

2.2 SITE CONTEXT AND EXISTING CONDITIONS

Existing Context:

The Haymarket site sits directly to the south of Darling Harbour, between two key roads running north south; Darling Drive to the west and Harbour Street to the east. Darling Drive provides the 'back of house' vehicular access to all the major venues of Darling Harbour and associated car parking. Harbour Street currently provides front door access to the The Sydney Entertainment Centre (SEC) which presently occupies the site. To the rear of SEC sits the associated multi-level SEC car parking block. These two structures dominate the existing Haymarket site.

The partially pedestrianised precinct of Chinatown lies directly east of The Haymarket site. The laneways of Chinatown (Factory Lane and Little Hay Street) run perpendicular to the site, providing access and views from Chinatown into The Haymarket. Hay Street is a part pedestrian only street that forms the southernmost boundary of the site.

The Light Rail system that provides access from the city suburbs of Lilyfield and Glebe to the Central and Haymarket districts of the city forms the westernmost edge of the site. The tracks run around the south western corner of the site and into Hay Street, with a designated stop at Paddy's Markets.

The existing Darling Harbour pedestrian concourse to the front of the Exhibition Centre and the Chinese Garden of Friendship lie directly to the north of The Haymarket site with a former hydraulic pumping station, now a bar known as The Pumphouse, situated next to Pier Street adjacent to but outside of The Haymarket site boundary.

The Powerhouse Museum sits to the west of the site, on Harris Street some 9 metres above The Haymarket. Access from the Powerhouse Museum and Harris Street is provided via a lengthy covered walkway at the raised level which brings pedestrians into Darling Harbour via the multi-level SEC car park. The Sydney Monorail passes overhead and adjacent to the light rail corridor, currently providing access to Hay Street and Paddy's Markets. The University of Technology, Sydney (UTS) and Ultimo Tafe, Sydney campuses lie just south of the site along Quay Street.

Existing Site Conditions

The quality of the public domain is poor, consisting of poorly integrated paved areas between the two buildings. Pedestrians



Figure 2.2.1 Existing site aerial photograph

who access the site from the west have to use the overhead walkway which connects the site to the Powerhouse, Pyrmont and Ultimo at the raised level. This also connects to the multi-storey SEC car park and brings visitors into the site via the back of house service areas for The Sydney Entertainment Centre (SEC). Not only is this a poor pedestrian experience, it enforces a sense of confusion and illegibility upon the site. The confusion of light rail tracks, overhead walkways and the monorail at the south west corner of the site, combined with the dominance of the SEC car parking create an area that in effect is cut off from its surroundings and from the Darling Harbour precinct. When accessed from Harbour Street the public domain is unrelated to

its adjacent Chinatown neighbourhood and holds none of the fine grain characteristics or vibrancy of this precinct.

The site essentially consists of expanses of paving with small pockets of public park space such as 'Reflections Park' to the front of the Novotel and the Pumphouse Hotel on Little Pier Street containing a memorial called 'Memory Lines'.

The portion of Hay Street that lies within the site boundary is under utilised as a space, having little visual connection to Paddy's Markets or the UTS building.

A total of 120ha of a 210ha catchment drains into the site at the south east corner and low flows are largely captured by a pit and pipe system throughout the Darling Harbour precinct.

The site is traversed by large Sydney Water stormwater culverts, however in heavy rainfall events there is potential for significant overland flow through the site.

There are a number of existing trees both within and just outside of the site boundary. The proposed footprint of the development will necessitate the removal of many of these but it is intended to replace these with an increased number of trees appropriate to the proposal. A limited number of trees will be retained within the site boundary including the existing Platanus (Plane) trees at the edge of the Novotel Hotel forecourt on Little Pier Street.

Existing trees outside of the site boundary will influence the tree planting strategy of the public domain; these trees, as indicated in Figure 2.2.2 include Golden Robinia trees within the Chinatown laneways of Little Hay Street and Factory Lane. These will be considered as a species continuation within the proposed development in order to tie in with the surrounding language of the site. There are several mature Ficus species along the southern section of Darling Drive which will influence tree selection for the Darling Drive public domain.

The majority of the existing public domain will be removed and will undergo significant change due to the proposed development, however the existing area of landscape on Little Pier Street to the front of the Novotel will be retained. This area of turf and trees contains a memorial called “Memory Lines” by sculptor Ingrid Skirka which was sponsored by Unions NSW to commemorate Australian workers who have lost their lives in work related incidents. There are also plaques within this memorial area that commemorate the Indigenous Cadigal people who once populated the area and John Dickson who established the steam powered mill on the site. It is intended this memorial will remain intact and incorporated into the public domain.

