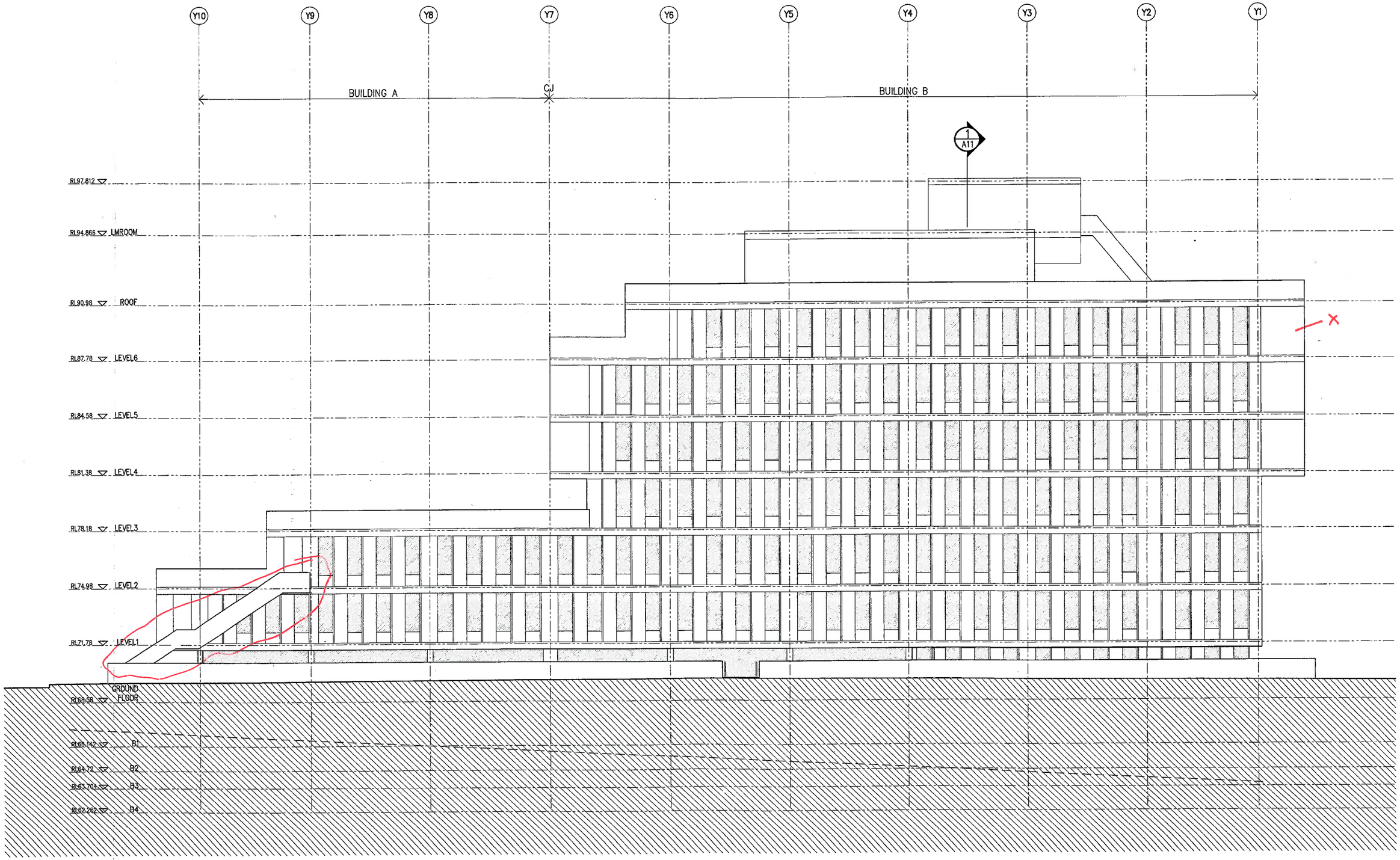

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Issue	Amendment	Date	Issue	Amendment	Date
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PROJECT	SCALE 1:100
OFFICE BUILDING 41 McLAREN Street N.SYDNEY	DRAWN AW
	CHECKED RMcQ
	JOB No. 3368
DRAWING TITLE	REF No.
MEASURED DRAWING: WEST ELEVATION	DWG No. A15
	ISSUE -

