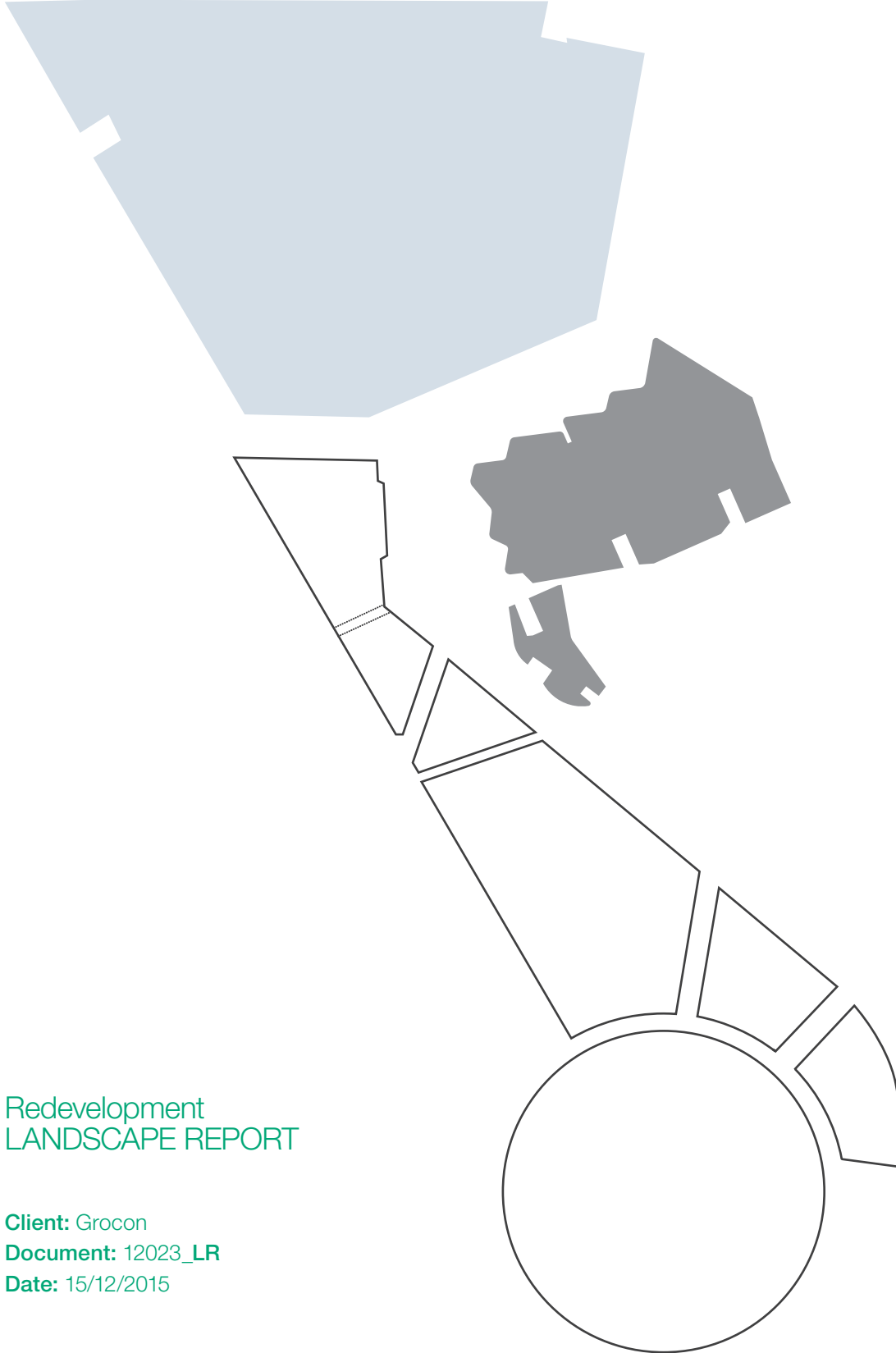


31 Wheat Road

Sydney



Redevelopment
LANDSCAPE REPORT

Client: Grocon

Document: 12023_LR

Date: 15/12/2015

CONTEXT

Context within Darling Harbour

31 Wheat Rd is a large site in the middle portion of Darling Harbour, located on Harbour St between the Cockle Bay Darling Park developments (to the north east), Darling Quarter (to the South) and Convention Centre (to the west). The site is currently occupied by the IMAX cinema complex and associated ground floor retail. The current public domain areas included a taxi/ bus drop off along Harbour St (via Wheat Rd) and predominantly large paved areas that tie in with Darling Harbour. Access into the site from the CBD is primarily from two pedestrian overbridges, at Druiitt and Bathurst Streets.

The site's proximity to Darling Quarter, SICEEP and other leisure precincts gives it the chance to build upon the renewal of the area. The development will bring large numbers of people to the site each day for work and leisure.

The proposed public domain areas within the site have been designed with regard to the general design principles listed below.

Design Principles

- Improve the pedestrian and visual connections, specifically from the city into the site, from surrounding areas and within Darling Harbour,
- Enhance the quality, quantity and usability of public space,
- Provide a public domain that encourages use by people of all ages,
- Respond to existing site conditions including the waterfront locale, overhead freeways and adjacent precincts such as Darling Quarter,
- Provide a design which is flexible with future proposals for SICEEP,
- Provide for a new playground space, as an extension of the existing playground at Darling Quarter,
- Employ best practice in landscape architecture to achieve sustainability objectives,
- Incorporate ESD initiatives to the landscape documentation where suitable
- Improve biodiversity and environmental protection through choice of plant and hard materials,
- Improve the vehicular connections and experience,
- Ensure that the public domain is designed with regard to crime prevention through its environmental design,
- Provide public domain that has been designed for longevity through use of robust materials and spaces that can cater to a multiplicity of uses. This project should be an exemplar of leading practice landscape architecture.

Landscape Areas

The proposed public domain plan can be broken down into the following components described in detail below:

- Harbour St pedestrian link
- Harbour St/ Wheat Rd drop off and building lobbies
- Cockle Bay/ Darling Harbour public domain interface
- Ground floor retail interfaces and IMAX lobby
- Western event space
- Palm Grove (relocated)
- New playground/ Darling Quarter interface

