

Art Gallery  
Expansion Project  
Sydney Modern

Architectural  
Design Report

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# 01 Design Intent



## Concept

The Art Gallery of New South Wales sits along the ridge top of the Domain, adjacent to the Royal Botanic Garden, overlooking Woolloomooloo. The Gallery has gradually grown over the past century, making multiple extensions to accommodate their diversifying collection.

This report describes the Art Gallery of NSW Expansion Project - Sydney Modern, which is planned to open to the public at the end of 2021. The Sydney Modern Project will increase the amount of gallery and support spaces available to the Art Gallery of New South Wales, allowing for expanded capacity to show works which are currently held in storage as well as major international exhibitions. It will also provide spaces for creative learning and expanded programming opportunities. Adaptive re-use of an existing disused Fuel Bunker will create new opportunities for the display of contemporary art. This major expansion will bring the Gallery to a scale befitting Australia's largest city, and in alignment with galleries in Melbourne and Brisbane which compete nationally for major international exhibitions and for cultural tourists.

Presently, the European collection is housed in the 10m tall top-lit courts of the Vernon Wing, built between 1897 and 1909. Colonial and 19th-century Australian works are displayed on the ground level of the Captain Cook Wing (1972) with views to Woolloomooloo Bay. This wing also provides 2 levels of white cube galleries on LL1 and LL2, currently used for temporary exhibitions and the exhibition of contemporary collections, each with a ceiling height of about 3.6m. In the Bicentennial Wing (1988), which extends the Gallery to the East on multiple levels, a mixture of Asian, Modern, Contemporary, and Aboriginal art are housed over 3 floors of gallery spaces, each with a ceiling height of 3.6m. The most

recent addition to the existing Gallery is the Asian Wing (2003) on the ground level which is a naturally lit space with a ceiling height of 4.6m. While the numerous extensions provide varying spaces, the Gallery still faces a challenge of limited floor area and ceiling height to accommodate international exhibitions and their growing collection.

The Sydney Modern Project is planned to be an independent building to the north of the existing building. This complex site area includes a decommissioned Fuel Bunker at the lower level along Lincoln Crescent, a land bridge over the Eastern Distributor and a steep landscaped area across Art Gallery Road from the Woolloomooloo Gate of the Royal Botanic Garden. There is pedestrian traffic on site from every direction – from the stairs at the south end of Lincoln Crescent, the stairs at the base of the substation to Mrs Macquaries Road, Woolloomooloo Gate connecting to the Royal Botanic Garden, along the edge of The Domain, Hyde Park and St Mary's Cathedral, and the pedestrian bridge from the Woolloomooloo area. The new extension will maintain this access from all directions to connect the Gallery, the Royal Botanic Garden and the Domain, the city and the harbour.

The design concept for the Sydney Modern Project by SANAA, a Tokyo based architecture and design firm, was selected through an international design competition endorsed by the Australian Institute of Architects and Australian Institute of Landscape Architects. Through the two and a half year engagement post the competition, the selected design architect, SANAA, and appointed executive architect, Architectus, worked alongside the client, the Art Gallery of New South Wales, to develop the competition scheme and to prepare this architectural documentation.



Aerial View

Site Context

The Art Gallery of NSW is situated on the eastern edge of Central Sydney, connected to from the city proper by the large expanse of green space, including the Domain and Royal Botanic Garden. The proposed Gallery expansion will be sited to create a focal point for four key precincts – Woolloomooloo, Potts Point, Central Sydney and the Domain and Royal Botanic Garden. The Gallery forms part of Sydney’s “cultural ribbon” of arts and cultural establishments. The cultural ribbon is a concept of City of Sydney’s Sustainable Sydney 2030 Strategy for coordinating and connecting the cultural institutions in Central Sydney, The Rocks, Walsh Bay and Darling Harbour, including the Powerhouse Museum, National Maritime Museum, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney Theatre Company, Sydney Dance Company, Art Gallery of NSW, Australian Museum, Customs House, Opera House, Royal Botanic Garden and the State Library, all of which wrap around Sydney Harbour (image to right). The cultural ribbon is also a concept reflected in State Government policy in ‘A Plan for Growing Sydney’, and other publications.

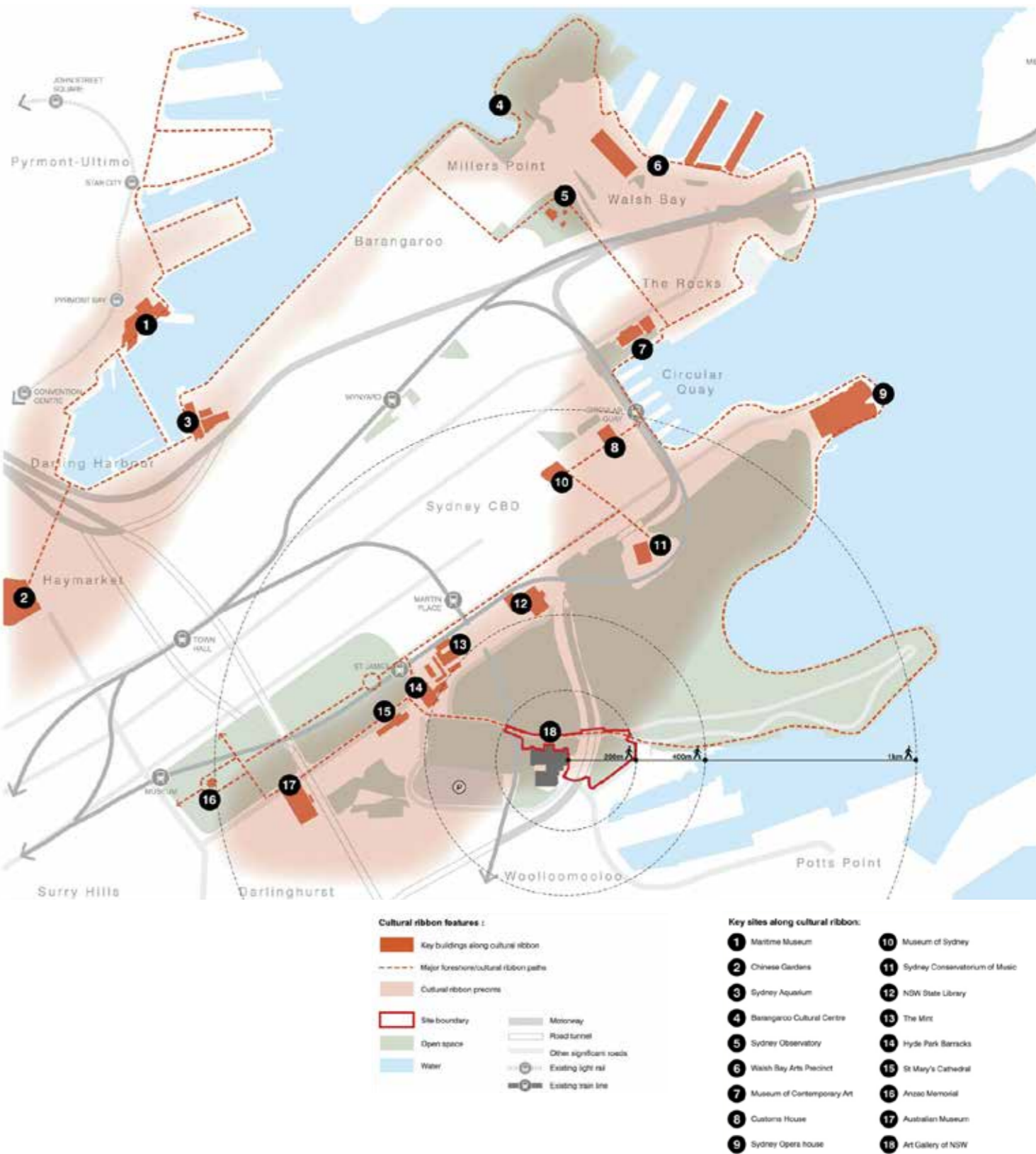
Sitting on the edge of Central Sydney, the Gallery provides an interface between the inner eastern suburbs of Woolloomooloo and Potts Point and Central Sydney. The eastern edge of Central Sydney is defined by its civic precinct (NSW Parliament House, State Library, Sydney Hospital and The Mint Museum) and the Domain and Royal Botanic Garden. The proposed expansion has therefore been designed to sit within this edge and interface context through a light touch approach to the built form and

architecture, which is contemporary and responsive to the site, and sensitively complementary to the historic grandeur of the existing building and more broadly the Domain and civic edge of Central Sydney.

The Gallery expansion is sited to maintain the green character of Central Sydney’s eastern edge, achieved through landscaped terraces and roofs, and building in response to the site’s topography. It is also designed to enhance the stature of the Gallery as a significant cultural institution of Sydney and Australia – achieved through the significant growth in exhibition and education space as well as by drawing greater activity in and around the Gallery by intergration of architecture, landscape and art within a cultural and civic precinct.

The Entry Plaza will become a primary hub and focal point of activity, providing opportunity for Gallery visitors and the broader public to utilise this space and appreciate the Gallery and its surroundings as a whole. Paths along Art Gallery Road, from Woolloomooloo and Potts Point, and from Central Sydney via the Domain, will provide direct linkages to the Entry Plaza. The existing through-site link will also be maintained and integrated with the new Entry Plaza.

A number of accessible roof terraces will provide a sense of place for visitors, allowing a broader appreciation of its context on the edge of Central Sydney, sitting above the Woolloomooloo and Potts Point neighbourhoods and providing a visual connection to Sydney’s natural and urban context.



## Site Context

### 1. Cahill Expressway / Eastern Distributor

The expressway that runs below the site of the Sydney Modern Project was built in two stages. The original Cahill Expressway was built from 1955 to 1958 as a CBD bypass for traffic from the bridge to East Sydney. The above-ground portion of the expressway formed a barrier between the Domain and Royal Botanic Garden that remains today. Art Gallery Road continued as a narrow road bridge connection over the Cahill Expressway to Mrs Macquaries Point.

The Eastern Distributor project from 1996 to 1999 extended the expressway via tunnels under Darlinghurst to connect with the airport freeway. The land bridge was built as part of the Eastern Distributor project, extending the road bridge on both sides with a landscaped concrete deck. This created a cover for the structure of roadworks that formed the junction of the two road systems, in order to provide a green apron for the Gallery.

The expressway has high traffic levels and despite the relief provided by the land bridge, is visually prominent both day and night.

### 2. The Domain

The Domain is a park opened to the public in the 1830s. It is an open space that is open to the public 24 hours and comprises a mixture of playing fields, green spaces for use of festivals, concerts, sports, etc.

### 3. Royal Botanic Garden

The Royal Botanic Garden which extends to the north west of the site is one of the earliest European landscapes and oldest botanic gardens in Australia. It is a major tourist attraction in the immediate precinct and is open after dawn and closes by dusk.

### 4. Woolloomooloo

Woolloomooloo is a mixed residential area and home to the local Indigenous community. Adjacent to the residential area is Woolloomooloo Bay and the Woolloomooloo Finger Wharf which was originally built between 1910-1916, and renovated for residential commercial and hotel use in the 1990s.

