

3.1 Overview

This chapter includes an analysis of the Powerhouse Ultimo site and its surrounding context to inform the development of design guidelines and strategies for the site. An exploration of the places and spaces surrounding the site is important in establishing an understanding of the site's context.

This aligns with the objectives of Better Placed, the integrated design policy for the built environment of New South Wales, published by the Government Architect NSW. The understanding of place particularly applies to the policy's first objective - Better Fit:

"Good design in the built environment is informed by and derived from its location, context and social setting. It is place-based and relevant to and resonant with local character, heritage and communal aspirations. It contributes to evolving future character and setting." (Better Placed, p38)

The site analysis has focused on the following attributes:

- Access and Movement - Public Transport
- Access and Movement - Pedestrian and Cycle Movement
- Open Spaces
- Spatial Character - Public Domain
- Topography
- Subdivision Patterns
- Spatial Character - Harris Steet, Goods Line & Street Elevations
- View Analysis - Existing
- Overshadowing - Existing
- Opportunities
- Constraints



Powerhouse Ultimo's connection to the Goods Line. Image credit: Katherine Lu.



Powerhouse Ultimo on the edge of the city. Image credit: Powerhouse Ultimo

3.2 Access and Movement - Public Transport



The Powerhouse Ultimo precinct is well serviced by public transport with close proximity to Central Station, Inner West Light Rail via Haymarket and Exhibition stops, as well as 501 buses along Harris Street. Light Rail on George Street and the future Metro West broaden the reach in the future. This is enhanced by the well-connected pedestrian network in Chinatown, Darling Square and Darling Harbour.

Future Infrastructure

- Sydney Central Metro serves lines T1, T2, T3, T4 & T8 lines.

Ultimo Precinct Projected Modal Splits

Modal split for residents living in Haymarket (based on 2016 Census Data) – details only 8% of residents are car drivers.

The close proximity of Ultimo to major public transport nodes (particularly Central Station) and the Sydney CBD dictates that car dependency for future residents of Ultimo is anticipated to be low based on current modal splits.



Key

- Bus network
- ||| Train track + stations
- Light rail route + stations
- - Future light rail route + stations
- Future metro route + stations
- Key public transport hub

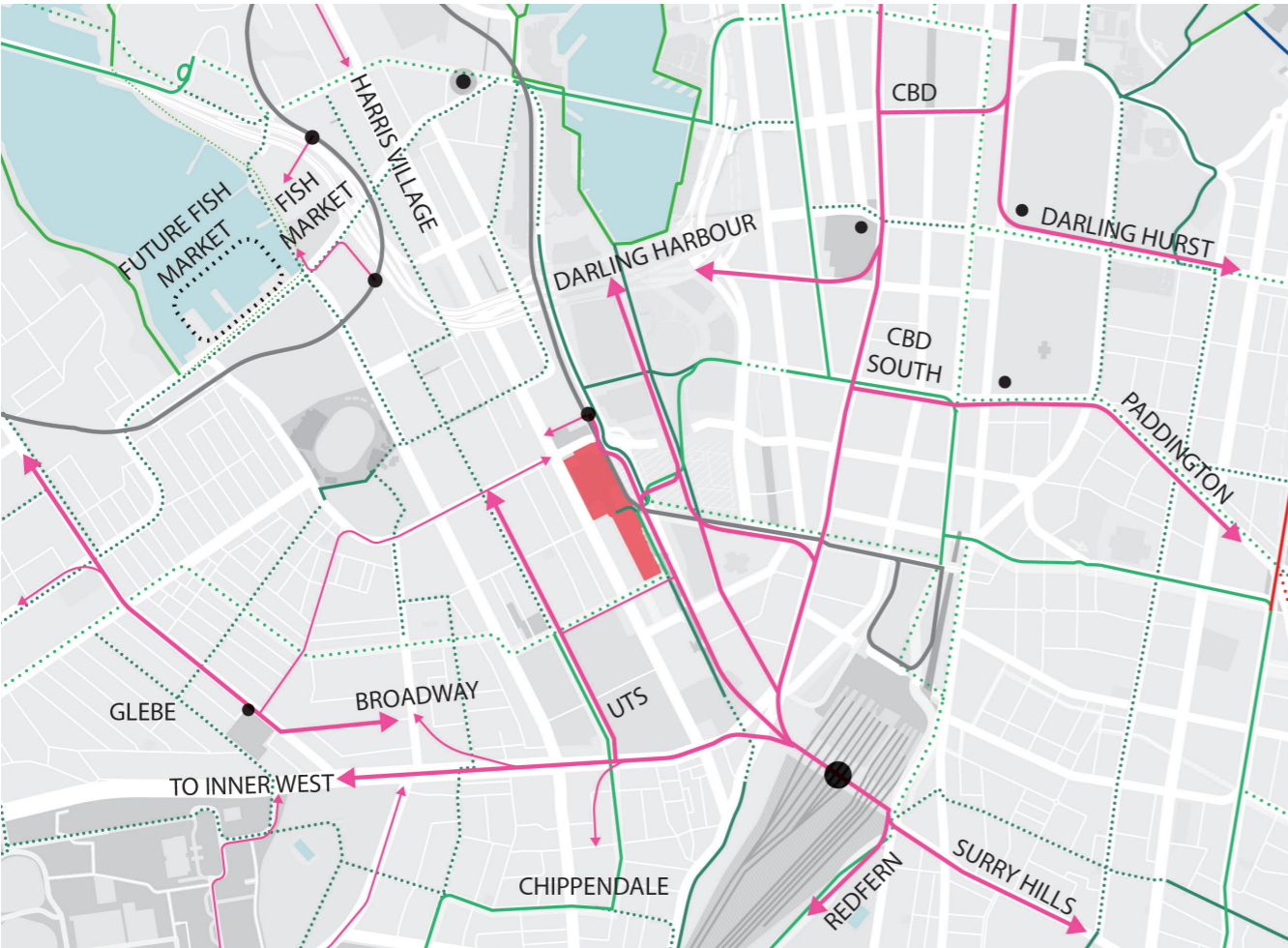
Image 1. Future Pyrmont Station <<https://concreteplayground.com/sydney/news-2/pyrmont-and-the-cbd-new-train-lines-metro-west-line>>

Image 2. Exhibition Centre Light Rail Stop <Google Maps - street view image>.

