

Design Report - Major Project Application
March 2010 S11174

6. Archaeology

i. Site history

The town of Parramatta was founded by Governor Phillip in 1790. Initially the town allotments were occupied by convicts, who were housed in what are known as “convict huts” - small wattle and daub buildings accommodating up to 10-14 convicts. Gradually the huts were taken over by free persons. By 1823 the whole town was leased out and the remaining convicts were housed at the Convict Barracks (the site is on Macquarie Street, opposite Governor Phillip High School).

These excavations include the sites of four convict huts, built in the 1790s. Two are located on the Macquarie Street frontage, the other two are on the Hunter Street frontage. The one on the corner of Macquarie and Marsden Street became a hotel by 1801 (The Wheatsheaf and later the Shepherd Inn) and was then leased to John Graham in 1806. The hotel survived until the 1870s.

The sites of the convict huts were redeveloped for housing in the 19th and 20th centuries. The site is now vacant and most recently has been used as a car park.

Significance

The Penal Colony of New South Wales was founded in 1788 and continued to take the overflow from British gaols until the end of transportation in 1841. The buildings and structures associated with transportation form an important group of heritage items, deemed to be of state, if not national significance. The remains of “Convict Huts” are at the opposite end of the social scale of Old Government House in Parramatta Park, but nonetheless share a common heritage.

A number of “Convict Huts” have been excavated in Parramatta. Each has provided a unique story and sequence of occupation. Careful excavation of the convict hut sites here will reveal new evidence to add to the picture provided by previous excavations.

Below

George Street, Parramatta from the gates of
Government House c.1805
(Heritage NSW, Autumn 2005)



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Later Sites

Much of the redevelopment of the allotments occurred in the late 19th century. House sites of the 1880s or later do not necessarily reveal large artifact collections, which means that little analysis can be done.

The 1840s brick house and 1840s to 1880s weatherboard cottage (Allotment 16) provide an opportunity to examine the footings of a mid 19th century building and record the artifacts from each room and yard to enable spatial analysis for room function, dating and other research questions.

The same type of detailed analysis will be completed for all oilier earlier sites, the convict huts and hotel, but will probably not be warranted for late 19th century sites, if few artifacts are found.

Historical Sequence for Each Allotment

Allotment 16, Macquarie Street.

A brief history.
A small timber cottage, known as a “Convict Hut” was erected on the Macquarie Street frontage by 1804. Although initially occupied by convicts, it was taken over by free persons. The cottage survived until after 1823, but the site was vacant in the 1830's.

A new brick house with timber outbuildings was built in the 1840s, before the allotment was subdivided. By the 1880s a weatherboard house was built on the western half of the allotment. It was replaced in the 1910s by another house.

Excavation.
Present excavation is of the remains of the 1840s house (red sandstock brick) and also the footings of the 1840s to 1880s weatherboard house (between the concrete footings).

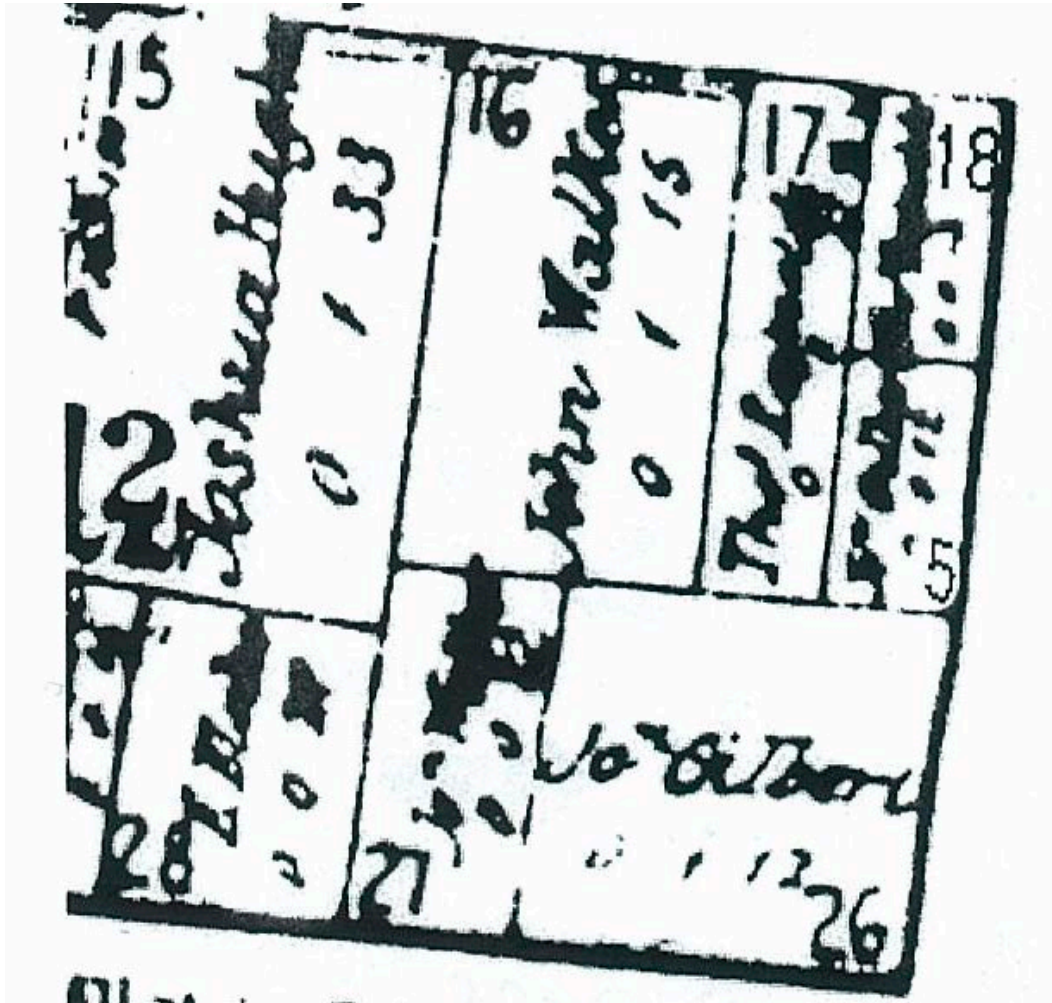
Excavation and removal of these footings is to take place in order to uncover the remains of the original convict hut, almost a metre below current street level.

