



## THE MERCANTILE HOTEL HOTEL UPGRADES INCLUDING NEW ROOFTOP ADDITION + EXTERNAL LIFT

for HBMS Pty Ltd  
April 2018

## DESIGN STATEMENT



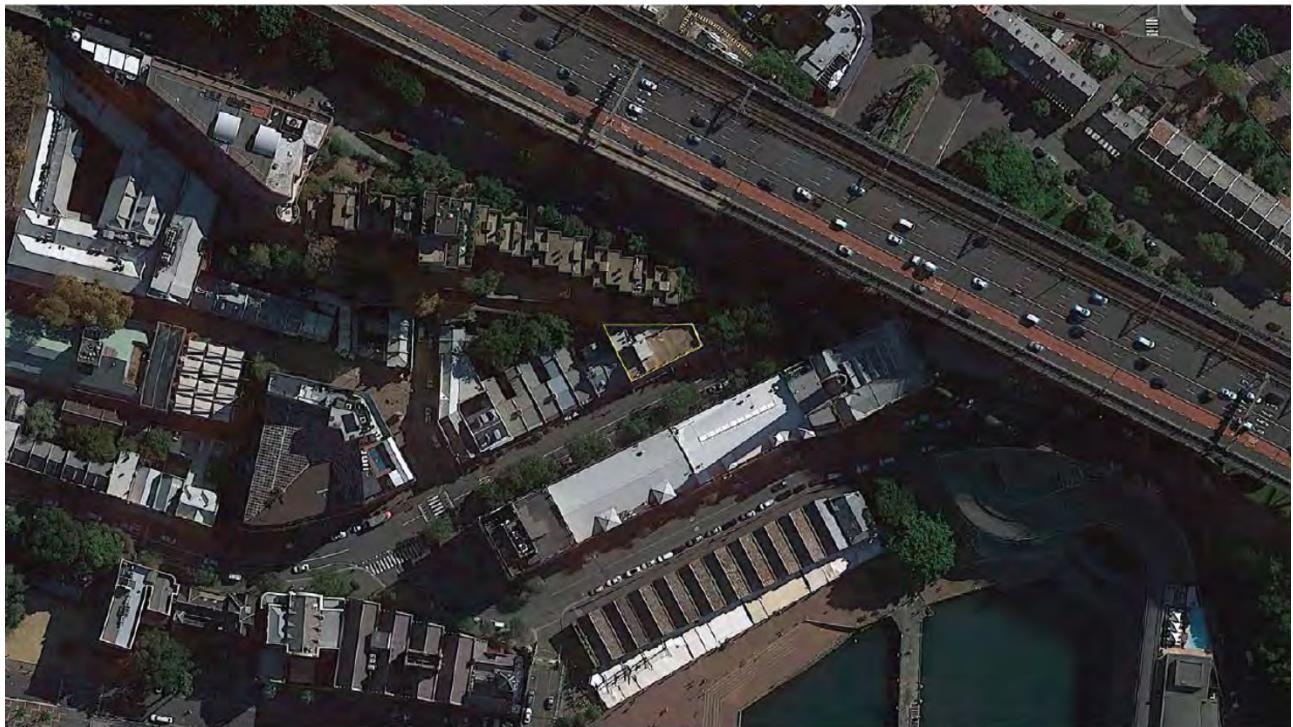
*Prepared by Welsh + Major Architects*

## ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN STATEMENT

April 2018  
Summary

This statement has been prepared by Welsh + Major Architects on behalf of HBMS Pty Ltd to accompany the State Significant Development Application for the redevelopment of The Mercantile Hotel at 25-27 George St, The Rocks. Proposed works include the construction of a new external steel and glazed lift structure; new ground floor amenities addition; new rooftop bar + restaurant addition; and internal modifications, including the relocation of the commercial kitchen fitout to the first floor.

The Mercantile Hotel currently occupies the entire site at 25-27 George St, (Lot 10 Deposited Plan 258607). The wedge-shaped site sits at the northern end of George Street, bounded by the pedestrian laneway of Gloucester Walk to the rear western side. To the south of the site is a row of two storey terraces along George Street known as Sergeant Majors Row.



The Mercantile Hotel was constructed in 1914, originally built with a separate shop to the south with residential accommodation above. Over the years the use of the shopfront and separate accommodation was integrated with the hotel and access provided between the two buildings on the ground and first floors. The CMP for the site, prepared by Graham Brooks and Associates Pty Ltd (2007), notes “the building is of three stories, plus a cellar and rooftop spaces. It is constructed of liver colour face brick, timber and iron, exhibiting relatively simple and restrained lines, with a block-like appearance, relieved by awnings and some cornice moulding.”

The ground floor of The Mercantile Hotel contains a main public bar area, bistro, kitchen, and formal dining area, with a lower ground split-level containing a sports bar and gaming lounge. Patron amenities, the kitchen, coolrooms and other storage areas are located in later addition outbuildings and sheds to the rear. The first and second floor currently contain staff rooms, reception, store and accommodation rooms, most with shared bathroom facilities. The rooftop area and rooms are not currently used and contains an old laundry and store room.

Welsh + Major Architects were commissioned by the long-term lessee, HBMS Pty Ltd, in late 2014 to design the refurbishment, restoration and adaption of the hotel. The hotel has a long tradition as an “irish pub” with live music, however the “sports bar” (created in the old shop in the 1980’s) is less successful and a large area is also devoted to poker machines. The service of food has also become an increasingly important part of hotel operations with a high demand for table seating including the outdoor seating area. Lunchtime and evening food service have seen particular growth, serving both the local working population and visitors. The current kitchen and back of house arrangements are extremely undersized and struggle

to provide the quantity and quality of service that patrons demand. On the upper floors, the guest accommodation rooms, there is a strong continuing trend for guests seeking private ensuite rooms rather than shared bathrooms.

The main objective for the proposal was to refurbish the existing hotel to enhance its traditional pub character while sensitively adapting and adding elements to provide enhanced facilities for food and beverage patrons and accommodation guests, all to facilitate the viable future operations of the hotel.

Key design criteria included; maintaining ground floor public bar and restaurant/bistro areas; provide additional outdoor dining areas; upgrade the hotel accommodation to provide private ensuite rooms to facilitate a vital ongoing use of the hotel; and to expand the hotel operations to the disused rooftop, providing a new open-air rooftop terrace bar. The brief later expanded to include an enclosed rooftop structure for the bar and restaurant, providing the provision of permanent weather protection for patrons and to provide acoustic separation to the surrounding buildings and public domain.

The resulting proposal comprises:

- The construction of a new ground floor concrete amenities building to the rear with compliant toilet numbers
- A new glass and steel lift, located at the rear of the existing building fabric, connecting all four levels of the hotel
- The construction of a new steel and glass rooftop bar + restaurant structure with amenities, bar and kitchen servery
- A new fire egress stair connecting the rooftop level to the existing stair lobby on the second floor
- A new commercial kitchen fit-out to the first floor
- The construction of bathroom 'pods' to the accommodation rooms on the first and second floor
- Restoration and maintenance works
- Upgrade of building services, including, fire, electrical, mechanical and hydraulic
- Re-fitting of internal areas

The proposed ground floor amenities building has been designed to remove the detrimental impact of the current 1980s era infill building, noted as intrusive to the original building and surrounding public domain. The new rear amenities structure will provide compliant washrooms for the hotel within a new structurally independent concrete addition with green roof planting above. The new addition has been designed to locate the patron circulation hallway for the washrooms to the rear of the site, alongside the early sandstone retaining wall below Gloucester Walk. A glass roof is proposed above the hallway to provide natural light across the sandstone wall and visually separate the new addition from the rear sandstone wall. The views from the public domain and rear neighbouring buildings will be greatly improved from the removal of the intrusive ancillary structures and mechanical services and the introduction of green roof planting.

A new steel and glass lift structure is proposed at the rear of the original building footprint, minimising the impact on the heritage fabric whilst providing compliant access to all four levels of the building. The lift structure has been designed to be visually separate from the existing building through glazed links, to allow the original form to be read and to provide transparency through to the original brickwork and detailing. Existing window openings have been utilised where possible to provide compliant access into the new lift structure.

The existing intrusive rear outbuildings and cool rooms are to be removed to provide a courtyard dining area. Access to the courtyard is proposed through a modified rear door and window assembly. The existing lower ground floor sports bar and gaming room is to become a new bistro area with connection to the new rear courtyard. An enlarged opening is proposed in between the current sports bar and gaming room to provide visual connection from George St through to the rear sandstone retaining wall, expressing the sandstone wall as part of the history of the site and connecting key elements of the site to the public domain.