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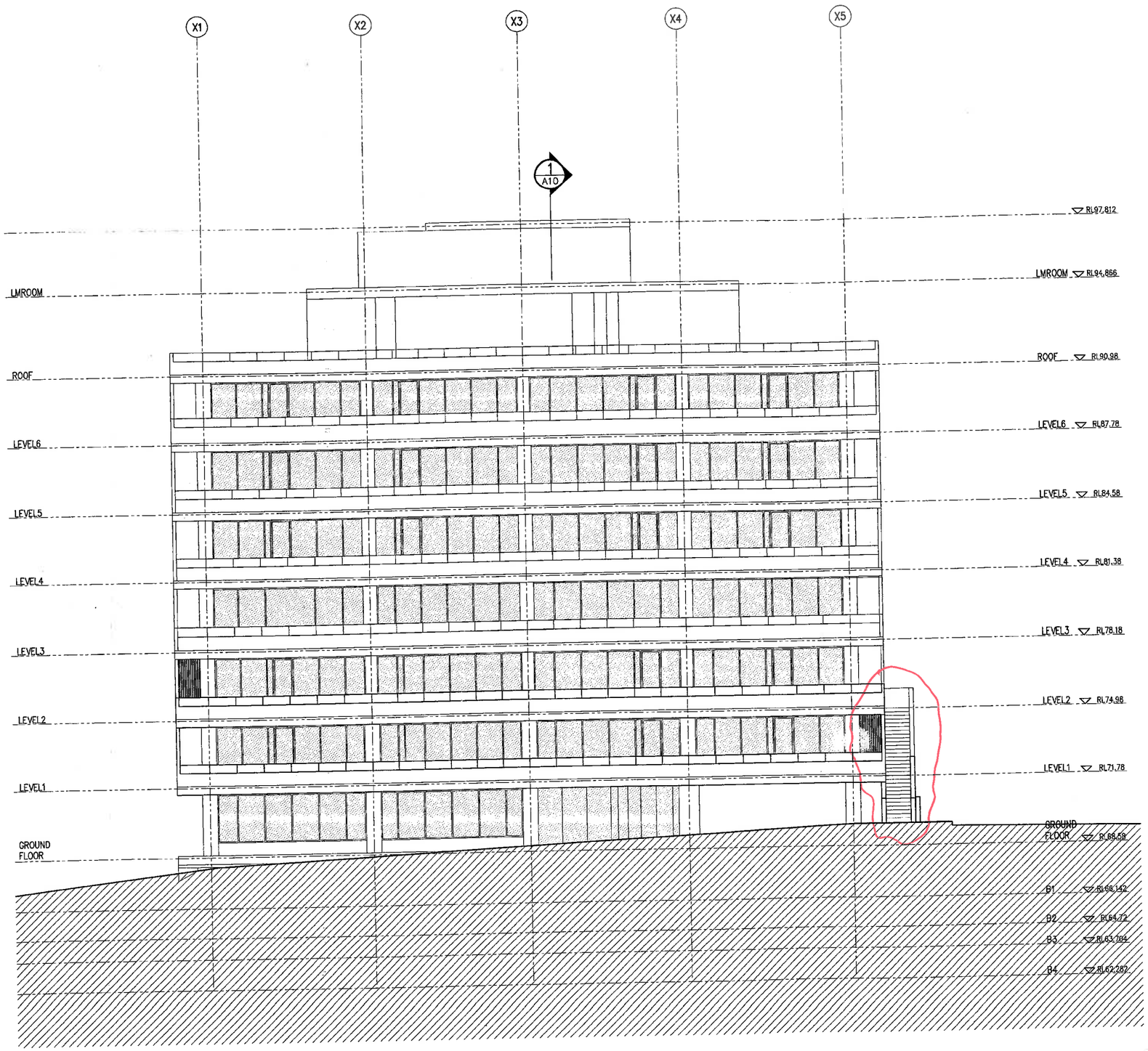

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Verify all dimensions on site.

Issue	Amendment	Date	Issue	Amendment	Date
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Brisbane
Haysom Spender Architects

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PROJECT	SCALE	1:100
OFFICE BUILDING 41 McLAREN Street N.SYDNEY	DRAWN	AW
	CHECKED	RMcQ
	JOB No.	3368
DRAWING TITLE	REF No.	
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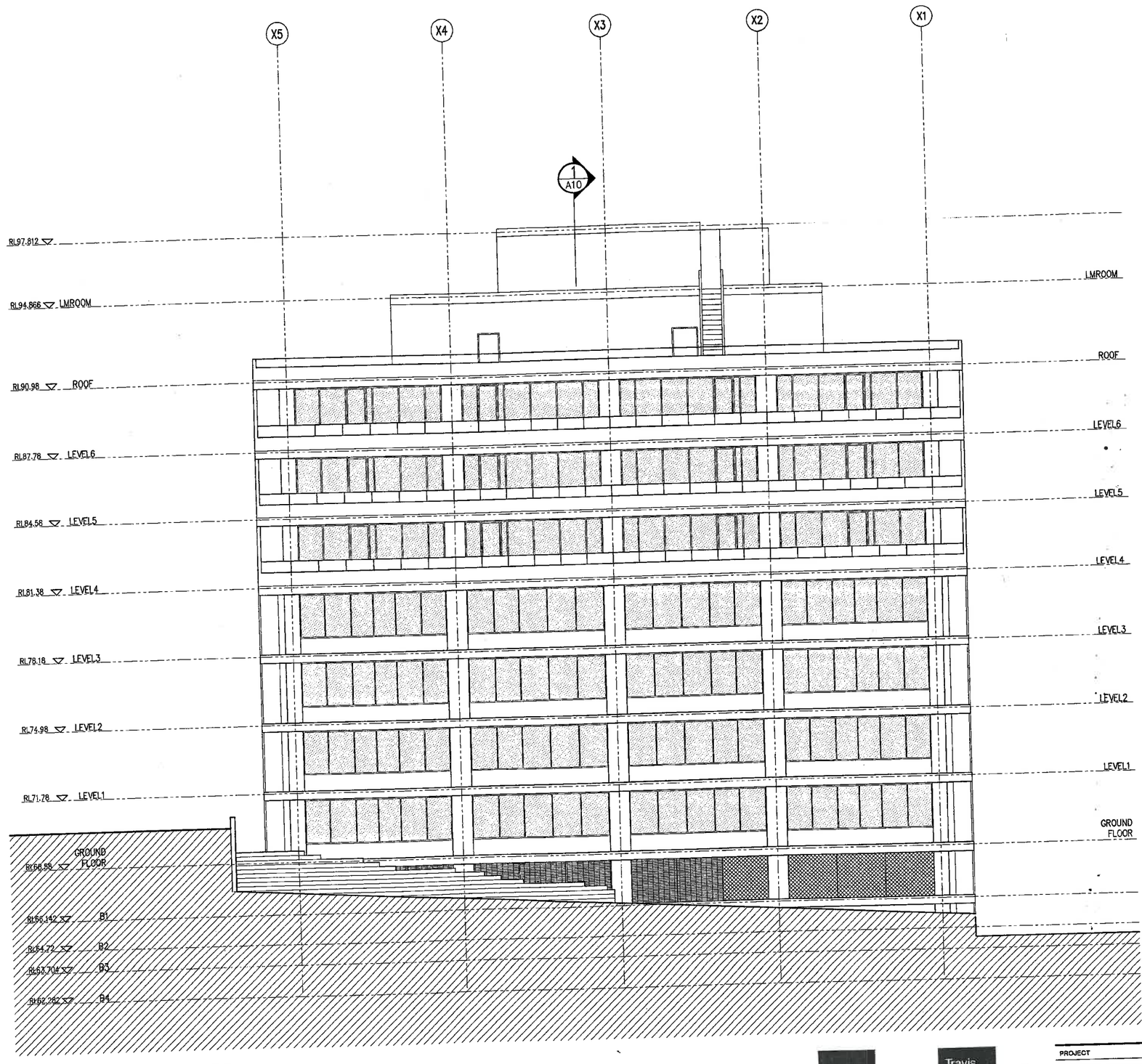