Allotment 17, Macquarie Street.

A brief history.
A small timber cottage, known as a “Convict Hut”, was erected on the Macquarie Street frontage by 1804. Although initially occupied by convicts, it was taken over by free persons. By 1849 the house on this site was described as a “Messuage Tenement or Dwelling House and premises in Macquarie Street in Parramatta” occupied by James Edward Vallack, brewer. By September 1892 the house was replaced by a 2 storey brick building with slate roof.

Excavation.
The sandstone & concrete footings of the 1892 house now stand high up in the soil profile. The original street frontage was on the line of the 1892 footings.

At the base of the trench is the original topsoil, about a metre below street level. Just to the left of the 1892 footings we have exposed the remains of a cellar which belonged to the Wheatsheaf Hotel (1801-1823).



Top:
Site allotment plan

Bottom:
Heritage Map of development site showing Wheatsheaf Hotel on the corner of Macquarie & Marsden St and the convict hut to the west of the hotel.

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Allotment 18, corner of Macquarie and Marsden Streets

A brief history.
On January 1806 the land was leased to a Mr John Graham. By 1825 the hotel was renamed “The Shepherd Inn”. The hotel closed by 1870 and the buildings were demolished. The land remained vacant until the 1910s when a new building was erected.

This is the site of one of the earliest hotels in Parramatta. It was on a prominent corner of one of the main streets into the town from the Western Road (Great Western Highway).

Excavation
The footings of the hotel are poorly preserved and have been almost completely removed by recent development. Yet we may still be able to define the size of the building from the deeper post-holes which do survive. However the footings of the cellar for the Wheatsheaf Hotel (1801-1823) have been found on Allotment 17.

Allotment 5, Marsden Street

A brief history.
By 1854 a weatherboard house was built on this allotment. It was replaced in 1887 with “2 two-storey Brick Houses each containing 5 Rooms & Kitchen together with front and back Verandahs Balcony and Shed”, value £902.

Excavation.
Allotment 5 is so poorly preserved that no farther excavation will take place in this location. You may just be able to discern the base of the 1887 sandstone footings cut into the natural clay, but no occupation deposits survive.

Allotment 26, Hunter Street.

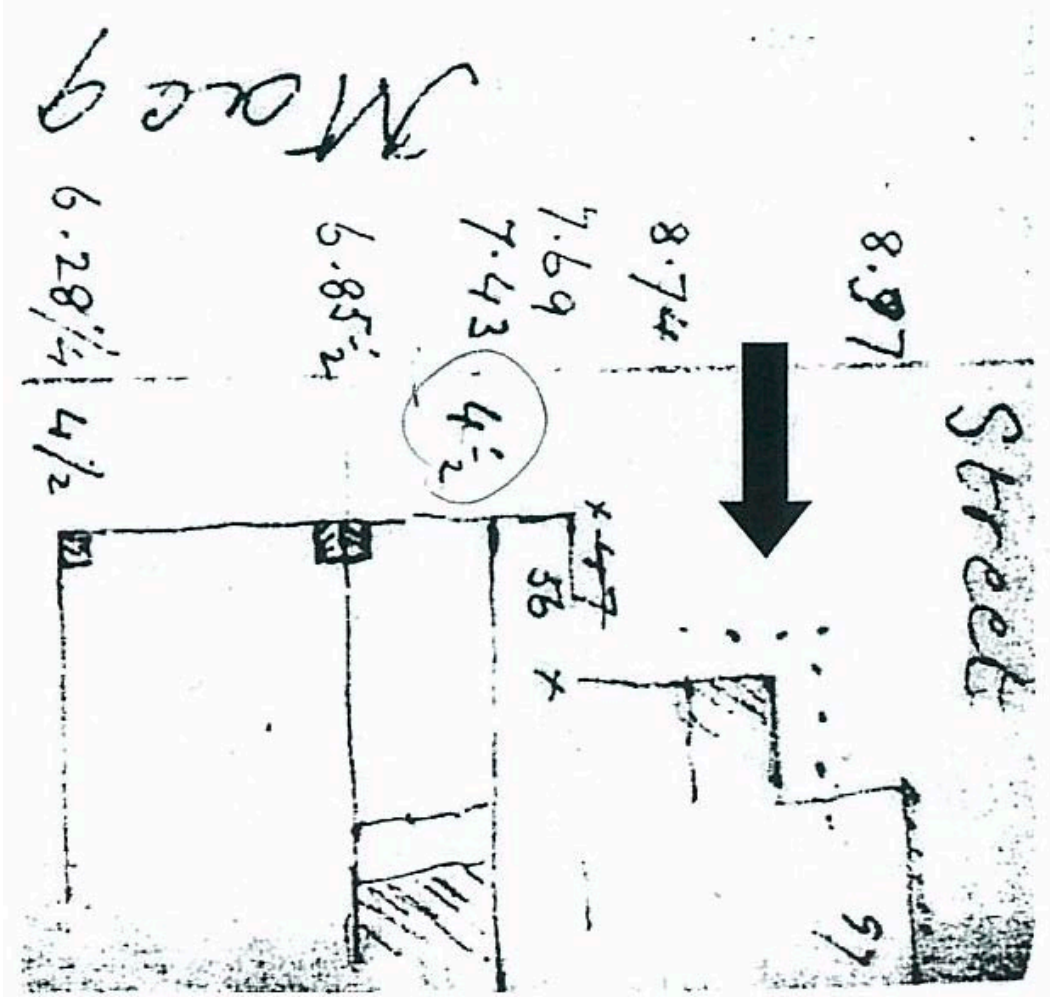
A brief history.
A small timber cottage, known as a “Convict Hut” was erected on the Hunter Street frontage by 1804. Although initially occupied by convicts, it was taken over by free persons. The house survived until the 1830s, but the land was vacant from the 1840s onwards. By the 1880s a series of houses was built on the Marsden Street frontage of this allotment.

