

6.0 DESIGN VISION

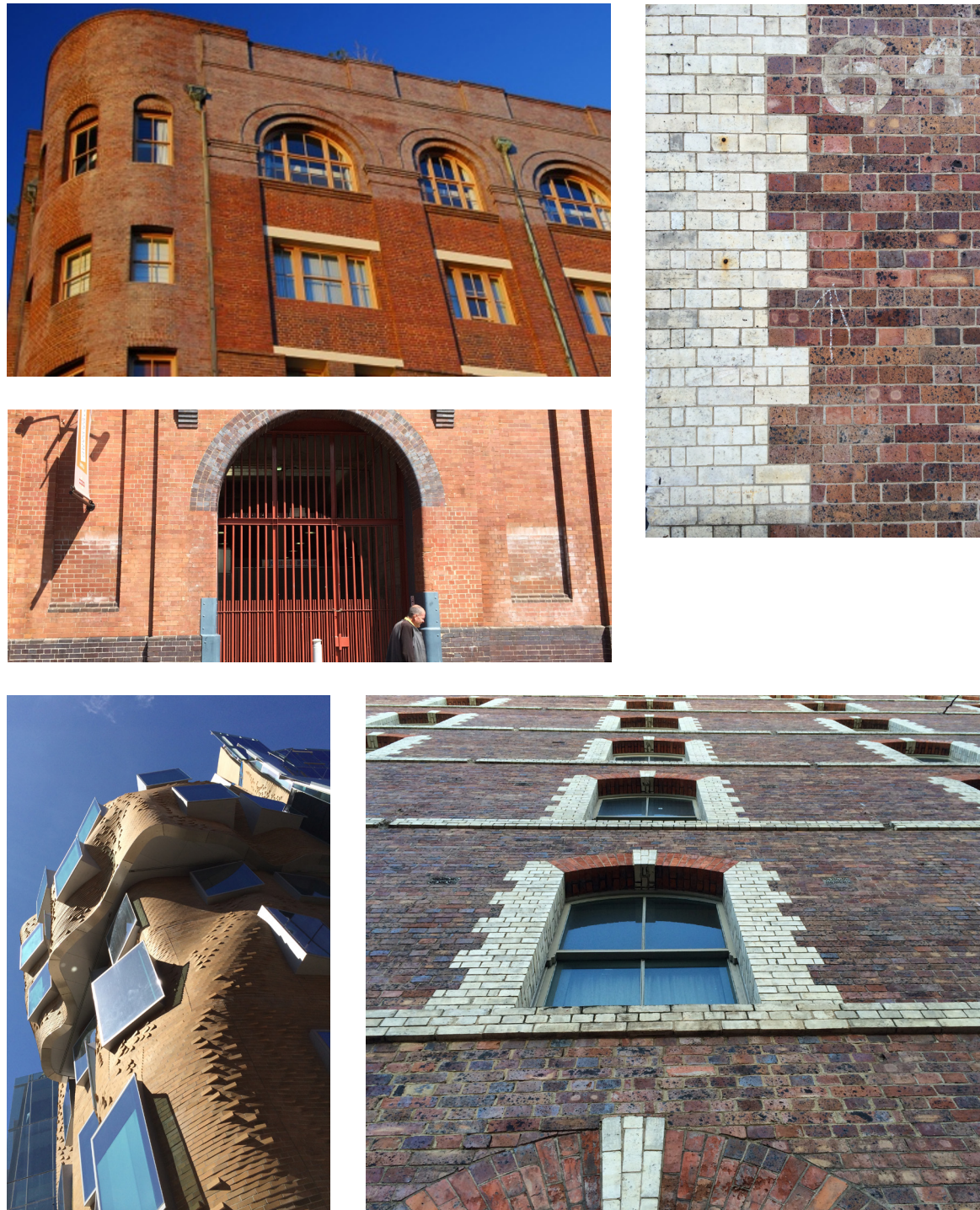


Figure 6.8 – Materiality of brick buildings in close proximity



Figure 6.9 – View from Junction of Harbour Street and Little Hay Street

The materiality of the building responds to the local context.

A material palette has been developed for the project that responds to the local context. A simple palette of brickwork, concrete, metalwork and glass has been developed in response to the local environment and to support the urban design strategy.

The large scale urban design moves are described in concrete and glass whilst brickwork has been utilised for the finer grained subtler urban design responses. The bricks proposed and some of the detailing have been developed as contemporary interpretations of the brickwork detailing found in surrounding buildings. SSDA7 engages the use of varied brick and bond types to achieve a rich architectural character.

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The design provides opportunity to activate the surrounding public spaces.

The design ensures maximum activation to the surrounding network of public open spaces through a varied mix of retail tenancies and apartment entries. Retail tenancies are maximised in terms of both frontage and depth to the new public square to the west and to front the memorial park to the north. A narrower depth of retail tenancy is provided to the lane to the south. The tenancies also vary in height with 5.9m floor to floor high tenancies addressing the square and 4.2m floor to floor high tenancies to the north, south and east.