### 5. The Domain car park

Located beneath the Domain, this car park structure was originally built in the 1970's to service the Opera House. It now serves the local Domain precinct, including the Gallery. A pedestrian access point with stairs and a lift is located to the south of the existing Gallery. Playing fields are situated over the car-park.

### 6. Art Gallery Road

A road to the west of the existing Gallery and the site for Sydney Modern Project. This road leads vehicle and pedestrian traffic from Hyde Park to Mrs. Macquaries Chair.

### 7. Land Bridge

The land bridge was built in the late 1990s to the north of the existing Gallery. It provides a landscape connection to the Domain. The land bridge follows the general slope of the land around the existing Gallery building.

### 8. Disused Fuel Bunker

The Fuel Bunker was constructed in the 1940s to supply heavy fuel oil for naval ships. Decommissioned in 1984, the Bunker was emptied in 1992. The Fuel Bunker is constructed of concrete with pre-cast concrete columns in a regular 4m grid, set into the sandstone excavation. A central wall divides the structure into a northern and southern bunker. A massive stepped concrete retaining wall forming the eastern edge of the Bunker is visible on Lincoln Crescent.

### 9. Pedestrian Bridge

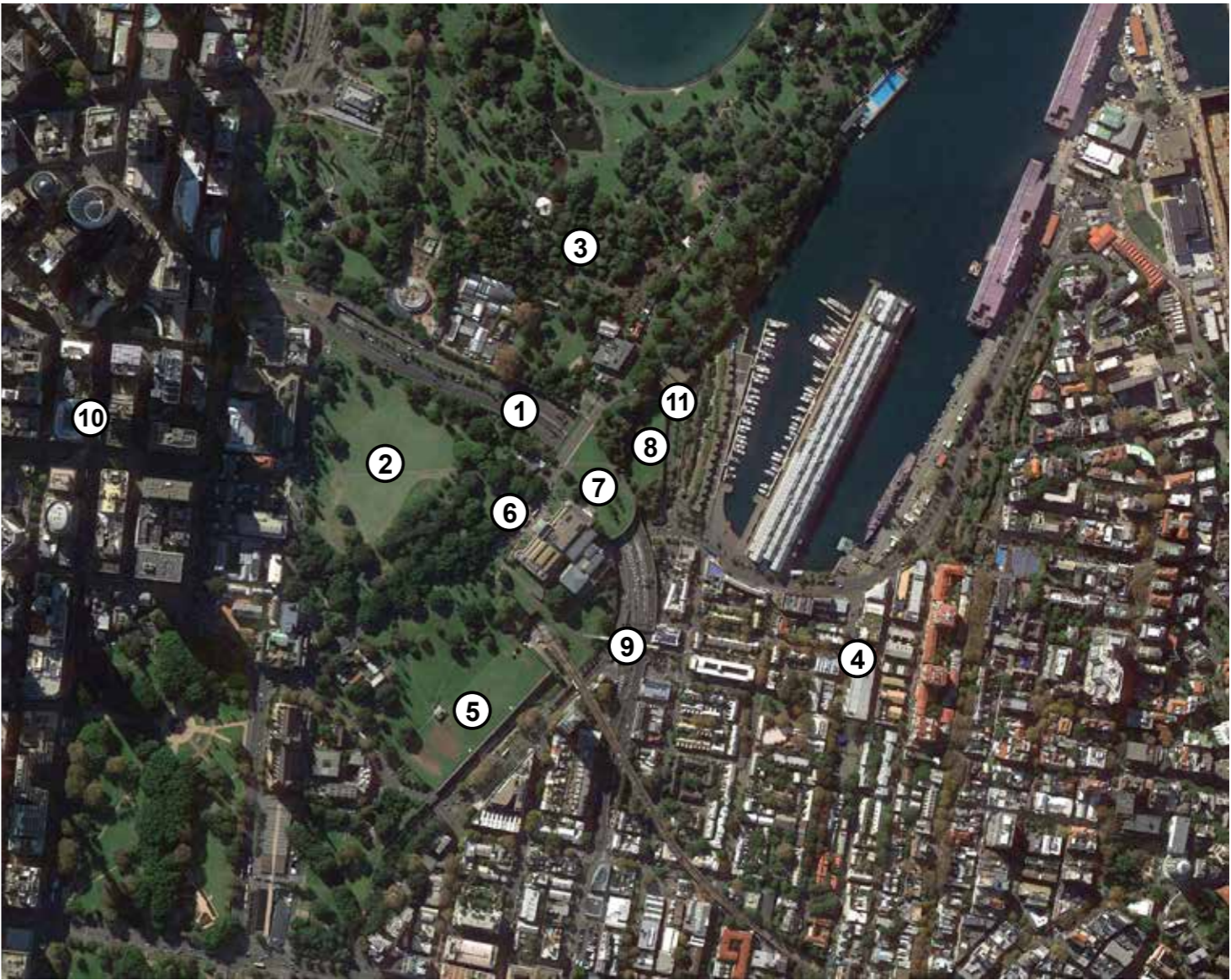
An existing structure the pedestrian bridge straddles the Eastern Distributor to the south of the existing Gallery building. This bridge brings many visitors from the residential area of Woolloomooloo through the site to the CBD.

### 10. Central Business District

The Central Business District is bustling with activity throughout the day. Pedestrians cross the Sydney Modern site from the residential area to the east to access the CBD daily.

### 11.Pump Room and Substation on Lincoln Crescent

South of the large substation building on Lincoln Crescent are two smaller buildings within the site boundary. The southern building just north of the stepped facade of the Fuel Bunker is a substation. Adjacent to it is a pump station. Both buildings will be demolished to create more landscape opportunities. The existing staircase will be renovated to allow for a more verdant passage experience to Mrs Macquaries Road.



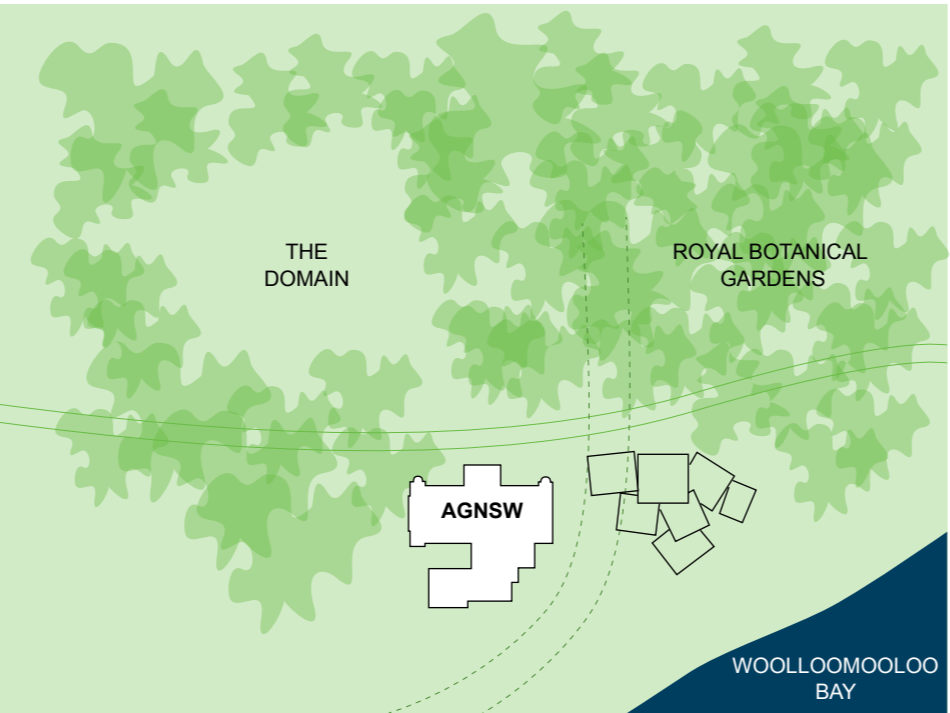
# Concept

Located between the Domain, Royal Botanic Garden, and Woolloomooloo Bay, the Art Gallery of New South Wales is surrounded by a rich natural setting and the Sydney Modern Project is to be integrated in this existing landscape. An important concept is to mix the landscape with the built form to blur the boundary between the natural and the built.

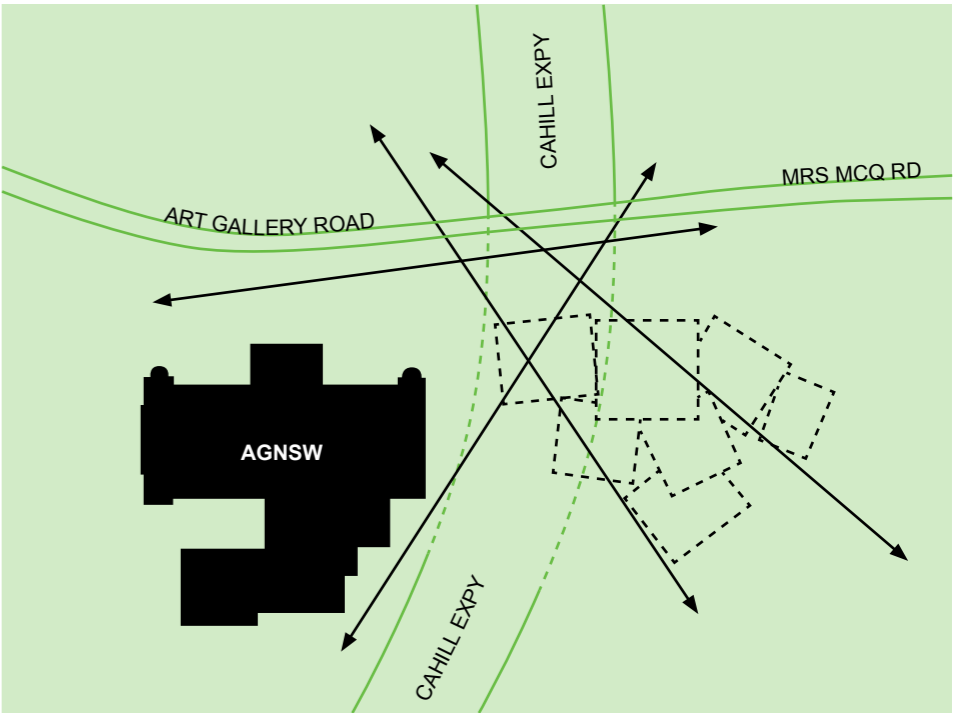
Looking closer, the proposed site for the Sydney Modern Project is a major crossroad for pedestrians. Pedestrians access the site from Lincoln Crescent, the existing pedestrian bridge, the Domain, and the Royal Botanic Garden to cross over the site to their destinations.

The proposal for the Sydney Modern Project places a series of pavilions on the existing topography in a compact manner to allow each pavilion to be surrounded by landscape. Between the Domain, the Royal Botanic Garden, and the Gallery is the Entry Plaza, which is an open weather protected area for the public accessible at all times, day and night.