Allotments 27 & 28, Hunter Street.

A brief history.
A small timber cottage, known as a “Convict Hut” was erected on the Hunter Street frontage by 1804. Although initially occupied by convicts, it was taken over by free persons.

The house survived until the 1840s. Allotment 27 remained vacant until the 1880s, when “Mr. Gordon McKinnon, the well known architect, ... erected a terrace of three two-storey houses, to be known as ‘Gordon Terrace’”. Allotment 28 (part) remained vacant until the 1900s.

Excavation of Allotments 26, 27 and 28.
The investigations will concentrate on the location of the convict huts, unless the later 19th century housing is poorly preserved.

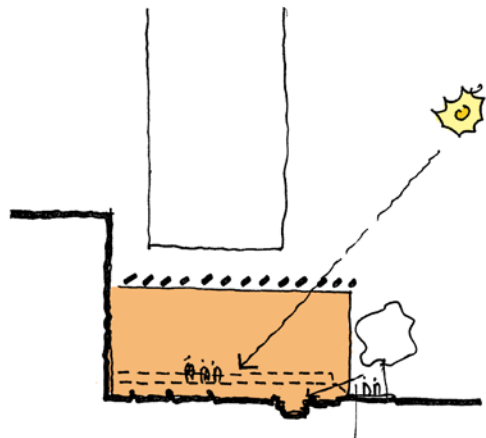


6. Archaeology ii. Strategic Approaches to the Archaeology

The following are 5 strategic approaches to exposure and display of the archaeology that were explored with the Design Review Panel.

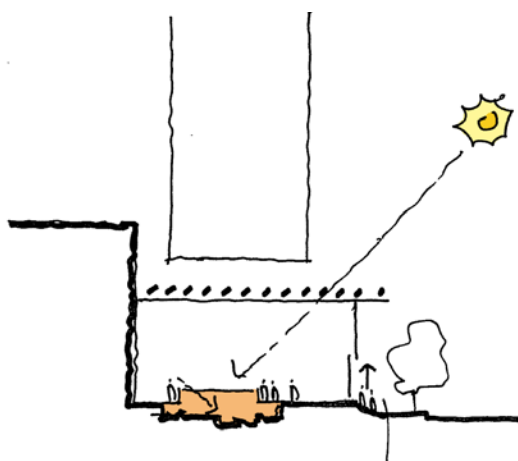
A combination of Options 2 & 3 were progressed, providing the best combination of public space and accessibility with display of archaeology remains.

The security is proposed on the perimeter of the public space which would be open during retail trading hours.



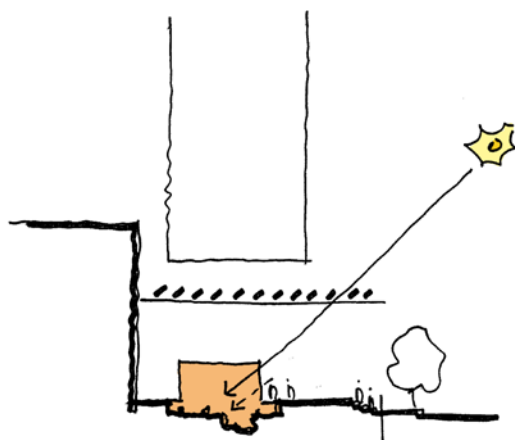
1. Archaeology Pavilion

- Glazed pavilion
- Fully exposed archaeology
- Semi public access via bridges / platforms over archaeology



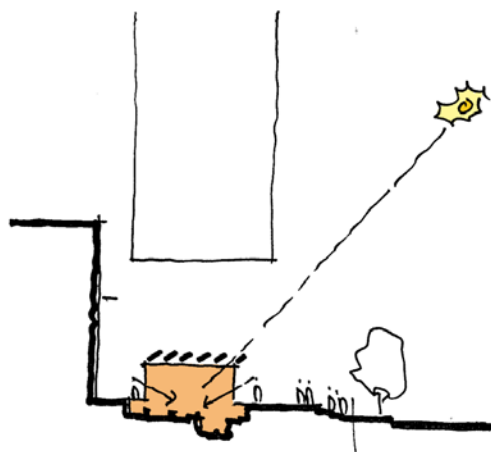
2. Winter Garden Pavilion

- Glazed pavilion
- Significant archaeology exposed
- Public access during business hours



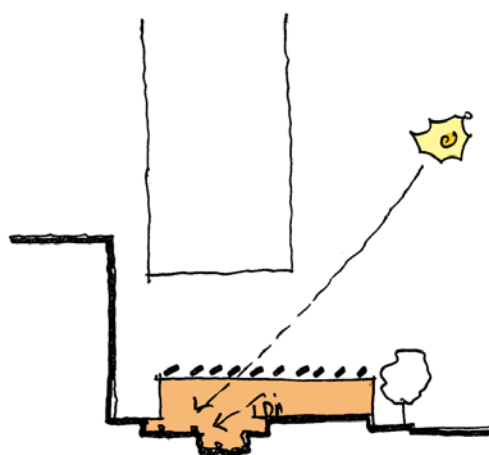
3. Roofed Public Space

- Open public space with shade structure
- Significant archaeology exposed
- Open 24 hours
- Archaeology within glass display pavilions