Apartment entries to NE 1 and NE 3 towers are consolidated to maximise the available frontage for retail as well as form a distinctive address on the Harbour Street frontage. The western tower is accessed by more intimate addresses on the southern lane and the square.



Figure 6.10 – Ground plane activation

The building design enhances the amenity of the apartments designed within it.

The richness of the urban design response and the articulation of the building design relates to how the uses have been distributed within the envelope and how the building's fabric responds to these constraints. The design of each apartment in particular has been developed in consideration of the opportunities and constraints of its position within the building. This strategy is supported by the detailed design of the envelope. The façade is more open to take advantage of light and views and more closed to provide visual and acoustic privacy and protection from overlooking. These requirements change in relation to the site context.

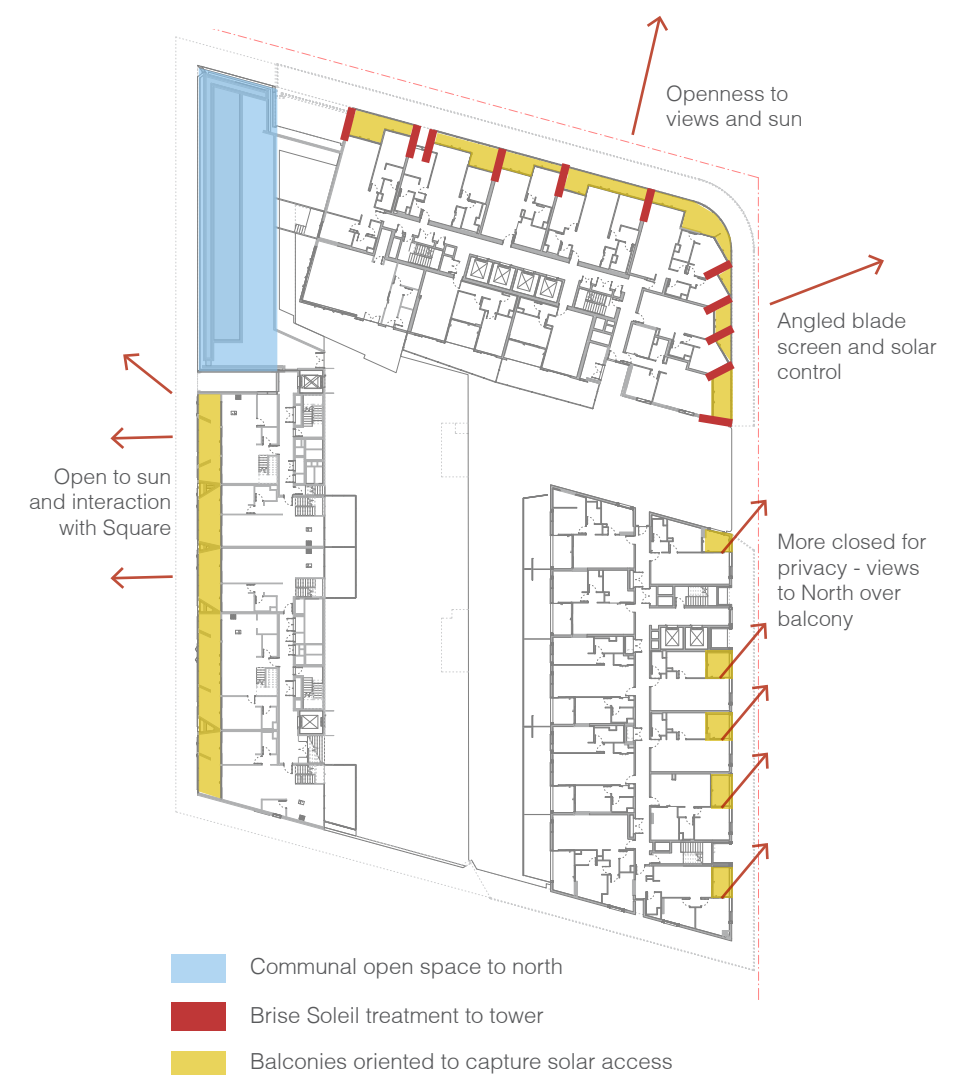


Figure 6.11 – Planning amenity in response to context

7.0 BUILT FORM AND ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER



Figure 7.1 – View from North West

7.0 BUILT FORM AND ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER

7.1 Design Principles

The proposed development is defined as a cohesive city block, articulated by a 6 storey podium with 3 towers of varying height above, being 7 stories, 19 stories and 41 stories respectively.

The podium consists of a grand ground floor lobby, incorporating retail tenancies of varying height and depth, apartment and a vehicle entry. The interior of the podium is occupied by car parking, storage and services. Above ground level the car parking is sleeved by apartments on 3 sides and screening is provided to the southern side fronting Little Hay Street.