Do not scale drawings.
Verify all dimensions on site.

Issue	Amendment	Date	Issue	Amendment	Date
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architecture alliance

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PROJECT	SCALE 1:100
OFFICE BUILDING 41 McLAREN Street N.SYDNEY	DRAWN AW
	CHECKED RMcQ
	JOB No. 3368
DRAWING TITLE	REF No.
MEASURED DRAWING: SOUTH ELEVATION	DWG No. A17
	ISSUE -

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Appendix F

Extracts from Ward Street Precinct Masterplan, Draft, dated 5 December 2017 relevant to 41 McLaren Street, North Sydney.

SITE SPECIFIC: 41 McLAREN STREET

TO LEP

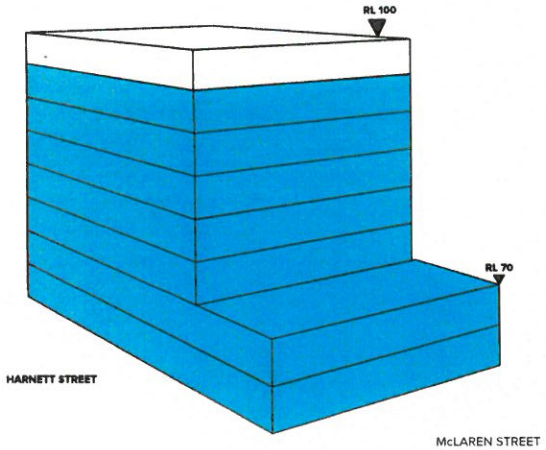
NOTE:
ASSUMED ADAPTIVE RE-USE OF HERITAGE LISTED STRUCTURE

COMMERCIAL

GFA = 10,720 m² (APPROX)

7 LEVELS

TYPICAL FLOOR PLATES = 2,020 m² & 1,340 m²



PROPOSED

THE PROPOSAL RETAINS THE EXISTING BUILDING AND PROPOSES A 5-LEVEL RESIDENTIAL ADDITION. THE PROPOSED ENVELOPE RESPECTS THE DAYLIGHT AMENITY OF THE DA APPROVED 221 MILLER ST AND THE NEW NOC SQUARE.

RESIDENTIAL ADDITION

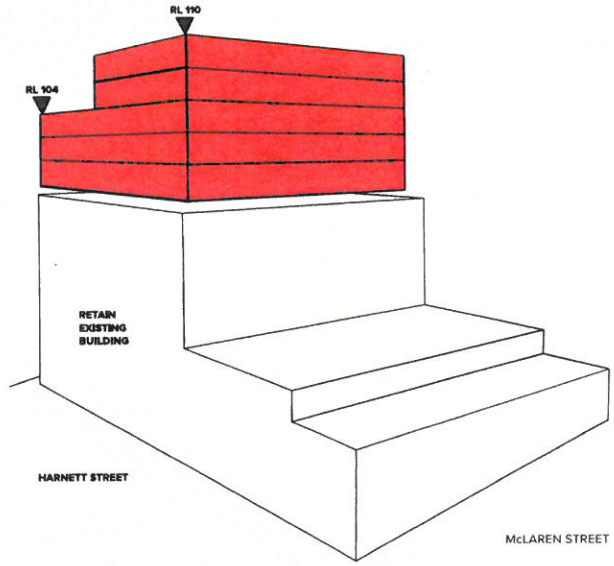
GFA = 3,363 m² (APPROX)

5 LEVELS

TYPICAL FLOOR PLATE = 915 m² & 586 m² (APPROX)

APPROX. 5 - 7 APARTMENTS PER LEVEL

25 - 30 APARTMENTS DEPENDING ON MIX.