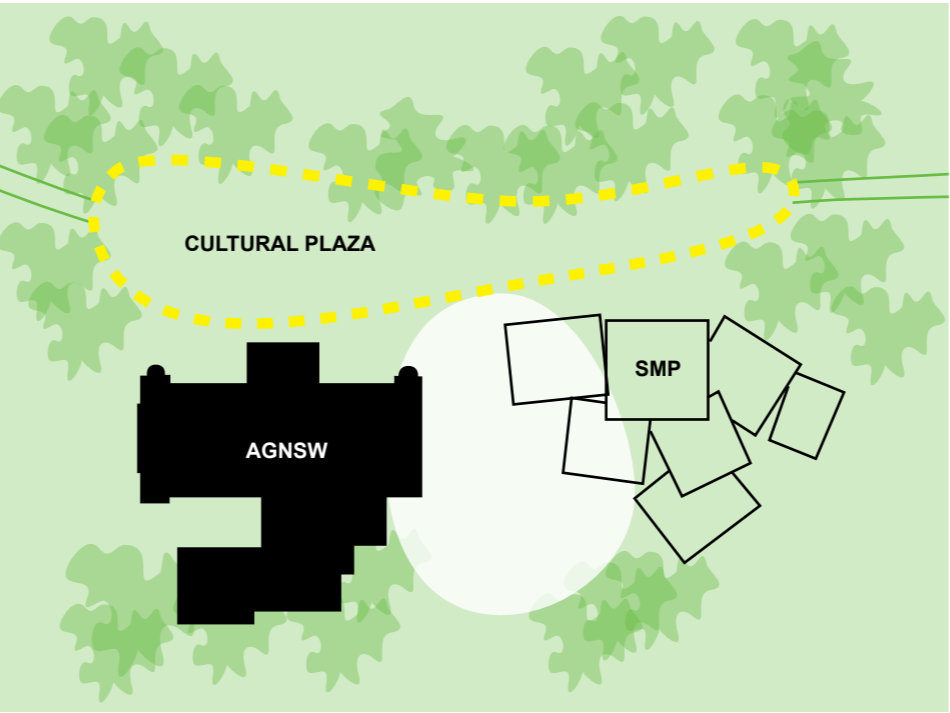
The Entry Plaza is sited between the entrance to the existing building and the new building. This space is placed in the centre of many pedestrian paths and will become an active space into which many activities will spill into from different directions. It is also a space which will be a central point for the improved access from the surrounding neighbourhoods.



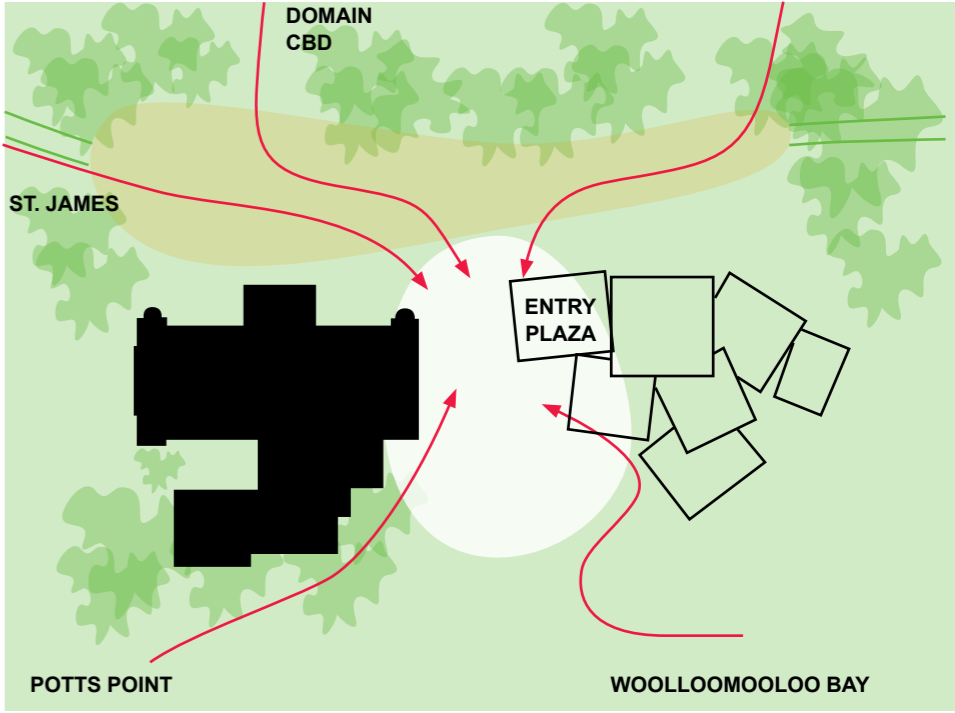
Site and Context



Pedestrian Access



Cultural Plaza



Entry Plaza

Concept

The program is divided into a series of low pavilions so that the buildings appear more integrated with the site. Each pavilion is oriented in a direction responding to the landscape and towards specific views and they step down to follow the topography to preserve as much as possible the memory of the landscape.

Paths and terraces, naturally created from the shifts and shape of the site, activate much of the outdoor spaces to display art work or for visitors to rest.

Most pavilions have a window towards special views and the public foyer is visually connected, and sometimes also accessible to the exterior terraces or landscape. These visual and sometimes physical connections to the landscape affords new opportunities to display art with direct connection to the Sydney context.

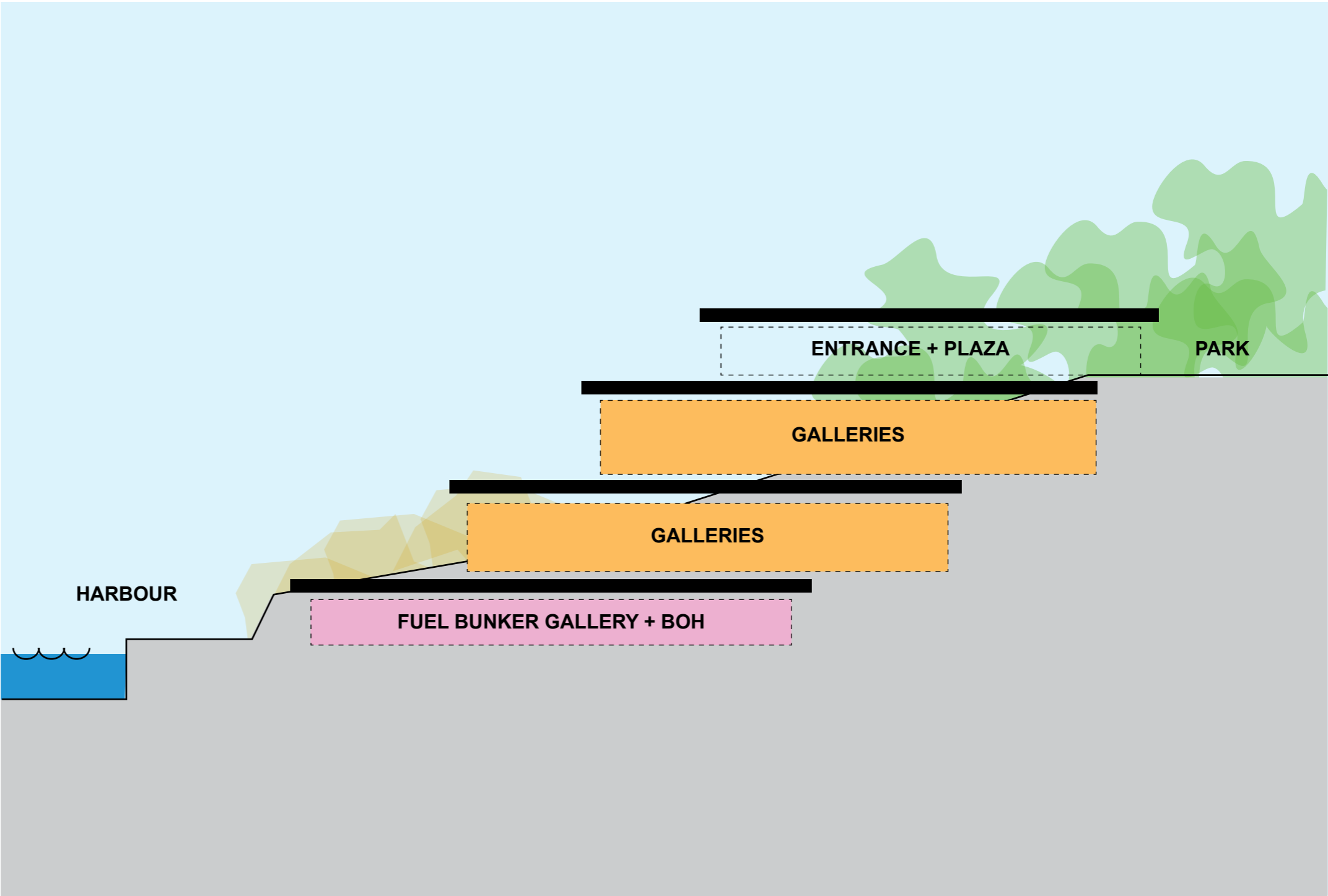
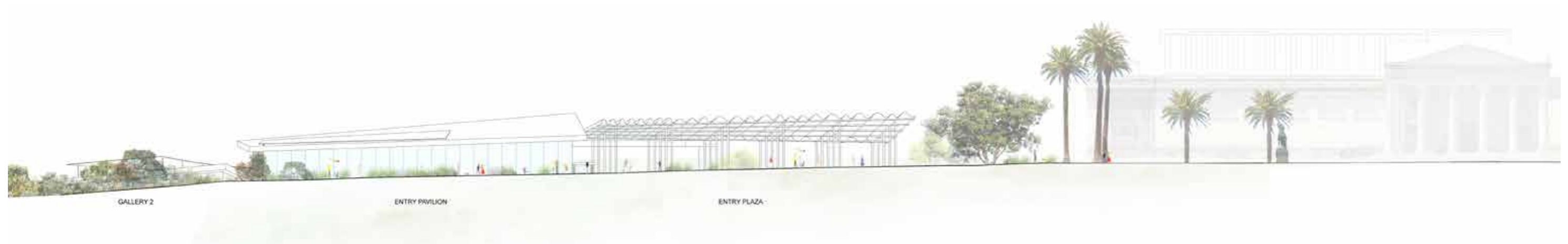


Diagram from Competition Stage

## Relationship to the Existing Building

The new building is a low profile building to compliment the existing building. The Entry Plaza and canopy is visible but is setback to allow unobstructed views towards the historical Vernon facade of the existing building. The new canopy is also lower than the highest cornice of the Vernon facade and each pavilion steps down towards the east and north to follow the existing topography.

The material of the new building does not mimic the material of the existing building but is meant to complement it. As the pavilions are low lying, the roof structures will be visible from different vantage points and careful consideration has gone into their detailed design, selection of materials, and finishes. The main materials used in the Sydney Modern Project will be concrete with a warm tone, stone, glass and aluminium to softly reflect the surroundings.