The siting of the building, at the southern end of the large scale public space of Darling Harbour provides a unique opportunity to provide a building that operates both on the grand scale of this largely public space, providing a distinctive new element on the skyline and a fine grained contribution to the local public domain of Haymarket, Chinatown and Darling Square.

The built form of the proposal is compliant with the approved Stage 1 Concept Proposal and has been designed with the following intent;

- To produce elegant distinctive buildings appropriate to their place;
- Positively integrate with its surroundings; and
- Create efficient floor layouts and apartments, designed for modern residential living.

The design intent is to generate a contemporary and innovative building, elegant and vertically articulated, setting the proposal in context with the surrounding developments of Darling Square and the surrounding industrial, commercial, residential and institutional buildings.

The design proposed seeks to express its massing and articulation as a series of related yet distinct towers set above a richly articulated podium. The taller towers (NE 1 & NE 3) express their verticality through a range of architectural detailing to define a series of elegant forms. The lower elements within the podium is composed as a horizontal block of brickwork defined in bands of varying colours, textures and reflectivity. The tower elements are typically articulated from the podium by both a re-entrant in the building form and through a variation in material and detailing strategies.

The towers respond to the changing characteristics of the site with elevation from dense and private to open and expanding.

The NE3 tower located to the north of the site is conceived as two vertical interlocking volumes articulated by vertical slots. The northern and eastern volume consists of a curved brise soleil. The texture of the northern face consists of horizontal slabs with minimal vertical elements. This language is transformed on the eastern face where the vertical blades are angled and increase in density to angle views to the north and provide screening from the city to the east. The southern and western block is more regular, flush in response to its southern aspect and increased proximity to surrounding residential towers. The top of the tower is articulated by a change of floor to ceiling height, texture and materiality resulting from the layout of the penthouse apartment and the introduction of a higher floor to ceiling height for the top floor.

The NE1 tower located to the east of the site is designed as a series of vertical brick forms of varied widths set above the horizontal brickwork of the podium. The large scale of the tower is broken into three towers of varied proportions by recesses in the facade highlighted with glazed brickwork. These elements are further articulated by the vertical fenestration pattern of the apartments which terminate with double height living spaces to the apartments at the top floor. The castellated ceiling heights allows for the plant rooms to be concealed behind the taller volumes, allowing for the expression of a modern mansard roof profile.

The NE2 building located to the west of the site is articulated as a singular, horizontal concrete band. This band is broken into two parts, the northernmost enclosing the communal pool and garden area with the southern one enclosing the double story apartments. An angled roof profile screens the roof level plant room from the public spaces below.

The podium consists of a ground floor level of flush glazed shop fronts set in brickwork with integrated awnings. The residential apartments above are enclosed in brickwork, the character of which changes in relation to its context. These strategies include spandrels of brick work, to curved vertical columns of brick to brick screens and brick spandrels with integrated concrete structure.

The underlying design principles of the design are consistent with the wider precinct proposals so that it forms a coherent part of the city's fabric.

The design will offer improved connectivity and permeability through the site, linking Chinatown and Haymarket to the harbour via improved pedestrian, public transport and vehicular links. In particular, pedestrian routes are enhanced to create safe, enjoyable and active paths. These paths are connected to the wider precinct and surrounding areas with vistas to urban focal points opened up to assist with way finding.

