



# WALSH BAY ARTS PRECINCT

WALSH  
BAY ARTS  
PRECINCT

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## SSDA DESIGN REPORT



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# CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	1	4. BUILDING DESIGN PRINCIPLES.....	26
1. INTRODUCTION.....	2	4.1 BUILDING ANALYSIS.....	26
2. THE SITE.....	4	4.2 HERITAGE APPROACH.....	30
2.1 PROJECT SITE AND EXTENT.....	4	4.3 BUILDING DESIGN APPROACH.....	32
2.2 STRATEGIC PRECINCT LOCATION.....	5	4.4 IMPACTS.....	37
2.3 SITE ANALYSIS.....	6	5. FUNCTIONAL LAYOUT.....	38
2.4 HERITAGE CONTEXT.....	8	5.1 SITE LAYOUT.....	38
3. THE PUBLIC DOMAIN.....	10	5.2 PIER 2/3 LOWER SHED GROUND AND MEZZANINE.....	39
3.1 DESIGN FRAMEWORK.....	10	5.2 PIER 2/3 UPPER SHED LEVEL 1 AND LEVEL 2.....	43
3.2 PUBLIC DOMAIN GOALS.....	12	5.3 WHARF 4/5 LOWER SHED.....	49
3.3 PUBLIC DOMAIN STRATEGIES.....	13	5.4 WHARF 4/5 UPPER SHED.....	52
3.4 GATEWAYS.....	14	5.5 SHORE SHEDS.....	53
3.5 PUBLIC DOMAIN DESIGN PRINCIPLES.....	16	6. EXTERIOR DESIGN.....	54
3.6 PUBLIC DOMAIN ELEMENTS.....	17	6.1 PIER 2/3 EAST ELEVATION.....	54
3.7 MODES OF USE.....	18	6.2 PIER 2/3 WEST ELEVATION.....	55
3.8 EVENT DESIGN CONSIDERATIONSV21		6.3 WHARF 4/5 EAST ELEVATION.....	56
3.9 SHELTER AND SHADE.....	23	6.4 WHARF 4/5 WEST ELEVATION.....	57
3.10 SEATING.....	23	6.5 PIER 2/3 NORTH ELEVATION.....	58
3.11 MATERIALITY + CHARACTER.....	23	6.6 WHARF 4/5 NORTH ELEVATION.....	58
3.12 SCALE COMPARISON.....	24	6.7 SHORE SHEDS SOUTH ELEVATION.....	59
		6.8 SHORE SHEDS NORTH ELEVATION.....	60





Figure 1 Waterfront Square, Mogamma



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## DESIGN PARAMETERS

- The architectural design for the Walsh Bay Arts Precinct (WBAP) is based on the following over-arching design parameters:
- The conservation principles defined for this State-significant site, retaining and conserving the fabric of the precinct.
- The detailed requirements of the arts tenants who will occupy the buildings with a wide range of production and performance activities.
- Statutory and other upgrades that will enable the buildings to function as public performance facilities.
- The creation of a vibrant new public realm including a focal, multi-use Waterfront Square.
- The fitout of new event and function spaces to enable cost-effective and flexible use.
- The creation of commercial spaces that will support the activities of the precinct financially and improve visitation numbers and the visitor experience itself.
- Strengthening the precinct's links to Sydney's "Cultural Ribbon" and to the sequence of waterfront public spaces and facilities.
- Creating elements that will help to define the precinct's identity and image world-wide.

## BUILDINGS

The design team, working with the tenants and stakeholders at all levels, has developed a scheme that fulfils these often-conflicting aims and will provide both Sydneysiders and visitors alike with a new and vibrant focus for arts, leisure and tourism.

The design retains the richness of the original fabric whilst meeting strict acoustic and energy-conservation principles, adopting strategies such as:

- Planning many of the spaces so that new walls required for acoustic or energy conservation are located within the buildings leaving exposed the interior faces of the original multi-layered timber walls.
- Concealing new plant within the ridge lines of the twin-peaked roofs.
- Carefully modelling crowd flows and fire safety to reduce the impact of egress routes.
- Planning the audience journey to maximise the experience of the Harbour views and the heritage architecture.
- Locating public spaces so that the public can enjoy new and existing outdoor spaces such as the Gantry Balconies, the Wharf Aprons and the new Waterfront Square.