4. Unroofed Public Space

- Open public space with shade structure
- Significant archaeology exposed
- Open 24 hours
- Archaeology within glass display pavilions



5. Public Space with Archaeology Pavilion

- Public open space 24 hours
- Significant archaeology exposed in interpretation pavilion

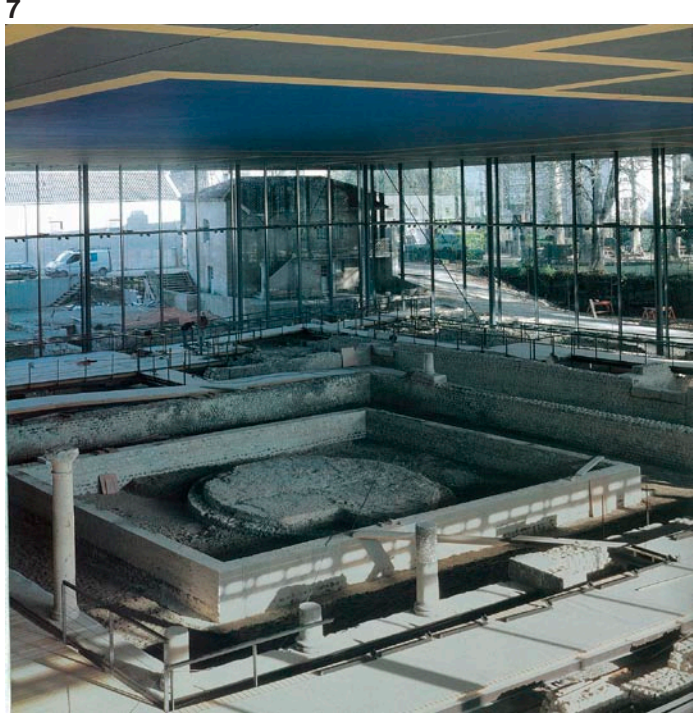
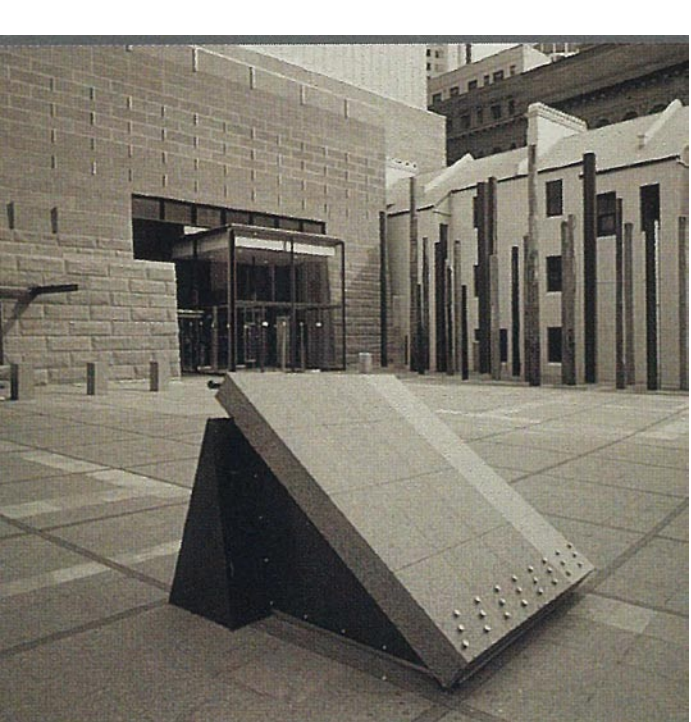
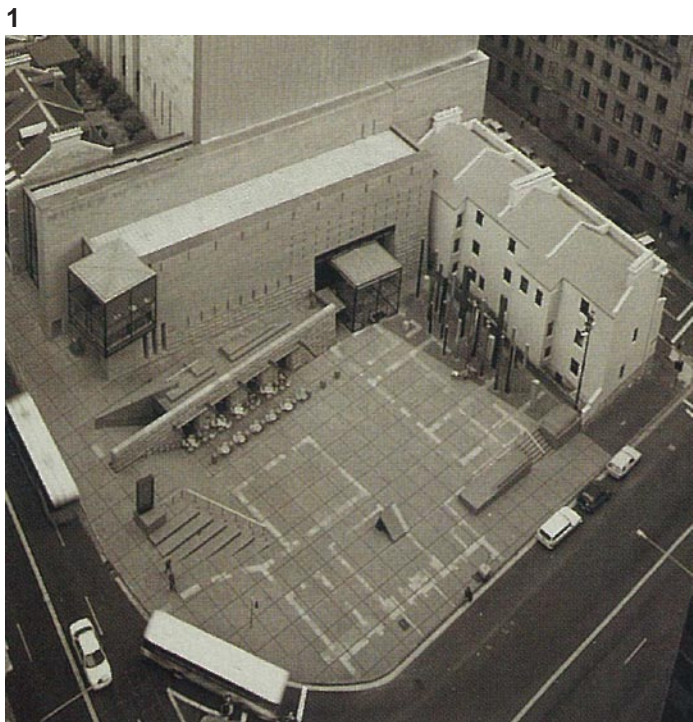
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6. Archaeology
iii. Heritage significance

- 1. The key aspect is the unusual depth of stratigraphy, which has protected the site.
 - 2. Good preservation.
 - 3. The connection between the historical and archaeological evidence - John Walker - wheelwright - actual site of forge - charcoal, slag and forge waste. This is an incredible coming together of the two types of evidence.
 - 4. The increasing evidence for the survival of timber associated with the "convict hut" - timbers will only survive in wet conditions like this - so this is unique for a "convict hut" to date.
 - 5. The preservation of a distinct early assemblage of artifacts associated with the early occupation of a "convict hut" - usually early / convict and later / free occupation deposits are intermixed with difficulty in assemblage separation, which can be achieved on this site.
- Dr. Edward Higginbotham