Refer Figure 1 for landscape areas key plan

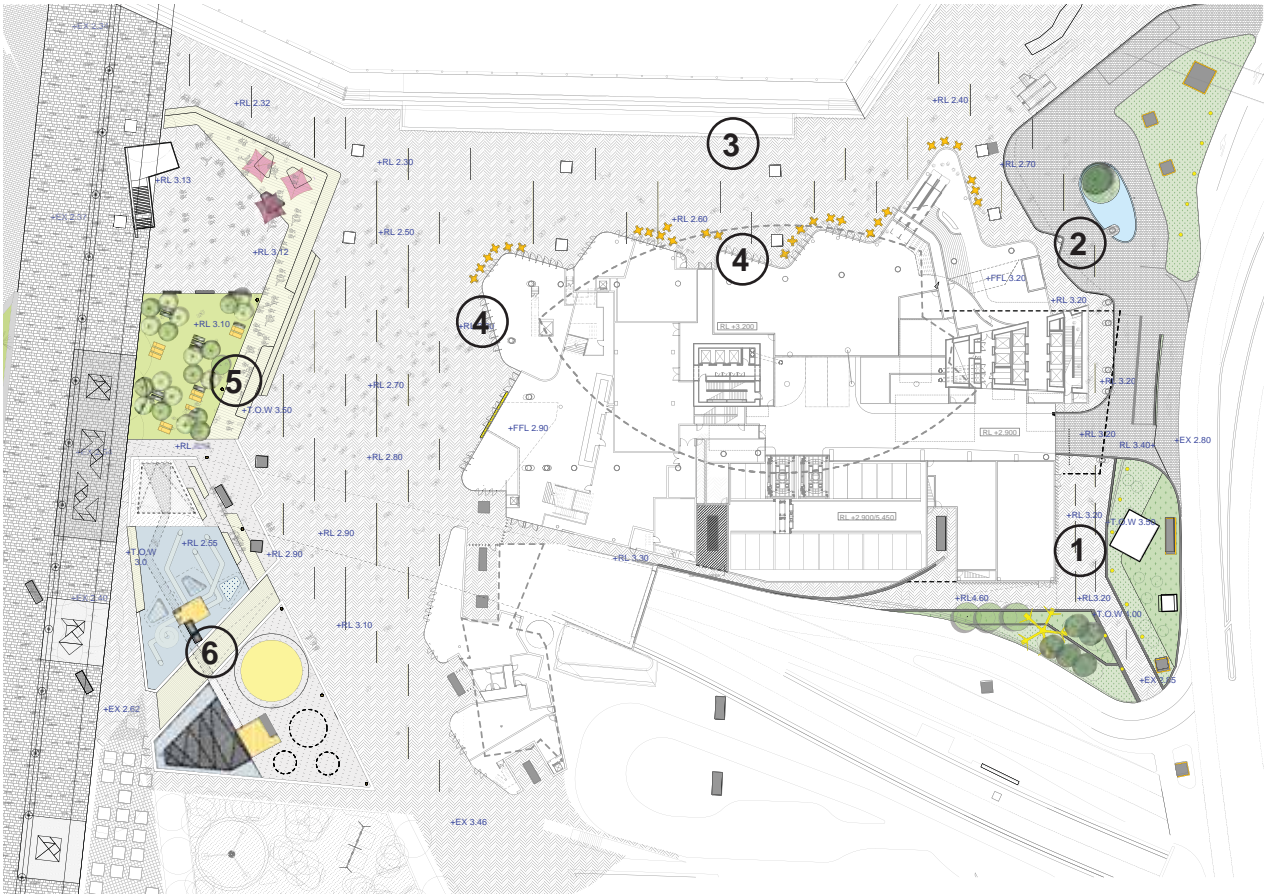
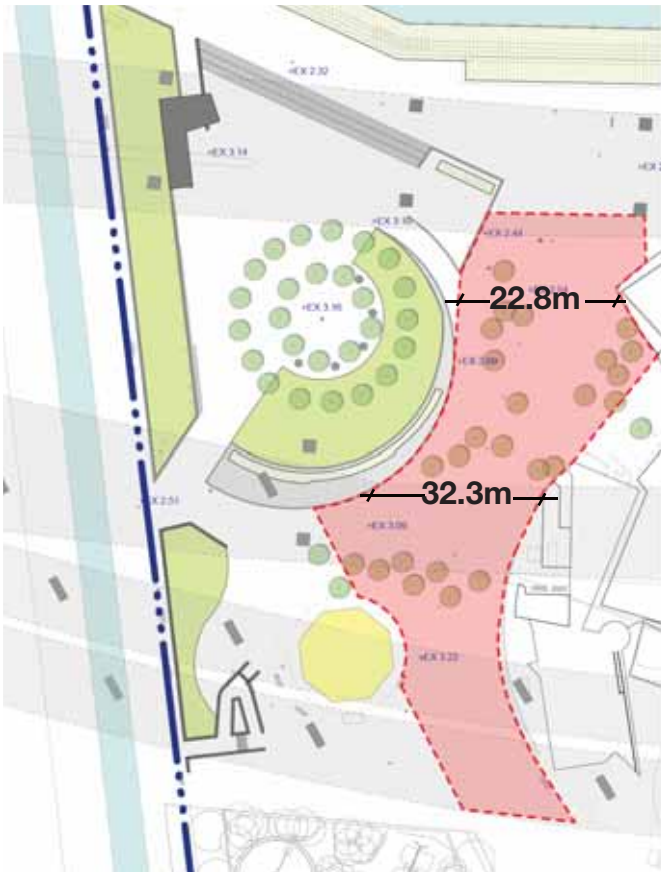