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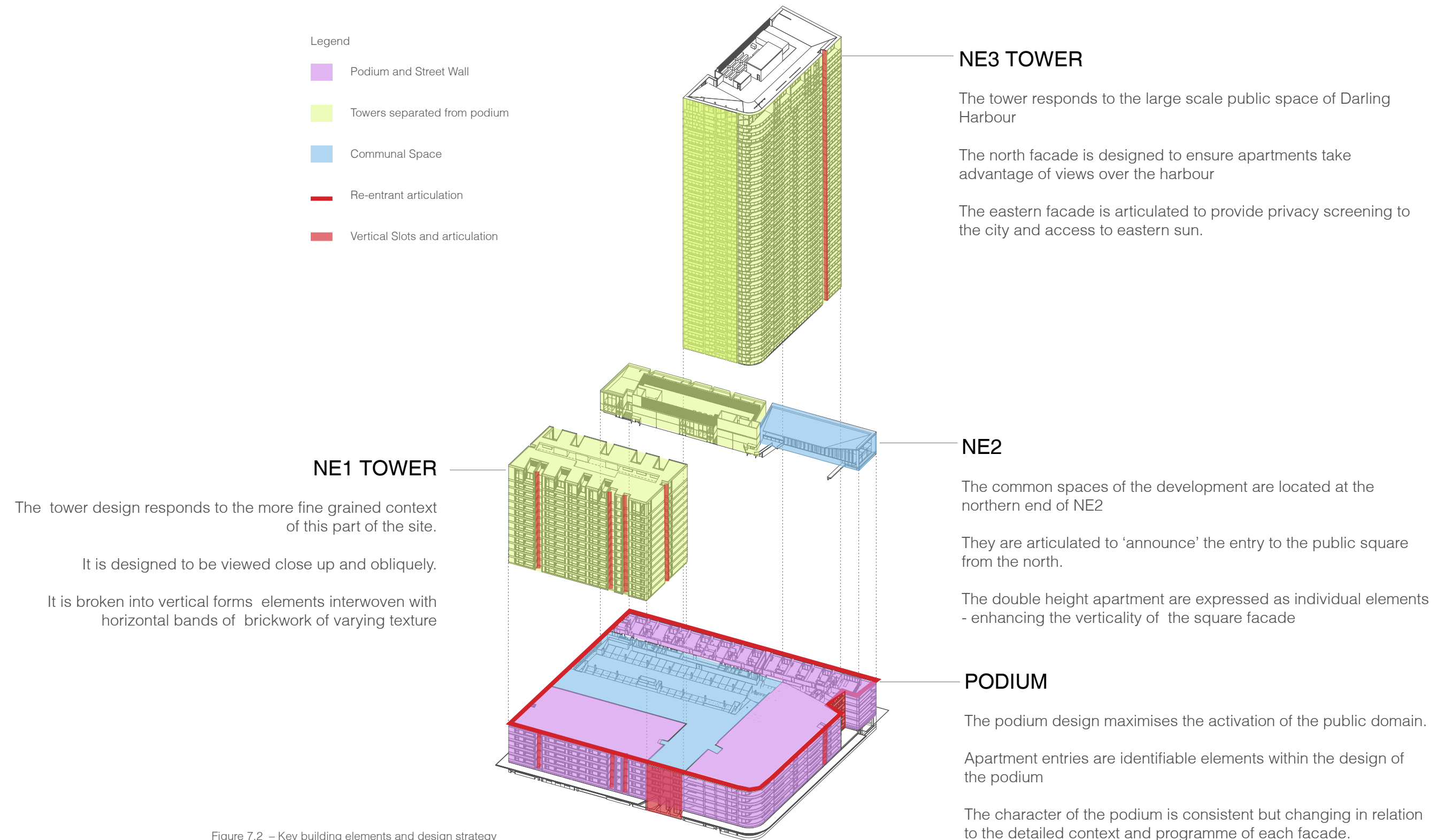


Figure 7.2 – Key building elements and design strategy

7.0 BUILT FORM AND ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER

7.2 Building Scale and Massing

The massing of the NE1, NE2 and NE3 towers typically define the edge of the block, particularly the street wall of the Square, Harbour Street and the extension of Factory Lane to the north which defines the northern edge of Darling Square. The podium also reinforces the street edge on these alignments.

Horizontal and Vertical re-entrants have been used to articulate and refine the scale of the buildings. The continuous re-entrant to the podium parapet defines the separation of the street wall from the scale of the towers above. The size and detail varies slightly in location and extent to suit the change in architectural character of the three towers. Vertical slots and fenestrations further delineate the building volumes to reduce the effect of bulk and scale, express changes in the building use and highlight foyer entries.

The massing and articulation of the towers maximises outlook and views and responds to the geometry contained in the Darling Square Stage 1 Concept Proposal with regard to solar orientation and visual separation.

The two towers, NE1 and NE3, sit above the podium at the perimeter of the site and create a unique and recognisable signature for the city skyline. The location of NE3 in the context of the city and Darling Harbour is particularly distinctive in this context. They are separated by 12 metres to minimise overlooking and respect view corridors across the site.

NE2 building defines the eastern edge of the Square. Its lower built form responds to its proximity to the square and its overall massing responds to the design of the SW plot through a consistent rise in storeys and scale.

The podium is a 6 storey brick form of varying characters that floats above a retail ground plane. The characteristics of this responds to the changing conditions across the site, use and the towers over.

7.3 Ground Floor and Public Domain

The proposal supports the street network hierarchy established by the Stage 1 Concept Proposal approval. It supports the fine grained, active new east west lane way connections through the site. This new open space network facilitates safe accessible pedestrian movement across the site and facilitates their use for both planned and spontaneous activities.

In particular the project complies with the controls defining lane widths, the requirement that the lanes be open to the sky with the exception of canopies and tenant awnings, the requirement for a direct line of site into Little Hay and Factory Lane, clear pedestrian access paths in street edge activation zones, the provision of a Little Hay Street extension and the provision of level thresholds into retail and entrance lobbies.

The building has been designed to accommodate a variety of activities to activate the public domain, including retail, dining and apartment lobbies. It has been designed to provide definition to public spaces whilst minimising building bulk surrounding the public square to minimise overshadowing to this important public space.

Residential entry points are clearly defined within the fabric of the podium providing a strong sense of arrival to the apartments above.

Awnings provide weather protection around the entire perimeter of the building. This provides a consistent datum for both the project and continuity with adjacent projects.