Elevation

## 02 Design Principles

Access and Approach

1. Through Site Link

There are three major links which run through the site connecting the lower Woolloomooloo area to the Domain and the Royal Botanic Garden. (Refer to site plan on right)

The major connection is through the centre of the site which begins where the existing steps are provided along the land bridge structure. Visitors are guided through a native plant grove leading them up to the Entry Plaza. The eastern stairs that exist on site will be retained which will bring visitors up to the land bridge level from the Fuel Bunker roof - now LL2 of the new gallery. Along the path are resting spaces and opportunities for the Gallery to display artwork in the landscape. This area will be lit at night to ensure safety. (Refer to the through site link image on right)

There are two minor connections to the north of the site, along the existing substation, and another to the north of the existing Gallery building. The stairs running adjacent to the substation is a direct path from Lincoln Crescent to Mrs Macquaries Road. The path to the north of the existing Gallery building brings people from the pedestrian bridge over the Eastern Distributor to the Entry Plaza, activating this space.

2. Entry Plaza

The Entry Plaza is a gently sloped space placed between the entrance of the new building and the existing building. It also opens up to the remainder of the landscaping over the land bridge. It serves as not only the main entrance for the new building but also a shared space connecting surrounding neighbours - Royal Botanic Garden, CBD, the Domain, Woolloomooloo, and Potts Point. It is a large open space in which many activities can simultaneously occur. We envision a space where visitors and school groups can gather casually to relax, meet new people and prepare for their visit to the Gallery.

This open plaza is covered by a shading structure to protect visitors from the Sydney climate. The roof softly reflects the surroundings and changes its expression with the weather and the activity happening around.

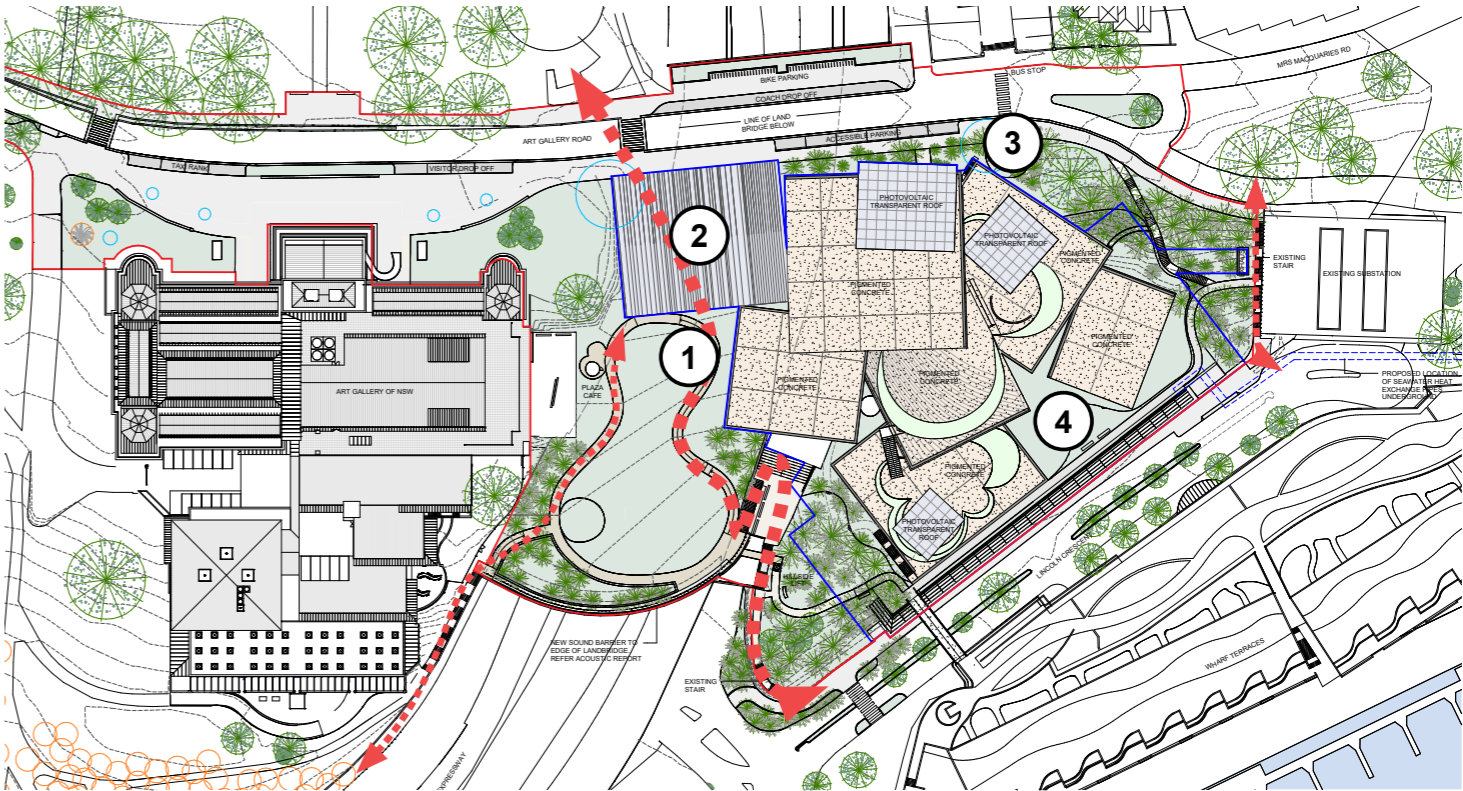
It is envisaged the Entry Plaza will be a place where many activities happen simultaneously. On a daily basis, school groups prepare for their visit here. Both visitors and passers-by are able to rest under the canopy. The Gallery can also place art installations in this space.

3. Royal Botanic Garden Plaza

Across the street from the Woolloomooloo Gate is the new Royal Botanic Garden Plaza. This Plaza gives a place for visitors to pause to enjoy the view before continuing their trip through the precinct when they arrive from the Royal Botanic Garden.

4. Path & Terraces

A path encircles the landscape. This path crosses over different levels of the site - over the land bridge above the Fuel Bunker, and along the north side of the site.



Main Through Site Link



Through Site Link to Entry Canopy

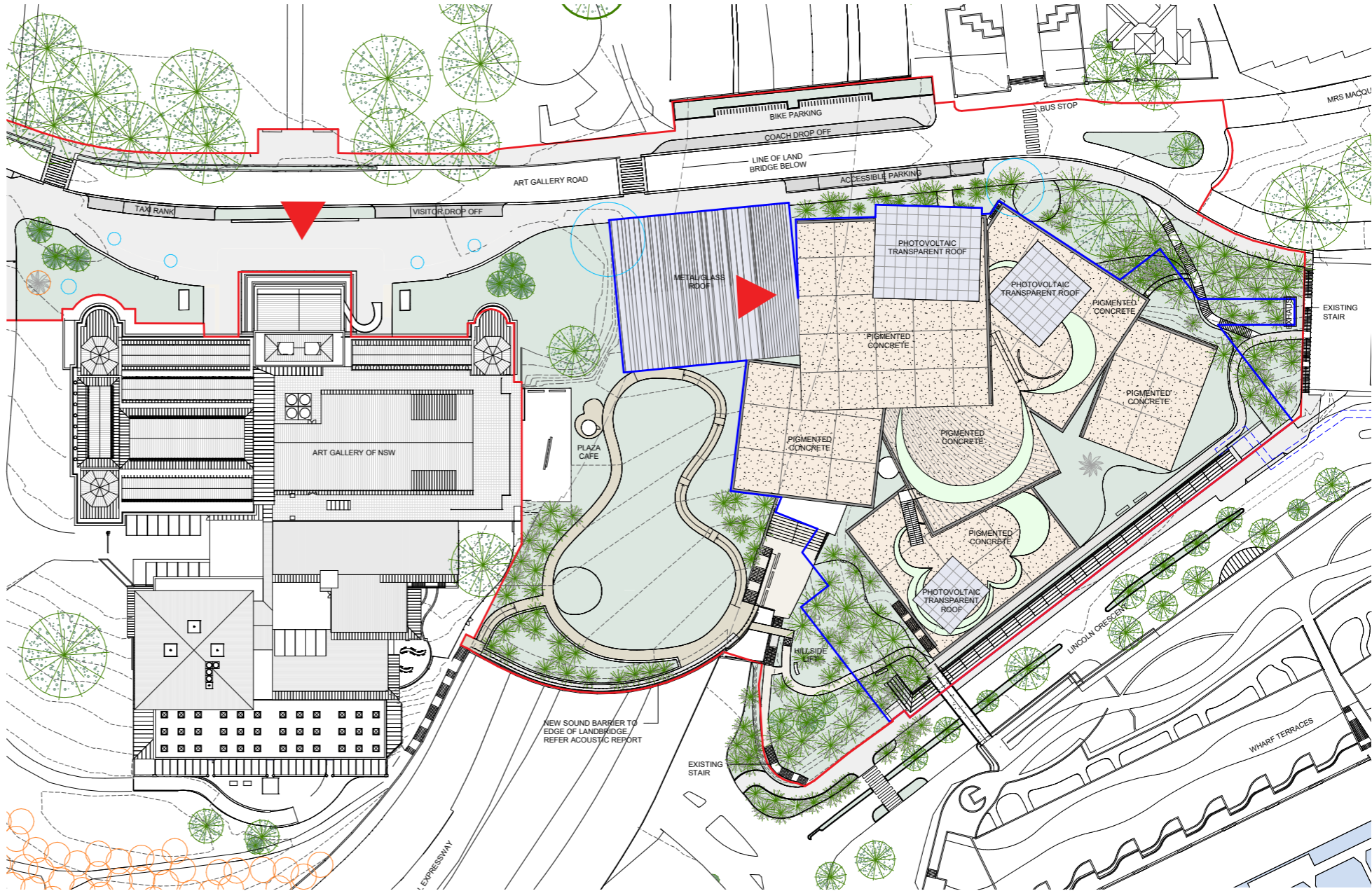
# Entry Points

## Ground Level

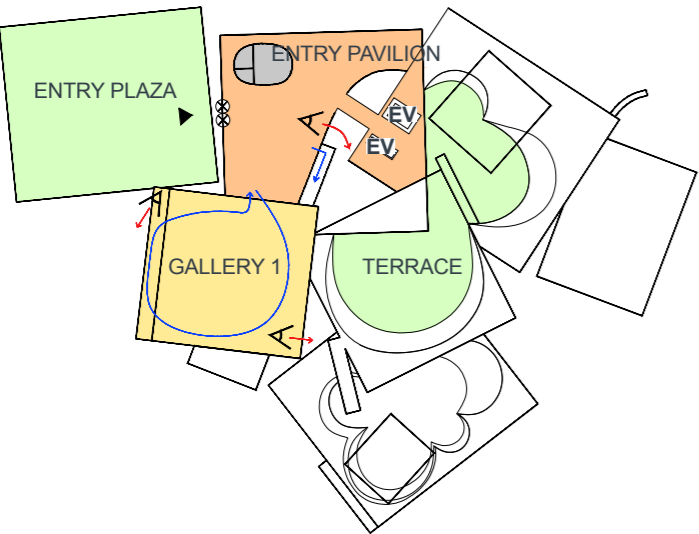
The historical entrance on the Vernon facade remains and a new entrance for the Sydney Modern Project is created, accessible from the Entry Plaza. These two entrances will be the only public entrances.