Future design development leading the construction documentation will include the final selection of interior and exterior finishes and the detailed design of services and structure, all to accord with the design principles set out above.

## PUBLIC DOMAIN

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 derived from the original 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.

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

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, by 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.



Figure 2 Pier 2/3 Proposed eastern elevation photomontage.



# 1.0 INTRODUCTION

*“The vision for Walsh Bay is to create a sustainable and activated arts and culture precinct that supports and nurtures Sydney’s home-grown culture and creativity. As a destination, it will be inclusive and accessible to all.*

*It will be alive at all hours of the day and display a vibrant and accessible night life.”*

WALSH BAY ARTS PRECINCT VISION REPORT  
PREPARED BY ARUP FOR ARTS NSW  
JANUARY 2012

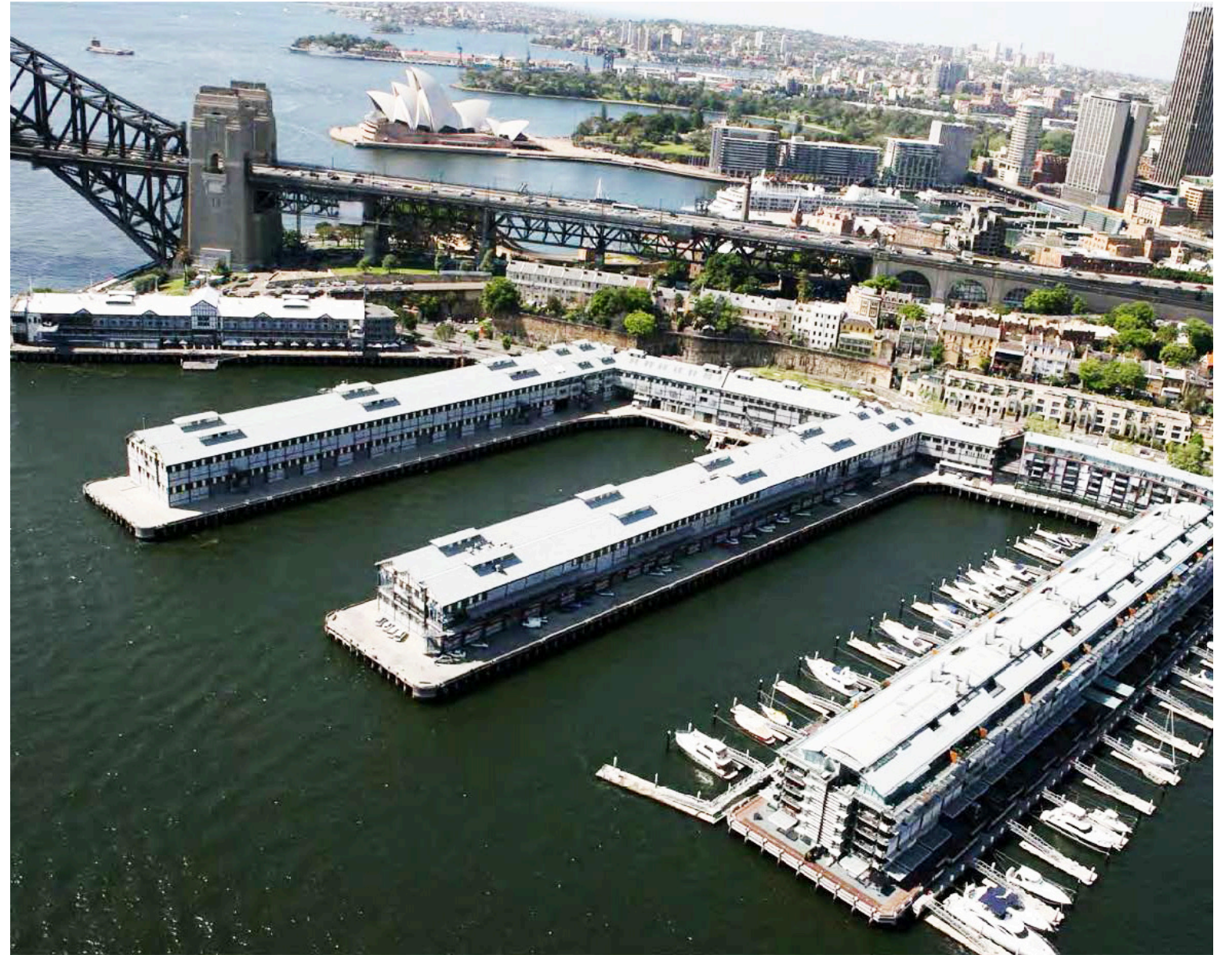


Figure 3 Aerial view of site.





Figure 4 Pier 2/3



Figure 5 Wharf 4/5 and Pier 2/3 looking north

The four key objectives of the Walsh Bay Arts Precinct are to:

1. Activate the Precinct through the provision of a unique cultural offering & visitor experience.
2. Rejuvenate a vital piece of Sydney’s water-front cultural heritage, providing intergenerational benefits for the people of NSW.
3. Provide facilities that better enable arts organisations to develop world-class productions & experiences & deliver on their strategic visions and Government objectives.
4. Create a financially sustainable operating model for the Precinct and its tenants.

This report has been prepared by Tonkin Zulaikha Greer Architects on behalf of Arts NSW and forms part of the Walsh Bay Arts Precinct Stage 2 State Significant Development Application to be submitted to the Department of Planning.