Image 3. Powerhouse Ultimo Bus Stop + Plaza <ASPECT - site image>

Image 4. Powerhouse Ultimo Bus Stop <Google Maps, street view image>.

3.3 Access and Movement - Pedestrian and Cycle Movement

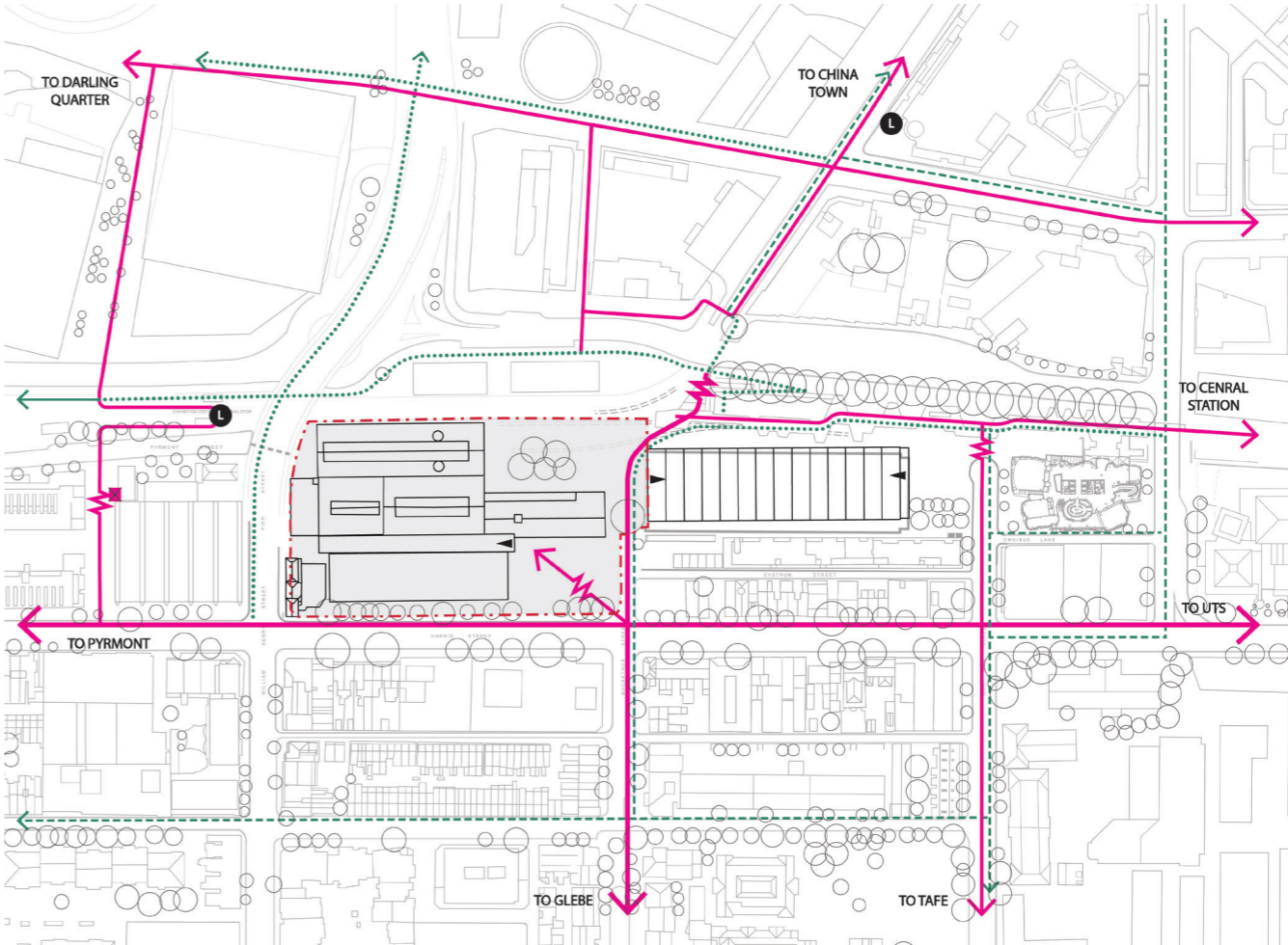


Excellent public transport linkages to heavy rail, light rail, buses and, the new Metro line, all intersect with the primary north-south axis of Harris Street. This confluence of the public transport network dovetails with the pedestrian and bicycle network to ensure a highly accessible and connected precinct.

As outlined in the City of Sydney DRAFT Cycling Strategy and Action Plan 2018-2030, the precinct presents a significant role in the regional and local cycling network, providing great connections for cyclists from Central Station to Pyrmont and Darling Harbour. There is great on site potential to improve the cycling connection from The Goods Line to Broadway via Mary Ann Street.

Key

- Major public transport stop
- Light rail
- ↔ Pedestrian flow
- Existing local cycleway
- ⋯ Planned local cycleway
- Existing regional cycleway
- ⋯ Planned regional cycleway
- Existing recreational cycleway
- ⋯ Planned recreational cycleway



The precinct is bounded by a well established pedestrian network that connects to major public transport hubs. It provides plentiful car-free pedestrian friendly connections. With abundant public transport, the site is extremely well connected. However, while being considered as part of the Ultimo community, the precinct presents a lack of pedestrian friendly streets that stitch itself back to the neighbourhood. Improving east-west connections and large falls across the site pose challenges for accessibility to consider going forward.