The current hotel accommodation mostly offers rooms with shared bathroom facilities. To maintain vitality of the hotel operations, it is proposed to provide all suites with a self-contained ensuite bathroom. This is achieved by utilising the existing layout of the accommodation rooms and introducing new 'pods' to contain bathroom services. The pods have been designed to be fully reversible and new services are contained and reticulated within the new pod walls and floors.

The new rooftop addition is designed to be visually distinct from the main building, allowing the original heritage structure to read as the principal and dominant building form. The new rooftop sits within the footprint of the existing structure, set-back from the parapet masonry walls to minimise views of the new rooftop from surrounding areas, in particular, from George St. The enclosure of the new rooftop, is set-back from the George St frontage, aligned with the existing rooftop store structures, allowing an uninterrupted reading of the existing masonry façades.

## The Design + Consultation Process

### Background

In 2015 Welsh + Major Architects were engaged by the long term lessees of the hotel, HBMS Pty Ltd, to advise on minor maintenance works to the hotel including painting and lighting works that were subject to a S57 exemption. As part of the consultation with the Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority (now Place Management NSW (PMNSW)) for these works, it was suggested by SHFA that any minor works should be considered in the context of any future plans for upgrades to the hotel. At this time there had been little work carried out to the hotel for a number of years and there was a desire by HMBS to review the overall physical condition of the hotel, its compliance with BCA standards, particularly fire protection measures, its future as a hospitality venue and the viability of continuing to provide accommodation in the hotel.

Based on this initial review, Welsh + Major began preparing initial masterplan strategies for The Mercantile Hotel in early 2015. These strategies were developed initially through consultation with HBMS and SHFA (PMNSW), and more recently in consultation with the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage. The City of Sydney was also contacted regarding the proposal and sent drawings, however they were unable at the time to meet.

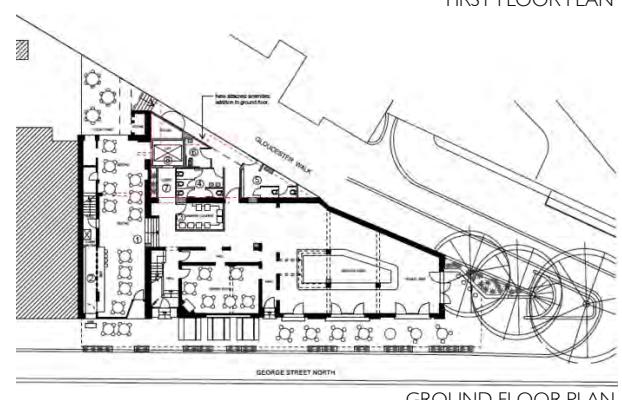
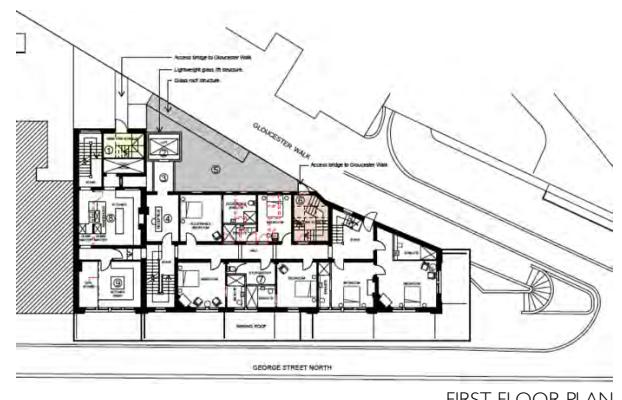
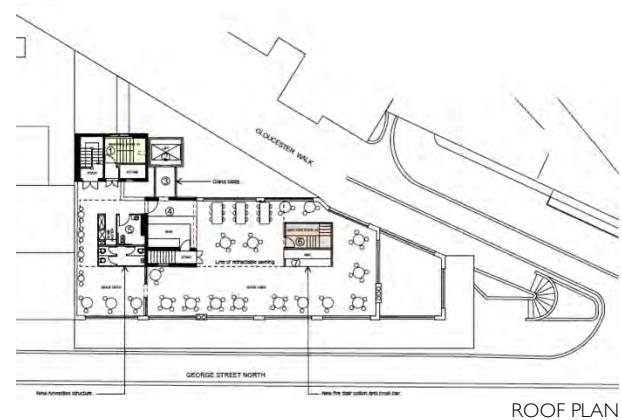
### Concept Design + Consultation 2015

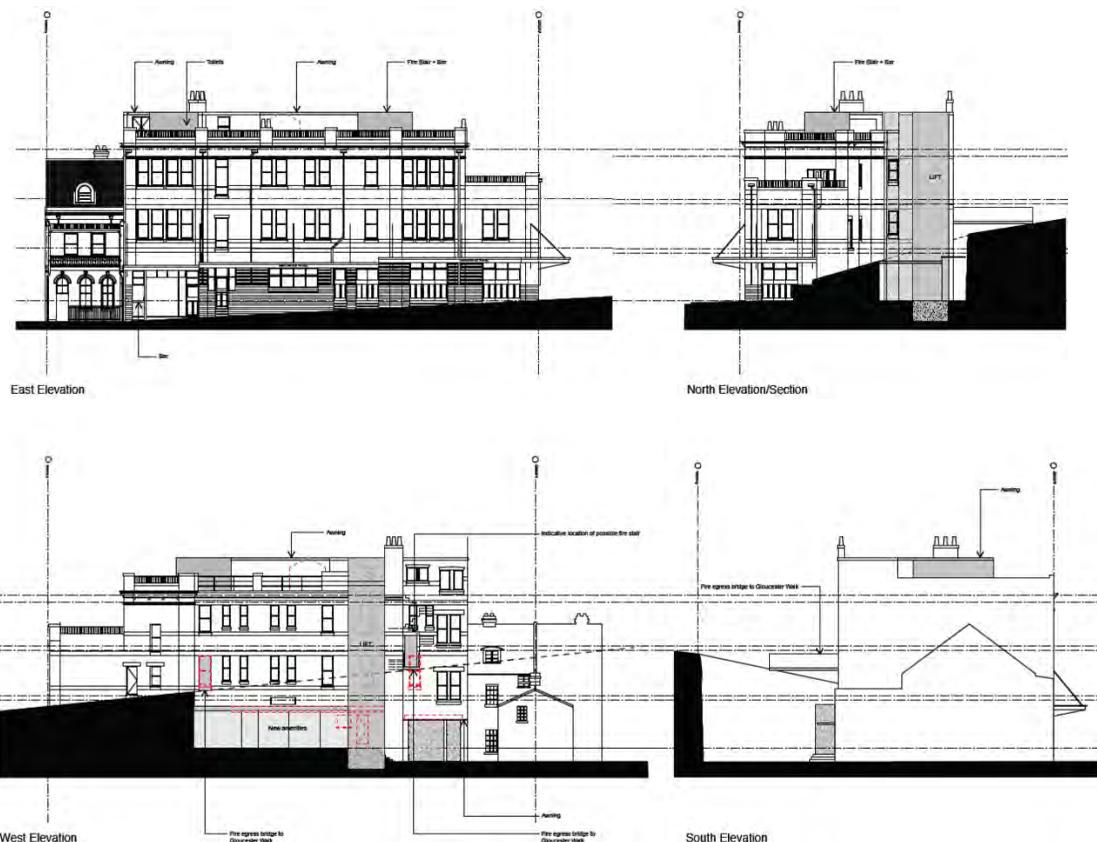
Initial masterplan options were presented to PMNSW on July 24, 2015 and a site visit conducted to explain the proposal and approach. This masterplan explored the arrangement of the ground floor including introducing a new bistro dining area, opening up to the rear courtyard, relocating amenities, kitchen and gaming room, locating a new lift to provide accessibility to the whole of the building and creating a new bar/restaurant on the existing flat roof area. The proposal also presented key internal modifications, including introducing ensuite "pods" to service the accommodation rooms accommodating the kitchen on the first floor to open up the ground floor area and introducing new fire egress stairs.

A key issue that was discussed with PMNSW at this time was the BCA compliance of the hotel and in particular fire separation, fire protection and egress. Initial advice indicated that the following BCA upgrades would be required:

- Sprinkling of the whole building,
- Acoustic and fire separation of accommodation floors and rooms
- Dedicated egress from the proposed rooftop and upgraded egress from accommodation floors.
- Accessibility upgrades including accommodation rooms and equitable access to the ground floor, accommodation and rooftop levels.

The design process explored numerous options for compliant egress from the hotel, including the rooftop. Initial options proposed included two new fire egress stairs located within existing storerooms on the first and second floor, with bridges to Gloucester Walk at the rear of the building. A new lift, providing access to all levels was located at the rear of the building with a bridge connecting back to the main building.





