

# 3.0

## THE PUBLIC DOMAIN

### 3.1 DESIGN FRAMEWORK

#### MASTERPLAN DESIGN PRINCIPLES

This Stage 2 SSDA seeks to build on the Government Architect's Office Masterplan completed in August 2013 and the subsequent Stage 1 SSDA approved in May 2015. The masterplan diagrams and notes within this section are extracted from the GAO's Walsh Bay Arts Precinct Masterplan which identifies six key principles, illustrated on the following pages.

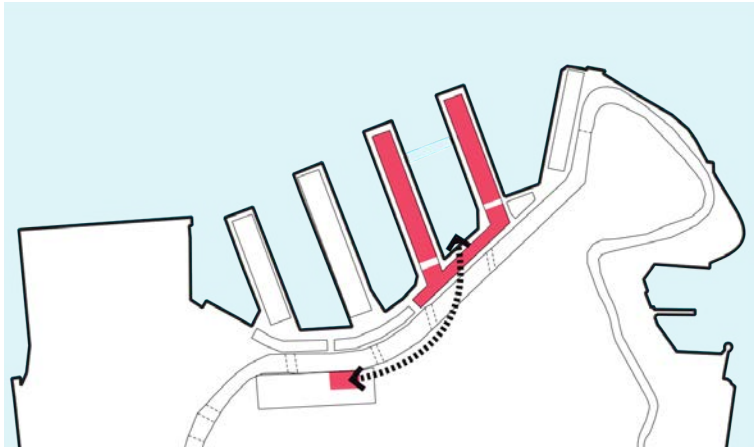


Figure 23 Principle 1 diagram, GAO 2013.



Figure 24 Principle 2 diagram, GAO 2013.

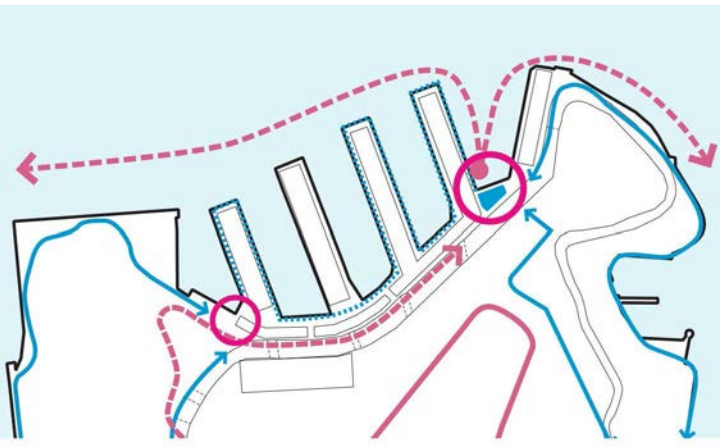


Figure 25 Principle 3 diagram, GAO 2013.

#### STAGE ONE SSDA APPROVAL

The current Public Domain design is a further refinement of the Stage 1 SSDA proposal, in accordance with the agreed Vision for the WBAP and the design principles embodied in the Stage 1 consent.

#### PRINCIPLE 1

##### CREATE A UNIFIED ARTS PRECINCT

Establish a critical mass of arts and cultural activity by linking existing and proposed tenants to establish a cultural hub.

- Create a synergy between Wharf 4/5 and Pier 2/3 and Sydney Theatre.
- Cluster activity through coordinated programming in the precinct.
- Program space with a range of activities for a wide range of users.
- Transform the precinct by connecting facilities through new complementary activities, enhanced public domain.
- Create areas of covered public access to allow for a diverse range of activities to be connected throughout precinct in all weather conditions.

#### PRINCIPLE 2

##### CREATE A RANGE OF ATTRACTORS

Connect the precinct through a range of permanent, temporary and pop-up activities that act as attractors and draw people to and through it such as; performances, temporary art installations, festivals, temporary events, art and theatre workshops.

- Introduce a range of complementary commercial activity to support core arts tenants such as; bars, cafes, coffee carts, restaurants, small food stands.
- Design and program the public domain to support a range of activating uses for a broad range of users.

#### PRINCIPLE 3

##### CREATE AN INTEGRATED PUBLIC TRANSPORT NODE WITH IMPROVED CONNECTIONS AND WAYFINDING

Provide regular public transport and create defined entry thresholds with high quality amenity to establish a clear sense of arrival and reinforce precinct identity.

- Extend Millers Point bus services to Walsh Bay and extend ferry services to Walsh Bay for evening and weekend performances as well as special events.
- Create an information centre/one stop shop at the key arrival point on Pier 2/3.
- Encourage cycling through dedicated cycle paths and the installation of cycle parking facilities.
- Use signage/maps to assist in wayfinding as well as identify current programs and up and coming events.
- Increase views to the harbour and enhance public domain to reinforce public accessibility and amenity.

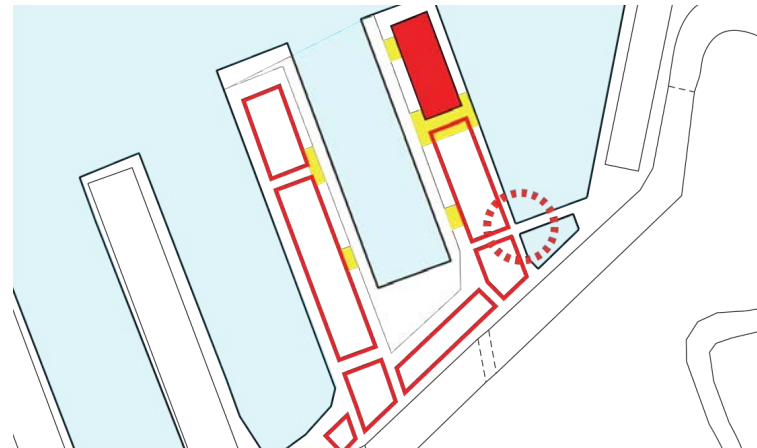


Figure 26 Principle 4 diagram, GAO 2013.