Despite having good pedestrian connections to the south and east, the local topography creates major constraints for accessibility, particularly with steep footpaths on Macarthur Street. The light rail corridor that runs along the east of the site presents as a fenced barrier and allows minimal crossings. The existing museum forecourt has poor interface with Harris Street, presenting stairs with tactile indicators. Careful consideration will be needed to provide permeable movement on site and seamless pedestrian focused connections to its surroundings.

Key

- Site boundary
- ↔ Pedestrian flow
- ↔ Cycleway only
- ↔ Shared pedestrian and cycleway
- ↔ Share cycleway and local traffic
- Light rail station
- ▲ Entry points
- ⚡ Existing steps
- ⬮ Elevator access

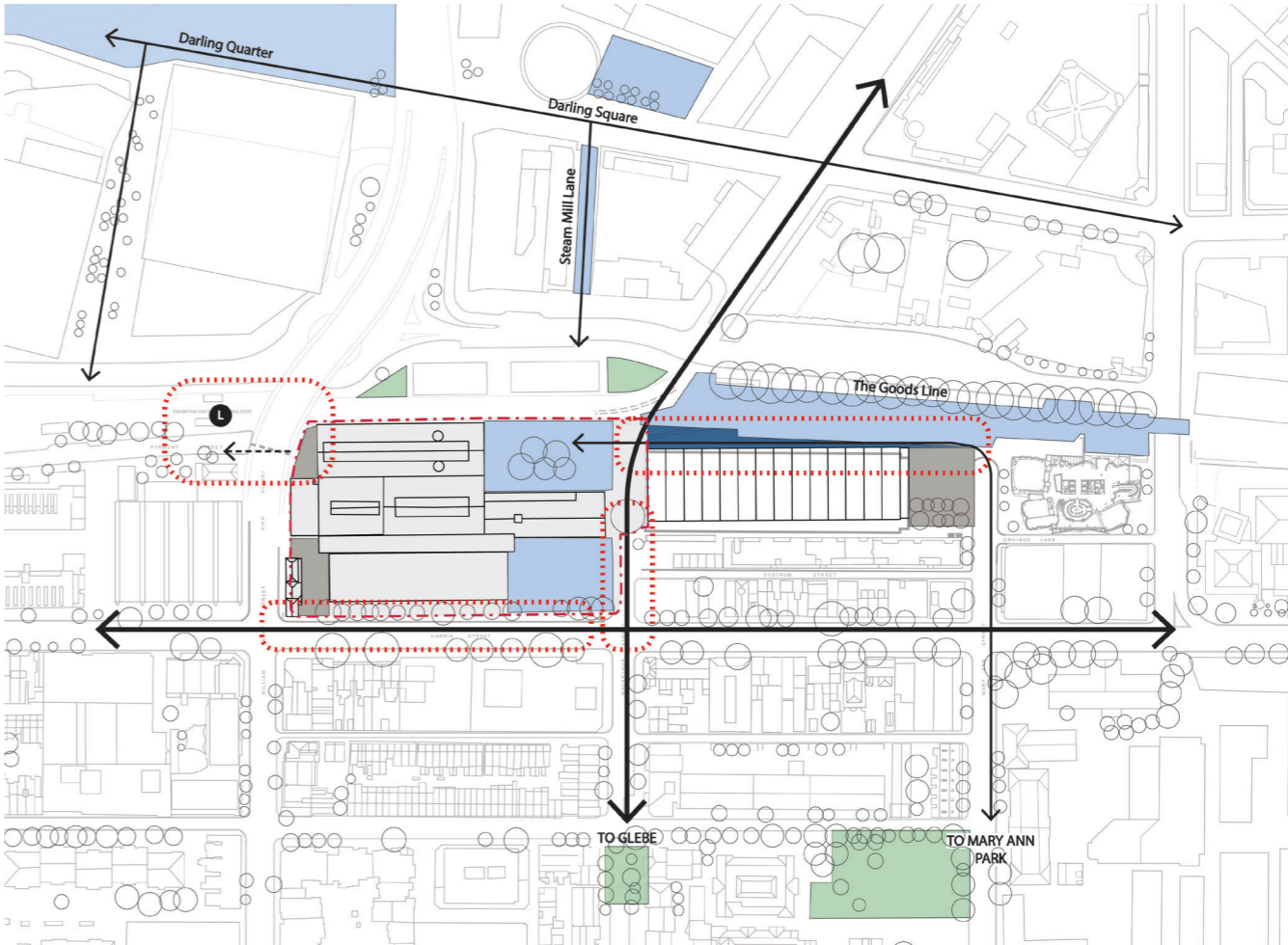
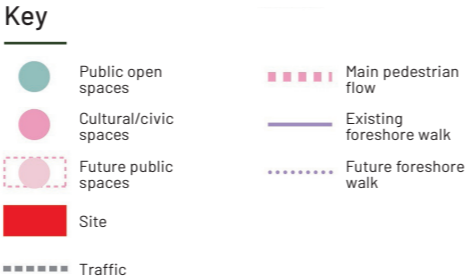
3.4 Open Spaces



While large open spaces are distributed along the foreshore line, the site sits adjacent to a cluster of public spaces with great cultural value. The completion of George Street Light Rail has reinforced a strong and connected North - South civic spine.

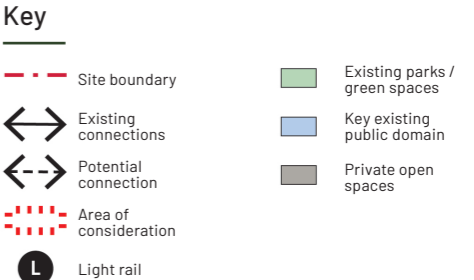
Existing and proposed open spaces, public domain projects in the area:

- Darling Harbour
- Goods Line
- Darling Square
- Chinatown
- Mary Ann Street Park
- Wentworth Park



The buildings within the precinct site terminate the axis of Hay Street to the east, Macarthur Street flows down hill from the west, dropping dramatically as it crosses Harris Street to terminate at the Powerhouse forecourt and light rail.