Feedback was received from PMNSW (email attached in Appendix), with the overall concept and scope of works generally being supported. Key comments included:

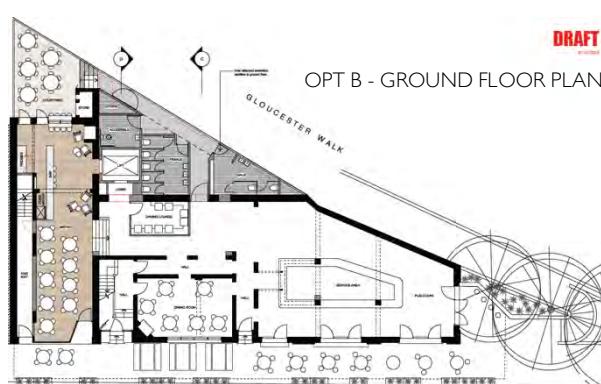
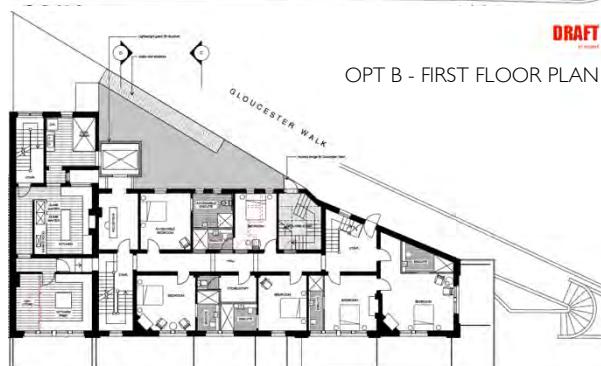
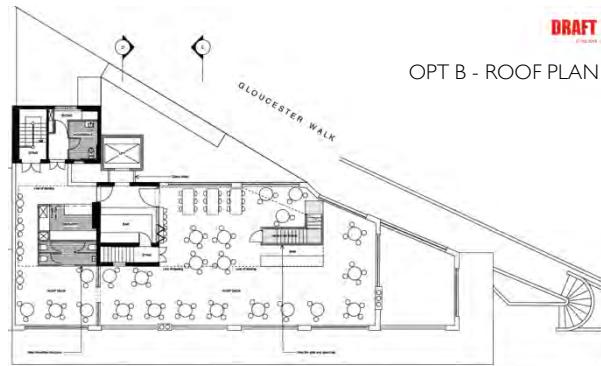
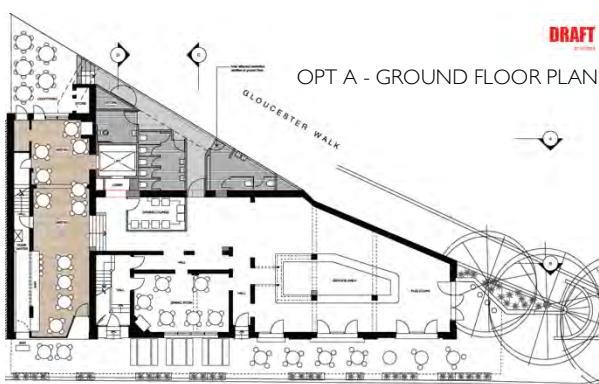
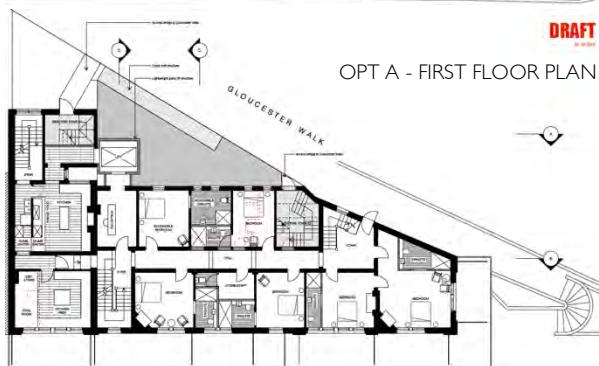
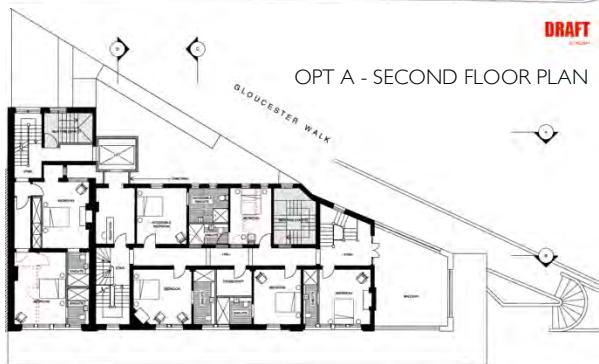
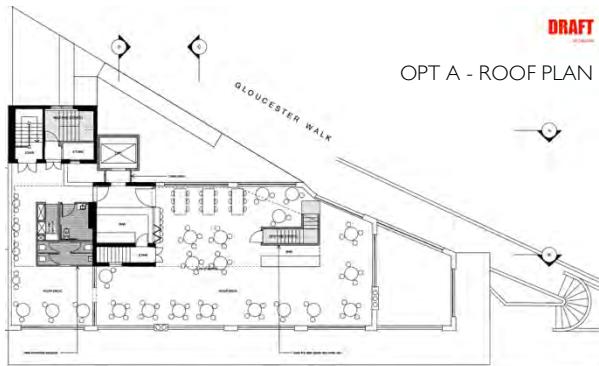
- Further review of the proposed works against the CMP significance diagram should be undertaken;
- Legibility of the former shop and hotel that were originally separated should be maintained;
- The works should aim to conserve original fabric and retain/reinstate the original spatial layout;
- Fire upgrade works would need to be clarified (see above);
- The lift should be designed as a contemporary element and moved so as not to impact on significant fireplace fabric on the ground floor;
- Review the need for the addition southern fire stair and bridge to Gloucester Walk;
- The removal of the existing kitchen and amenities on the ground floor was supported as was the location and design approach of the new amenities.
- A proposed new door opening to the main stair was not supported;
- The new ensuite pods to bedrooms could generally be supported with more work required to the design in the northern rooms;
- Adaptation of the existing roof structures was generally supported with comments made regarding the legibility of the original two-building roof layout.
- It was also noted that prominent views of the proposal, in particular from the Sydney Harbour Bridge and George Street were to be carefully considered.