#### PRINCIPLE 4

##### **RESPECT AND CELEBRATE HERITAGE**

Harness the existing heritage within the precinct to reinforce its unique identity and establish the cultural hub as a distinctive destination

- Adaptively re-use, integrate and interpret the unique heritage spaces and artefacts.
- Harness the potential of the raw space within Pier 2/3 for temporary events.
- Explore the innovative building structure
- Reinterpret the site's heritage with a contemporary expression and overlay.
- Develop a high quality public realm fitting to the robust wharf structure and maritime setting.

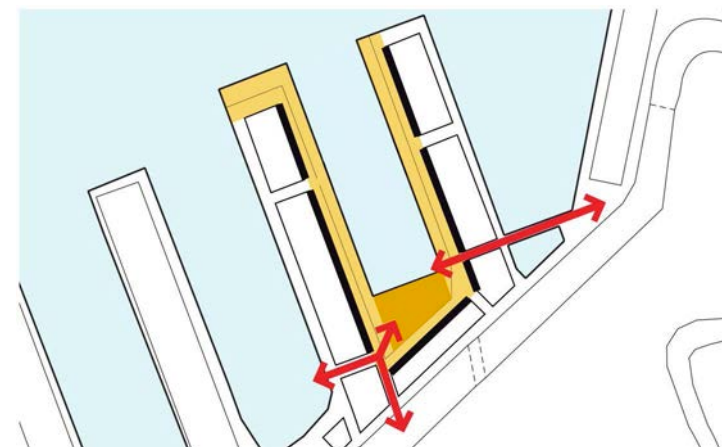


Figure 27 Principle 5 diagram, GAO 2013.

#### PRINCIPLE 5

##### **CONNECT WHARVES WITH NEW CULTURAL HUB**

Create a cultural hub by establishing a critical mass of residential arts and cultural organisations on Pier 2/3 and Wharf 4/5 linked through a high quality public domain.

- Establish a unique destination on the harbour through creation of a Waterfront Square.
- Use the Waterfront Square as a dynamic waterfront performance and public event venue.
- Create links along the length of the wharves to increase site permeability.
- Create a series of levels within the public domain to support a range of uses and activities and improve engagement with the water.

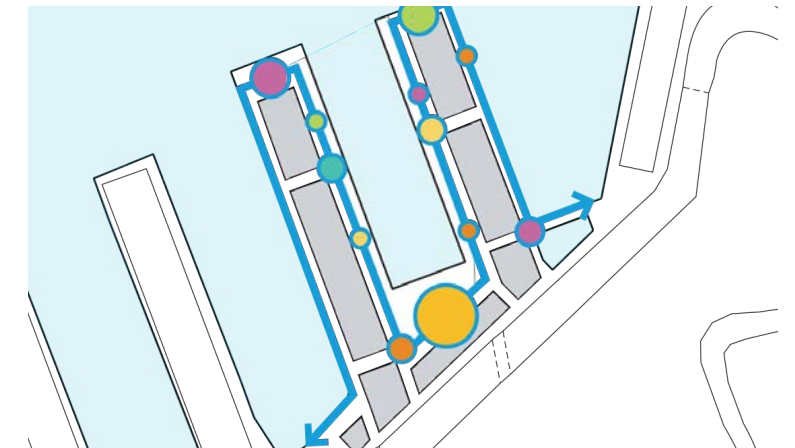


Figure 28 Principle 6 diagram, GAO 2013.

#### PRINCIPLE 6

##### **CREATE ACTIVE WATER FRONTAGE**

Create an active waterfrontage by spreading a range of activity along the length of the wharves and engaging building users with the outdoor areas.

- Distribute a diverse range of users along wharves.
- Increase activity along wharf aprons.
- Open up buildings to the Waterfront Square to enhance indoor/outdoor interaction.
- Design and program the waterfront square to act as both an every day place and special event space.
- Re-introduce gantries at the upper levels to provide additional outdoor spaces overlooking the water.

3.2 PUBLIC DOMAIN GOALS

The Stage 1 SSDA approved concept has been refined to generate the greatest degree of activation and flexibility all year around. In order to do this the following goals for the public domain were identified:

- Increase views
- Extend the hours of use
- Maximise creative space
- Creating flexible and scalable performance spaces
- Allow for daily recreation
- Allow for a diversity of uses
- Establish an active engagement with the water

Using these seven goals, the design of the public domain is positioned to function as a day to day hang out space for the creative and the public and as a flexible performance space for larger groups and major events. The result is a public domain that offers a high degree of adaptability for a wide range of uses, that is active 365 days of the year.