## Entry Foyer

From the Entry Plaza, visitors enter into the Entry Pavilion. This is a formal entrance which provides cloak, tickets, and information. Visitors are greeted by a tall transparent space with views towards the harbour and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander gallery. Moving a few steps into the space, visitors can view into the atrium which connects all levels above the Fuel Bunker.



# Circulation



The main circulation path takes visitors through the new building with views leading to the landscape or their next destination.

## Entry Level

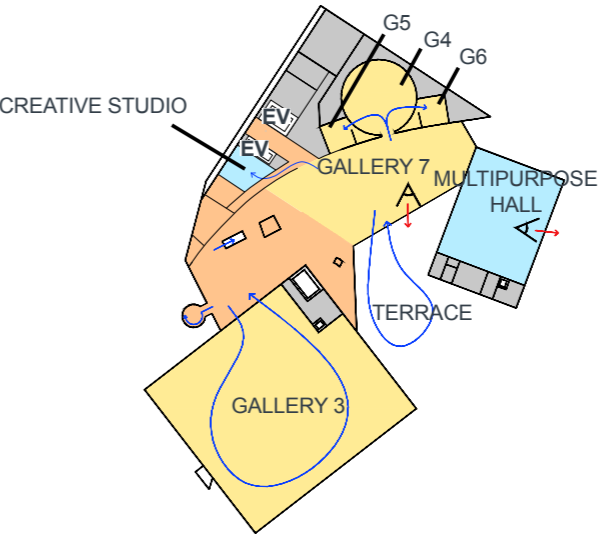
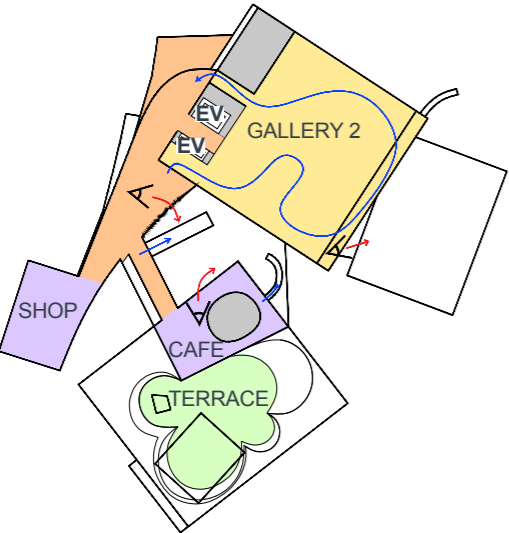
From the Entry Pavilion, visitors are led down the foyer via escalators or lift. They will be able to see out towards the landscape as they descend through this space.

The galleries are spread on all levels with the first gallery, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Gallery, connected to the Entry Pavilion.

Across the lift lobby are outdoor terraces, only accessible through the Gallery.

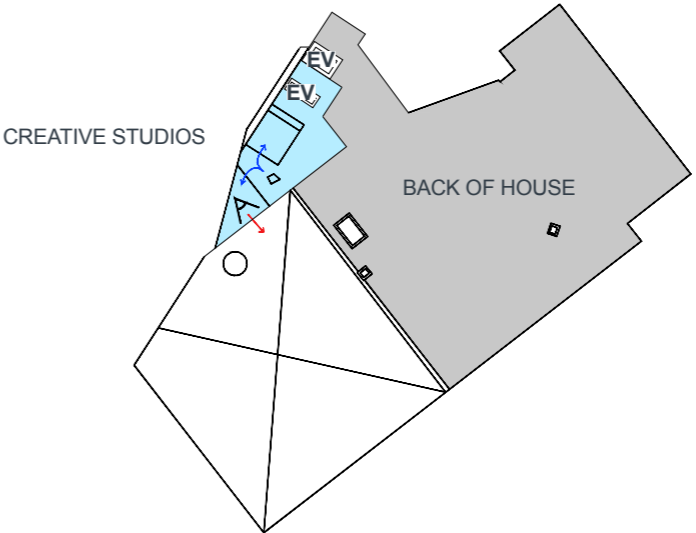
## Lower Level 1

On LL1 there is a spacious landing foyer where groups can gather before and after their visit to the Gallery on this level. Across this foyer is a cafe for 150 guests internally and 100 seats externally on a terrace. On the eastern end is a shop - a glass enclosed space that is visible from the public circulation path, especially on the exit route.



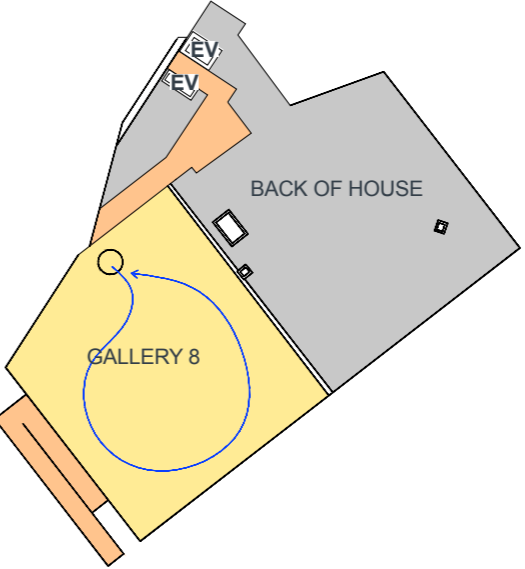
## Lower Level 2

Four galleries are located on this floor - a large temporary exhibition gallery, special purpose galleries, and an open gallery which is directly connected to the foyer. From Gallery 7, visitors can step out to the garden which may exhibit sculpture. At one end of the foyer is a multi-purpose hall. The multi-purpose hall is a glass enclosed space where a variety of creative programming can take place surrounded in landscape. For lecture type events, the space can be closed off with curtains to control the lighting. During the day, it will be open to allow for Gallery visitors to enjoy the space. A creative 'black box' studio is also located on this floor.






## Lower Level 3

Creative Studios are planned on LL3. The space is visually connected to the Fuel Bunker Gallery at LL4, and accessed by a dedicated staircase from LL2. They will be new facilities for learning.

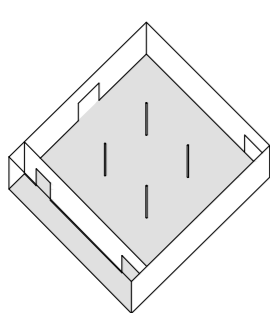


## Lower Level 4

The Fuel Bunker gallery is accessible via a spiral staircase on LL2. Minimal intervention is planned here to maintain the raw characteristic, making a very unique exhibition space.

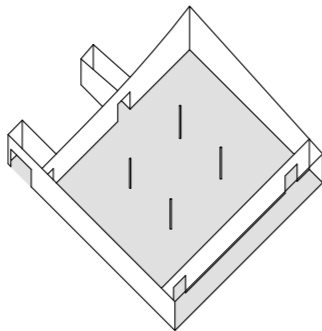
Direction of View   
Circulation Path   
Public Lifts 

Current Scheme - Galleries + Creative Studios



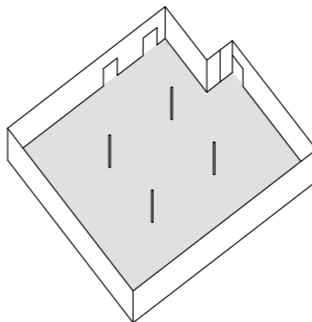
Gallery 1 - Entry Level

Gallery 1 is located on the Entry Level and is the first gallery along the visitor path. It will exhibit the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art and is 33m x 30m and 5.5m ceiling height. This gallery is planned to accommodate temporary walls to provide maximum flexibility for various exhibitions. A smaller glazed gallery connected to the south is a space that can be used for art and learning, and affords views towards the existing building and new landscaping on the land bridge. An opening on the north wall provides views towards the harbour.



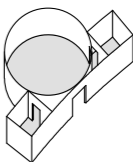
Gallery 2 - LL1

Gallery 2 is located one level below the Entry Level. This gallery is 33m x 36m with a ceiling height which sweeps from 5m to 7.5m in height. This gallery is also planned to accommodate temporary walls to provide maximum flexibility for various exhibitions. The smaller glazed gallery on the east looks towards Woolloomooloo Bay and Potts Point. This space can also be used as space for art and learning.



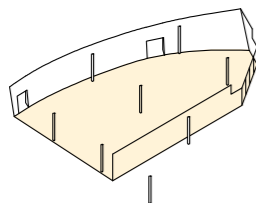
Gallery 3 - LL2

Gallery 3 is the largest of the new gallery spaces with about 1400m<sup>2</sup> (40m x 36m) of open space and a ceiling height of 5.5m. It will accommodate major temporary exhibitions. This gallery space has a direct connection to the large art-lift and is accessible from the generous foyer, where pop up shops and information related to the exhibition program can be set up.



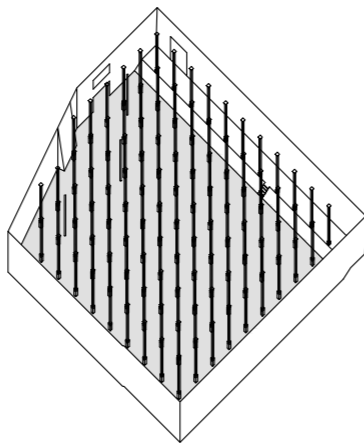
Gallery 4, 5, 6 - LL2

Gallery 4 is a circular gallery 15m in diameter with direct connections to Gallery 5 (5.7m x 5.5m) and 6 (5.7m x 5.5m). These galleries are smaller in scale and their special geometry encourages specific commissions, or smaller works by emerging artists. These three galleries are equipped with media equipment, such as back projection, and speakers to also allow video installation art. All spaces are 4.6m in height.



Gallery 7 - LL2

Gallery 7 is an informal gallery space of 16m x 35m with a ceiling height of 4.6m, that is directly connected to the main foyer. This space is envisioned to be for the display of sculptures to maintain transparency towards the exterior courtyard. The exhibitions can also extend into this courtyard.



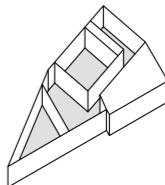
Gallery 8 - LL4

Gallery 8 is the re-purposed southern tank of the Fuel Bunker. The aim is to maintain the impressive proportions and raw characteristics of the space. Approximately 2000m<sup>2</sup> with 6.7m ceiling height, the space will be equipped to support a variety of exhibitions in different mediums, including sound and light. The gallery is accessed via the main elevator core, staircase from the LL2 level.



Creative Studio Black-box - LL2

This 4.6m tall, 5.5m x 9m black box is a dedicated studio environment enabling experimentation and engagement with the experience of creative art using new media technology. It is accessible to visitors and is an important part of the educational strategy of the Gallery.



Creative Studio - LL3

The Creative Studio is a 260m<sup>2</sup> space directly accessible from the LL2 foyer. It can be divided into two separate studios used for creative learning and provide a place for artist-led learning experiments. The spaces are located next to Gallery 8 and can be visually connected through the opening in the wall. The studios are serviced by the main elevator cores which are located directly adjacent to it.