The impact of services and back of house on the façade is minimised through the careful design and positioning of these elements on the façade. They are limited to the car park entry, mail rooms, substation, fire escapes and key fire services. These elements are minimised and distributed among the retail tenancies and apartment entries. Larger elements such as the substation and car park entry are located on Harbour Street, separate from the active pedestrian public domain.

CPTED Response

A CPTED review of the project has been conducted and the outcomes of this review integrated into the design of the project. Refer to the CPTED Report which accompanies SSDA7.

7.0 BUILT FORM AND ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER

7.4 Facades and Materiality

The material character of the building has been developed in consideration of the local context, the architectural design concept and the long term performance of the façade. A limited, direct palette of materials and details has been proposed using glass, metalwork, concrete and brickwork. The implementation of these elements varies for each part of the proposal and their façades in response to each environmental and contextual condition as well as the activities enclosed. This strategy allows for the creation of a rich, related but varied architectural character for the proposal.

The large scale elements of the design are proposed in concrete whilst finer elements are proposed in brickwork. The use of brickwork ties the building to its rich local context of industrial and institutional brick buildings.

A variety of brickwork types are proposed to articulate the building form and develop a rich surface texture. A glazed white brick articulates building entries and key elements in the built form. A base brickwork pattern is developed out of matt and gloss bricks of matching colour.

A horizontal banding of brickwork in matt and gloss is proposed for the podium to respond to the visual and acoustic privacy of the lower apartments. This detailing creates a solid and unified datum for the street wall, which is capped by a re-entrant to define the separation from the towers above. The materiality of the towers is varied to respond to the different character of each building and its context. Balustrades are glazed above the podium to increase access to light and views framed by concrete for NE2 & NE3. Full height glazing to NE1 windows results in the expression of vertical brick fingers and the effect of a mansard style roof form.

The surface variation of brick types, concrete application and variation in glazing extent, provides a changing reflectivity and texture to animate the façade. Each material is selected in consideration of its role and performance to deliver a low maintenance, high quality, and long lasting, durable architectural response.



Figure 7.4 – Podium East Elevation facade and materiality



Figure 7.5 – Image of NE2 showing varied brick textures

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7.5 Podium Design

The design of the podium was developed on a number of core principles:

- To maximise openness and flexibility to the retail tenancies allowing them the greatest opportunity to activate the public domain;
- To create distinctive, memorable entries to lobbies of the apartment buildings over;
- To allow the apartments within the podium to be identifiable as residential, be able to take advantage of views of the new public spaces created as part of the proposal and ensure appropriate levels of acoustic and visual privacy from these apartments;
- To provide adequate screening and ventilation of the carparking areas within the podium; and
- To have a diverse yet related architectural character in response to the site conditions and the buildings over.

The podium facades vary in response to particular urban conditions, use, and in response to the towers over. This strategy develops a hierarchy in forms to the public domain network as set out below.

The ground floor frontages of the podium are characterised by flush glazing within a brick armature. These are set below a recessed ventilation and awning zone and have structure suppressed behind the glazing line, allowing maximum flexibility of fenestration operability and tenancy breakup. A number of variations in this strategy between the east and north, and south and west facades reflect the importance of the new public square. These are primarily a glass in lieu of solid awning to the west, a double height frontage to the west and the introduction of a brick podium to the shop fronts to the east and north to deal with the flood levels affecting the site.

Apartment entries are articulated through the use of glazed brickwork, often in curved form, and set back frameless glazing. The larger NE1 and NE3 lobby is further articulated by its dramatic scale, location between the NE3 and NE1 towers and the changed expression in the façade over.

Services frontages have been minimised and are generally enclosed in the base brickwork of the tower over with flush metal panelling to integrate doors and ventilation where required. A similar strategy of a brick screen is proposed to conceal the car park areas that form the southern elevation to the podium.

The apartment levels of the podium are typically given a brick treatment. This includes a brick slab edge detail and brick spandrel to provide privacy from below and strip windows over. This spandrel element is characterised by a soldier course and stretcher bonds in the gloss brickwork. (Refer to figure 7.5) These are further articulated by operable screens to the west, with these windows providing acoustic screening from the square. The spandrels are broken by the interspersed concrete structure of the tower underneath NE3 and are full length balconies rather than interspersed bay windows and balconies which is the typical detail for the podium. (Refer to figure 7.12)

The language of brick spandrels is broken over the grand lobby, replaced with a series of curved brick columns, assisting in the legibility of the lobby and the scale of the podium. (Refer to figure 7.19)

The change of architectural character and detailing around the podium establishes a rich texture across the street wall. The consistent use of brick in the varying applications unifies the podium identity. The podium datum is capped by the re-entrant to create a strong shadow to define the separation of the material and form changes of the towers above.