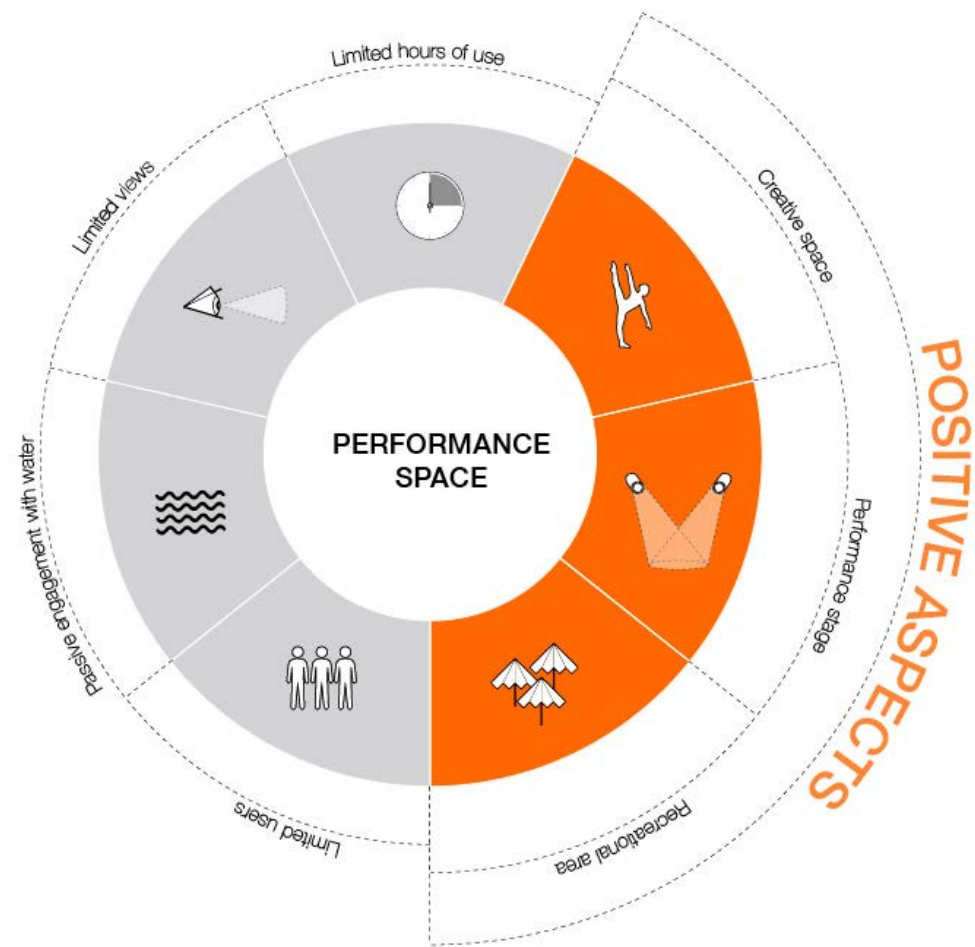


Figure 29 Event and performance use mode.