New Building from Woolloomooloo Bay



View Terrace Looking Towards the Harbour



View Terrace Looking Towards Woolloomooloo



Aerial View

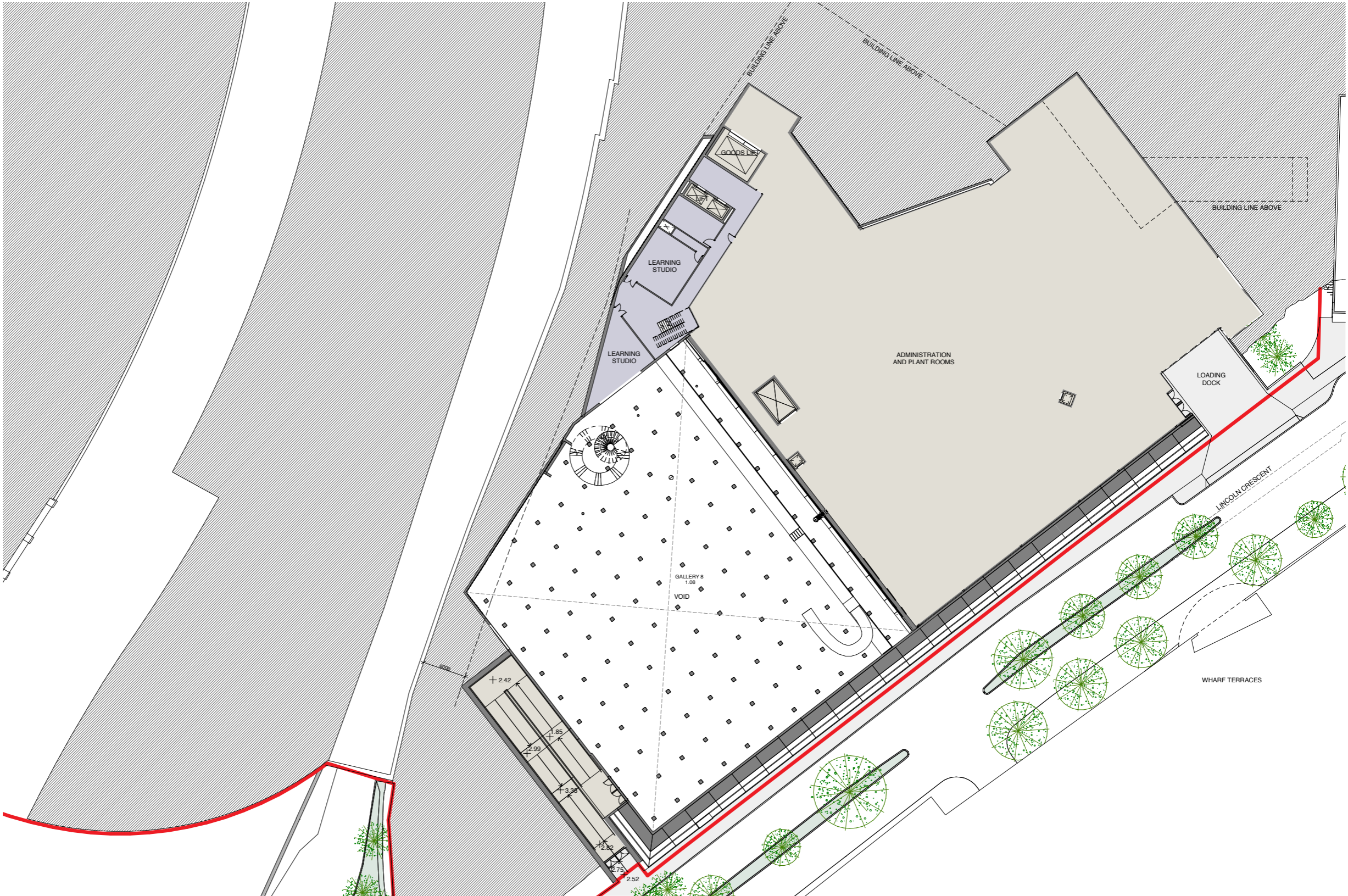


New Building from Lincoln Crescent

Proposed Scheme - Back of House

The north Fuel Bunker will be retrofitted to accommodate the new administrative and service programs.

One service access into this area from Lincoln Crescent is planned.



Proposed Scheme - Exterior Finish

There are 4 main materials and finishes: concrete, stone, glass, and aluminium.

Roofs

The accessible roof terraces have roof gardens. The gardens are planted with low native plants and flowers to connect the visitors to the landscape. The hard-scape is made of a cement mixture of a slightly warm colour tone. Non accessible roofs are paved with this material for continuity.

The Entry Plaza canopy is made of glass and slender anodised aluminium panels formed into tight waves in a random rhythm. The canopy provides shade and protection from rain.

In addition to the main roofs, three additional canopy structures of glass sheets are integrated with PV cells. Two of these roofs are located on the accessible roofs and provide shade for the visitors.

Exterior Walls

All exterior walls are made of either glass or concrete. All gallery volumes are clad in bespoke concrete panels which softly reflect the surrounding landscape and colours.

All foyer and informal gallery spaces are enclosed in clear glass.



Garden Surrounded Cafe Terrace



Cement Mixture of Warm Tone



Exterior Walls - Concrete



Exterior Wall - Glass

## Proposed Scheme - Interior Finish

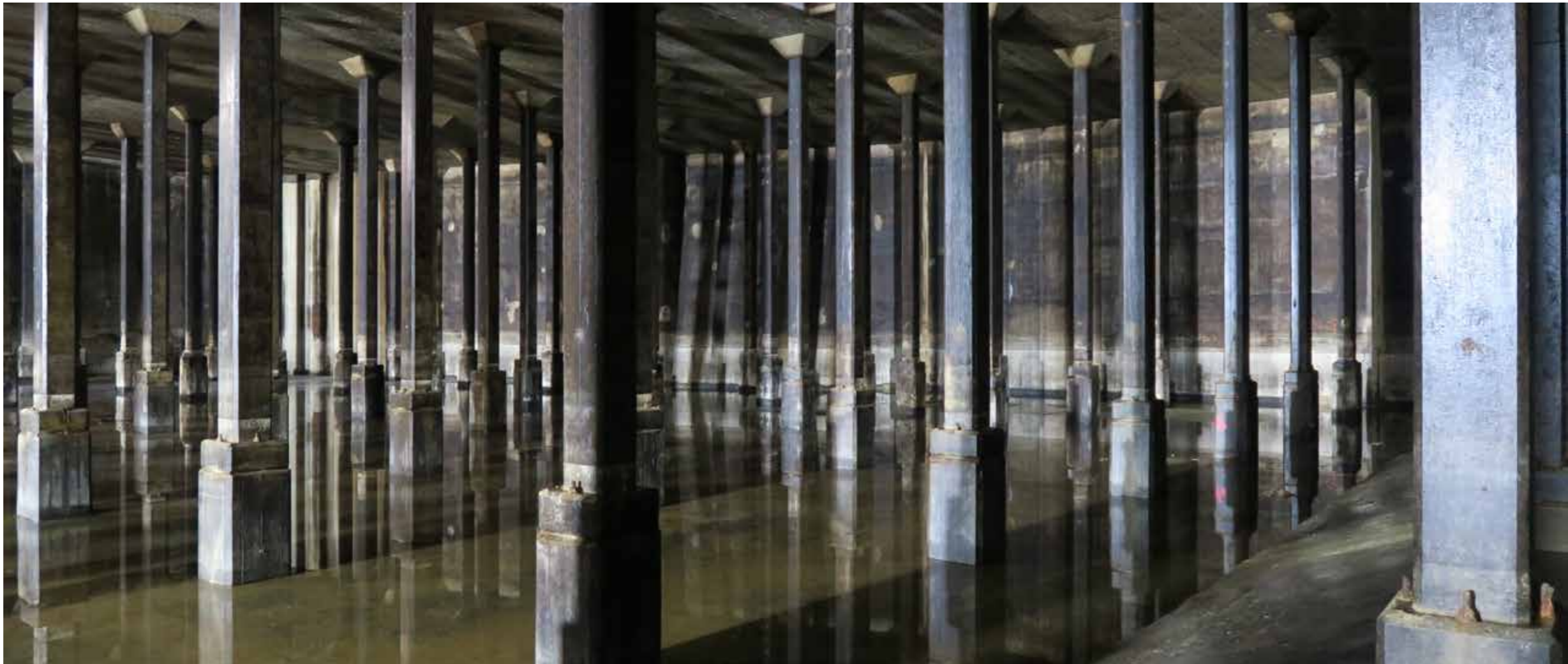
The floor finish is concrete, which will be used from the Entry Pavilion through to the gallery spaces.

### Entry Level, LL1 and LL2

The interior of gallery rooms and most public space are reinforced plasterboard in neutral tones (changed according to exhibitions) to support artworks. The ceiling is porous metal with integrated lighting, technical equipment, and art hooks. The walls of the gallery facing interior public areas are identical with the exterior finish for continuity.

The sweeping curved wall on LL2 will be clad with a natural material, such as stone, as it represents the conceptual cut in the landscape.

Minimal intervention is made in the Fuel Bunker. The walls, ceilings, and columns will be left as is. The team is studying ways to preserve the floor, or to recreate new floor with concrete in similar tone as the existing.



Fuel Bunker Finishes to be Preserved as much as possible



Floor - Concrete



Wall - Plasterboard



Ceiling - Porous Metal

## Way-Finding

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The gallery volumes are not stacked but placed organically to create a three storey void connecting the Entry Pavilion level to the Foyer on LL2. This atrium space, and views towards the exterior are used as way-finding tools. All public programs can be accessed from the tall atrium and large foyer on LL2.

Signage and pictograms will be placed throughout the proposed design to guide visitors to their destinations.

03 SEARS

Introduction

The Secretary’s Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) were provided on 13 October 2015 for the Sydney Modern Project with subsequent amendments. In this section of the Architectural Statement, the following items in the SEARs will be addressed:

- Outline the design process leading to the proposal and justify the suitability of the site for the proposed expansion of the Gallery, including alternatives considered.
- Outline and address any comments provided by the design selection panel.
- Demonstrate design excellence with specific consideration to the site's landscape/ horticultural character and heritage, its layout, setbacks, architectural design, materials, articulation and detailing, amenity, views and vistas, open spaces and public domain, connectivity and street activation.
- Address the height, bulk and scale of the proposed development within the context of the locality and its surrounds.

3.1 Process

2 Stage Competition

The 2 Stage Competition for the Sydney Modern Project was launched in October 2014. Upon the evaluation by a 7 person Jury Panel, SANAA was selected as the design architect for the Sydney Modern Project.

Initial Engagement Phase

Since the appointment as the Design Architect, SANAA and the Client, the Art Gallery of New South Wales, have worked collaboratively to develop the proposed design during the Initial Engagement Phase. The Initial Engagement Phase began in May 2015 and was finalized in June 2016.

Simultaneously, a local Sydney-based Architectural firm, Architectus, was appointed as the Executive Architect and for Urban Planning services. A team of consultants was also appointed during this phase to support the Architects.