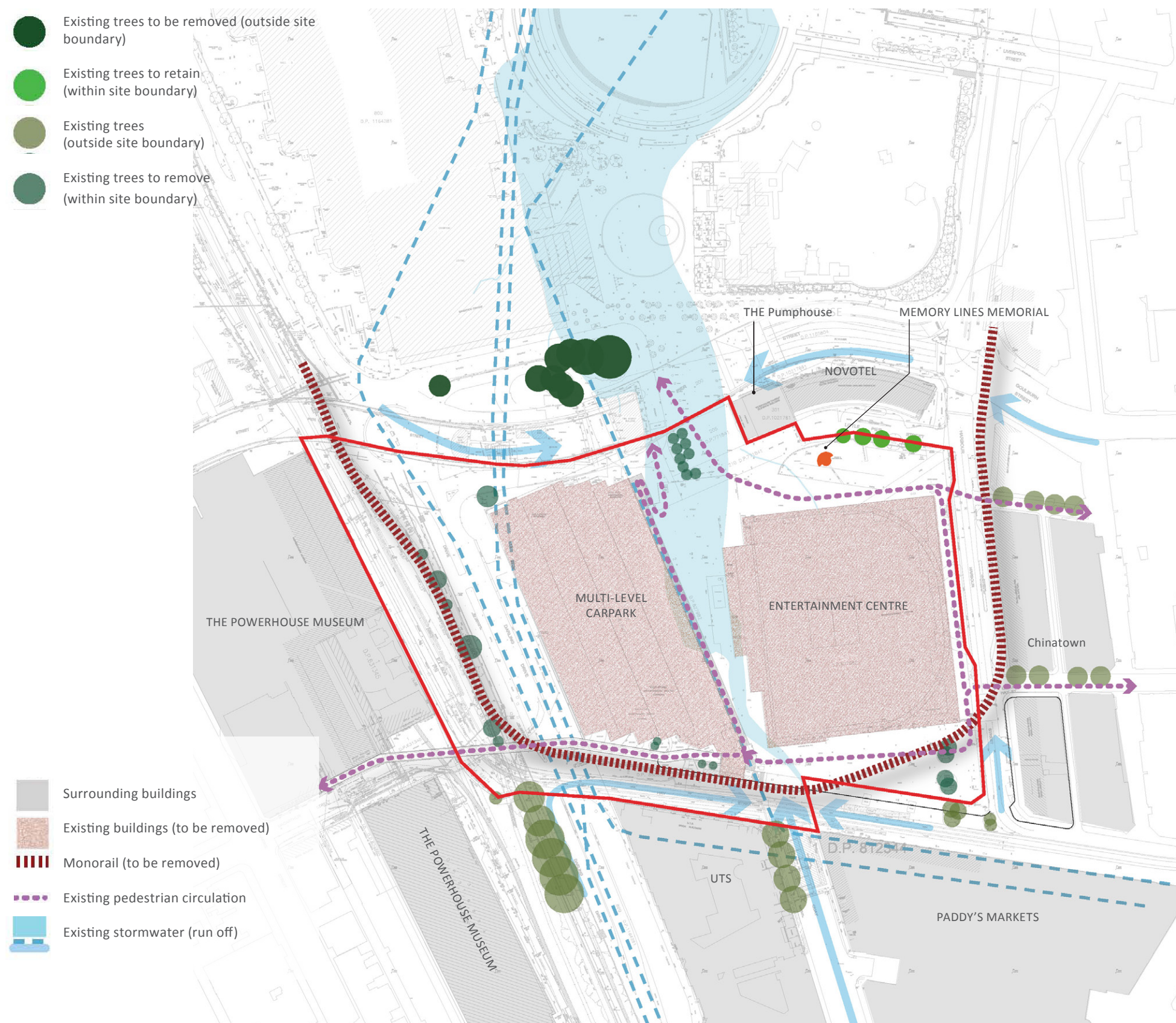


Figure 2.2.2 Existing site

2.3 SITE PHOTOGRAPHS



View looking east towards Paddys Markets with existing monorail in foreground. Source - HASSELL



View looking west along Hay Street with the light rail and Paddys Markets to the south. Source - HASSELL



The existing light rail stop at Paddys Market/ SEC. Source - HASSELL



View looking south along Quay Street shelter between the UTS campus and Market City. Source - HASSELL



View looking east towards Chinatown and the city CBD. Source - HASSELL

Hay Street

These images show the existing situation along Hay Street which forms the southern edge of the study site. Essentially a paved forecourt, the area is visually cluttered with the Monorail and Light Rail systems side by side, and yet also a rather derelict space. The bustling and vibrant Paddys Market faces onto the Hay Street forecourt but with no active or visual activation within the external public domain.



View looking north east from the multi storey SEC car park toward Pier Street overpass with the Pumphouse and paved forecourt below. Source - HASSELL



View towards the multi storey SEC car park entry adjacent to Pier Street overpass. Source - HASSELL

Pier Street

These images show the existing situation around Pier Street which forms the northern edge of the study site. The Pumphouse (now a bar/ hotel) does not have a relationship with the surrounding public domain with only a private enclosed seating terrace to the front. The area is dominated by the overpass structure, the SEC service yard and the SEC car park building. This allows the surrounding paved public space little opportunity for active or passive amenity within the public domain. It is essentially a thoroughfare with very limited amenity.



View of The Pumphouse from Pier St overpass. Source - HASSELL