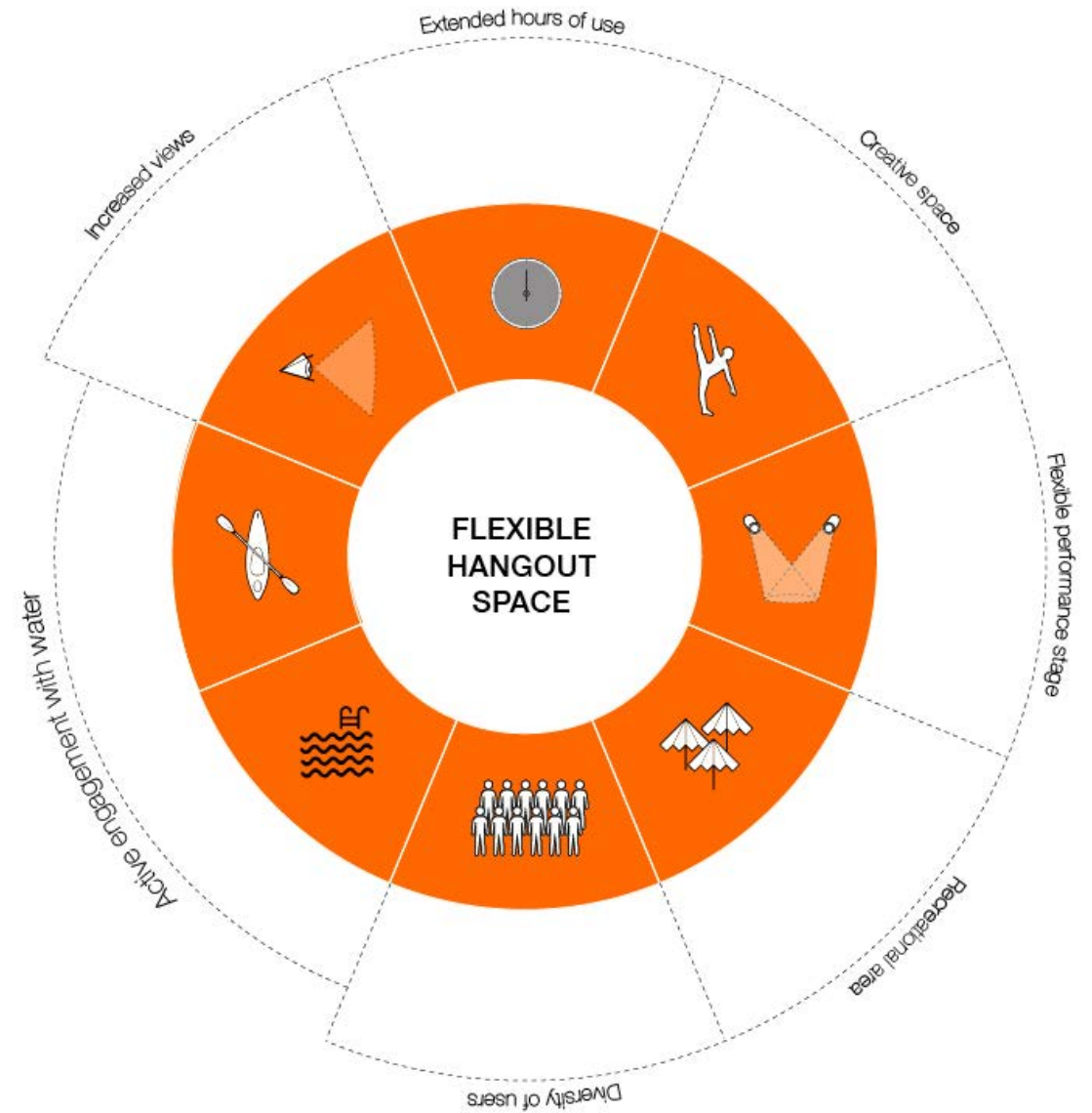


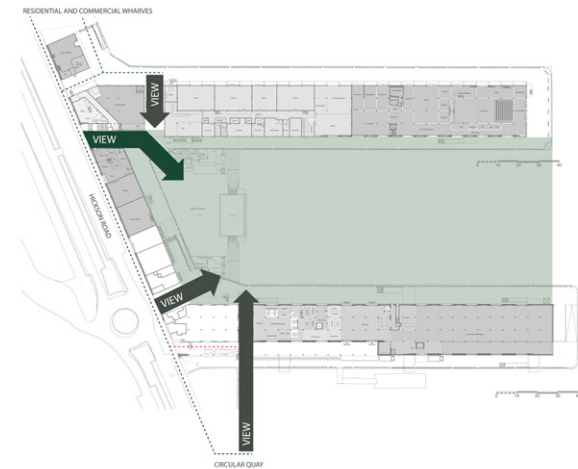
Figure 30 Day to day use mode.



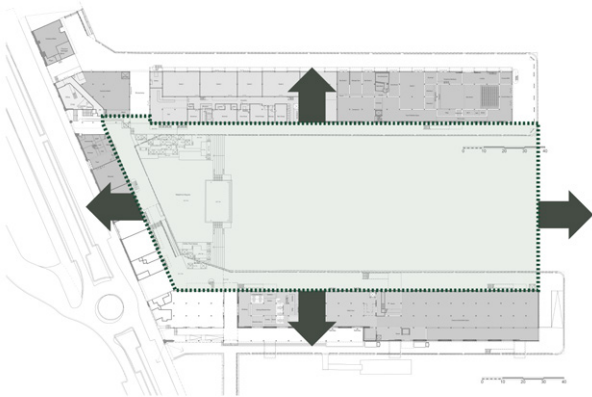
3.3 PUBLIC DOMAIN STRATEGIES

Seven key public domain strategies have been established, based on the public domain goals, to drive the design development of the project. These are as follows:

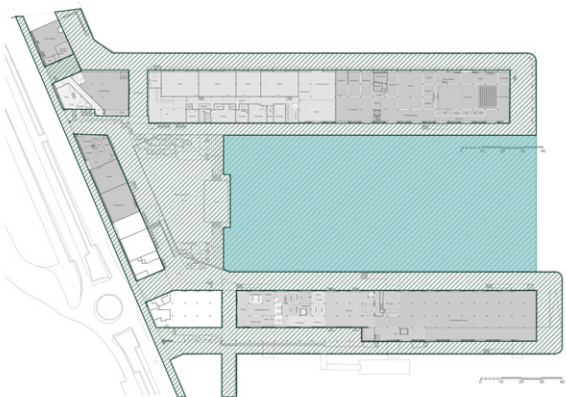
- Improve external identity and arrival experience.
- Create an iconic 'destination' in the city.
- Create a holistically considered public domain.
- Encourage tenants to play a role in the design and use of the space.
- Explore a multidimensional use of space in the public domain.
- Provide an appropriate response to the microclimate and environment.
- Ensure the design supports a range of uses, events and performance types.



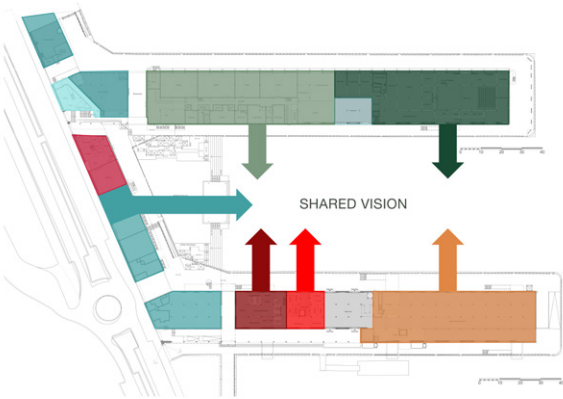
**Figure 31**  
**IMPROVE EXTERNAL IDENTITY & ARRIVAL EXPERIENCE**  
Create a unique and legible arrival experience from the adjacent streets and breezeways that draws visitors into the space and responds sensitively to the industrial and heritage character.



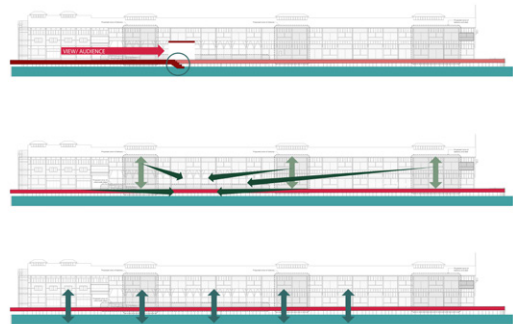
**Figure 32**  
**CREATE AN ICONIC “DESTINATION” IN THE CITY**  
Create an iconic and identifiable public space in the city that reflects the exceptional qualities of its tenants and responds to its identifiable industrial and heritage context.