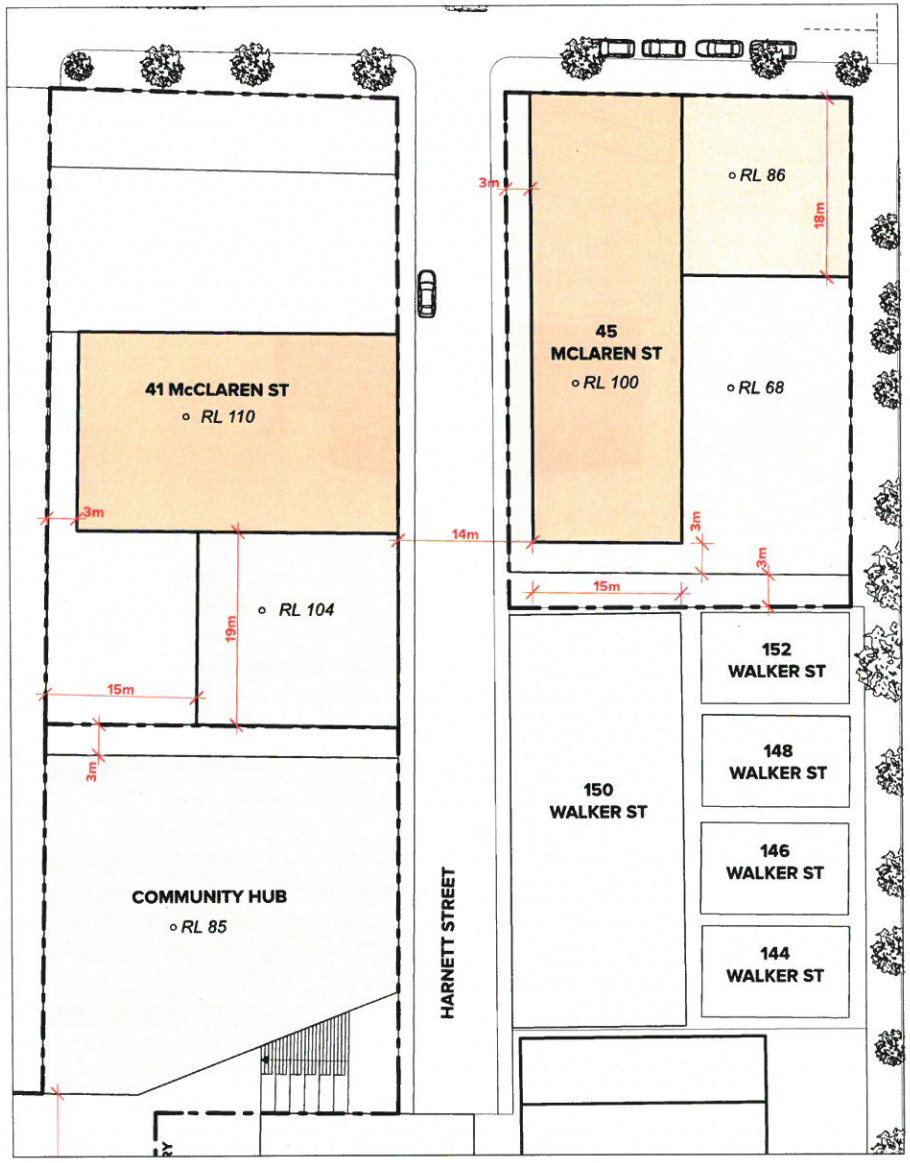
PROPOSED BUILT FORM SETBACKS

ADG STATEMENT

Community Hub
The community hub is envisaged as a low building with a pleasant roof garden for neighbouring buildings to view down upon. Its envelope goes to the two side boundaries and sits 3m off the northern boundary creating a link between Harnett St. and the private roadway. A stairway connects Harnett St. to NOC Square with accessible path of travel (lifts) integrated into the Hub.

41 McLaren St
Given the location of this site in relation to the new NOC Square and the neighbouring residential buildings to its West, any additional height is limited due to the solar amenity impact that volume would have. It is suggested that any additional development be limited approx. 5 levels stepping down to 3 levels at the rear. The addition sits approx. 22m from the street boundary and positions the volume towards the rear end of the neighbouring 39 McLaren St. The addition is set 3m off the side boundary.

45 McLaren St
The façade of the proposed 45 McLaren St envelope has been aligned with the façade of 150 Walker St. The podium level creates a courtyard space in the south-east corner of the lot. The built form address the street corner with a "leg" that turns towards Walker St and frames out the courtyard space.



2. Ward Street Precinct Masterplan

Opportunities & constraints

Opportunities

The preceding analysis and that undertaken for the Ward Street Car Park Scoping Study highlight a number of opportunities that should be explored as part of this Masterplan.

Ward Street Car Park

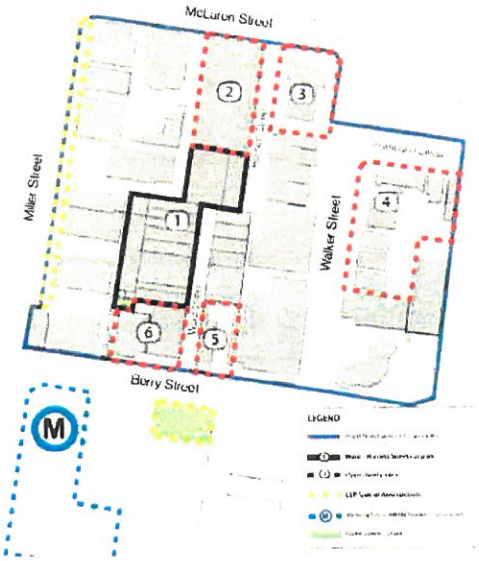
- As the most underutilised part of the precinct, this publicly-owned asset presents significant opportunities for public benefit and financial return to Council.
- A new public plaza at northern end of North Sydney Centre
- New recreational facilities serving local working and resident population
- Underground public car park to replace existing
- Redevelopment of the car park could provide a significant contribution to commercial floor space stock within North Sydney.
- Redevelopment could incorporate significant assets to improving commercial amenity in North Sydney e.g. conference facilities.
- Residential units as part of a mixed use development
- A unique chance exists to facilitate an iconic built form to announce North Sydney and shape its identity
- Redevelopment of the car park site will improve land value and amenity generally throughout the precinct.