Current site conditions create constraints to intuitive public movement north-south given the heavily trafficked William Henry Street - Pier Street link and the adjacent light rail corridor. The site presents significant opportunities to improve the interface with, and activation of, the Goods Line, and to improve linkages to the Darling Harbour/Darling Square precinct and its newly established boulevard - particularly along an extension of Macarthur Street.



3.5 Spatial Character - Public Domain



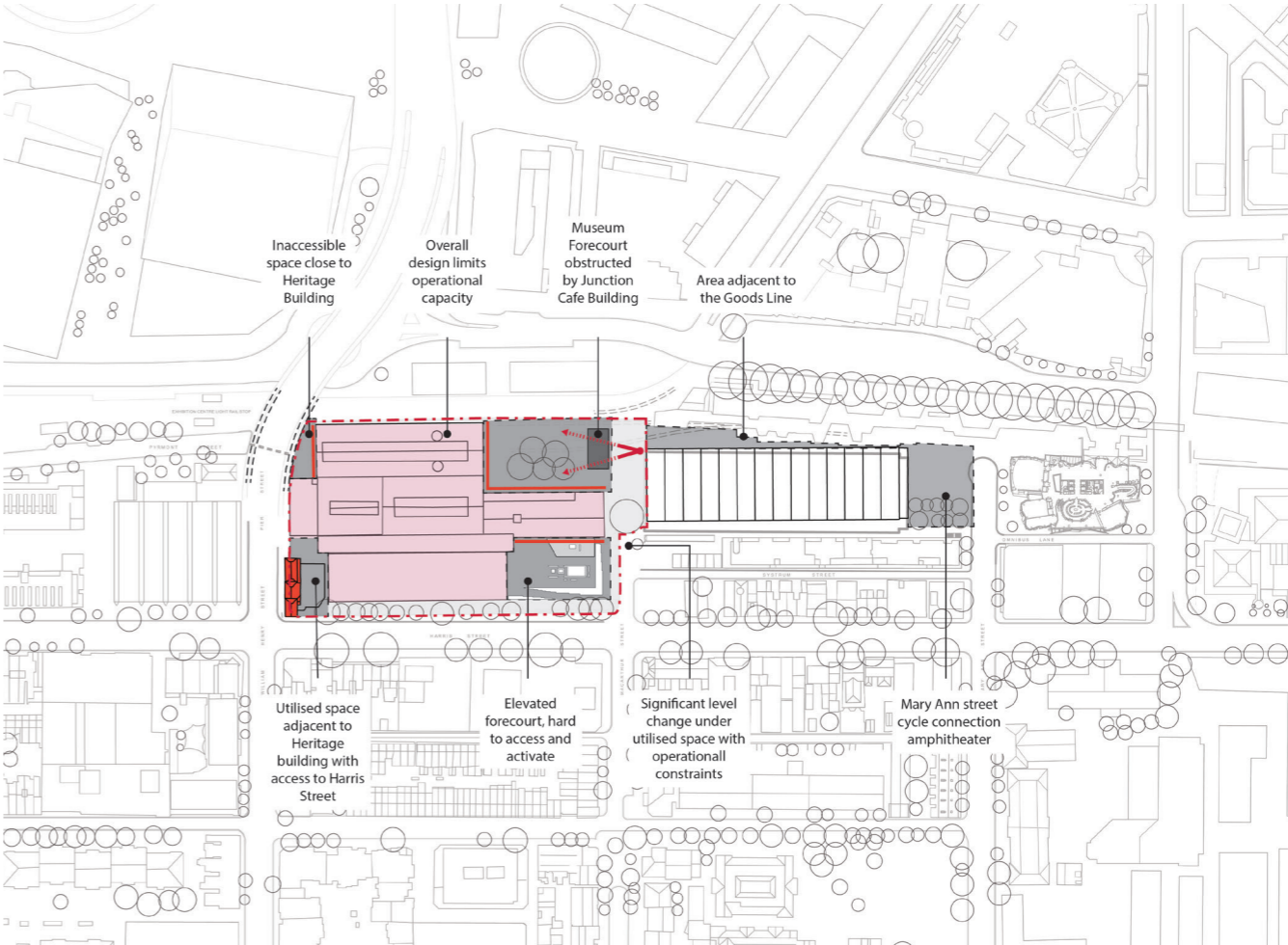
The site is located within diverse and changing neighbourhoods. Significant investment in major infrastructure over the last decade has seen the addition of the Sydney International Convention Centre and precinct, Darling Square and The Goods Line.

To the west, the Ultimo precinct retains a substantially inner-city local character, with smaller pocket parks and interweaving streets edged by character laden (often) heritage buildings. The Bays East district transformation will draw more residents into nearby neighbourhoods and substantial projects such as the new Fish Market will provide iconic destinations for visitors and locals alike.

To the south, plans to better connect pedestrian and cyclists to the new Metro (and ultimately across central station) will further strengthen the quality and quantity of public space.

Key

- Parks
- Pocket Parks
- Square / civic spaces
- Foreshore walk
- Pedestrianised street / sharezone
- Street closure
- Laneways