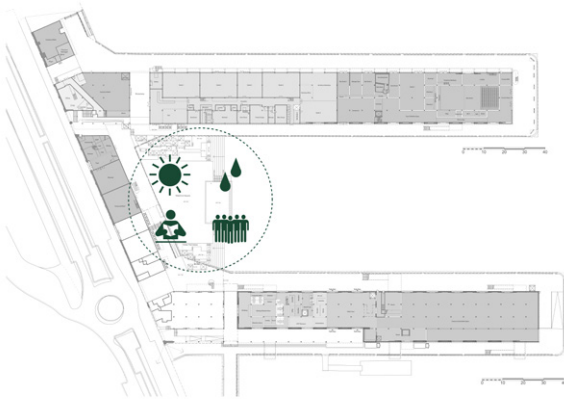
**Figure 33**  
**CREATE A HOLISTICALLY CONSIDERED PUBLIC DOMAIN**  
Establish a holistically considered public domain strategy that balances the complex working and performative requirements of the precinct with an active and engaged pedestrian environment.



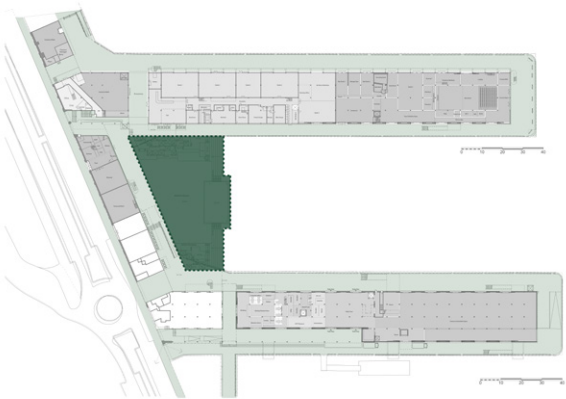
**Figure 34**  
**ENCOURAGE TENANTS TO PLAY A ROLE IN THE DESIGN & USE OF THE SPACE**  
Establish a shared vision that reflects a comprehensive understanding of how to maximise the use of the public domain for all stakeholders and their associated activities.



**Figure 35**  
**EXPLORE A MULTIDIMENSIONAL USE OF SPACE IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN**  
Create a public domain that engages with all the dimensions of the space including the existing and proposed openings, views, vertical circulation of the space and the relationship of the public domain and the water.



**Figure 36**  
**PROVIDE AN APPROPRIATE RESPONSE TO THE MICROCLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENT**  
Develop a holistic response to the microclimate requirements that adds to the identity of the precinct and allows for a range of active and inactive uses throughout all seasons and times of the day.



**Figure 37**  
**ENSURE THE DESIGN SUPPORTS A RANGES OF USES, EVENTS AND PERFORMANCE TYPES**  
Establish a highly adaptable spatial response for the public domain that maximises its usability for a broad range of uses from large scale events to intimate performances, art installations and passive recreation.



### 3.4 GATEWAYS

The Walsh Bay Arts Precinct is accessed via a series of key Gateways which provide eight entrances; one to the east, one to the west, four to the south on Hickson Road and two from the Pottinger Street in the form of bridges connecting down to the aprons.

- The eastern entry to the site (1) presents an opportunity to mark the precinct and provide an important visual and ceremonial entry. The existing bridge from Pier 1 visually directs visitors to the precinct and key lobbies in Pier 2/3.
- Gateway 2 provides access to the existing Shore Sheds function venue via the existing colonnade and will provide access to the proposed new foyer to Pier 2/3.
- The breezeway that forms Gateway 4 is the existing primary gateway for visitors to the Sydney Dance Company, Sydney Theatre Company, Australian Theatre for Young People and Bangarra, particularly for visitors arriving at the precinct via taxi or car.
- The breezeway that forms Gateway 3 has clear, wide site lines into the precinct and the public domain, and is an important visual and physical link for visitors approaching the precinct from the upper Rocks via Pottinger Street and entrance (7).
- The new loading and servicing strategy for Wharf 4/5 and Pier 2/3 proposes the removal of the existing boom gates and vehicle infrastructure from gateways (3) and (4), and replacement with removable bollards to improve the address of these entries.
- The breezeway that forms Gateway 6 connects the site to the rest of Walsh Bay including the waterfront commercial restaurants and bars located in the Shore Sheds to the west of the site.
- Gateway 7, the eastern Pottinger Street bridge, connects directly to the Precinct via stairs and a lift to the Ground level at the wharf apron. It could become an valuable gateway for pedestrians from the Rocks and the northern CBD.
- Gateway 8, the western Pottinger Street bridge, connects directly to the STC workshop. Whilst it has no public access function, it is an important goods and service access for the STC.