Precedent Images

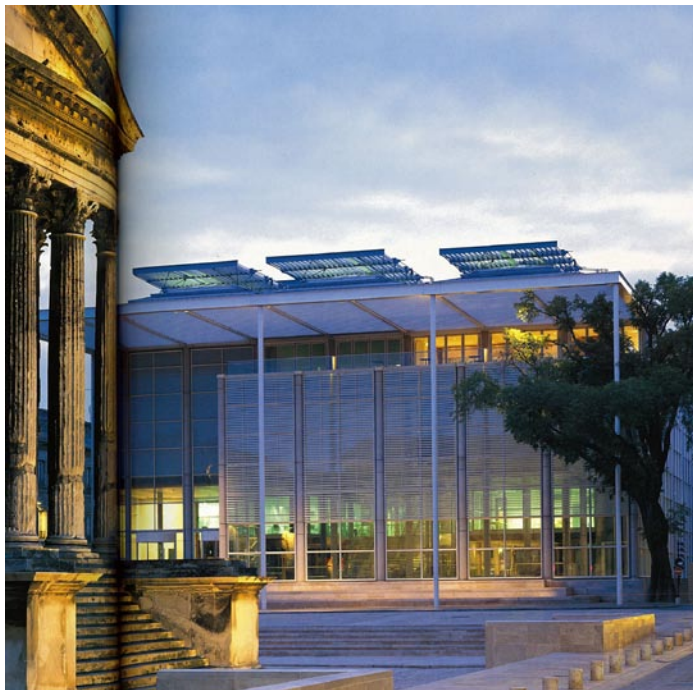
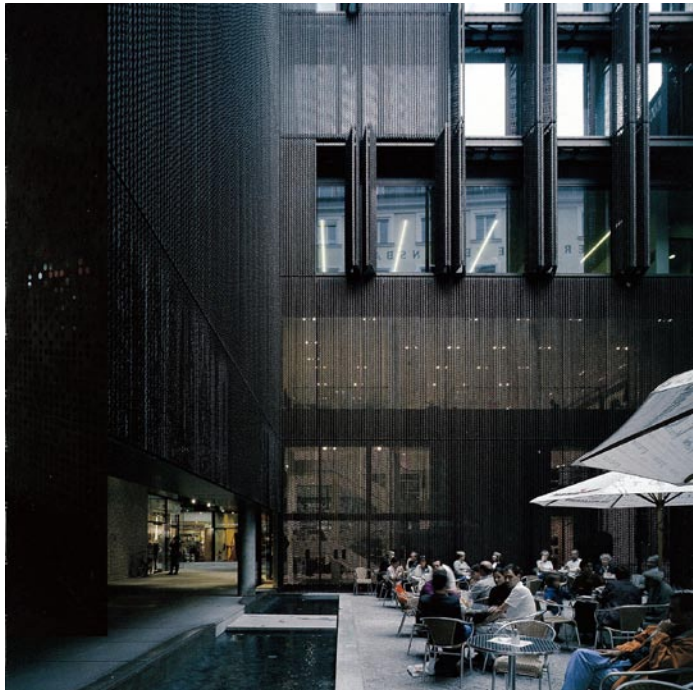
- 1. Museum of Sydney- heritage plaza
- 2. Museum of Sydney - Internal display
- 3. Museum of Sydney- heritage viewing windows.
- 4. Museum of Sydney - glass floor displays
- 5. The Mint, Sydney - Interpretation Centre
- 6. Conservatorium of Music, Sydney- Interpretation centre
- 7-9 Gallic- Roman Museum, Perigueaux



6. Archaeology

iv. Public Space Precedents

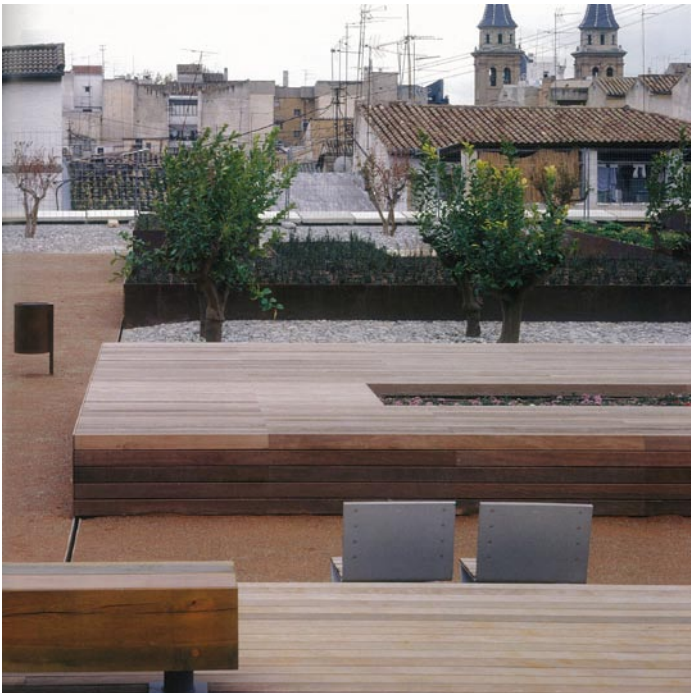
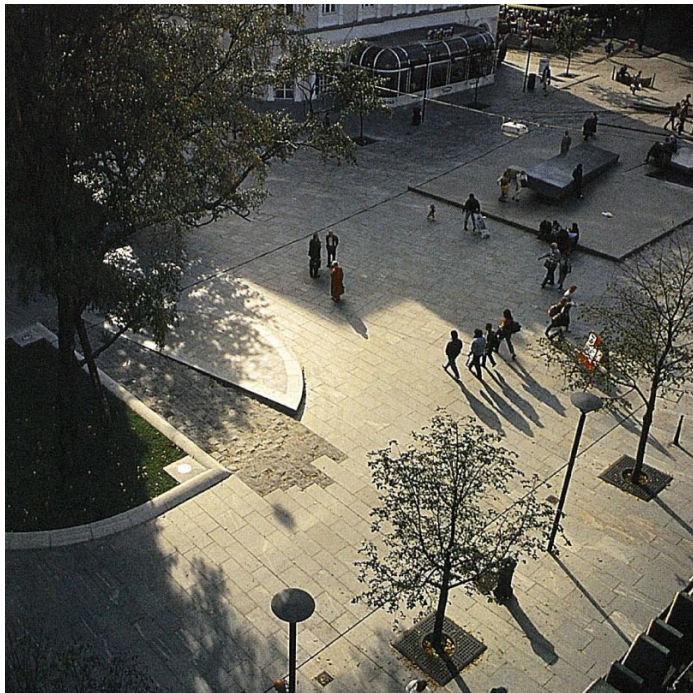
Contemporary Public Space