The Stage 1 State Significant Development Application gained “in principle” approval for the overall WBAP concept only. It is now followed by two detailed Stage 2 SSDAs: the current Stage 2 SSDA for the construction of a new waterfront square, building alterations to Wharf 4/5 and the Shore Sheds and the adaptive reuse of Pier 2/3. A separate SSDA for the interior fitout of the Sydney Theatre Company (STC50), located in the upper shed of Wharf 4/5, is being lodged concurrently.

The current Development Proposal is in general accordance with the consent and conditions of consent granted in May 2015 for the Stage 1 Development Application prepared by Bates Smart and others for the Walsh Bay Arts Precinct. Where significant departures from this consent are proposed, they are detailed in this Design Report and in the supporting Statement of Environmental Effects prepared by MG Planning.

The Walsh Bay Arts Precinct (WBAP) concept comprises the following key elements:

- The introduction of a new public domain, comprising a waterfront square between Pier 2/3 and Wharf 4/5 as well as steps down to the waterway for multipurpose use.
- A series of stairs and balconies designed as a contemporary interpretation of the original gantries reflecting the precinct’s former industrial heritage.
- The inclusion of flexible and adaptable spaces in Pier 2/3 and Wharf 4/5 for a large range of arts and cultural activities.
- Modification to the roof of Pier 2/3 and Wharf 4/5 to provide adequate acoustics, plant and equipment.
- Use of the precinct for arts festivals, events and pop ups as well as a range of activating uses such as restaurants, cafes and bars.

SCOPE

This Design Report applies to the following major elements of the WBAP:

- The Public Domain as defined by the Arts NSW leasehold from Roads and Maritime Services, for the Wharf Aprons and Shore Shed Aprons on Pier 2/3 and Wharf 4/5, and the new Waterfront Square between the two Piers.
- The external refurbishment of Wharf 4/5 and internal refurbishment of the Lower Shed.
- The external and internal refurbishment of Pier 2/3 and its adjoining Shore Sheds, excluding areas under a separate leasehold from RMS.

TERMINOLOGY

- In this SSDA, the following terms are used:
- Wharf 4/5 includes Piers 4/5 and the adjoining Shore Sheds.
  - Pier 2/3 includes the Pier itself, excluding the existing RMS tenancies at the south end.