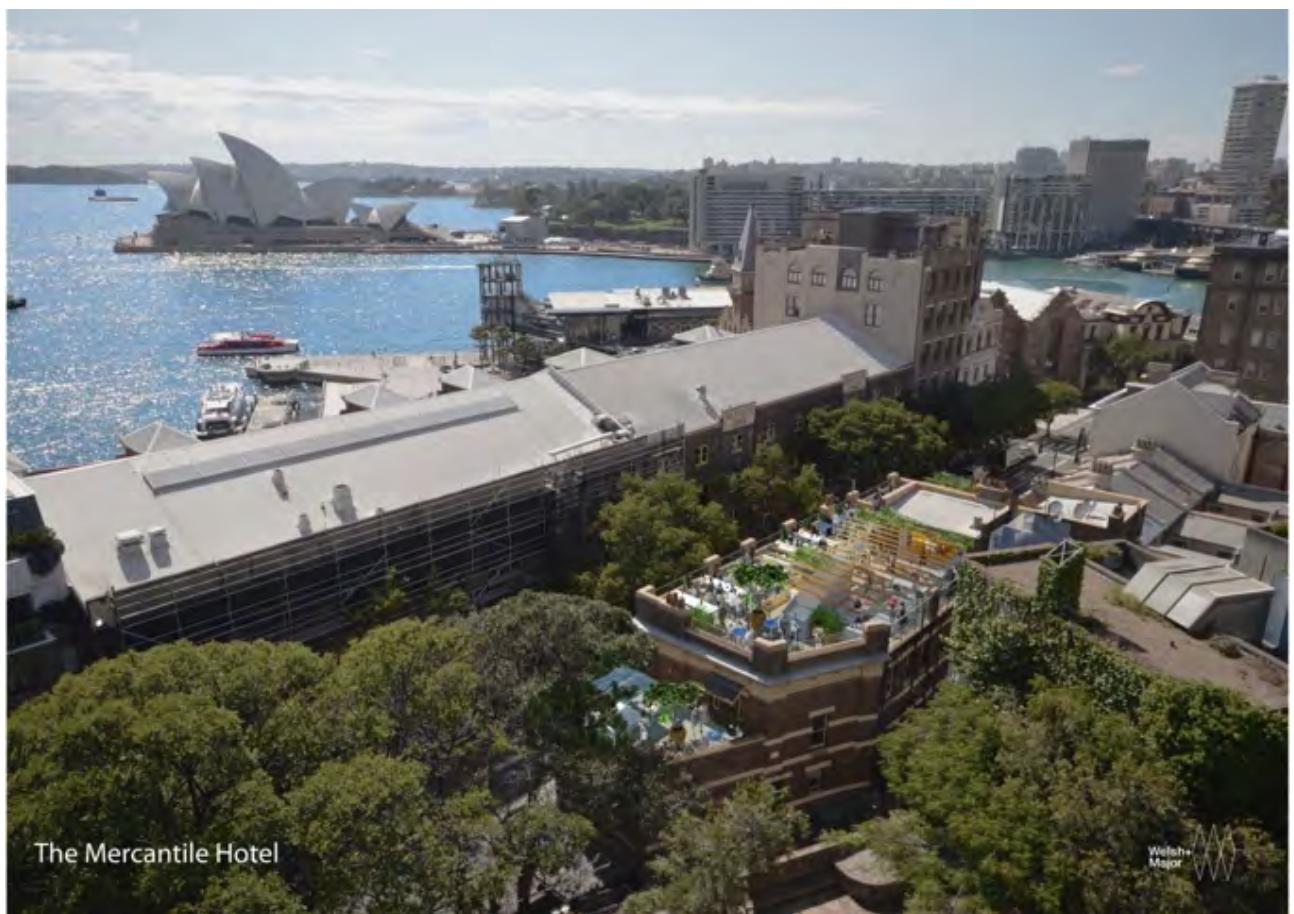
The proposal was further developed in late 2015 in consideration of this feedback including specific exploration of options for the location of the lift and arrangement of the fire egress. Two further options were explored at this time with specialist BCA input: Option A included the new southern fire stairs with bridge to Gloucester Walk and retained a bar area in the shopfront area and former hallway on the Ground Floor; Option B instead utilised the existing southern stairs, re-enclosing them at Ground Floor level so as to provide fire separated egress directly to George Street and relocating the bar to the rear of the Ground Floor in the area of the current gaming room. Option B was adopted as having many advantages including



the lesser impact of upgrading the existing stair over the introduction of a new separate fire stair and the freeing up of existing space for other functions including on the rooftop.

In addition, preliminary view studies were undertaken looking at the views from George Street, Gloucester Walk and the Harbour Bridge. These were used to further inform the design development.





### **Design Development + PMNSW Consultation June - July 2017**

During 2016 the client group, HBMS, took time to focus on the existing operations of the hotel and the further development of the proposal was put on hold for a time. In October 2016 Welsh + Major met with PMNSW to present the design proposal developed during 2015 to new senior PMNSW staff in order to gauge support from the landowner and further understand the approvals pathway for the project.

In early -mid 2017 design work was re-commenced with a view to developing a formal Development proposal for approval. To assist in the design development specialist input was sought from various specialist consultants including heritage, structure and acoustics. Key to this process of design development and refinement was input from Urbis, with included various site meetings with director Stephen Davies and others on both the suitability/impact of design options and on proposed conservation works.

Due to the time that had passed since the initial consultations with PMNSW in 2015 + 2016 and changes in personnel, the project proposal was again presented in June 2017 with a subsequent site walk-through in July. The opportunity was also taken to discuss in general the option for a more enclosed structure on the rooftop to address acoustic issues raised in relation to the adjacent Sirius building. Feedback from PMNSW noted the following:

- The overall concept of the rooftop restaurant + bar, rear amenities structure and new lift was well received with particular support given to the design being considered holistically and the opportunity it created to extend the original use and ongoing appreciation of the building.
- PMNSW noted that a more substantial rooftop enclosure may be acceptable to provide a fully integrated solution that was fit for purpose (i.e. providing adequate weather + acoustic protection), so as to prevent further inappropriate interventions at a later date such as the introduction of umbrellas, "temporary" shade structures, retrofitted acoustic enclosures or blinds.
- The location of the new kitchen, amenities and ensuites were discussed. It was noted that detailed service runs would need to be carefully considered and service riser locations shown in the drawings submitted for approval.
- Potential archaeological impacts with the introduction of the new lift and replacement ground floor amenities should be reviewed.
- The dumbwaiter location was to be reconsidered due to the impact on the intact pressed metal ceilings. SHFA suggested investigating locations within the existing gaming area/rippled ceiling area
- The ground floor rear door/window assembly leading to the rear courtyard was to be reviewed with the option suggested to retain and adapt the existing joinery to allow for compliant DDA access. The door/window arrangement of the existing main bar area doors was suggested as a possible precedent.
- Further investigate the flooring in the bar area and options for suitable DDA compliant floor coverings.
- Review options to eliminate the new northern fire stair by adoptions to the existing stair (a BCA alternative solution) so as to reduce the impact on existing rooms and extend the viable use of the existing stair.
- Consider aligning the new lift structure with the edge of the existing lightwell of the shop building (No.27).
- Further review the detailing of the relocated gaming lounge within the current bistro area.

### **Design Development + PMNSW / OEH Consultation August - October 2017**

Based on the feedback from PMNSW and the ongoing inputs from specialist consultants, the design process was further progressed including:

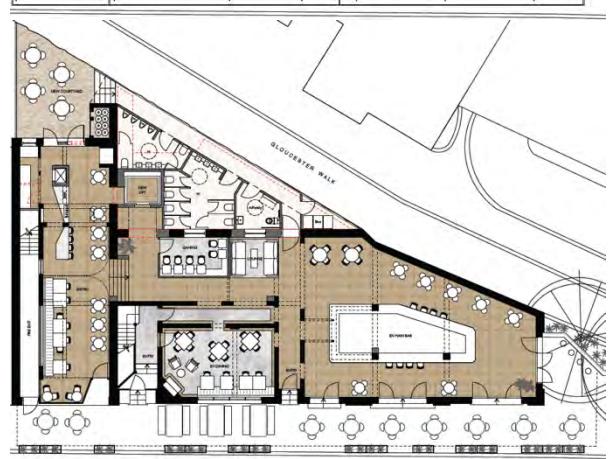
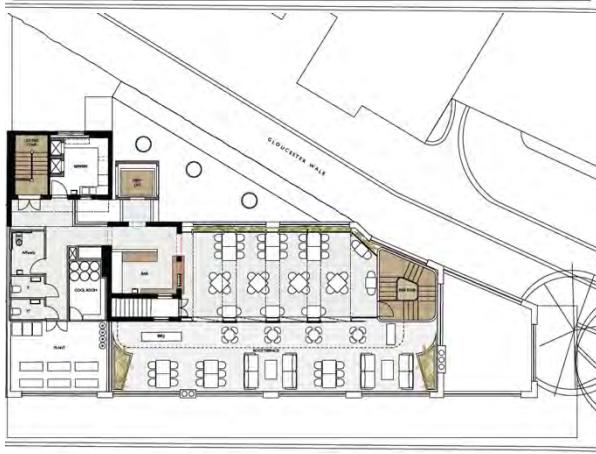
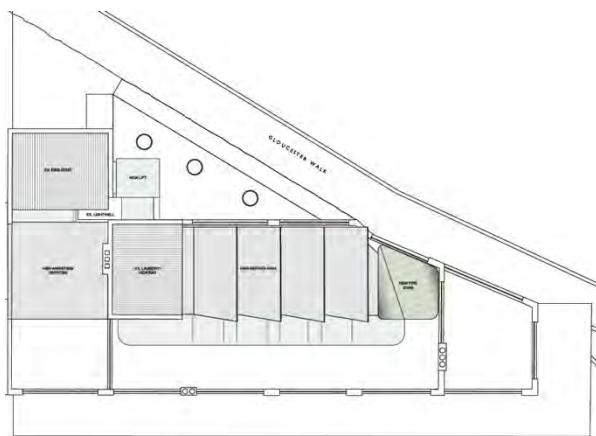
- The engagement of specialist building consultants, including Fire, Hydraulic, Mechanical and Electrical to develop the most appropriate strategies for the upgrade of services.
- The engagement of an archaeologist to review the placement of potential impact of the works including the placement of the lift and new ground floor services.
- The development of a BCA Alternative Solution to allow use and extension of the existing stair between the first and second floors, thereby deleting the proposed new northern stair and retaining existing rooms.
- The relocation of the dumb waiter to the rear of the bistro area (current gaming lounge)
- Modifying the rear courtyard door/window assembly to include two doors (one accessibility compliant) with a central fixed pane