6. Archaeology

iv. Public Space Precedents

Contemporary Public Space



6. Archaeology

iv. Public Space Precedents

Interpretation within Public Space



6. Archaeology

iv. Public Space Precedents

Traditional Public Space



6. Archaeology v. Archaeology Concept Design

Archaeology Criteria

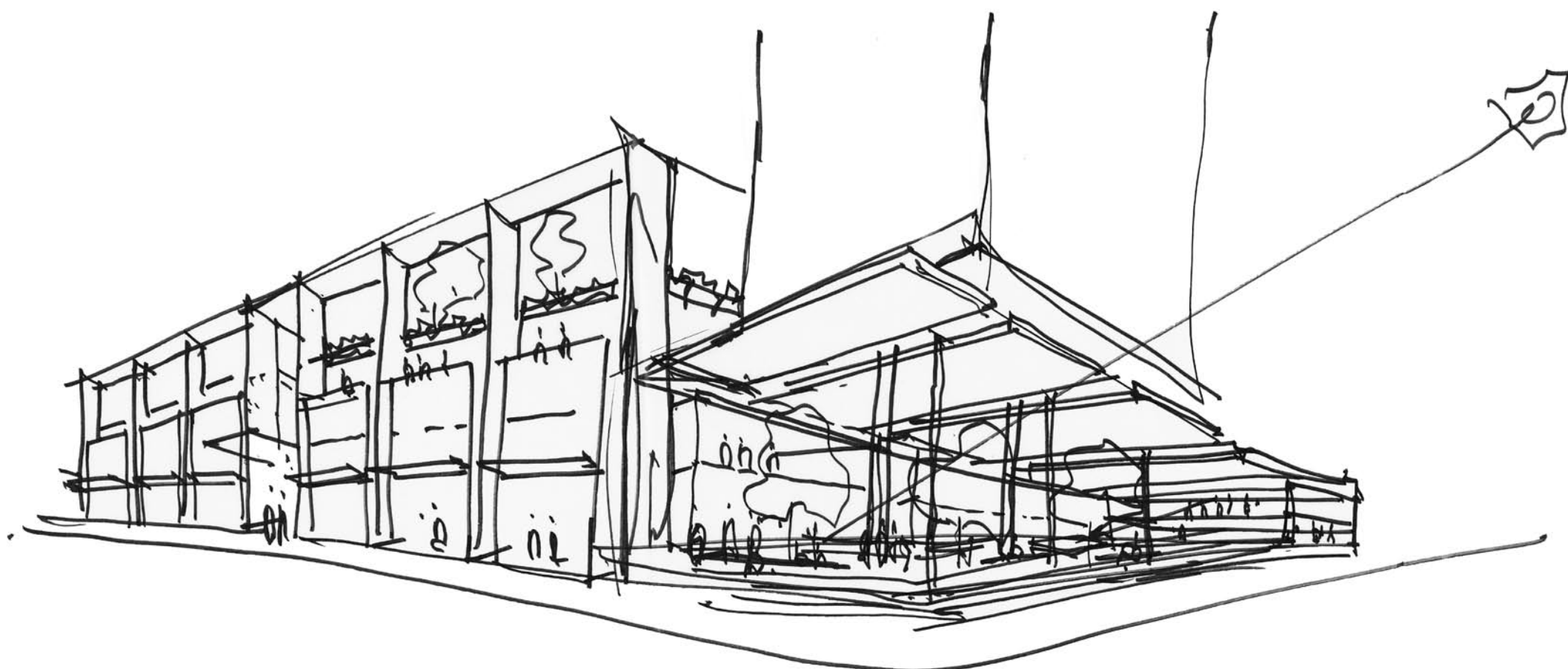
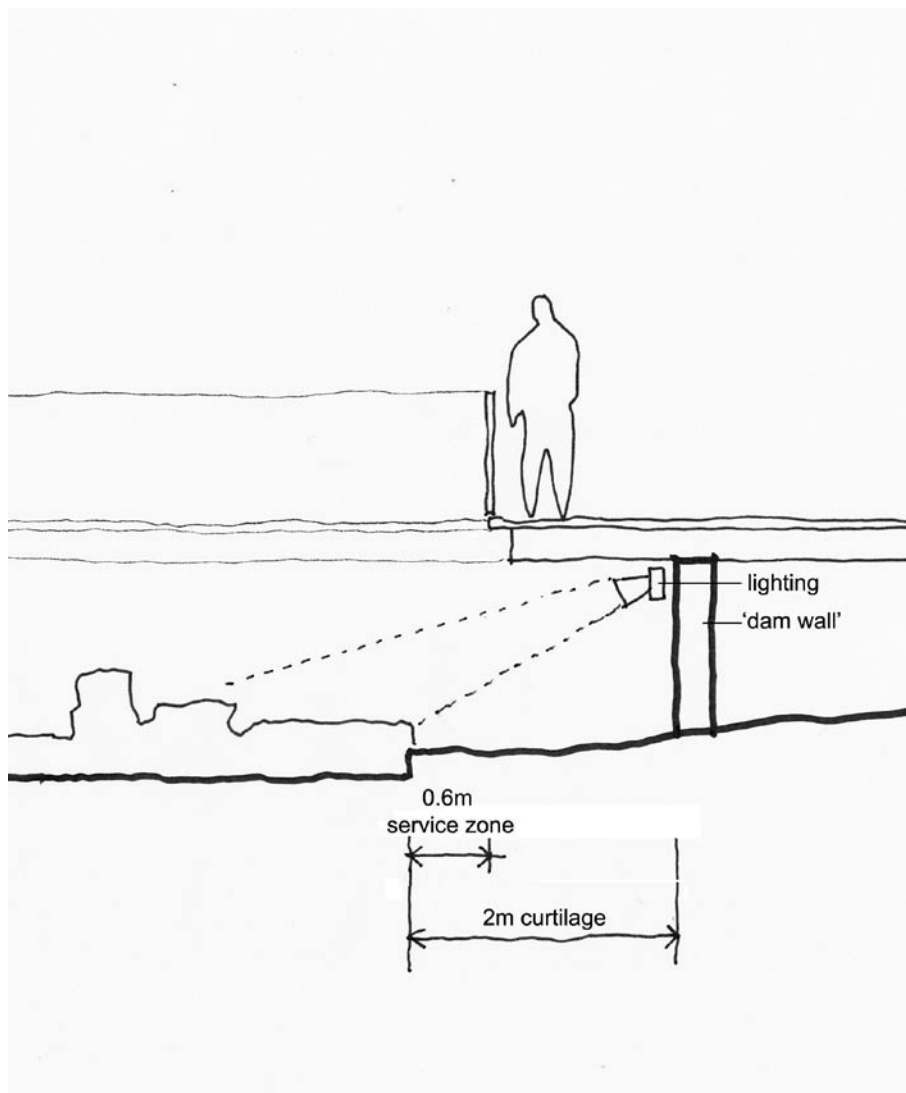
- >2m curtilage to significant archaeology
- >one large excavation exposing all archaeology within a 'dam wall'
- >floor level over to appear lightweight
- >bridges and cantilevered platforms to extend over 2m curtilage
- >approx 600mm maintenance zone within curtilage
- >publicly accessible with managed access (not 24hr access)
- >security line at perimeter of plaza allows for glazed balustrades rather than fully glazed enclosures to archaeology