Schematic Design Phase

Subsequent to confirmation of NSW government funding, the Architects and Client reviewed the Design Brief for the project. As a result some programs were defined to remain or to be added to the existing building, reducing the overall size of the new building. At a few bench-mark points during the Schematic Design Phase, cost estimates were made to understand the cost impact of the building as well.

Through the process, the Architects engaged the consultants to make sure the building is compliant to local Australian building codes and regulations.

The Architects and Client team engaged with key stakeholders to understand the impact of the project on the public domain.

3.2 Comments Provided by the Design Selection Panel

The Competition Jury commented on SANAA's Stage 2 entry,

“The scheme responds to the beauty of the competition site through a series of pavilions that reach out to the Domain and the Royal Botanic Gardens as they cascade down to Sydney Harbour and Woolloomooloo. The low profile of the pavilions complements and preserves both the integrity and importance of the existing Gallery building and creates spaces to bring people together and foster a sense of community, imagination and openness.

Its lightness of form speaks to the new century while respecting the architecture of the previous centuries to create a harmonious and inspiring new public space for Sydney. The scheme is futurist in its thinking about art museums and the visitor experience, and will be transformative for the Gallery. The scheme elegantly places Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art at its heart.

This is a 21st-century concept that has the full potential when developed to be an environmentally sensitive art museum. The scheme starts to deconstruct the classical art museum and offers opportunity for further development of new types of spaces for the display of a variety of art forms, both existing and new.

The design offers what the architects describe as ‘a clean palette’ for displaying art and staging cultural events. The scheme will invite artists to experiment and provide a curatorial challenge for the Gallery which would be profoundly invigorating for an institution transforming itself into a 21st-century art museum.”

The Competition Jury selected unanimously that SANAA be recommended to the SMS Committee as the preferred architect for the Sydney Modern Project.

3.3 Massing within the Context

As mentioned previously, the concept of the Sydney Modern is to make a series of pavilion-like buildings which terrace with the landscape. The intent is to keep the building low and integrated into the terrain. As a result, the building does not obstruct the tree-line of the Domain when viewed from the east and appears light and transparent when viewed from the parkland to the west.

The new building is not directly connected to the existing building. The landscape over the land bridge structure sits in between the two and becomes a very important element to connect the two galleries. Both of the galleries look over this landscape and reference each other.

3.4 Design Excellence

| Landscape and Horticulture  | Heritage  | Massing   | Materials   | Views  | Open Space and Public Domain   |
|---|---|---|---|--|--|
| <p>The competition proposal for the Sydney Modern Project was to introduce a gallery which is immersed in the landscape. The visitor experience begins once in the precinct of the Gallery which is surrounded by a distinct Sydney landscape. It was always important to maintain this scenery and the landscape that currently exists on site.</p> <p>The proposal for the Sydney Modern Project aims to maintain the local horticulture. The planting for the northern and southern side of the site differs according to the concept of the space, the southern side responding to the Royal Botanic Garden and the northern side responding to the native Australian bush land.</p> <p>The proposed rooftop landscape is designed to improve the ecology of the landscape itself and its surroundings.</p> | <p>The site for the Sydney Modern Project extension is surrounded by heritage elements such as the Royal Botanic Garden, Woolloomooloo Gate, the decommissioned Fuel Bunker, and the existing Art Gallery of New South Wales. Each element in the immediate surrounding of the site was carefully studied and considered while planning the new extension.</p> <p>For example, the height of the new building is kept low below the cornice line of the existing Gallery and a plaza placed in front of the Woolloomooloo Gate for visitors approaching the site from the Royal Botanic Garden.</p> <p>Where possible, large significant trees within the site will remain untouched, and several smaller trees will be transplanted within the site area in order to preserve them. In general, only minor trees and bushes of recent age will be removed, with new plantings to outweigh the numbers removed.</p> | <p>The concept of the Sydney Modern Project extension is to make a series of pavilion-like buildings which terrace with the landscape. The intent is to keep the building low and integrated into the landscape. As a result, the building does not obstruct the tree-line of The Domain when viewed from the East and appears light and transparent when viewed from the parkland.</p> | <p>Building materials were investigated and studied with local consultants.</p> <p>There are generally 3 types of roofs. The Entry Plaza canopy which is made of porous metal material and solid glass elements which softly reflects the surrounding environment. Three secondary glass roofs are located above the volumes to support PV cells. The other building roofs are finished with a mixture of native plants and hard-scape.</p> <p>There are two types of façades. Transparent glass wraps around the public areas and opaque polished concrete panels wraps the gallery volumes.</p> | <p>The Gallery visitors will enjoy views to the harbour and the parkland from many different levels as the site is on different levels. The proposal of the new extension provides places for visitors to rest and enjoy these views from the terraces. Along the main through-site link in the centre of the site, there are areas where visitors can rest.</p> <p>There are 3 levels above the decommissioned Fuel Bunker in the new extension. From each of the levels, there are views outside for the visitors to orient themselves. For example, in the two upper level galleries, there is a glass enclosed verandah space. In this space, visitors are able to view art in the context of the landscape of Sydney.</p> | <p>Each pavilion of the new extension is organised to create several different types of open spaces. The major open space is the Entry Plaza between the new and existing building. This plaza is accessible at all times. The majority of the land bridge will be kept open for public use.</p> <p>The existing entrance will remain on the Vernon building. A new entrance will be accessible from the Entry Plaza. This will activate the outdoor spaces in between the existing and the new buildings, further connecting the gallery to the Domain, the Royal Botanic Garden, and the neighbouring precincts.</p> |



# 04 Sydney LEP - Design Excellence

## Introduction

This section responds to the items under section Section 6.21 (4) (d) Design Excellence of Sydney Local Environmental Plan. The objective is to deliver the highest standard of architectural design.

## 4.1 Architectural Design

The Art Gallery of New South Wales is a Gallery to serve the public. The architectural design of the Sydney Modern Project extension hopes to fulfil this vision and purpose of the Gallery by providing ample public space that is accessible for both Gallery visitors and people passing by. The building mass is kept as minimal as possible while still serving the Gallery's requirements. Building materials are carefully selected to blend the building into its surroundings and the context of Sydney. For more detail please refer to the Design Principles section of this report.

## 4.2 Improvement of Public Domain

Situated in a focal point of four key precincts - Woolloomooloo, Potts Point, Central Sydney and the Domain and Botanic Garden - the Sydney Modern Project extension for the Art Gallery of New South Wales is ideally located to connect the different precincts. The proposal for the new extension is a plan to maintain the through-site links that are currently available to the public and enhance these connections.

The majority of the site is currently occupied by man-made structures as the decommissioned Fuel Bunker along Lincoln Crescent Road and the land bridge adjacent to the Art Gallery and Art Gallery Road. The current space above the Fuel Bunker is accessible, however, is underutilized. The new Sydney Modern Project will bring much improved public amenity and safety to everyone in this location. The outdoor space will be appropriately landscaped, improving this public space.

The new extension proposal also creates a variety of public spaces that will be accessible at all times. The characteristics of these spaces vary throughout the site - some are large scale and some more intimate. We hope the visitors will be able to find spaces that they feel most comfortable in on each of their visits.

## 4.3 Impact on View Corridor

One of the views the Sydney Modern Project affects is from the Woolloomooloo Gate. Currently, when accessing the site from the Woolloomooloo Gate, visitors are able to see out to a line of trees beyond the steps. The new extension will replace these steps with a plaza surrounded by trees at the street level. This plaza will give visitors, accessing the Gallery from the Woolloomooloo Gate, a place to rest and enjoy the landscape before continuing their journey to the Gallery. Also from the Woolloomooloo Gate, visitors are able to see the entrance to the existing Gallery. The new extension is set back as much as possible and the canopy of the Entry Plaza is meant to be porous to maintain this view. The Sydney Modern Project building volume is set back from Art Gallery Road to maintain the view from Woolloomooloo Gate to the main facade of the existing Gallery building.

Approaching the Gallery from the south end of Art Gallery Road, the existing gallery building appears first and the Entry Plaza of the Sydney Modern Project sits behind. It is a light space with a translucent sunshade roof which disappears into the background. The Entry Pavilion and the successive pavilions behind terraces down the landscape. This will alter the view of the approach to the existing Gallery building but considering the characteristic of Sydney Modern Project, increase in pedestrian space, and reorganization of the vehicle parking in front of the existing building, the impact should be positive.

## 4.4 Suitability of Land for Development

The majority of the site is occupied by man-made structures such as the decommissioned Fuel Bunker along Lincoln Crescent and the land bridge adjacent to the Gallery and Art Gallery Road. As the space above the Fuel Bunker is currently underutilised, the new extension will make the space above the decommissioned Fuel Bunker more available to the public. The conversion of low quality space that is fragmented and can only support limited low intensity usage, into high quality public Gallery space and cohesively designed hard and soft landscaped areas that are accessible, represents a significant uplift in the public utility and amenity of the overall site area.

The space above the land bridge is also difficult in terms of maintaining the landscape as demonstrated currently (landscape must be replaced every few years). This space will be partially occupied with building and a mix of hard and soft landscape.

The landscape plan identifies the proposed usage and planting of all external areas, which has been based on the preservation of existing deep soil areas and existing significant vegetation, and the rebuilding of those areas which currently have poor capacity to carry landscape of value to the public.

## 4.5 Massing of Buildings

As mentioned previously, the concept of the Sydney Modern Project extension is to make a series of pavilion-like buildings which terrace with the landscape. The intent is to keep the building low and integrated with the landscape. As a result, the building does not obstruct the tree-line of the Domain when viewed from the east and appears light and transparent when viewed from the parkland.

## 4.6 Street Frontage Heights

There are two major street frontages for the Sydney Modern Project extension.

From Art Gallery Road, the building mass is kept low and transparent to maintain the primacy of the heritage of the existing Gallery. The tallest canopy is the Entry Plaza canopy which slopes down below the cornice line of the existing building. From there the three pavilions along Art Gallery Road terrace down following the landscape.

From the Lincoln Crescent side, the building appears taller as the terraced pavilions are more visible. There are 3 levels stacked and stepped back above the Fuel Bunker, although each level steps back in sympathy with the land form and the full height seen on the elevations is rarely experienced by people in the vicinity. The maximum height of the overall building above the Fuel Bunker is 22.3m. Most of the building is below the ground level from the Art Gallery Road side so there is least impact on views.

## 4.7 Environmental Impacts

The design of the Sydney Modern Project is kept low as it terraces with the landscape. The shadow analysis included in the DA Drawing set portrays the shadow impact on the surroundings, which is very minimal.

There are negligible privacy impacts on the apartment complex to the east as the apartment complex faces the east to open up to the harbour. Appropriate landscaping is proposed to mitigate the amount of views into the apartment complex.

## 4.8 Achievement of Principles of ESD

SANAA worked with the ESD consultants, Atelier 10 and WSP, to develop a sustainability strategy.

The key principles for sustainable initiatives include:

- Conservation of art collection
- Integration and multi-functionalism
- Landscaped roofs
- Fittings and fixtures
- Water efficiency / harvesting
- Passive and active design
- Whole of life objectives

Combining the above principles with design and construction initiatives, the design team aims to achieve 5-star rating under Green Star Certification.