Figure 7.6 – Podium South Elevation

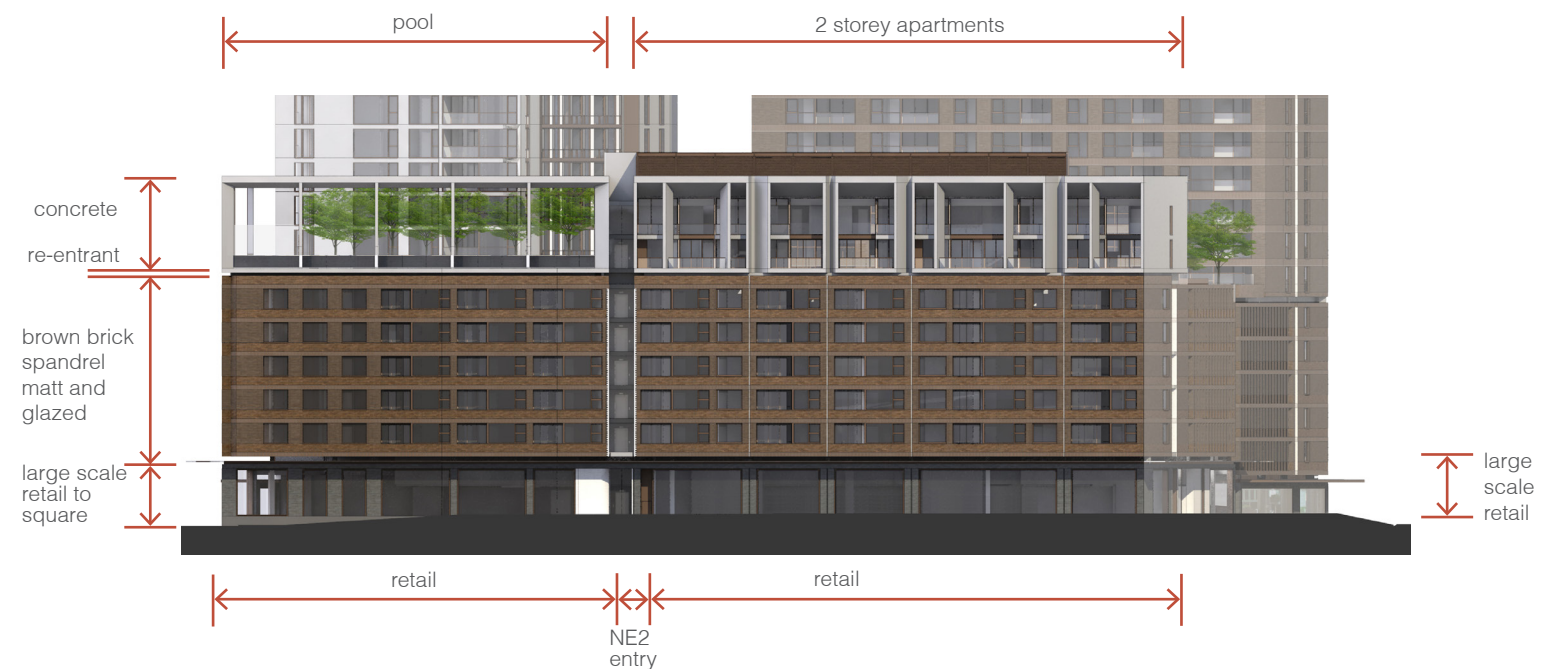


Figure 7.7 – Podium West Elevation

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Retail

Flush level transitions are achievable along Little Hay Street and to the Square.

Where level transitions are required by the flood levels, along Harbour Street and Factory Lane there was a concern that setting back retail to create grade transition zones and locating retail units above ground level significantly impacts the commercial viability of the retail and undermines the Design Guidelines objectives to activate the street edge. Limited plan depth and lane width prevents localised level changes. Instead, the levels have been graded up to the ground level datum.

Through this DA, the design seeks approval to deliver the retail and residential entries at ground level along Harbour Street and Factory Lane, which is the primary overland flow path where these levels cannot be raised. Instead they run below the recommended flood protection datum. Through consultation with hydraulic engineers and Lend Lease, these retail units will be designed so that fragile and electrical assets are located above the flood datum, and reinforced shopfront and entry doors will be specified to resist flood water. Fittings and finishes will be required to be suitably robust to allow easy cleaning, and an escape to a safe refuge above the flood datum.

There are some precedents for addressing similar retail installations within flood risk areas of Sydney. The final details will be subject to subsequent approvals.

This strategy is supported by a Retail Flood Strategy prepared by Lend Lease and a Flood Strategy Letter prepared by the Flood Solutions Advisory Group included as appendices.