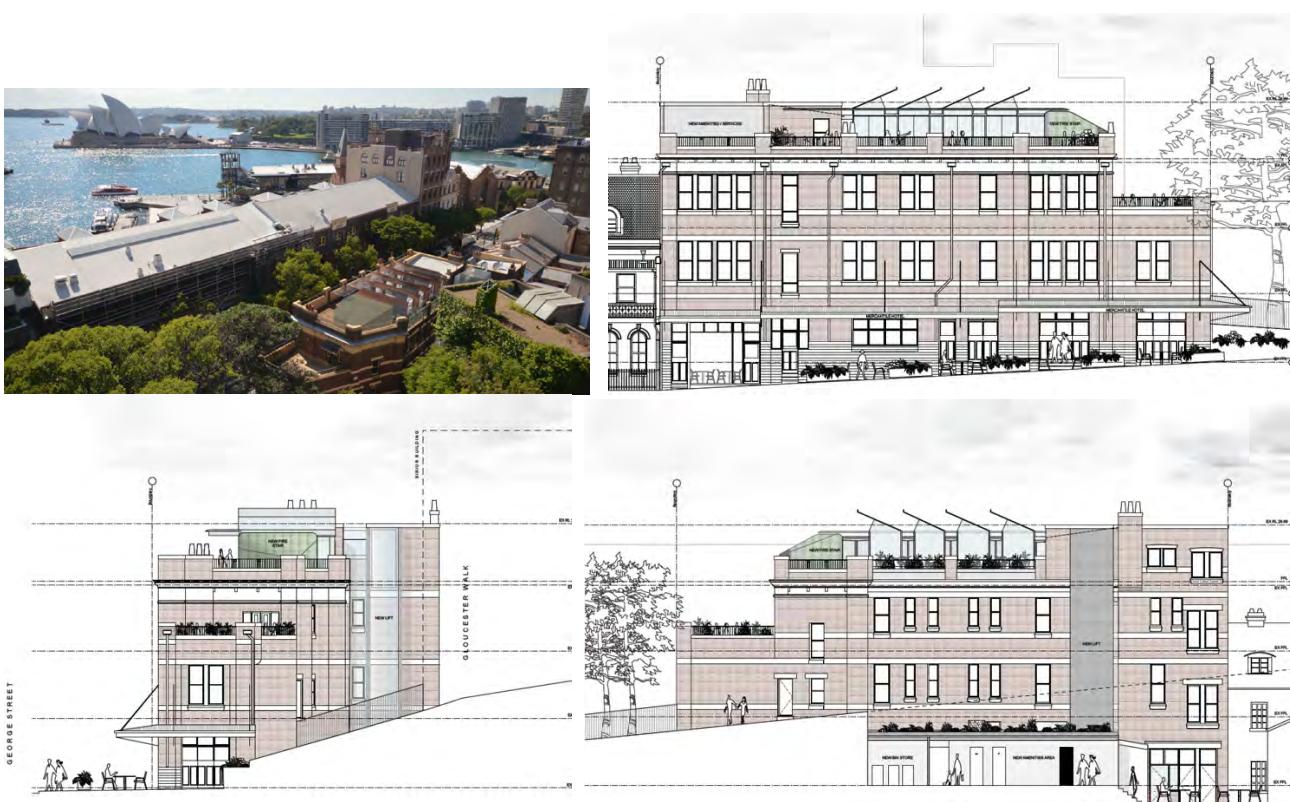
In addition, further testing was carried out by SLR acoustic consultants and it was determined that the proposed use of the rooftop would require at a minimum an enclosure on the west to Gloucester Walk and a roof enclosure in order to provide acoustic separation to the adjacent Sirius Building. Based on this a new design for the rooftop area was developed, including a weather protected enclosure that would provide acoustic separation to Gloucester Walk and the Sirius site and an open-

air terrace on the George Street side of the roof. Key criteria were developed for the new rooftop to meet the objectives from the client and PMNSW. These were:

- Maintain prominent views to the Sydney Harbour Bridge from the rooftop and from Gloucester Walk
- Create a sense of transparency and an open-air environment on the rooftop
- Create a distinct separation between the new rooftop structure and the existing façade to maintain the original building as the prominent form
- Set-back the rooftop structure from the existing eastern parapet to minimize visibility from George Street

In August 2017 further consultation was undertaken with PMNSW on the updated proposal.





Feedback received on the updated proposal from PMNSW is noted below:

- A solid wall to the western elevation of the lift shaft was supported to provide visual privacy to the adjacent Sirius building to the rear with the northern wall encouraged to be open/transparent
- The rooftop terrace and sawtooth roof design was supported with materials still to be resolved. Roof angles should be designed to maximise views to the Sydney Harbour Bridge
- The design team confirmed that the height of the Metcalf Bond Store opposite on George Street prevented the rooftop being visible from the Sydney Opera House
- Infilling the rooftop rear balustrade with brick to replicate the existing parapet walls to be considered.
- Modelling and materials for the rooftop fire escape stairs to be further developed
- Previously identified Ground Floor plan issues with the dumbwaiter riser penetration through pressed metal has been well resolved by relocation to the current Gaming Room area.
- External ground floor door configuration to rear courtyard supported
- New Ground Floor floating timber floor finish supported to protect the existing fabric from wear while providing a hard-wearing accessible floor finish.
- New materials to rooftop structures and lift to be developed in relationship to the current building materials/colours - not the same materials but complementary to the existing.
- New work should be reversible where possible to allow easy removal

A further process of design development was undertaken to address these issues. Key developments included:

- The removal of the gaming room and poker machines from the hotel operations
- Detail review with the View Assessment Consultant, K I Studio, to obtain specialist advice on potential view impacts
- Simplified material palette of zinc cladding proposed for the roof structure and fire stairs and the development of an articulated zinc lift shaft cladding design.

Welsh + Major Architects and Urbis Heritage then met with the Office of Environment & Heritage (OEH) in October 2017, presenting the design approach and current proposal and obtaining feedback as follows:

- It was requested that detailed service runs and riser locations would need to be carefully considered and shown in the drawings submitted for approval. Information was also requested on the methodology for the installation of services. The suggestion was made to centralise the new services wherever possible.
  - A methodology was requested for the introduction and installation of fire upgrades including separation, insulation and sprinklers.
  - The design of the roof was considered appealing, however it was noted that the contemporary approach should be addressed in the Design Statement including the design intent and process of design development.
  - Information to be provided on the existing timber flooring and condition, including species. Methodology for lifting and relaying flooring to also be provided.
  - Traditional flashings and use of mortar joints for required fixings into existing brickwork to be used
  - Details to be provided on the upgrades to existing doors
  - Use of traditional cladding materials considered to be appropriately recessive against the original brickwork
  - Treatment of the new lift cladding to have more solidity to the western face presenting to Gloucester Walk.
  - Support for the reinstated 'Mercantile Hotel' painted signage to the existing southern masonry wall.
  - Information requested to demonstrate how the introduction of required new services will future-proof the building
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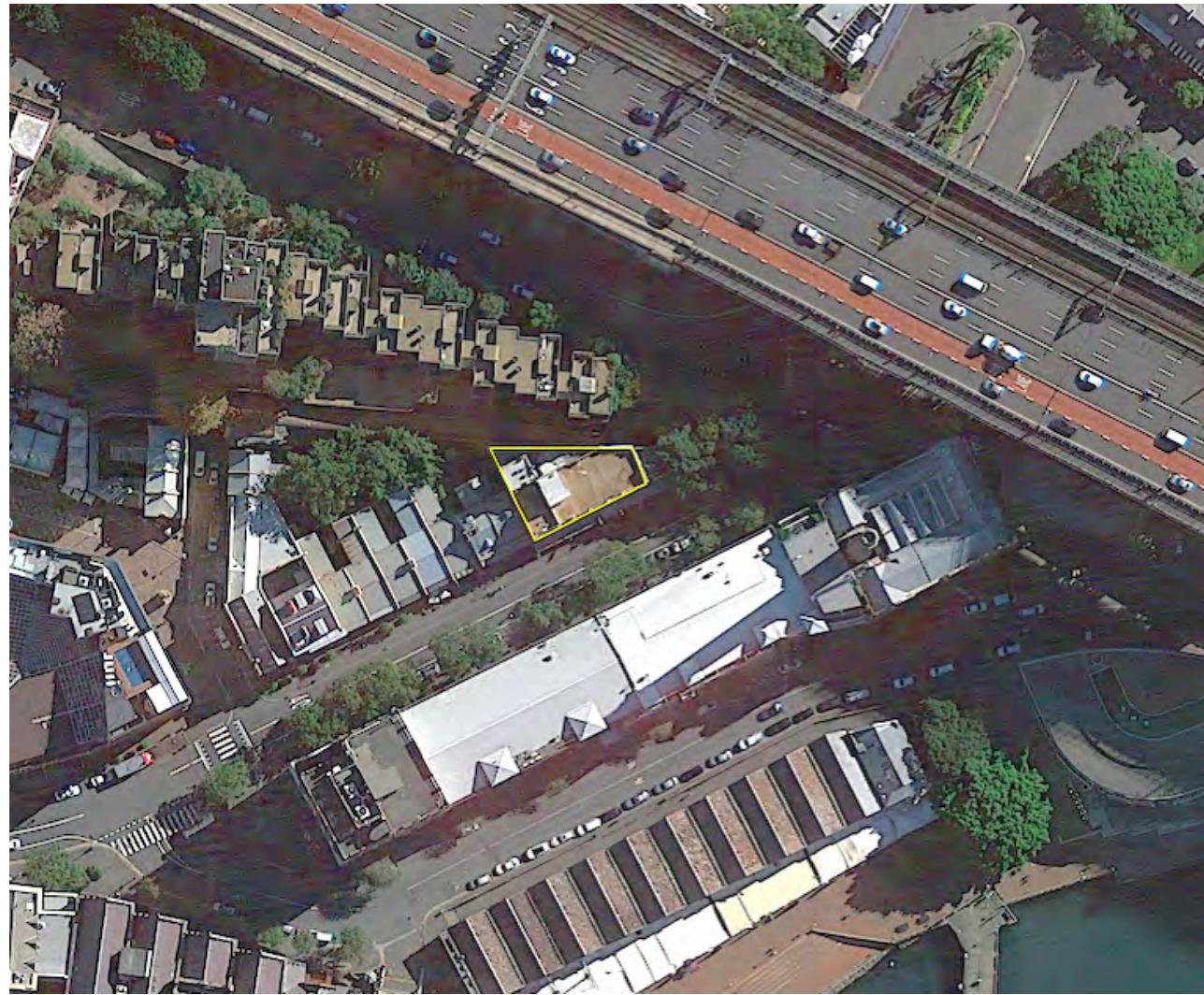
## The Existing Conditions