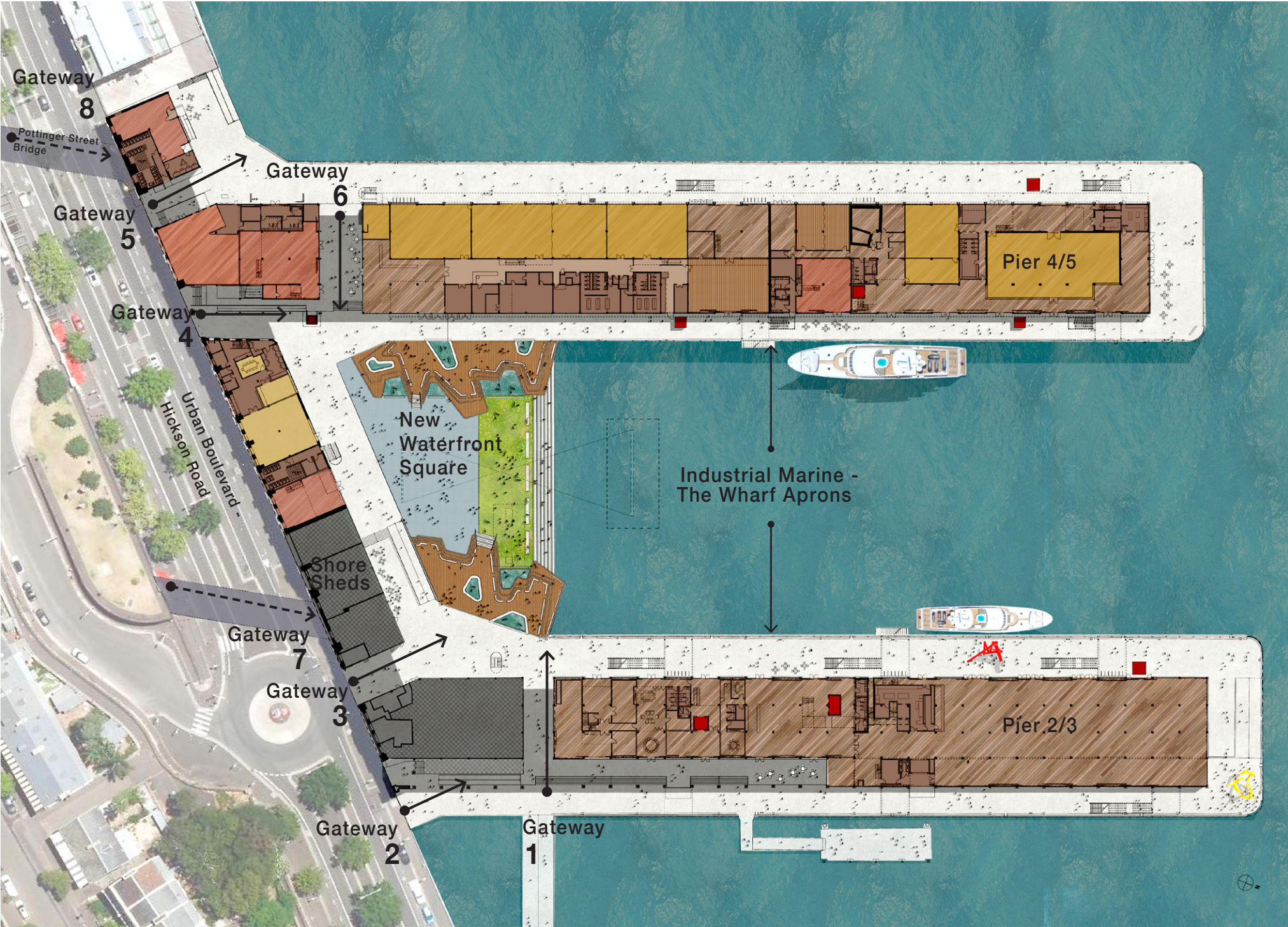


Figure 38 Gateway key plan.



GATEWAY STRATEGY

Gateways should:

- Retain clear and open views from Hickson Road into the precinct and especially to the Harbour.
- Be free of visible gates and barriers.
- Be accessible to the whole community
- Not be obstructed by ramps or stairs leading to individual tenancies.
- Include wayfinding signage.
- Support WBAP branding.

The Breezeways form several of the Gateways, as well as forming cross connections from Pier to Pier. Where Breezeways do not form Gateways, they should:

- Remain clear of visual obstructions to ensure wharf-to-wharf connectivity.
- Provide opportunities for outdoor sheltered seating.



Figure 39 Gateway 1, TZG

1. ENTRANCE FROM PIER 1

- Primary existing address to Precinct, impeded by existing service vehicle boom gates.
- Main gateway for visitors arriving by private vehicles and taxis as parking is located primarily west of the precinct.
- Patrons already familiar with precinct currently use this entrance to access the Sydney Dance and Theatre Companies.

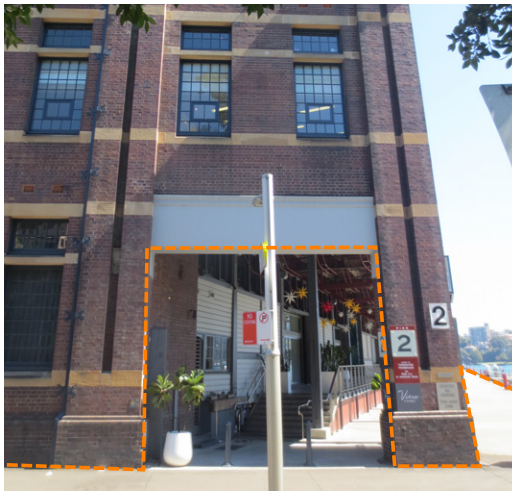


Figure 40 Gateway 2, TZG

2. HICKSON ROAD, PIER 2 ENTRANCE

- Important address that provides direct access to the proposed raised colonnade and main foyer.
- Provides access to existing function space.
- Gateway will increase in importance following completion of the development and will require enhanced signage.
- Vehicular access to service Pier 2/3 to the right of this gateway will need to be managed.



Figure 41 Gateway 3, TZG

3. HICKSON ROAD, PIER 2/3

- Important address for cyclists and visitors arriving via public transport from Circular Quay.
- Parking is generally located west of the precinct.
- Opportunity for wayfinding signage and precinct marking to signal ceremonial entry to precinct.



Figure 45 Gateway 4, TZG

4. HICKSON ROAD, WHARF 4/5

- Primary entry from Hickson Road through shore sheds.
- Clear sightlines into precinct and the public domain from Pottinger Street and Hickson Road.
- Important secondary access to capture visitors who miss main entry, as well as visitors approaching from The Rocks.