Figure 1. Public Domain areas key plan

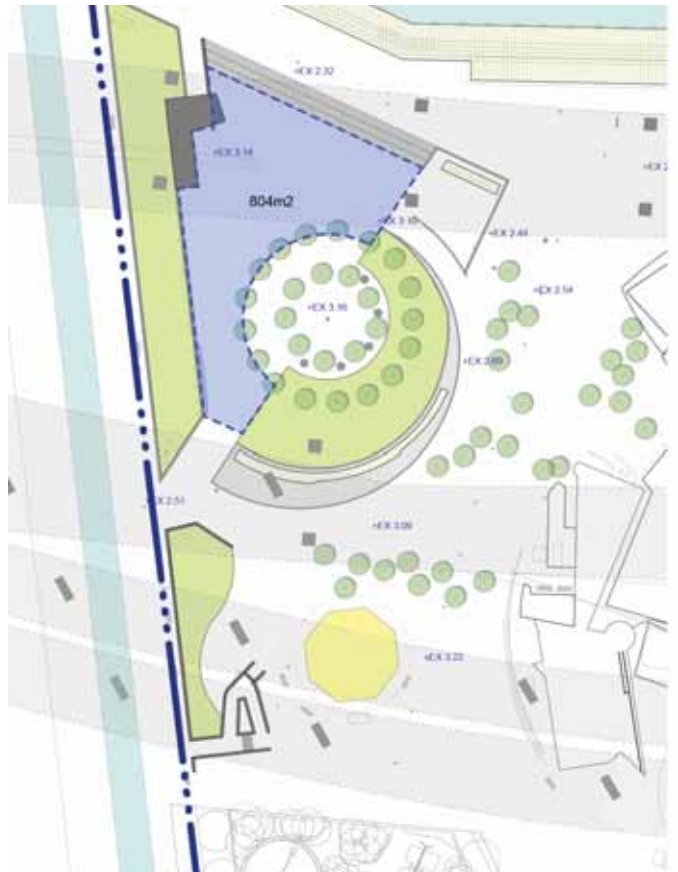
- ① Harbour St pedestrian link
- ② Harbour St/ Wheat Rd port cochere, drop off and lobby entries
- ③ Cockle Bay/ Darling Harbour public domain interface
- ④ Ground floor retail interfaces and IMAX lobby
- ⑤ Western edge (Palm Grove and event spaces)
- ⑥ New playground/ Darling Quarter interface

Figure 2. Public Domain Comparison Plan



Existing Public Domain
 Open Public Space
 Approx 1900m²

Figure 3. Public Domain Event Space Comparison Plan



Existing Public Domain Event Space
 Open Event Space
 Approx 804m²



Proposed Public Domain
 Open Public Space
 Approx 2424m²



Proposed Public Domain Event Space
 Open Event Space
 Approx 2065m² (580m² + 1485m²)



Figure 4. Zone of influence plan

LEGEND

- - - PROPOSED LEASE LINE
- - - SICEEP BOUNDARY
- DARLING QUARTER (approx 28,200m²)
- IMAX THEATRE FOOTPRINT
- ZONE OF INFLUENCE (approx 10,600m²)

KEY PLAN



Harbour St pedestrian link

A generous pedestrian link will be provided along Harbour St, linking the site to Darling Quarter and beyond to Chinatown and the CBD. The paved footpath will feature an upright and large scale lighting installation (pedestrian walk light) or opportunity for public art and heritage interpretation. Shifting levels and overland flow will be resolved by a series of angled in-situ concrete walls. Along the road side the existing substation and freeway pylon will sit amongst a field of low, lush rainforest planting and be lit by the adjacent lighting installation. Along the western side of the path an urban rainforest (with *Kentia*, *Livistonia* and fern species) will provide a soft foreground to the pylons and freeways behind.