### Location + Context

The area of The Rocks, Millers Point, Dawes Point and Walsh Bay is a unique heritage precinct. The area of The Rocks to the south along George Street and fanning out to Cumberland Street and Circular Quay is a popular tourist destination and has predominantly retail, hospitality, tourism accommodation, cultural and some commercial office uses.

The Mercantile Hotel is located in the north of The Rocks at the northern end of George Street. It is one of the last buildings before George Street passes under the Harbour Bridge approach structure to the immediate north and is framed by the bridge when viewed along George Street. The Sydney Harbour Bridge is the dominant physical structure in the immediate context of the hotel - the southern approach to the bridge soars over just to the north of the hotel, providing a dramatic backdrop to views from the hotel and George Street. Under the bridge approach a memorial park provides a large area of public open space that is relatively underutilized considering its central position and dramatic views of the harbor.

Around the Mercantile Hotel site the surrounding uses start to transition to the residential, commercial office and cultural uses of Millers Point, Dawes Point and Walsh Bay. Opposite on George Street is the commercially tenanted Metcalf Bond Building; to the rear across Gloucester Walk is the former public housing complex of the Sirius Building; to the south along George Street is Sergeant Majors Row of 2-3 storey terraces with a mix of commercial office, services, retail and café uses. As a result, the regular pedestrian traffic passing the Mercantile Hotel is a combination of local and international visitors, local residents and workers. On weekends the northern end of George Street is closed for the regular Rocks Market that is set up immediately outside the hotel, creating a temporary high traffic retail precinct.



### **The Site + Existing Building**

The Mercantile Hotel site at the north end of George Street is an irregular wedge shaped site that narrows to the north with a large fig tree providing a northern termination point at the junction with Gloucester Walk. Gloucester Walk to the west (rear) is higher than the hotel site which was excavated and flattened prior to the construction of the hotel and presents an early cutting in the natural land. An early sandstone retaining wall sits below Gloucester Walk at the rear of the site which increases in gradient heading south, becoming 6m higher than George Street at the southern point of the site. Palisade fencing is fixed to the top of the wall, allowing views down on to the service structures currently located at the rear of the original hotel building to the rear of the building.

The Mercantile Hotel itself was constructed in 1914 and is a state heritage listed item. The CMP for the site, prepared by Graham Brooks and Associates Pty Ltd (2007), notes “*the building is of three stories, plus a cellar and rooftop spaces. It is constructed of liver colour face brick, timber and iron, exhibiting relatively simple and restrained lines, with a block-like appearance, relieved by awnings and some cornice moulding.*”

The main part of the hotel occupies No.25 George Street with the building at No.27, originally built as a separate shop to the south with residential accommodation above. Over the years the use of the shopfront and separate accommodation was integrated with the hotel and access provided between the two buildings on the ground and first floors. The internal configuration of main hotel building and the former shop have both been modified over the years. The ground floor of the main hotel building originally accommodated kitchen, store and ladies parlour areas where it is now open seating area. The main hotel building also previously accommodated a large built office structure on the rooftop area.

The ground floor of The Mercantile Hotel contains a main public bar area, bistro, kitchen, and formal dining area, with the area at No.27 being a split-level lower ground and containing a sports bar and gaming lounge. Patron amenities, the kitchen, coolrooms and other storage areas are located in later addition outbuildings and sheds with exposed services to the rear of the main buildings, largely filling the area of the previous courtyard up to the sandstone retaining wall. The hotel currently has a well patronized licensed seating area on the George Street footpath of the hotel where both meals and drinks are served.

The first and second floor of the hotel continues to be used as guest accommodation. The majority of the rooms are in their original format with shared bathrooms located off the hallway. On each floor in No.27 George Street there are two accommodation rooms that have been converted to have ensuites. The rooms in No.27 on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor have no access to the main area in No.25 and are accessed off a stair at the back of the hotel. The hotel serves a varied accommodation clientele, including country and interstate visitors, small groups in Sydney for special events, cruise ship passengers and overseas travelers. The arrangement of accommodation rooms is becoming increasingly outdated as most guest are now seeking rooms with private ensuites. The upper floors of the hotel currently also contain a reception, office, staff rooms, reception, store rooms.

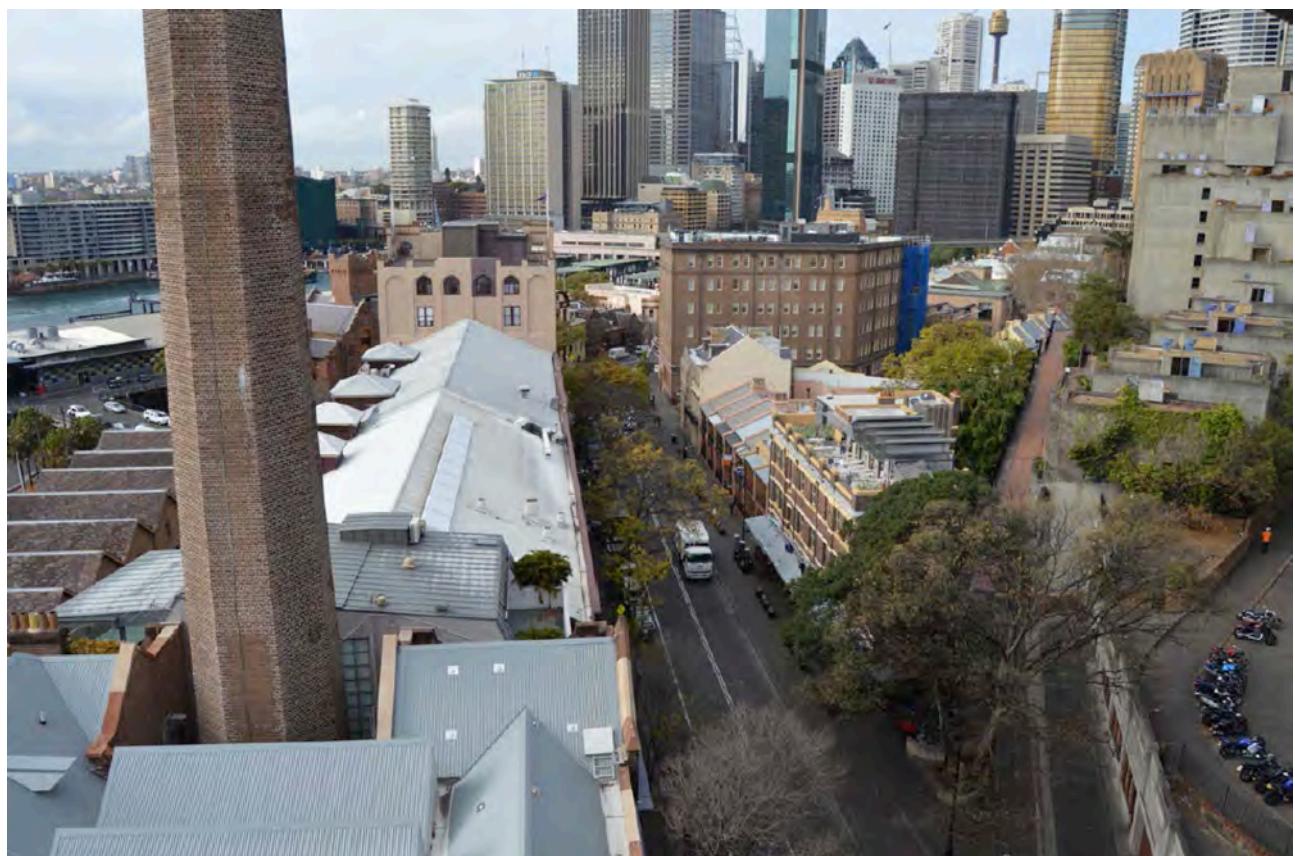
The rooftop of the hotel is a flat roof area spilt with a parapet wall between No.25 and No.27. The area of No.25 is accessed via a narrow steep stair up to an unused laundry that house hot water system units. The area on the roof of No.25 is accessed by the main stairwell with an adjacent store room. The parapet is approximately 1.4m above roof level and is solid brickwork to most areas except for the west facing edge of No.25 George Street. The rooftop area affords spectacular views of the underside of the eastern side and southern approach of the Harbour Bridge from a unique angle. There are also views to the east and the south along George Street over the rooftops of The Rocks and back to the city.