Figure 42 Gateway 5, TZG

5. HICKSON ROAD, PIER 5 ENTRANCE

- Primary vehicular access to service Wharf 4/5.
- Secondary pedestrian entrance.



Figure 43 Gateway 6, TZG

6. WHARF 4/5 BREEZEWAY

- Important existing entry for visitors approaching Sydney Theatre Company from existing restaurants and bars around Piers 6/7 and 8/9.
- Limited lighting and visibility into precinct.
- Opportunity for improved lighting and wayfinding and improved western address.



Figure 44 Gateway 7, TZG

7. POTTINGER STREET PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE

- Stair access to precinct from upper level of Shore Sheds via Pottinger Street
- Limited views into precinct from distance - not currently clear that this is a precinct entry from a distance.
- Opportunity for wayfinding totems and ground plane treatment to signal entry as visitors approach from the upper Rocks and the Argyle Precinct.



Figure 46 Gateway 8, TZG

8. POTTINGER STREET STC BRIDGE

- This vehicular bridge services the back of house of the Sydney Theatre Company.



### 3.5 PUBLIC DOMAIN DESIGN PRINCIPLES

#### THE PROPOSAL

The design of the new Waterfront Square integrates the geometry of the existing wharf aprons with their varied angled shapes and changes of level, all originally derived from their loading functions. At the north, stairs to the water continue the alignment of the Breezeway in Pier 2/3, retaining the view of the water from this important gateway. The majority of the Square is level and is flush with the key entry at Wharf 4/5. At either side, raised areas resolve the changes in level to the main Wharf Aprons.

The forms proposed are inspired by the site itself: by the indented bays and headlands of the Harbour, by the shifting surfaces of the water, the masts and rigging of the ships that for 150 years berthed in the bay, by the materiality and colours of the heritage structures.

A new layer of carefully-integrated infrastructure enables the Waterfront Square to function for day-to-day occupation, for small 'pop-up' events and small and large scale managed events, right up to city-wide celebrations such as New Years Eve, Vivid and the Festival of Sydney.

Overall, the design continues the principles endorsed by the Stage 1 SSDA consent, addressing concerns of event functionality, day-to-day use and shading.

#### CONCEPT INSPIRATION

Whilst still referencing the industrial past of Walsh Bay, the new Waterfront Square puts a distinctly modern twist on the heritage wharves we see today. Piers 2/3, 4/5, once a hive of daily maritime activities, have become disengaged with the theatrics of the harbour context: the change of the tide, the coming and going of vessels and the working harbour. Today, the hustle and bustle comes not from an active marine port, but from the coming and going of artists, audiences and sets. Conceptually working with the wharves' past mechanics of loading and unloading general cargo, Walsh Bay's new public space becomes a vibrant reworking of the past as a theatre for daily life.

Many outdoor performance spaces today are designed to prioritise large scale events and often become vacant and underused, relying on events and programming for their success. However, the result at the Walsh Bay Arts Precinct is a truly multipurpose public space, establishing a daily destination, a hangout for local artists, the public and surrounding community to enjoy. This approach enables a space that can remain active 365 days of the year, whilst maintaining the capacity to host a range of large and small scale events complementary to the arts precinct.

Playing with the concept of cargo nets, the new public space dances in and out, reminiscent of the rise and fall of the tide. The 'lounger's lawn' provides both a strong visual juxtaposition to the composition and a relaxing, informal space to unwind and socialise. The playful composition consisting of timber, colourful decking, shading, tensile netting and grass, positions the Waterfront Square as an iconic new public space befitting this centre for creativity.