The ESD consultants concluded:

“The principles of ecologically sustainable development have been embedded in each of the major components of the Sydney Modern Project.

The site selection has embodied the precautionary principle by selecting substantially disturbed land for the building location – straddling a motorway and embedded within historic Fuel bunker.

In this way, the serious environmental impacts of green field development are avoided and the ecological value of the precinct is enhanced. High value trees have been retained, further mitigating site impacts.

The native landscaping strategy further conserves and enhances the bio-diversity and ecological integrity of the precinct.

The built form and services support a resource- efficient strategy to enhance the whole of life resource consumption of the project. The consideration of zero-carbon energy, low-impact materials, operational waste strategy to embed zero-waste principles and making use of alternative water sources have been primary design drivers for the project. The project embeds principles for inter-generational equity, by curating, storing and enhancing the cultural environment and rehabilitating the ecological environment for the benefit of future generations.”

4.9 Circulation Requirements

| Pedestrian  | Vehicle  |
|---|--|
| <p>There are three major links which run through the site connecting the lower Woolloomooloo area to the Domain and the Royal Botanic Garden.</p> <p>The major connection is through the land-bridge which begins at the existing stairs at the corner of Lincoln Crescent and Cowper Wharf Road. The renovated path will lead up to the land-bridge to a new paved path which connects directly to the Entry Plaza.</p> <p>There are two minor connections to the north of the site, along the existing substation, and another to the north of the existing building. The steps running adjacent to the substation is a direct path from Lincoln Crescent to Mrs Macquaries Road. The path to the north of the existing building brings people from the pedestrian bridge to the Entry Plaza, activating this underused space.</p> <p>Additionally there is a path which wraps around the pavilions on the multiple levels which provides visitors with rest points and views out to the harbour.</p> | <p>The public parking and drop off area in front of the existing building will be relocated to provide a more generous pedestrian safe area in front of the entrance. Art Gallery Road will be reorganized to allow for coach parking, taxi and visitor drop off, and disabled parking. Pedestrian crossings will also be relocated to provide access where heavy traffic exists and is expected with the new Sydney Modern Project.</p> <p>A more detailed explanation can be found in the landscape and traffic reports.</p> <p>Service</p> <p>Servicing to the Sydney Modern Project extension will be from Lincoln Crescent. There will be two loading dock bays - one exclusively for art and the other for goods deliveries and waste. The street median will be adjusted to accommodate the trucks.</p> |

4.10 Interface at Ground Level

|  |
|--|
| <p>At the ground level, visitors will encounter the following spaces: the Entry Plaza, the Entry Pavilion, the glazed gallery portion of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Gallery, and the land bridge.</p> <p>The Entry Plaza is covered with a semi-transparent lightweight roof. The roof is high and set back from the road to not obstruct views towards the existing building and surrounding landscape. The Entry Plaza canopy is open on three sides and allows unobstructed passage throughout the site.</p> <p>The Entry Pavilion facade is transparent glass. Few fixed volumes are located within to allow for views through the building.</p> <p>From the landscape, visitors can also see into interior spaces and from within the building they can see out towards the landscape.</p> <p>This idea is repeated throughout the building. For example visitors can see into the gallery through the verandah space on LL1. Likewise, the visitors can step out to the terrace, accessible from inside the Gallery only, to enjoy the view of the harbour.</p> |
|--|

4.11 Integration of Landscape Design

|   |
|---|
| <p>Through the process, the Architects worked closely with McGregor+Coxall, the landscape consultant to plan and design the landscape. Collectively, ideas for various areas and pockets of landscape were developed.</p> <p>The building mass took on its current shape to preserve many of the identified healthy significant trees around the site. Some of high value trees that could not be saved due to the building requirements will be relocated around the site (Refer to the landscape report).</p> <p>The roof will be a mixture of native plants and hard-scape. The different species planted will bloom at different times of year making the building appear to breathe and change with the season.</p> <p>Three roofs are accessible, and the landscape will be appropriately designed to provide a safe and pleasant experience.</p> |
|---|

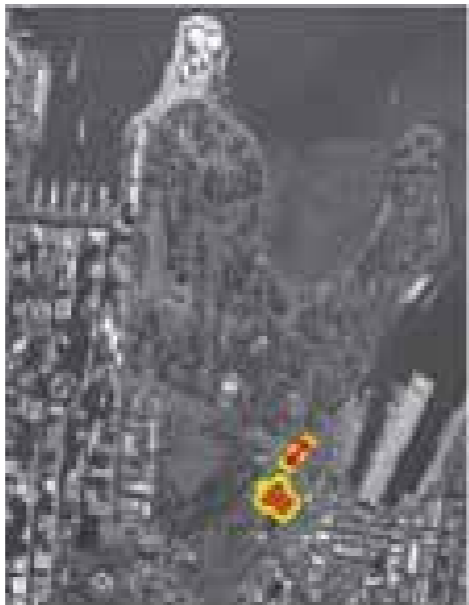
05 Alternatives  
Considered

## Alternative Schemes Considered

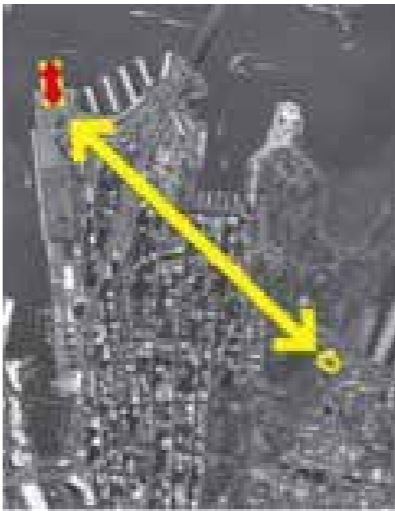
Six locations were considered for the Sydney Modern Project extension.

According to the EIS, option B3 was recommended as the site for the following reasons:

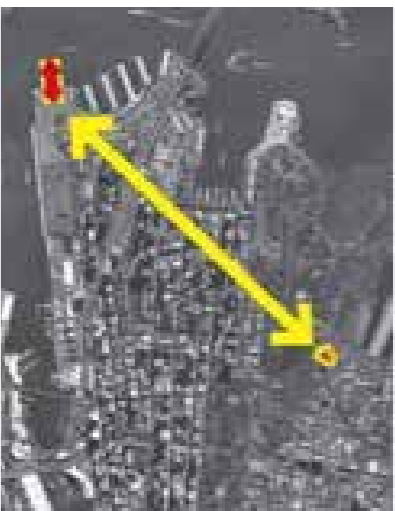
- It provides the opportunity to resolve spatial and facilities issues in relation to the existing site;
- It provides the opportunity for a new iconic building;
- It strengthens the presence and identity of the AGNSW in relation to Central Sydney;
- Will provide for significant improvements to accommodation standards, security and workplace amenity;
- Will enhance activation of the site;
- Is constructed in an area of relatively underutilised open space.



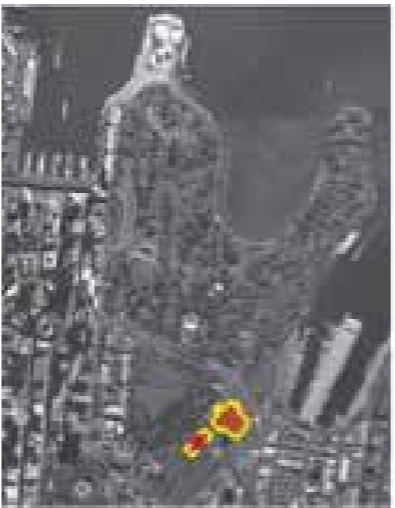
alternative scheme 0



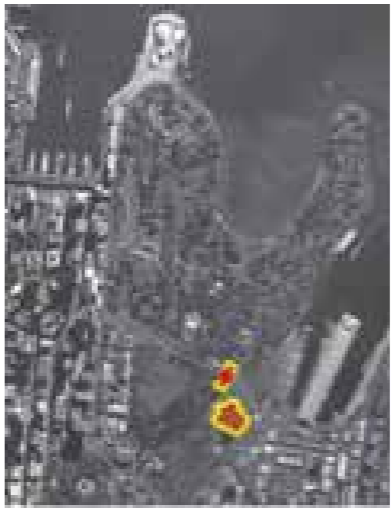
alternative scheme a1.1



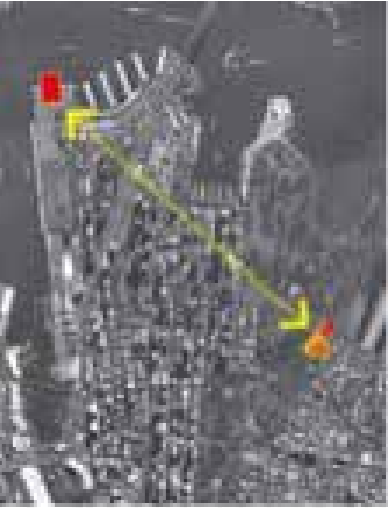
alternative scheme a1.2



alternative scheme b1



alternative scheme b2



alternative scheme c1

# 06 Comparison with Design Competition Scheme

General

The competition program envisioned the existing building physically connected to the new building. The SANAA competition scheme covered a larger area of the site to maintain a low profile and built on the land-bridge the maximum possible loads.

The proposed design no longer physically connects to the existing building. The design maintains the concept of pavilions placed following the shape of the terrain but in contrast to the competition design, they overlap to avoid significant trees resulting in a reduced footprint and increased public domain areas with soft landscaping.

Entrance

The competition scheme planned for two entrances in the new building.

Through the design process, the Client and the Architect together explored various entry options. In the proposed scheme, the existing entry is maintained and a new entrance is created. The current entry on the Vernon facade is iconic and will remain as a prominent entrance to the Art Gallery of New South Wales. The exterior space will be reorganised to create a more open space which will direct visitors to the new Entry Plaza and new entrance.

One of the emergency exit paths from the Fuel Bunker (Gallery 8) can be used occassionally as an access point from Lincoln Crescent for special events. No other entrances are envisioned at this time.

Gallery and other facilities

**Gallery**

The concept of large flexible gallery spaces is maintained. The number and content of the galleries in the proposed design have been re-imagined by the Gallery.

The Fuel Bunker gallery (Gallery 8) now preserves the entire southern tank of the Fuel B unker. A spiral stair and fire exits are proposed to make a publicly accessible space. The vision which the Client and the Architects together developed is to preserve the characteristic which the decommissioned Fuel Bunker holds as an artifact of the site.

**Other Facilities**

The commercial Function Space is no longer required in the proposed design.

The board rooms, Prints and Drawings Study Room, and National Art Archive, and staff offices will remain in the existing building.

A new conservation studio is located in the proposed design to accommodate large format works.

New Creative Studios are located in the proposed design.

The Multi-purpose Theatre is changed to Multi-purpose Space to accommodate more flexibility.

Loading and Parking

Various parking options were explored but due to site and cost constraints the following decisions were made:

- Locate a few parking spots near the SMP loading zone for contract worker's vehicles and accessible parking.

In conclusion, the development is substantially the same and exhibits design excellence of the design competition scheme.