Public Spaces

- Improved connectivity to, from a through a central plaza
- The large, blank substation walls are unfortunate and should be considered for significant public art or green walls.
- The redundant substation facility could be considered for a number of uses, including those that may contribute public benefit.

Opportunity Sites

A number of sites within the study area are identified as either potentially underutilised within the context of the North Sydney Centre, or likely to be the subject of development pressure in the future.



Planning Controls

Existing planning controls could be reviewed in order to achieve most beneficial development and public benefit outcomes.

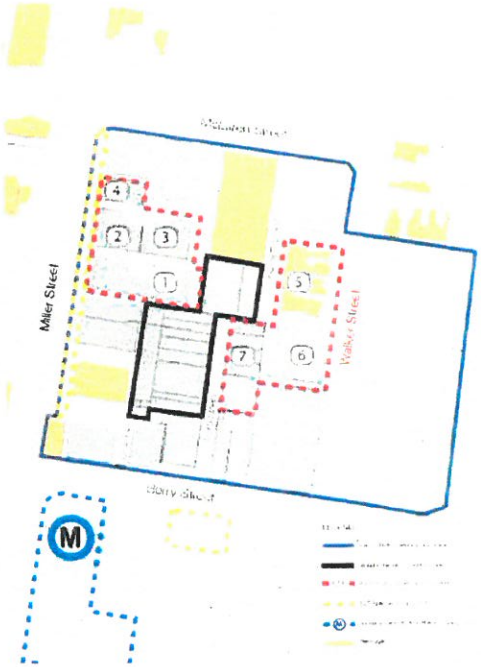
New Metro Station

- The new Victoria Cross Metro Station close to the subject area could be the catalyst for substantial change. Opportunities for to facilitate access kiosk from within the study area would contribute greatly to the activation of that space.
- Improved transport allows for reconsideration / reprioritisation of car parking requirements.

Constraints

The study area is an established (albeit evolving) urban precinct within the North Sydney Centre. Constraints to redevelopment and achievement of objectives can be generally described as follows.

- A number of properties within and around the study area are subject to local heritage listings
- Strata subdivision, although not an ultimate constraint, affects several properties and will impact on future redevelopment potential
- Key preferred through-site linkages are located on privately owned land and therefore need to be codified. Redevelopment of sites require through site links to be negotiated and followed through to ensure appropriate design
- Redevelopment of certain sites may impact on significant views from existing high rise development
- The car park site lacks a prominent street frontage. A special or iconic structure on the site may benefit from or require such an edge condition
- Despite its location, the study area and surrounds are still home to some lower scale residential development, redevelopment of or near which requires sensitive consideration
- A centrally-located plaza may suffer from possible overshadowing
- The Berry Square special area control restricts development of the northern side of Berry Street and the car park site. This has implications for the scale of development possible on the car park site
- Current planning controls afford increased protection from shadow and amenity impacts to residential land outside the North Sydney Centre, thereby limiting development potential within the Centre



Ongoing development interest within the study area continues to see new development introduceo that can limit the objectives for enhanced pedestrian permeability within the block, activation, employment floor space and the potential for the car park site.

PRECINCT SPECIFICS: EXISTING CHARACTER

AUTO-ORIENTED CAR PARKS

Existing Ward Street + Harnett Street carparks

HARNETT STREET

Harry Seidler designed heritage item on the northern edge of the precinct

DORIS FITTON PARK

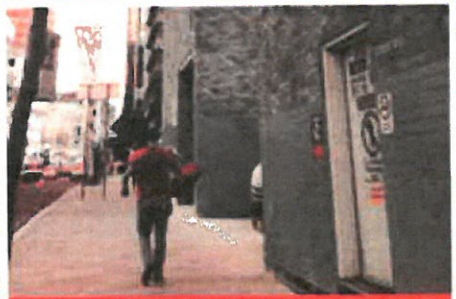
The precinct's eastern edge fronts the Warringah Expressway with old growth trees + plantings

WALKER STREET

The precinct includes a series of plazas + cafes that are not coherently connected

WARD STREET CAR PARK

The roof top of the Ward Street carpark with potential for early activation strategies

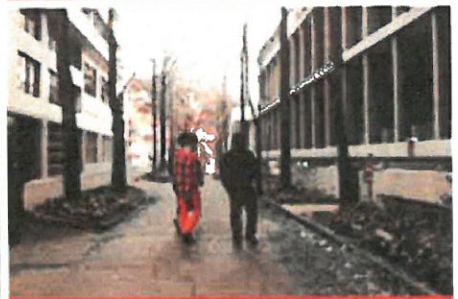


BERRY STREET

The Berry Street streetscape features inactive walls not suitable for a healthy pedestrian realm