Maintenance access has been provided to the existing cable vault, located in between the exit ramp and the development. Truck access to the cable pits will be controlled through bollards at the northern end of the pedestrian link.

The sculpture 'Jay Flowers' (Robert Parr) will be relocated to the western side of the pedestrian link and bring vibrancy to this area.

Harbour St/ Wheat Rd drop off

The Wheat Rd drop off will be realigned and upgraded to create a new street address for the hotel and serviced apartments lobbies. The objective is to create a pedestrian oriented environment which allows easy movement into Darling Harbour. This will be achieved by using unit paving (type of paving will be selected in accordance with the Darling Harbour Public Domain Manual) on both the roadway and footpaths, raised thresholds (flush kerbs) at the drop off zone with bollards demarcating the two.

The lobby entrance experience has concentrated on creating a pedestrian focused and welcoming arrival space. A raised water feature with overflowing edges and planting has been incorporated in to the centre of the port cochere zone to provide visual amenity as well as sound of moving water. The planting is lush shade tolerant urban rainforest planting with a large feature tree of Weeping Fig. This will soften the landscape to the building entry and relate to the overall site planting palette.

The building entry for cars and trucks is located further south, and has been kept away from the main drop off, the lobby front door and the main pedestrian area. The drop off lane still allows a double decker bus (Sydney Explorer) to pass through, valet parking, and keeps the lane as an important tourist and taxi drop off point.

The median separating the drop off lane and Harbour St will function as a high quality building address, with opportunity to either incorporate shade tolerant, hardy rainforest planting or water. Levels have been adjusted in this area to redirect the overland flow path, and to prohibit flooding of the drop off lane and building lobbies.

Refer GTA documentation for further information regarding the road alignment.

Refer Bonacci documentation for further information regarding the overland flow path and revised levels.

Cockle Bay/ Darling Harbour public domain interface

It is envisaged that new unit paving will feature to the public domain areas within the zone of influence (refer figure 4). The new paving will be selected in accordance with the Darling Harbour Public Domain Manual, and integrated with the existing surrounding paving in a harmonious way. The proposed new paving will feature a number of well crafted slotted drains to provide improved site drainage. This paving will continue to the Wheat Rd drop off area and pedestrian link, further tying in the site with it's surrounds. Any new paving will be

carefully considered and coordinated with paving/ material proposals for the SICEEP development.

The timber upstand and seating which currently flanks Cockle Bay will be upgraded as part of SHFA's current capital works program. Modifications (and part removal) are required to the upstand structure so as to allow the overland flow path to reach Cockle Bay.

Refer Bonacci documentation for further information regarding the overland flow path and revised levels.

Western edge (relocated Palm Grove and event spaces)

The proposed revitalisation of the western public domain and existing palm grove aims to create a strong pedestrian link between Darling Quarter and Cockle Bay, and provide for improved access to the waterfront from the south. The now quite confused space which contains a series of blockages (palms, carousel, abrupt level changes) will be rationalised creating a large gathering space which pedestrians can easily move through (refer Figures 3 and 4). The space will be activated on the building edge by the new IMAX lobby, and an outdoor 'city screen' which is located on the building facade. The screen will provide various stakeholder (SHFA/ IMAX/ City of Sydney) content in it's normal mode, and also create a lively atmosphere when in event mode which may take the form of an outdoor cinema, concert or telecast of live sporting events. A large seating edge has been provided to the west of this screen, and provides numerous seating options for the public, both during larger events and for quieter times of the day. During these larger event modes, pedestrian access to the north and south is provided via the building edge (under the facade), through the relocated palm grove and along the existing urban stream.

The existing palm grove (*Livistona australis*) has been relocated to an upper level turf area, which is designed for passive recreation. The turf area has been located between the freeways above, providing a sunny spot for a harbour side picnic or somewhere to sit in the dappled shade.