Heritage Interpretation Criteria

- >all archaeology to have a level of exposure relative to its significance to understand the whole history of the site development
- >relics and interpretive information to be displayed and integrated within the public plaza and residential building
- >Interpretation Centre to be located at Level 1 overlooking the relics

Materials Conservation Criteria

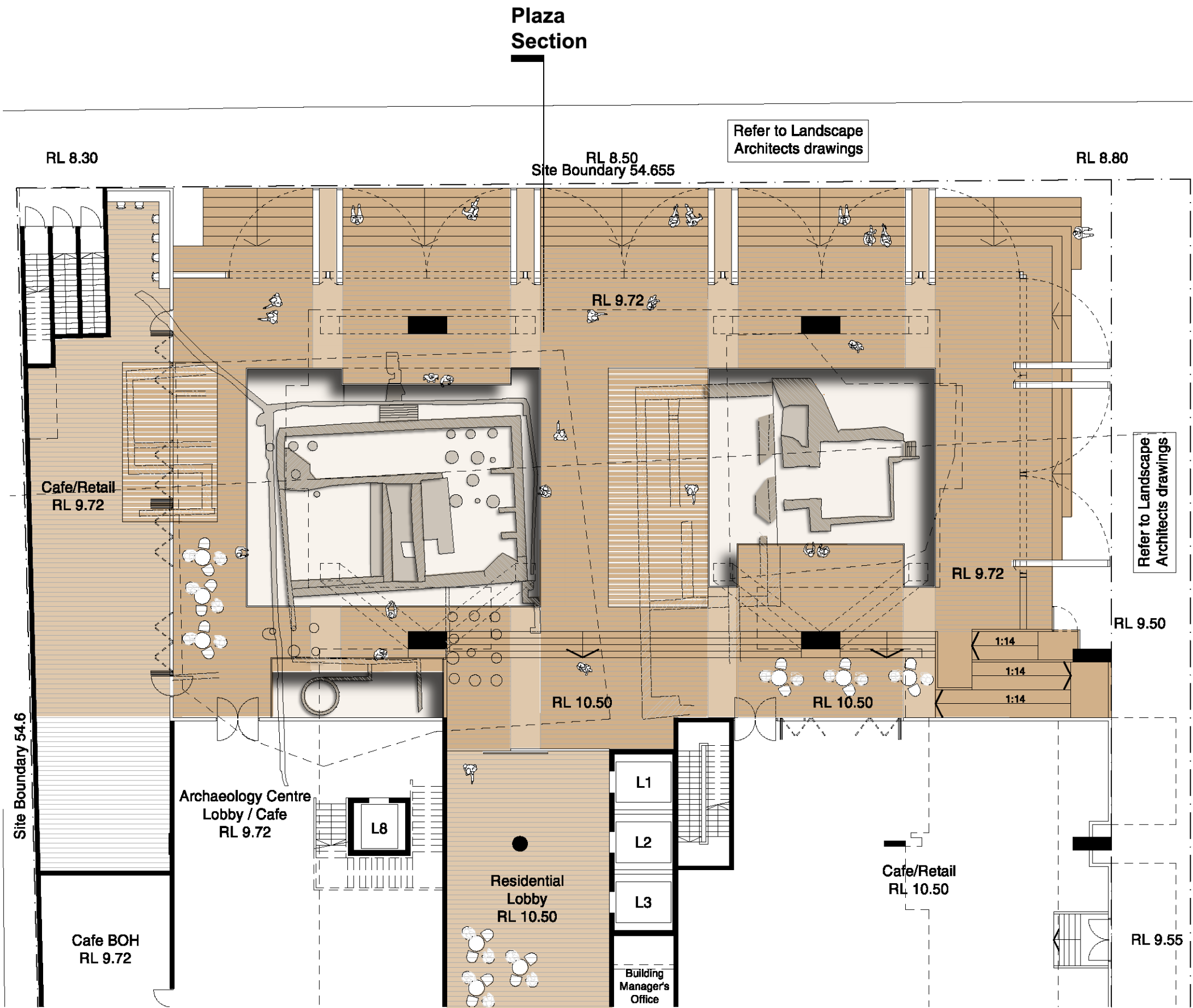
- >in-situ preservation of the remains
- >prevent overland flow of floodwater
- >maintain appropriate ground water table level
- >manage soil moisture content
- >prevent rainfall/ run-off directly on to the remains
- >manage moisture content of the masonry and timber of the remains
- >allow for active management of biological growth
- >manage and control air flow, moisture content and temperature to minimise thermal cycling of the remains
- >prevent public access directly on to the remains
- >monitor the behaviour of the remains over time to assess performance