HEIGHT + FORM

The precinct includes a variety of building scales + forms



LANEWAYS

The precinct includes laneways with the potential for pedestrian activation

URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK

SUSTAINABILITY BEST PRACTICE

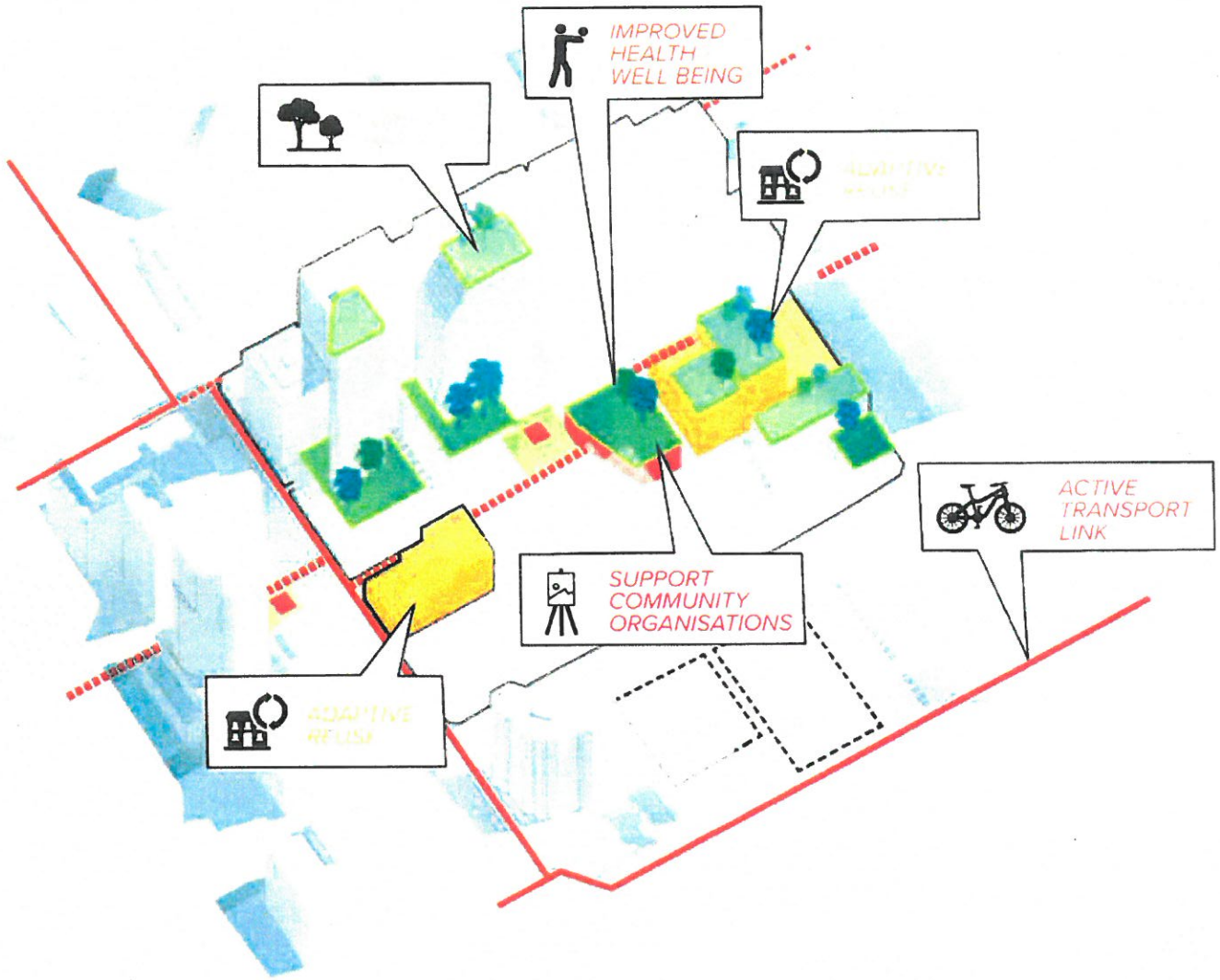
PRECINCT + BUILDINGS TO BE BUILT TO 6 STAR GREEN STAR RATING OR EQUIVALENT

RECREATIONAL AMENITIES PROMOTE HEALTH + WELLNESS

ADAPTIVE RE-USE MINIMISES CONSTRUCTION WASTE

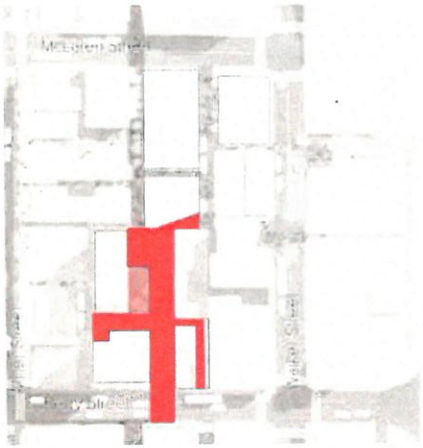
COMMUNITY SPACE FOCUSES ON LOCAL NEEDS + SHOWCASES COLLABORATION

GREEN ROOFS REDUCE STORMWATER RUNOFF WHILE PROVIDING COMMUNAL AREAS

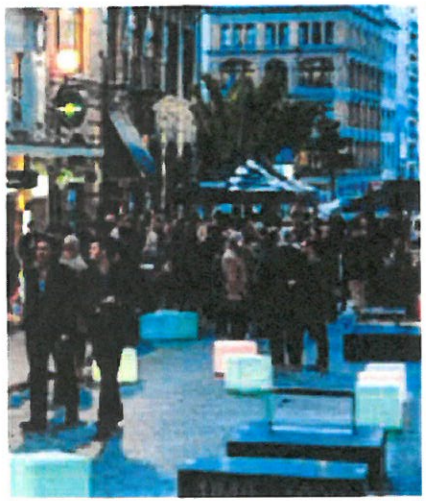


PROPOSED CONNECTIONS

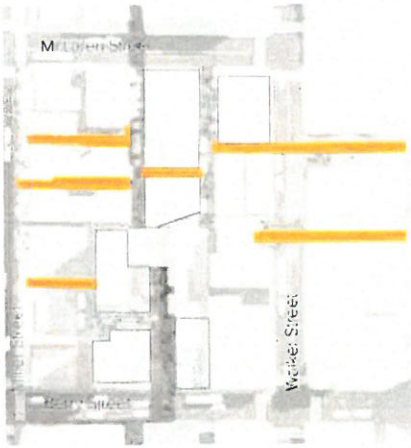
ACTIVE PEDESTRIAN LANES



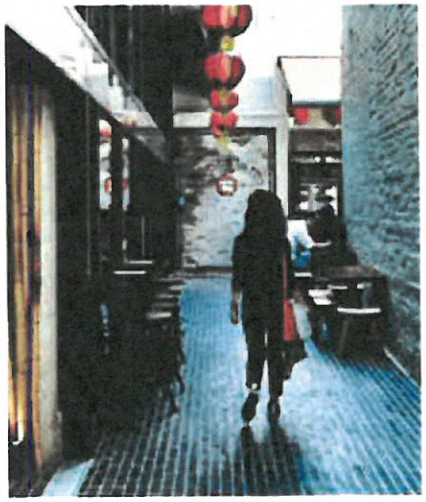
244 linear metres



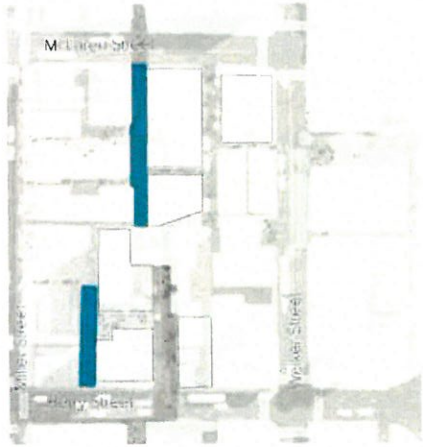
PEDESTRIAN PASSAGEWAYS



466 linear metres



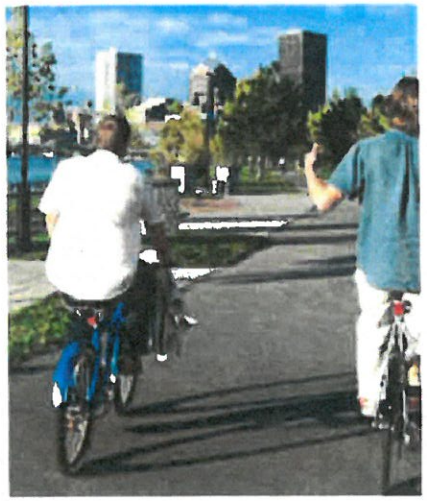
SHARED SPACES



125 linear metres

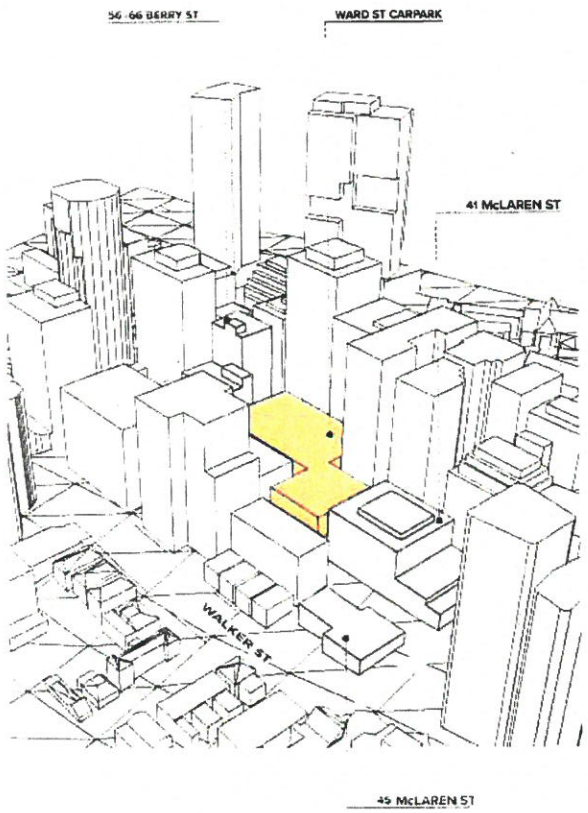
ACTIVE TRANSPORT LINKS

147 linear metres

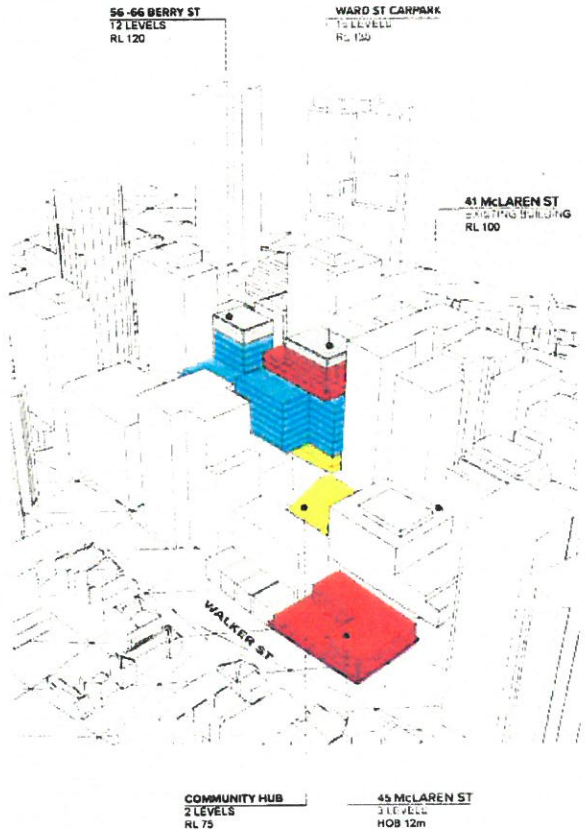


PROPOSED BUILT FORM: MASSING

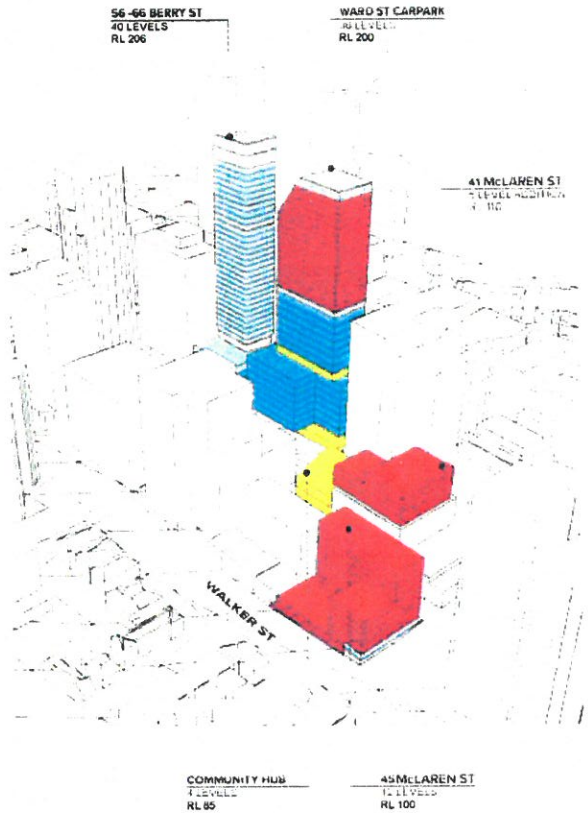
EXISTING BUILT FORM



BUILT FORM - TO LEP



PROPOSED BUILT FORM

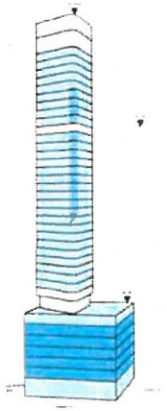