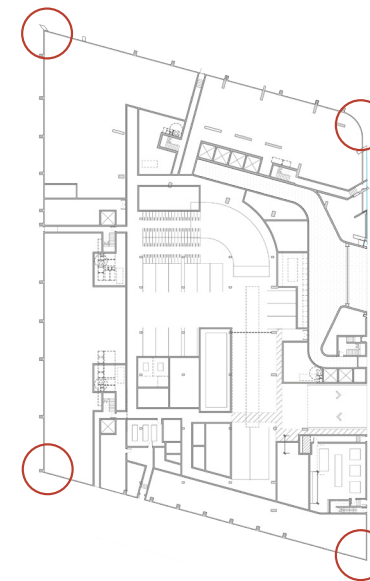


Figure 7.8 – Activated corners



Figure 7.9 – Ground floor slots in facade



Figure 7.10 – Residential entries & carpark entry



Figure 7.11 – View from Square

7.0 BUILT FORM AND ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER



Figure 7.12a – East Elevation

NE1

The NE1 tower extends the strategy of brick detailing developed in the podium, allowing it to be read in contrast to the more graphic concrete character of the NE3 and NE2 buildings above podium. Its character has been further developed in recognition that many of the views of this tower are close range, oblique, glancing views and that its surface character is of particular importance in response to this.

The façade of the building has been broken into three unequal towers by the services cores. These are expressed as recessed elements in the façade and highlighted by glazed brickwork. This vertical emphasis is continued in detail through the façade fenestration as the apartment layouts are extended from the podium layouts below.

This vertical patterning is interwoven with a subtle horizontal texture established primarily through changing the scale of the window design. Full height windows are proposed above podium level as privacy concerns are reduced, with a double height order at the top floor concealing the roof top plant. This horizontal structure is enhanced by the use of varied bands of brick texture. Soldier courses of a slightly more reflective brick are utilised for the slab edge details in contrast to the matt stretcher bond brickwork that makes up the majority of the façade. At the upper levels, the gloss brick is used throughout, maximising the reflectivity of the building against the sky.



Figure 7.12b – Typical Plan above podium

7.0 BUILT FORM AND ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER

NE2

NE2 is a low rise building with a 2 storey concrete element floating above the brick plinth of the podium. It has two distinct volumes separated by a recessed apartment lobby.

The northern structure is the communal pool area. It is an outdoor space, semi enclosed to provide protection from the elements. Frameless glass screens on all sides combined with an open roof provide protection from the wind but maximise solar access to the space. This is enclosed in a monumental, white, concrete armature, providing the large scale spans and spatial qualities required for such a space. The transparency of the building allows for views from the wet edge pool to the public space below and back to the large scale planting provided on the landscaped podium.

A similar strategy of monumental, concrete framing is implemented for the two story apartments that characterise the southern part of NE2. A greater order of texture and detail is provided by the second story balconies and window glazing as is appropriate for the residential use proposed for this part of the building.

The concrete armature, which frames the pool and the 2 storey apartments, float on the same re-entrant datum and align in parapet height. The consistent character establishes a unified top for the NE2 building with variances in the expression of the concrete openings to reflect the different uses between the communal pool and residential apartments.

The verticality and rise in storeys is consistent with the low rise building to the SW plot to maintain a complimenting character for the street wall to the Square.