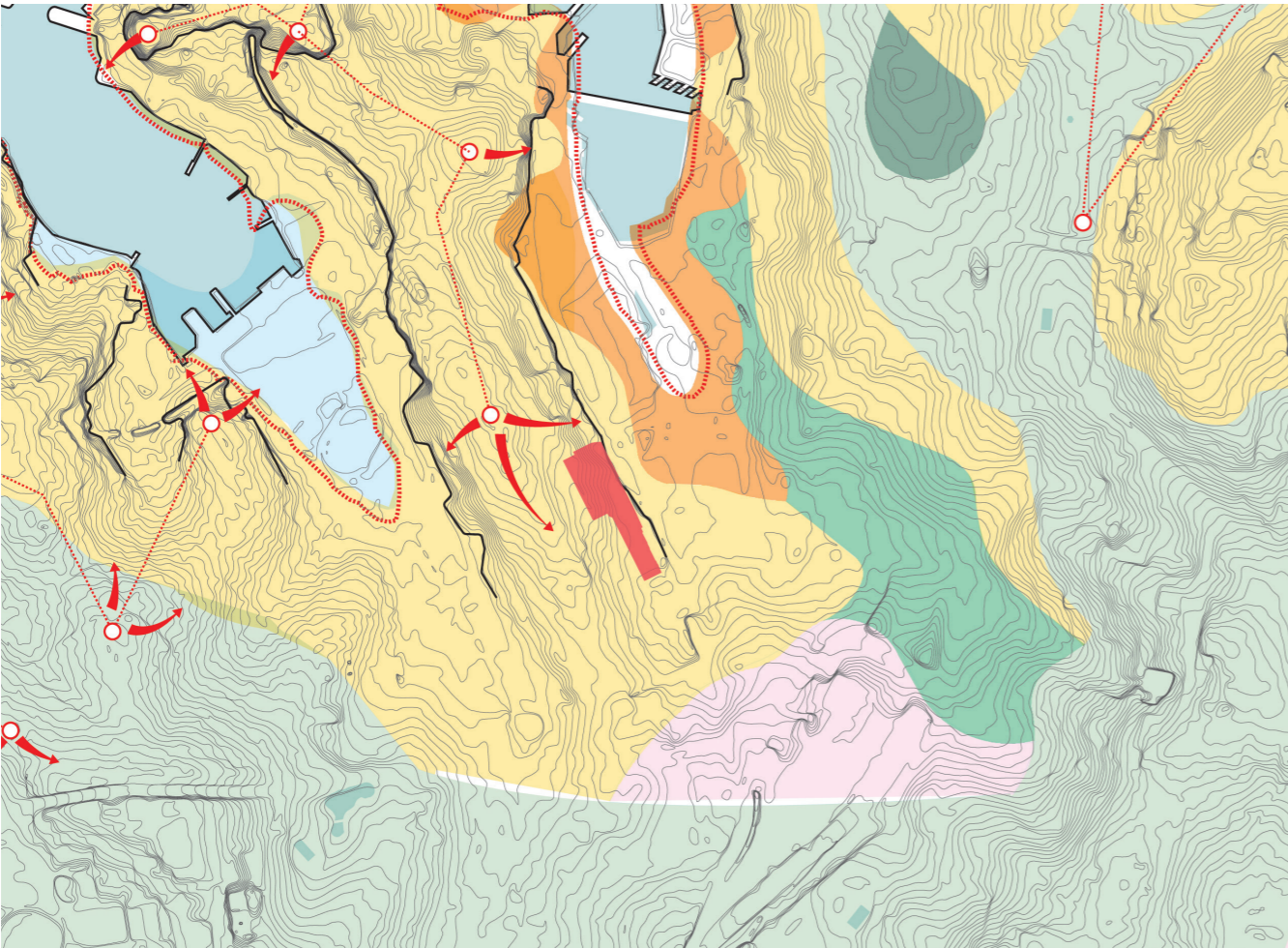
Nowhere is the history of Ultimo and its variant built form more apparent than along the length of Harris Street. Along Harris Street to the north of the site, the remnants of industry remain, warehouses with sawtooth roofs have been converted to apartments and offices.

Within these residential enclaves the six to eight storey warehouses sit adjacent to two storey cottages as they always have. To the south, the prevailing street wall condition intensifies toward Broadway, encountering cultural and educational institutions including the ABC, UTS and TAFE along the way.

Key

- Site boundary
- Existing heritage facades / elements
- Obstructed heritage views

3.6 Topography



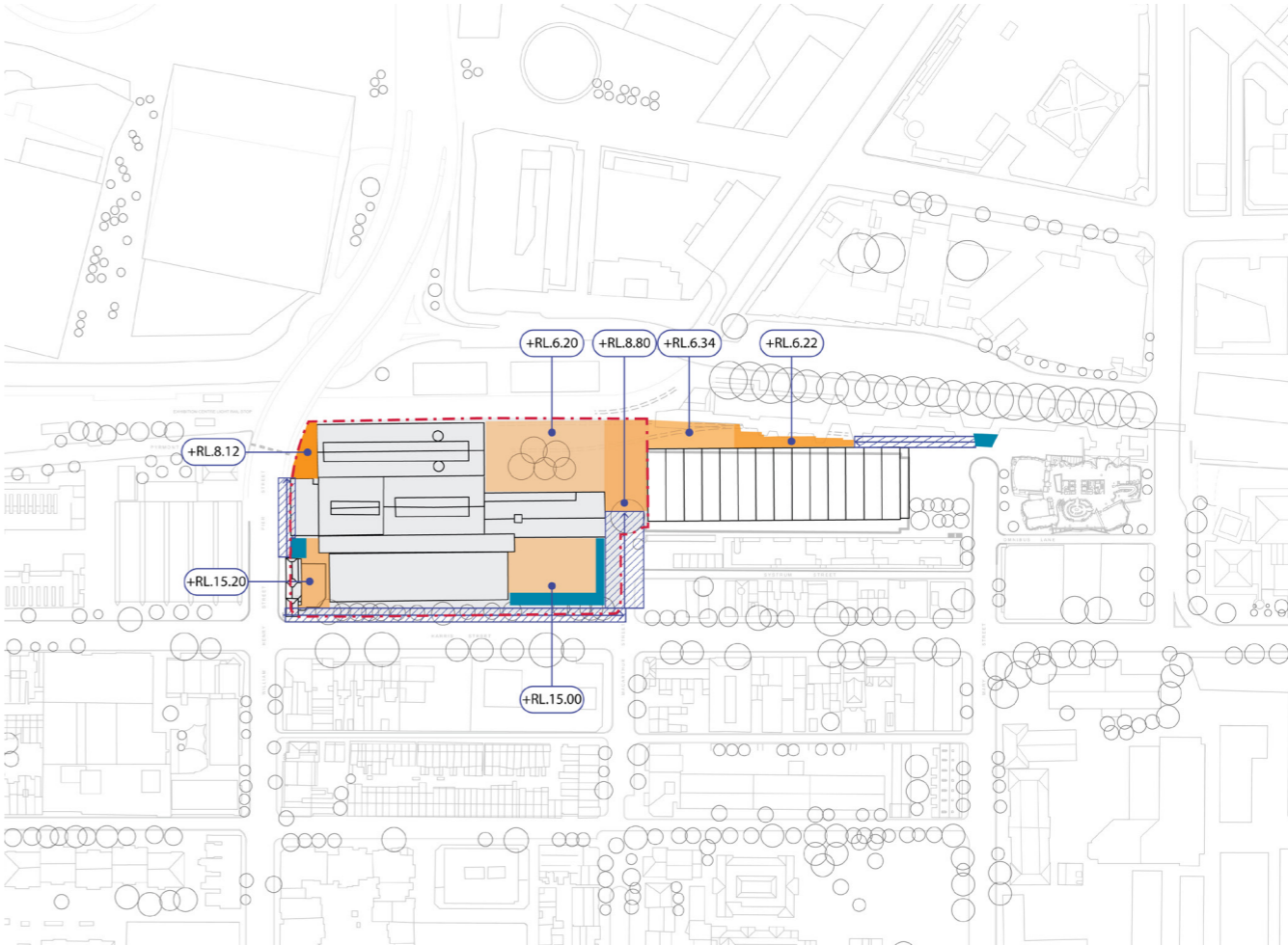
There is up to nine metres variance in the ground level between Harris Street and The Goods Line, with the existing buildings cut into the slope to form several different floor levels and platforms throughout the site.