- COMMERCIAL
- RESIDENTIAL
- HOTEL
- RETAIL
- COMMUNITY
- SERVICES

ECONOMIC ADVICE : THE OPPORTUNITY SITES

56-66 BERRY ST VIABILITY STATEMENT

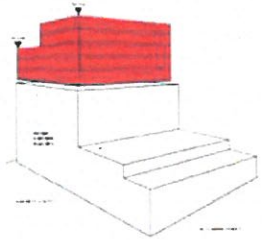
This potential development is comprised of two existing commercial office buildings. Cooperation by the landowners to achieve a redevelopment on a site directly opposite the future Victoria Cross train station could unlock a valuable renewal opportunity. The envisaged uses responds to demand for hotel and conference facilities, contributing to North Sydney's competitiveness as one of Sydney's important CBDs. Engagement with the landowners of the existing buildings would help progress planning for future redevelopment. The Masterplan contemplates built form and floorspace that exceeds that which is permitted under the current planning controls. Council could work with the landowners to leverage additional development potential towards public benefit.



41 McLAREN ST STATEMENT VIABILITY STATEMENT

The Masterplan contemplates retention of the existing commercial building structure and the addition of five levels to accommodate residential uses.

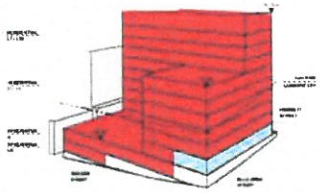
The existing commercial building has generous floorplates, however is aged and would require a comprehensive refurbishment to facilitate provision of contemporary office accommodation that would be attractive to commercial occupiers. There is a potential for the additional levels of residential to assist in the offset of the refit and refurbishment of the existing structure.



45 McLAREN ST. VIABILITY STATEMENT

The site comprises an existing strata residential building. Under current planning controls, redevelopment is not feasible.

The Masterplan envisages a 12 level residential building. This represents an opportunity for an aged building to be renewed, subject to the collective strata holders' objectives and expectations. Should there be interest by the strata holders in pursuing a redevelopment opportunity, there could be also be an opportunity for public benefit to be provided, leveraging the development upside.



70-74 BERRY ST VIABILITY STATEMENT

The location of this site presents an excellent opportunity to accommodate an 'entrance' to the precinct.

Despite its strategic position and prominent address to Berry Street opposite the future Victoria Cross train station, there is an array of unknowns with the site. Investigations into the cost associated with adaptive reuse of the building (e.g. remediation requirements, demolition, etc.) are required to enable development of viable options for the site.