To the north of the turf and new palm grove, the hardstand has been retained, with upgraded paving and finishes. The control box (Timothy Williams) has also been retained as it provides important infrastructure (lighting/ AV control) for events. A large timber deck is provided to the east of the control box, with bespoke group seating opportunities in a position which overlooks the harbour and city beyond. Existing *Phoenix canariensis* will be left as an important row of trees lining the valley floor of Darling Harbour. Vehicular access is provided to the control box via a pathway behind the seating edge. Both the western edge and the Cockle Bay interface provides opportunities to incorporate heritage interpretation within the proposed public domain fabric.

New playground and Darling Quarter public domain interface

The northern portion of the Darling Quarter playground has been extended into the zone of influence (refer figure 4). The geometry of the eastern edge of the new playground is informed by the existing playground edge, further strengthening the pedestrian boulevard and south-north connection. The space under the overhead freeways provides an ideal framework for the location of a series of giant, multi layered climbing net

structures, lookouts, climbing walls and an integrated slide-scape. The play area will be slightly set down from the existing public domain levels to the east and this edge will be sculpted to provide for play opportunities in themselves, such as parkour. The playground ground plane will also be moulded into a playful concrete terrain, which allows for skating and scooter riding.

These items will extend the play opportunities currently provided within the Darling Quarter playground and provide places for young adults.

The existing carousel has been shown relocated in this proposal. The surrounding paving will create a seamless transition from adjacent public domain areas and provide flush access and adequate queuing space.

Integration and Flexibility with SICEEP

Important through site links are proposed, designed to feed directly into the SICEEP development. Pedestrian flow from the south (Darling Quarter Pedestrian Boulevard and Retail Terrace) is opened up through the relocation of the palm grove and existing raised barriers and edges. This move allows freedom of movement to the north, to Harbourside (through SICEEP) and Cockle Bay. Movement to SICEEP from the western public domain occurs via the through links provided between the new and existing playground, through the relocated palm grove and through the existing link provided at the water's edge to the north. The entire western edge of the proposed western public domain can be flexible in its design. The current proposal delivers pedestrians to the edge of the urban stream, however further integration is dependant on the design proposals for SICEEP.

It is also important to mention the importance of the new elevated bridge from Bathurst St as a major east west pedestrian connection to SICEEP. The Harbour St overpass delivers pedestrians to Darling Quarter North and provides a landing point for the public. Views from this point will need to be retained to the proposed SICEEP Convention Centre with adequate way finding apparatus crucial in providing directional information for the other Darling Harbour destinations.

Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED)

The public domain areas have been designed with regard to the following principles, which intend to minimise the opportunity for crime:

Surveillance

- All new buildings will overlook the adjacent public domain and streetscapes
- Ground floor tenancies will feature vibrant retail, allowing day and night time surveillance and ensuring that all public domain areas and streets have active frontages to Darling Harbour
- Ground floor tenancies adjacent to the public domain have been designed to have direct access to Darling Harbour and are designed to overlook the wider public domain
- The Wheat Road drop off and pedestrian link along Harbour Street have been oriented to allow view corridors out to Cockle Bay to the north

Access Control

- The new public domain areas are designed to attract users of all ages

- The only private domain areas proposed are within the commercial (main) building and proposed 'building 2' along the western edge. The private domain is clearly delineated and separated by controlled access points from the public domain

Territorial reinforcement

- The proposed public open space has been designed to be clearly and openly connected to all surrounding areas with uses designed to attract regional and local users of all ages and backgrounds
- It is envisaged that the open space will be used by all of the public, not only the building tenants, IMAX users and retail/ restaurant patrons.

Space management

- The public domain areas have been designed with regard to their ongoing maintenance and will utilise robust materials to enable an ongoing high quality level of presentation.
- Lighting will be critical and all areas are proposed to be lit using current Australian and SHFA standard for public space.
- CCTV will be positioned to cover all public domain areas, and tie in with the overall SHFA security strategy for Darling Harbour.
- The southern access way will be controlled via security gates (and fences) to minimise entry into undesirable areas such as the pylon column bases (which require a clear space at the base as part of the Roads and Maritime access requirements).

ASPECT Studios
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