The existing site has significant infrastructure below ground level, flooding risk has been considered and will be addressed in the detailed design (Stage 2) DA.

Pymont was the source of sandstone that was quarried for many of Sydney significant heritage buildings.

The dominant original vegetation community of the area is sandstone woodland and mudflats.

Key



Site Thresholds

The site is characterised by a complex ground plane, in terms of topographic level changes and also the physical encumbrances created by road infrastructure.

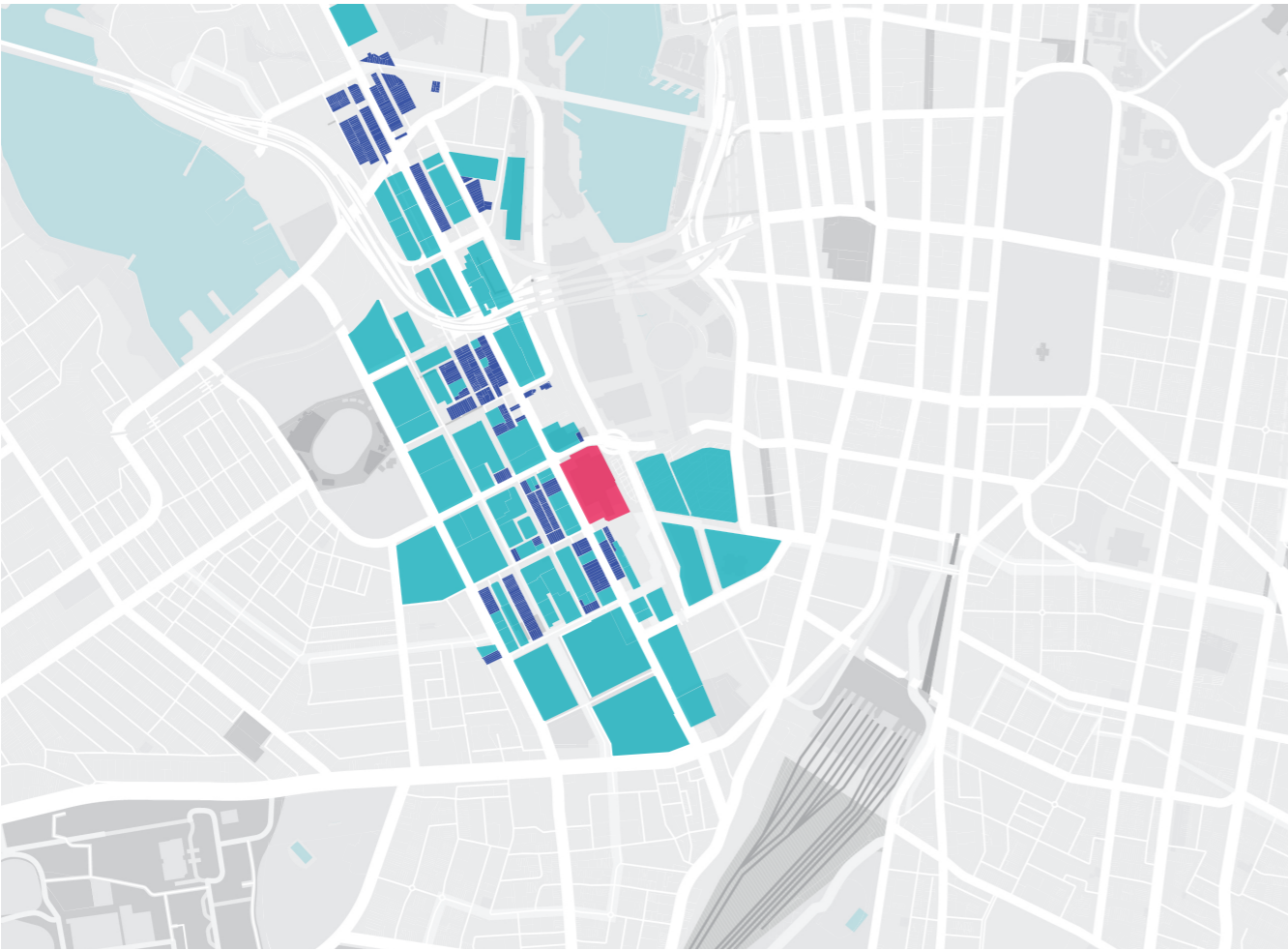
Significant changes in gradient and levels occur in these locations:

Hay Street (east) / Goods Line
Stairs and ramp from RL3.3 to RL6.6, a change of level of approximately 3.3m
Mary Ann Street (South) / The Goods Line
Stairs and street transition from RL4.8 – RL 8.1, a change of level of approximately 3.2m

Key



3.7 Subdivision Patterns

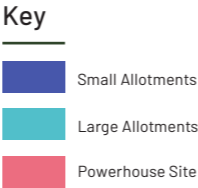


The site is bounded by Harris Street and Omnibus Lane to the west; the William Henry Street Bridge to the north; The Goods Line to the east; and Mary Ann Street to the south. The site has combined the following earlier sites:

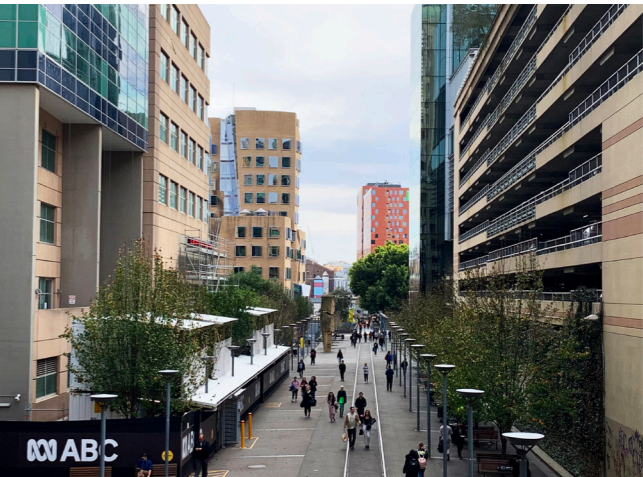
Ultimo Post Office (Lot 1 DP 770031) on the corner of Harris Street and William Henry Street;

Ultimo Power House (Lot 1 DP 631345), adjacent to The Goods Line, between the William Henry Street Bridge and Macarthur Street;

Warehouse buildings (Lot 1 DP 781732) on Harris Street between the Ultimo Post Office and Macarthur Street.



The Powerhouse Ultimo. Source: John Wardle Architects



Scale of development along the Goods Line. Source: John Wardle Architects



Scale of development along Harris Street. Source: John Wardle Architects



The adjacent residential grain along Macarthur Street. Source: John Wardle Architects

3.8 Spatial Character - Harris Street

By virtue of its location at the western edge of the Sydney CBD the precinct is exposed to a varied context and spatial character.

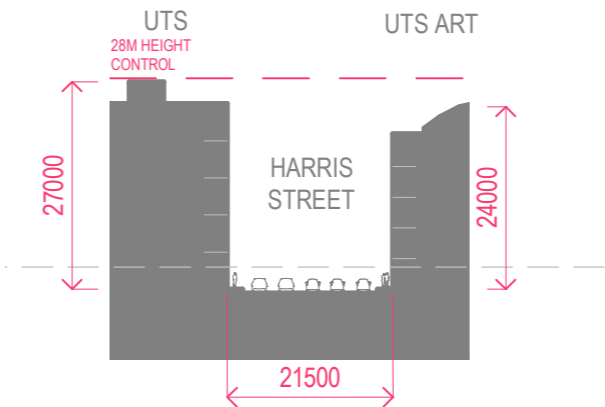
Haymarket and Darling Square to the east are characterised by food and beverage outlets at ground level and commercial, residential, hospitality and educational uses over, usually six to eight storeys in height. Some residential and student housing towers of over twenty storeys are recent developments in the area.

To the north, public and cultural infrastructure including the Ian Thorpe Aquatic Centre and the International Convention Centre are mixed with mid rise multi-residential uses and to the west, Ultimo is characterised by a mixed grain of low scale Victorian and 20th century residential terrace housing and six to eight storey warehouse conversions and multi-residential developments. To the south, the built form is characterised by commercial, institutional and educational uses at relatively high density at eight to twelve storeys in height – eg UTS, TAFE, ABC.

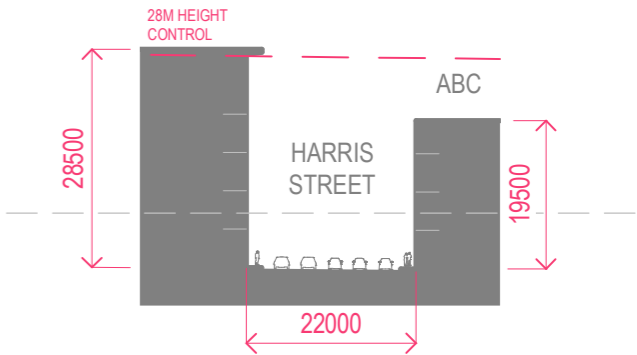
The precinct is best defined by the varied conditions presented at its edges, namely Harris Street and the Goods Line. These two key movement corridors

run north-south and, along their respective lengths, traverse a range of uses, building types and heights.