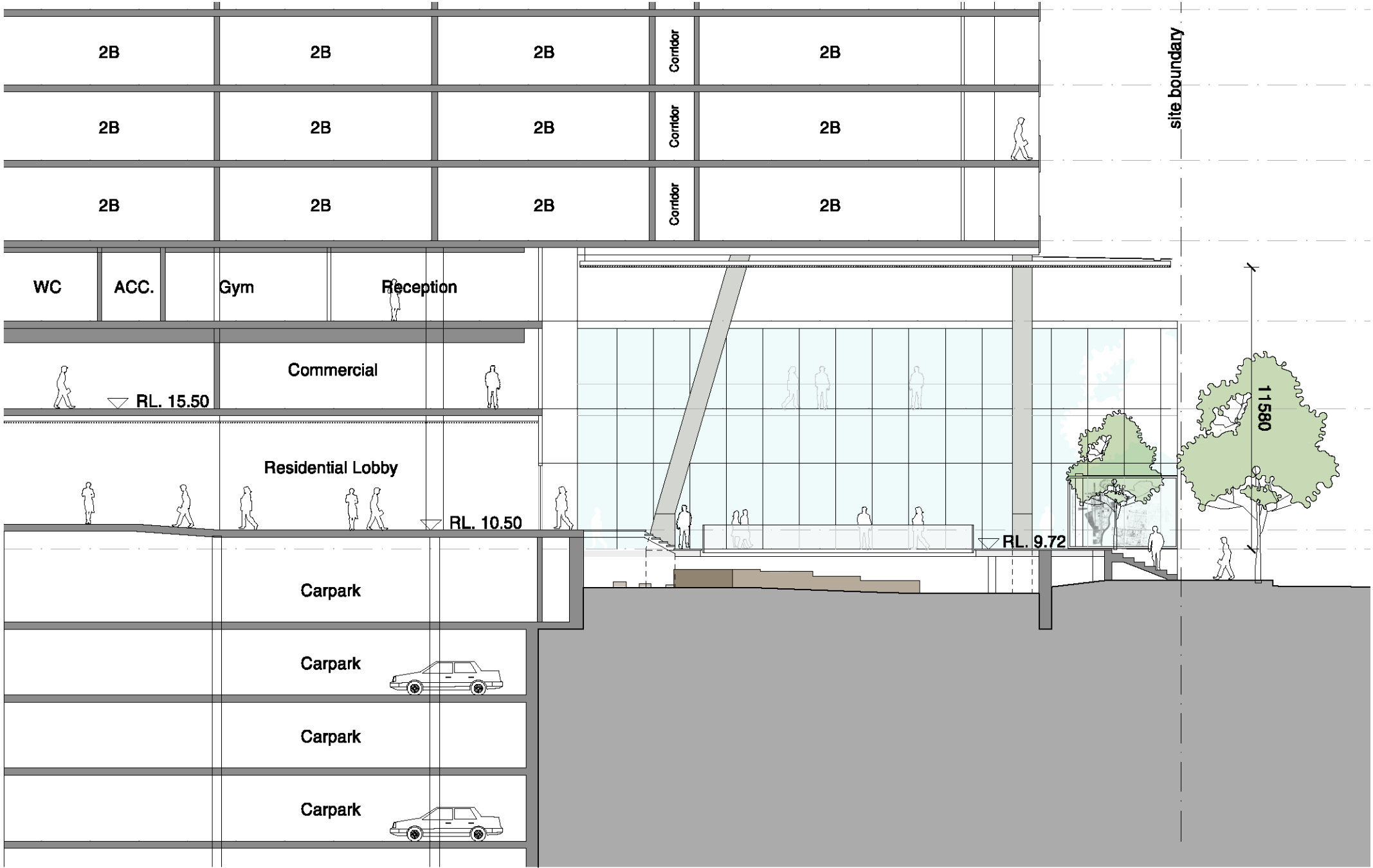


6. Archaeology

vi. Archaeology Plaza Detail Plan

Scale 1:200





6. Archaeology

viii. Archaeology Plaza 3D Sketch Views



View from the corner of Macquarie & Marsden Streets - plaza gates open



View from the corner of Macquarie & Marsden Streets - plaza gates closed



View from Macquarie Street

6. Archaeology

viii. Archaeology Plaza 3D Sketch Views



View from Level 1 Interpretation Centre