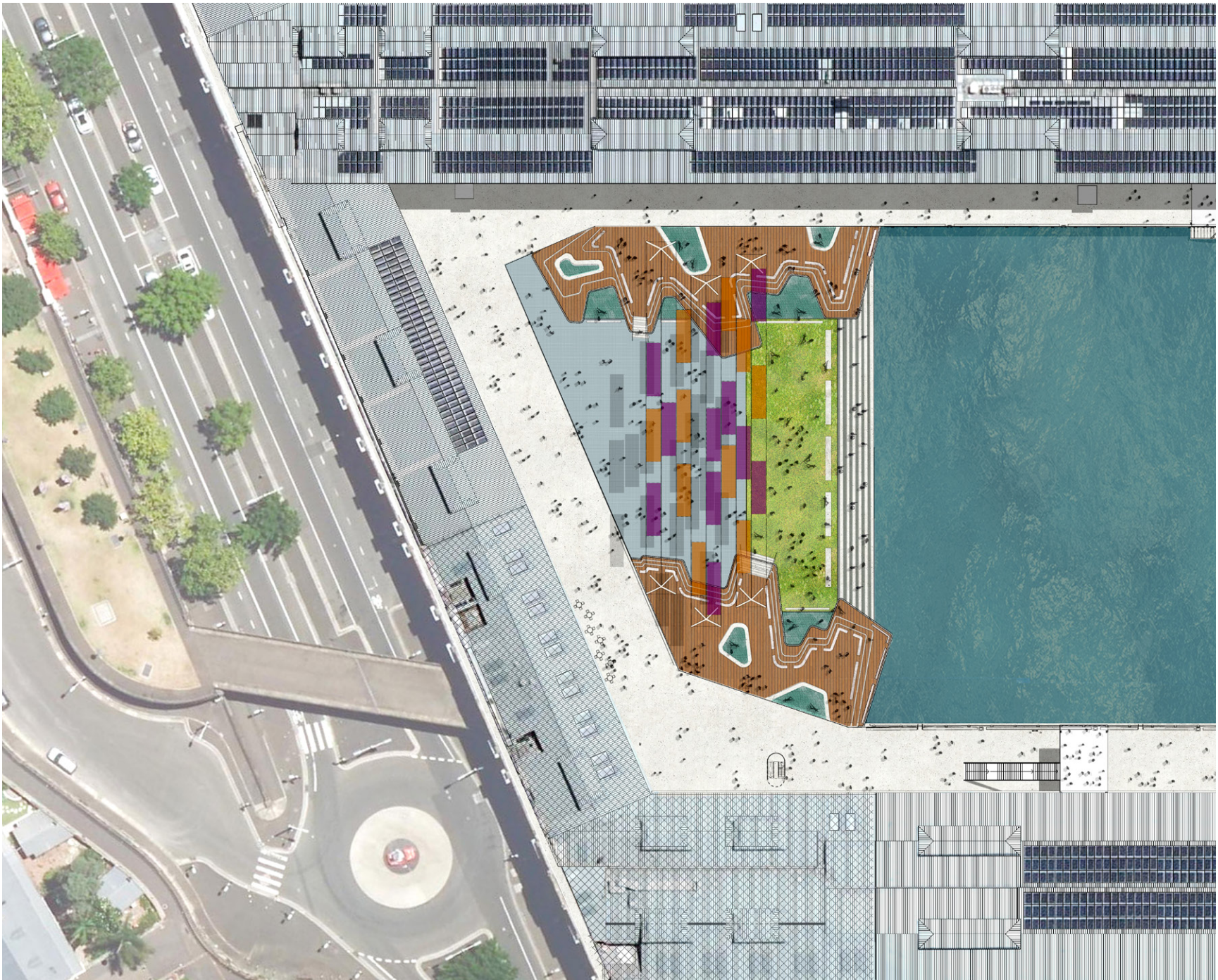


Figure 47 Roof plan showing proposed Waterfront Square



3.6 PUBLIC DOMAIN ELEMENTS

KEY MOVES

The public domain consists of three key moves underpinned by the principles in the GAO masterplan.

The aim of these moves is to work together to provide a 365 day space which facilitates both intimate hangouts, smaller events and large scale activities.

MOVE 1: THE WINGS

Hugging the edges of the public domain, ‘the wings’ provide an exciting multilayered intimate space for day-to-day hang outs, small scale performance and café dining. The design of these edges navigates the complex level changes of the pier aprons and works to create smaller social moments through its terraced design. The terracing utilises the concept of ‘bays’ and ‘peninsulas’. Inward facing bays establish smaller social enclaves and a unique user engagement with the harbour using tensile netting to create intimate social spaces. The design of the netting provides a direct reference to the history of Walsh Bay as a cargo site. It also allows the user to engage more directly with the harbour within a playful yet safe and universally accessible environment. The ‘peninsulas’ offer more open space which can be used for smaller events to provide micro stages and amphitheatres. The top of the ‘peninsulas’ have a larger decked area which engages with the neighboring cafes and events spaces, allowing internal activities to activate the new Waterfront Square.

MOVE 2: THE WATERFRONT SQUARE & FLOATING CANOPY

The microclimate of the Waterfront Square is modulated by a unique canopy which forms the focus of the design. The public space is capable of hosting large events and screenings, whilst maintaining a sense of enclosure and providing respite from the hot summer sun. The canopy itself is an artwork. The result is a space that can negotiate climate more intelligently, whilst providing a historical reference to the mechanics of the industrial past of Walsh Bay. Level access to this large area provides maximum flexibility for bump in and bump out operations for events.

MOVE 3: LOUNGER’S LAWN & WATER STEPS

Breaking up the scale of the Waterfront Square, the ‘lounger’s lawn’ offers a public space that engages directly with the water. This highly flexible space plays two key roles. It allows for an extension of the public square during large scale events whilst also offering a softer, smaller open space for rehearsals, picnics and day to day activities. The precast concrete waterside steps provide another moment of user engagement with the harbour enabling the public to engage with the water throughout tidal changes.

A FLEXIBLE SPACE

The public realm for the Walsh Bay Arts Precinct will provide an everyday hangout space as well as promote opportunities for performance, display and community events. The design will allow for flexibility in use and configuration, with a strong emphasis on curation and diversity of cultural programming.

Curation of the Waterfront Square and the events it hosts will lead to a dynamic, shifting landscape. The design allows for a variety of configurations for functions, performances and events. Temporary stages can be brought in for large scale performances, and erected in many ways.

Provisioning services to the Waterfront Square allows the space to function in multiple performance modes and will be underpinned with the following design layers (refer Figure 48):

- 1.Wayfinding and precinct marking at key locations.
- 2.A central, flexible space within the Waterfront Square will allow for multi-purpose activities and interactions, it consists of a new decking structure and grassed hangout space.
- 3.Generously scaled steps give greater connectivity between the central gathering space and the water.
- 4.The waterside edge of the central square will have provisions for bumping in a large scale screen for film events.
- 5.The spaces to the side of the central area, ‘the wings’, exploit the level changes between the building aprons and the central square to create a variety of platforms that will provide a spill out space from nearby food and beverage outlets.
- 6.A unique netting structure further breaks down the scale of ‘the wings’ offering informal seating and a greater connectivity to the water below.
- 7.Shading to both ‘the wings’ and the central square will be provided by a soft, colourful, linear shade structure floating above the space using a catenary system. A flexible lighting system for the Waterfront Square will be incorporated within the catenary system supporting the shade structure.
- 8.Existing leased areas for existing food and beverage outlets will benefit from activation of the precinct.
- 9.The existing ramp connecting the eastern Wharf 3 apron to the Shore Shed apron will be widened to facilitate vehicle movement and assist with event mode operations.



Figure 48 Public domain key spaces diagram