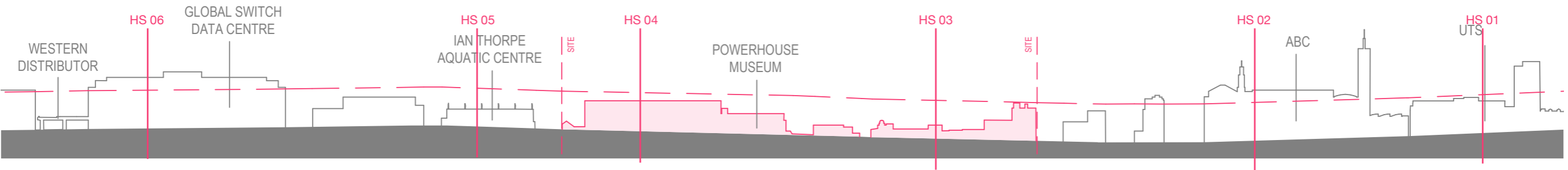
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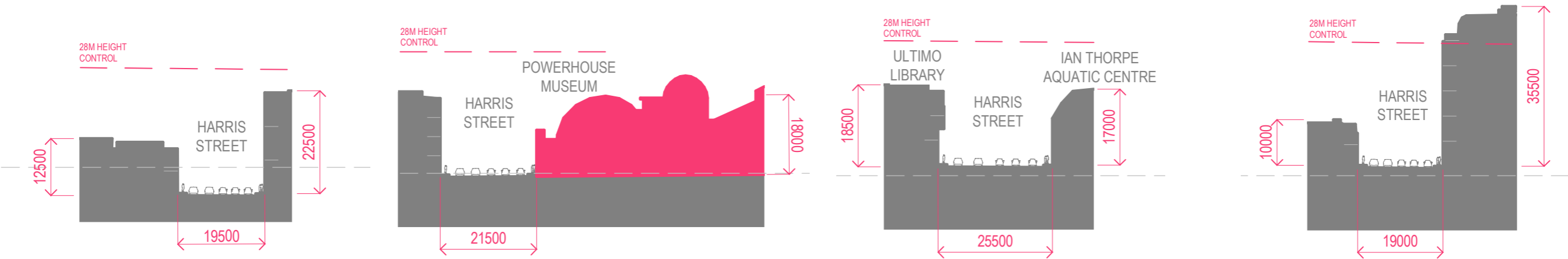
HS 01: UTS & UTS Art



HS 02: ABC HQ



3.8 Spatial Character - Harris Street



HS 03: Heritage Scale



HS 04: Existing Powerhouse Ultimo along Harris Street



HS 05: Ultimo Library and Ian Thorpe Aquatic Centre



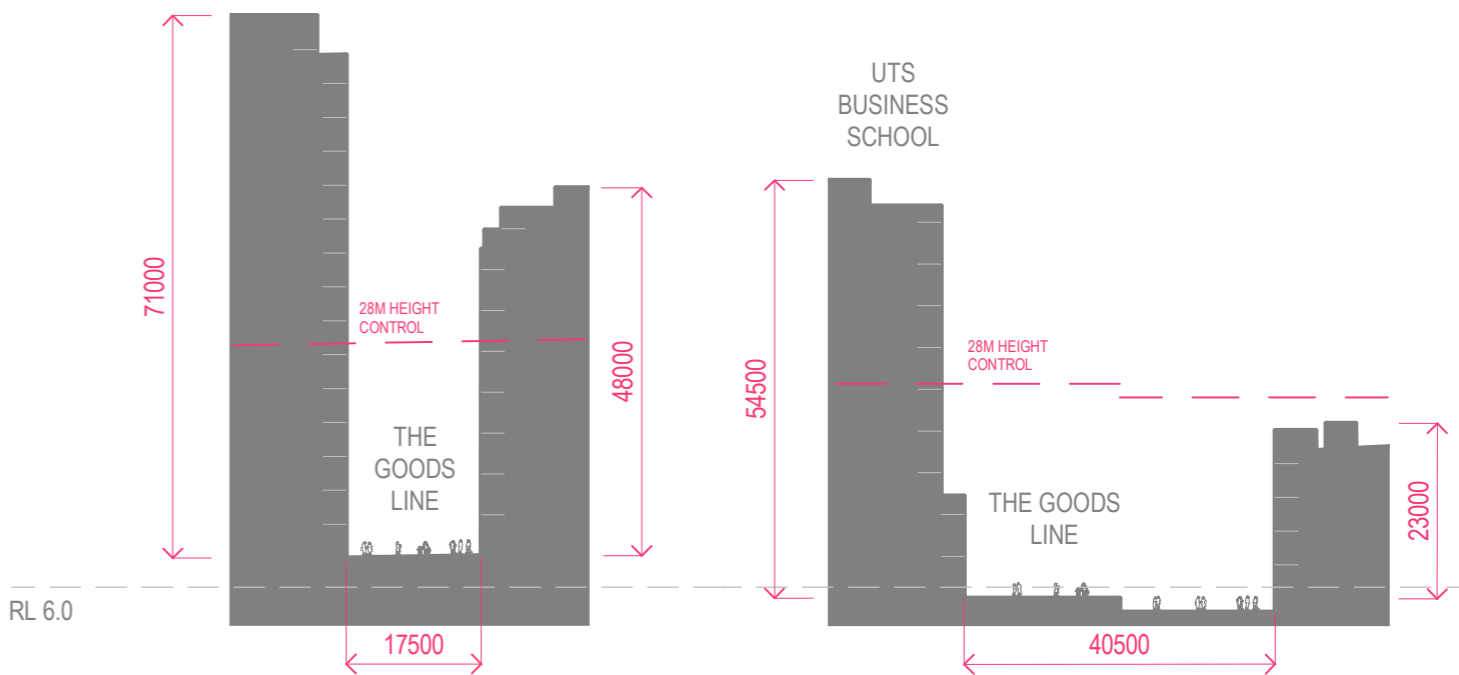
HS 06: Global Switch Data Centre

3.9 Spatial Character - The Goods Line

The Goods Line is a successful urban renewal project that establishes a high quality public domain, is pedestrian focused, and links a number of existing cultural institutions along its length. The UTS, ABC, Central Station and Powerhouse Ultimo each have good access and address to The Goods Line.

To the north and east of The Goods Line, existing public and cultural infrastructure such as Sydney International Convention Exhibition and Entertainment Precinct, Tumbalong Park and Darling Quarter together with The Capitol Theatre and Darling Square help reinforce what could be a thriving cultural spine at the southern end of the Sydney CBD.

This unique mix of commercial, tertiary and cultural uses are defining for The Goods Line. It is a transitory public space and does not exhibit a residential character, nor is it fronted by residential development along its length.



GL 01: UTS



GL 02: The Goods Line & UTS