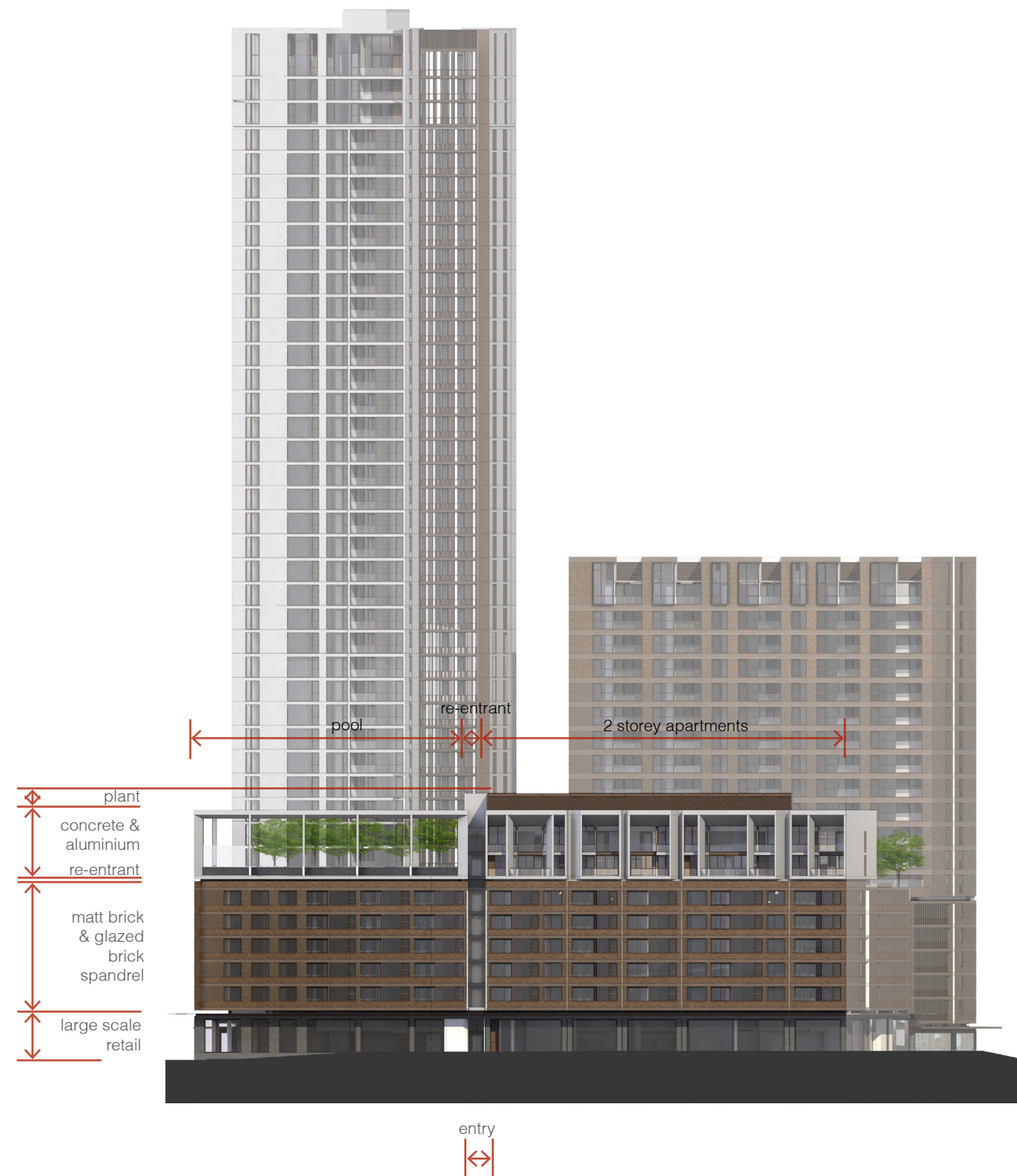


Figure 7.13 – West Elevation

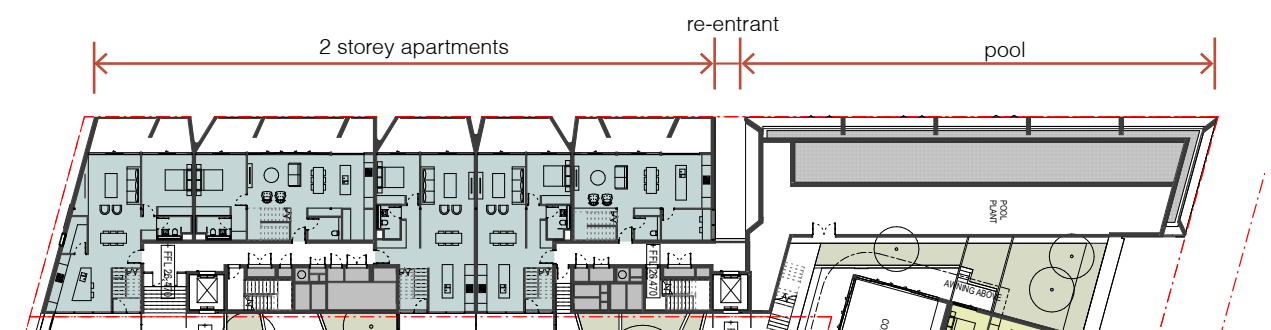


Figure 7.14 – NE2 Floor Plan level 6

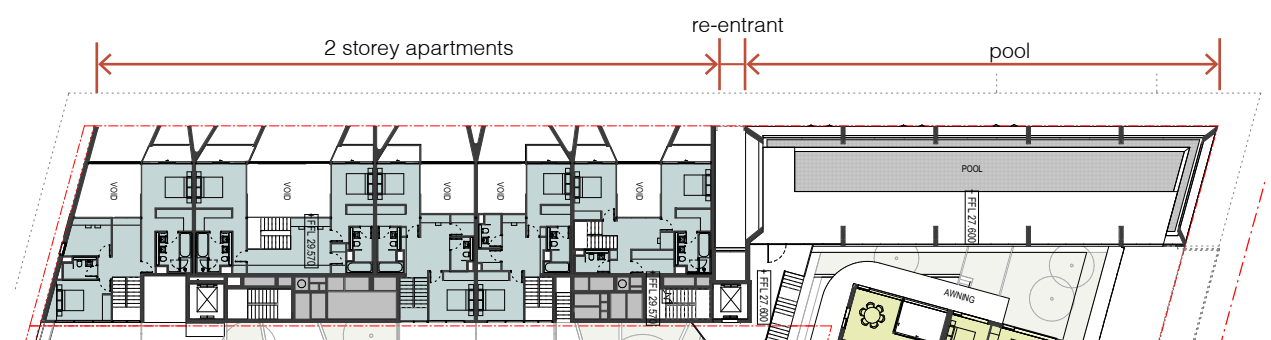


Figure 7.15 – NE2 Floor Plan level 7