The rooftop of the Mercantile Hotel is visible within the context of The Rocks and Sydney CBD when viewed from the Sydney Harbour Bridge. The rear of the site and the rooftop is also overlooked by the neighbouring Sirius Building to the west and is visible from Gloucester walk to the west. Long views from the north and south along George Street to the Mercantile Hotel are important and have been considered in the design.

## Overview of Proposed Works

The proposed works comprise the refurbishment, restoration and adaption of the hotel so as to:

- Maintain and enhance the existing ground floor public bar area and outdoor areas;
- Maintain and enhance the existing hotel dining room;
- Refurbish the existing sports bar and gaming room (in the former shop building at No.27 George Street) as an elegant bistro dining area connected to a new outdoor courtyard between the hotel building and sandstone retaining wall to Gloucester Walk.
- Remove the existing kitchen, bathrooms and service areas from the rear of the main building and construction of new compliant patron amenities with an accessway that provides views of the sandstone retaining wall to Gloucester Walk.
- Construction of a new commercial kitchen within the first floor of the former shop building to serve both the ground floor and rooftop.
- Construction of a lift to connect all floors of the existing building to serve both hotel residential guests and bar/restaurant patrons.
- Upgrades to the hotel residential accommodation on Levels 1 and 2 including ensuites, fire safety and other BCA upgrades to allow for the continued use of these floors as traditional hotel accommodation.
- General BCA and services upgrades throughout the buildings for compliance with current building and fire safety regulations within the constraints of the heritage fabric of the building.
- Creation of a rooftop bar and restaurant to expand the hotel operations to the unused rooftop, creating a new venue that will provide a unique perspective and appreciation of the Harbour Bridge and the northern end of George Street.

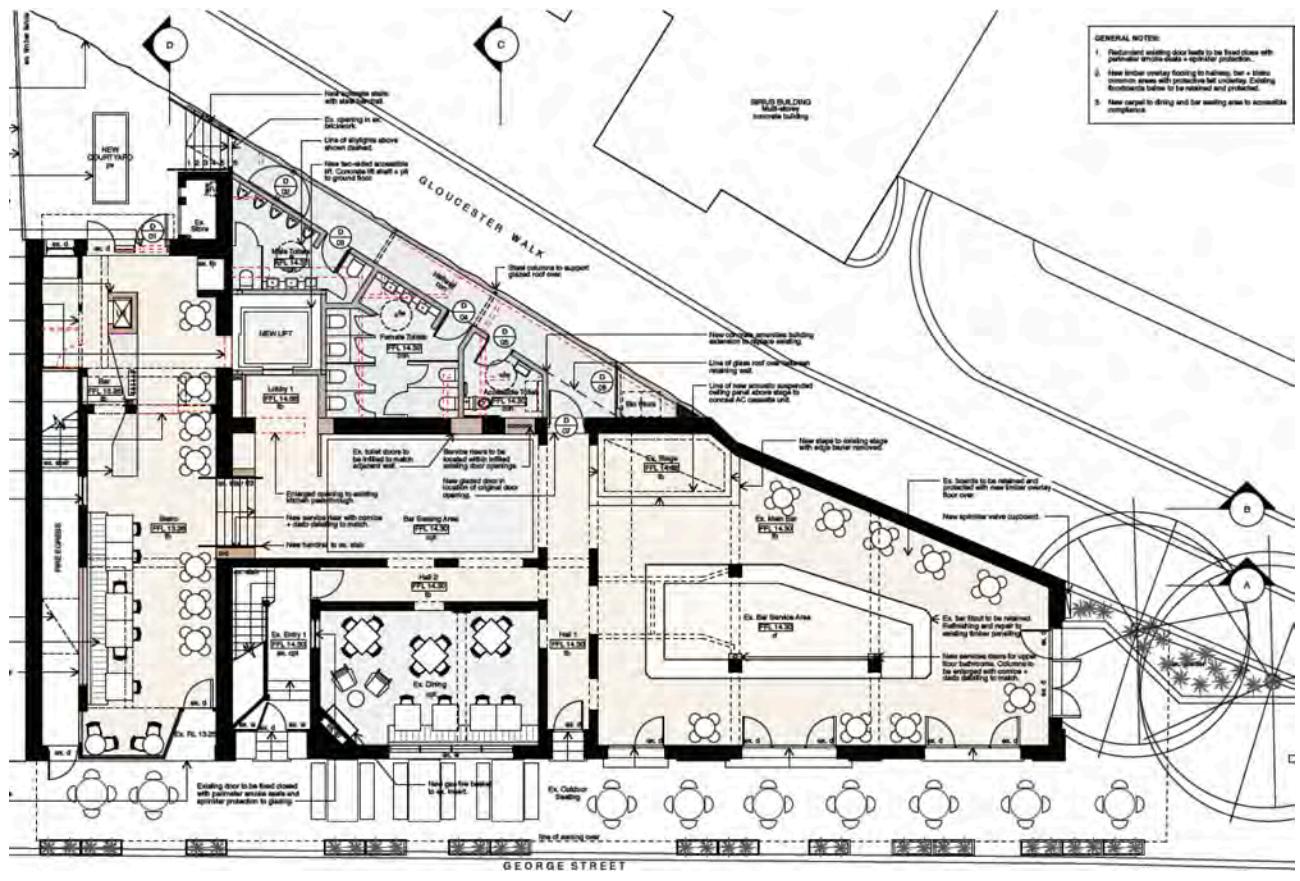


VIEW FROM SYDNEY HARBOUR BRIDGE SOUTH ALONG GEORGE STREET

Specifically, the works will entail:

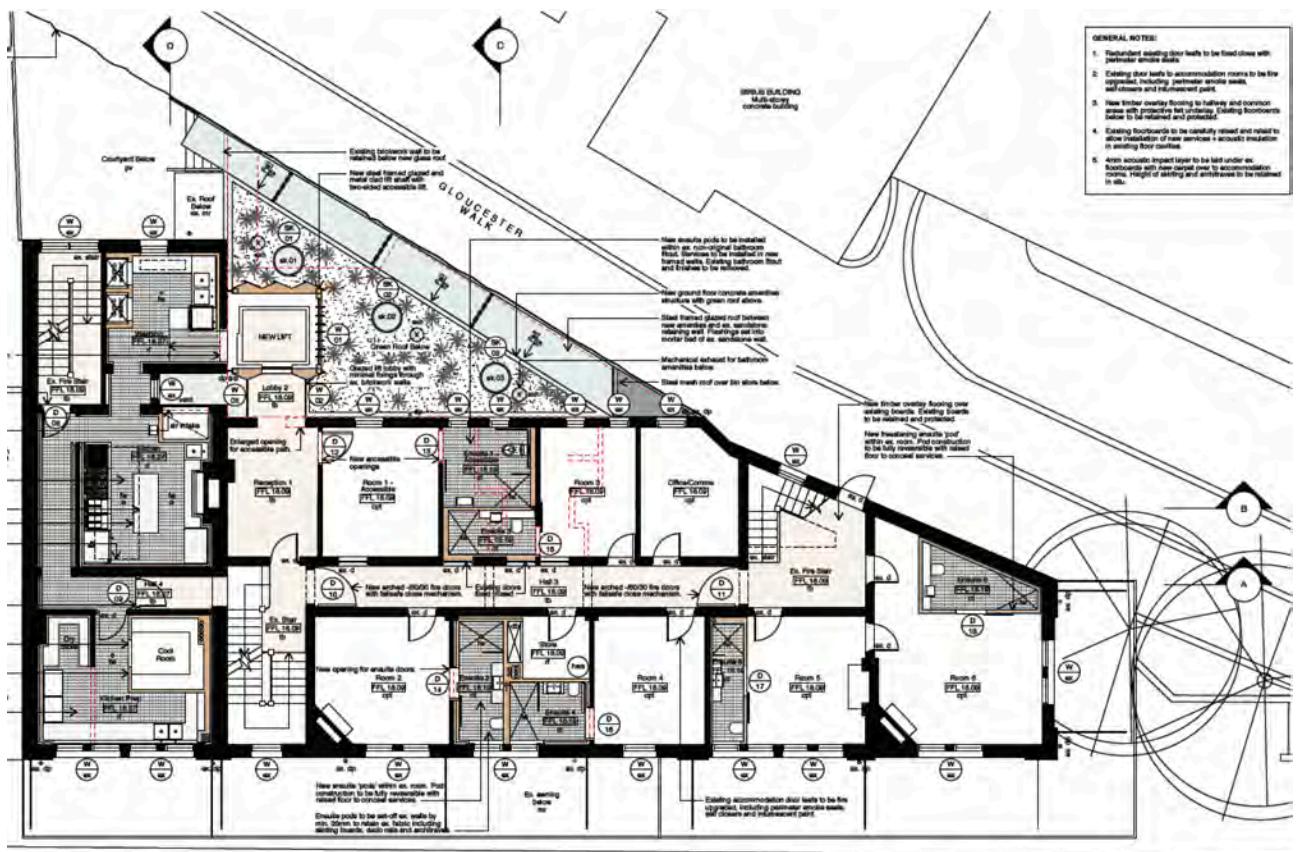
**Ground Floor Level - Public Bar, Dining Room, Bistro, Courtyard, Lift + Amenities:**

- Demolition of the intrusive late 20th century rear amenities and kitchen building, plant and storage area and ancillary structures at the rear of the main buildings.
- Removal of redundant exposed hydraulic + mechanical services and pipework to the rear of the building
- Construction of a new rear amenities structure with green roof and a glazed roof accessway to expose the existing rear sandstone retaining wall to Gloucester Walk.
- Construction of a new glazed and metal clad lift structure connecting all four levels of the building, including an enlarged opening in the western wall of the main building and a new opening to the existing gaming room north wall.
- A new external dining area at the rear of the former shop adjacent to the existing sandstone retaining wall.
- Modifications to the rear window + door assembly to provide equitable access to the rear courtyard.
- Enlargement of the existing opening between the current sports bar and gaming lounge to improve circulation and visual connection through the building to the rear courtyard.
- Construction of a new service bar to the existing gaming room area including a dumb-waiter to provide service from the first floor kitchen.
- Demolition of the intrusive contemporary shopfront bar and reinstatement of the hall wall to provide a compliant fire egress to George Street.
- Upgrade of fire services, including sprinkler protection throughout.
- Upgrade of mechanical services, including air-conditioning to the main bar areas and lower bistro area.
- General BCA + building services upgrades



**First Floor Level - Accommodation Rooms with Ensuites, Reception, Lift + Kitchen:**

- Construction of a glazed passage for access to the new lift including new/enlarged openings in external walls.
- Landscaping to the green roof of the new amenities block at the rear of the main building.
- Removal of late 20thC ensuites from the existing southern rooms and installation of a commercial kitchen fit-out within incorporating raised floors, suspended ceilings and internal wall linings to protect existing building fabric.
- Installation of two dumb-waiters to service the ground floor bistro and rooftop.
- Conversion of an existing accommodation room to provide compliant accessible accommodation including new door openings and adjacent accessible bathroom "pod"
- Construction of 5 new ensuite 'pods' within existing accommodation rooms including 3 new door openings.
- New fire rated doors to exit pathways, fire upgrade of existing doors to accommodation rooms and application of intumescent paint to ceilings.
- New acoustic insulation/separation between floors within existing floor cavity.
- Upgrade of fire services, including sprinkler protection to hallways and rooms run within the existing floor cavity.
- Upgrade of mechanical services, including the installation of air-conditioning to the accommodation rooms.
- Upgrade of hydraulic and electrical services installed in existing floor cavities or new framed ensuite 'pod' walls.

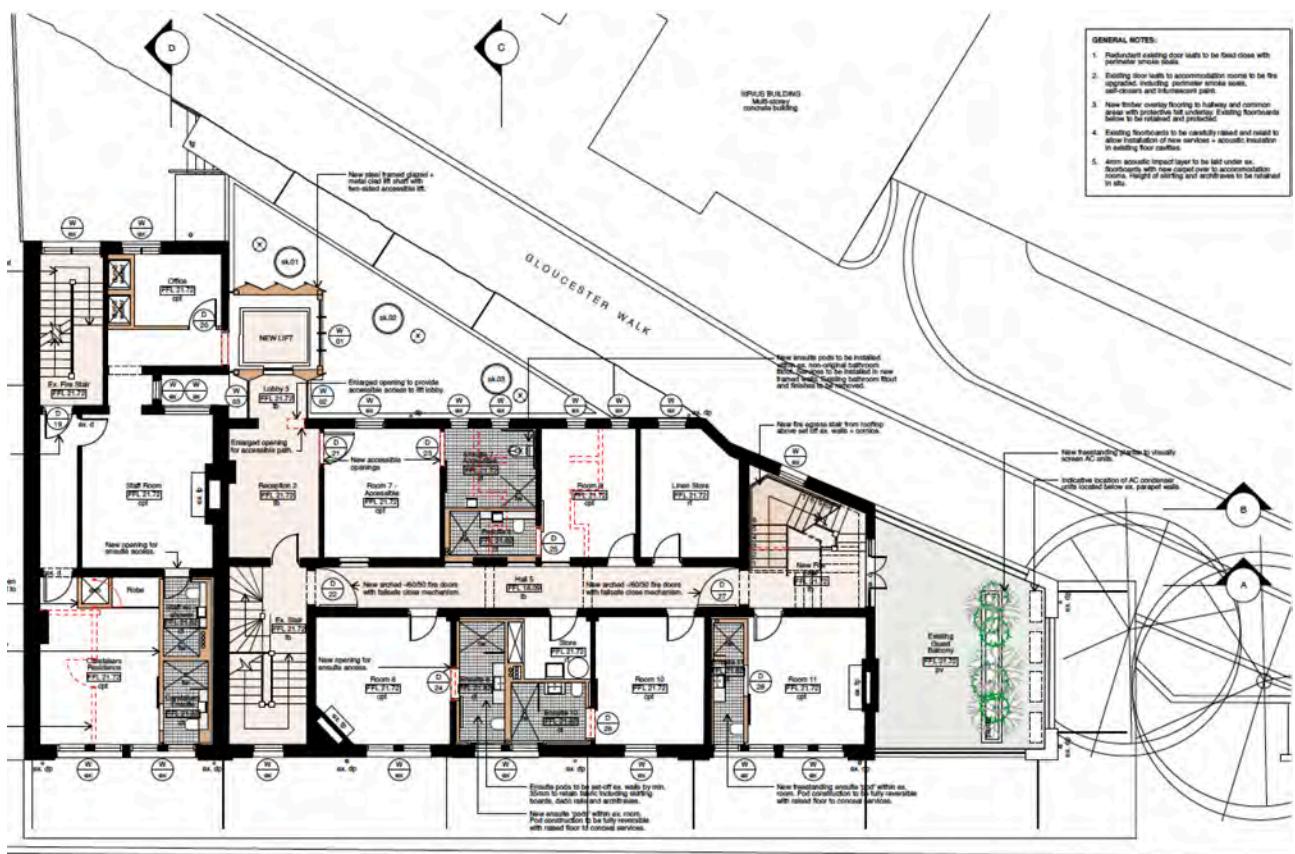


PROPOSED FIRST FLOOR PLAN



### Second Floor Level - Accommodation Rooms with Ensuites, Reception, Lift + Staff Areas:

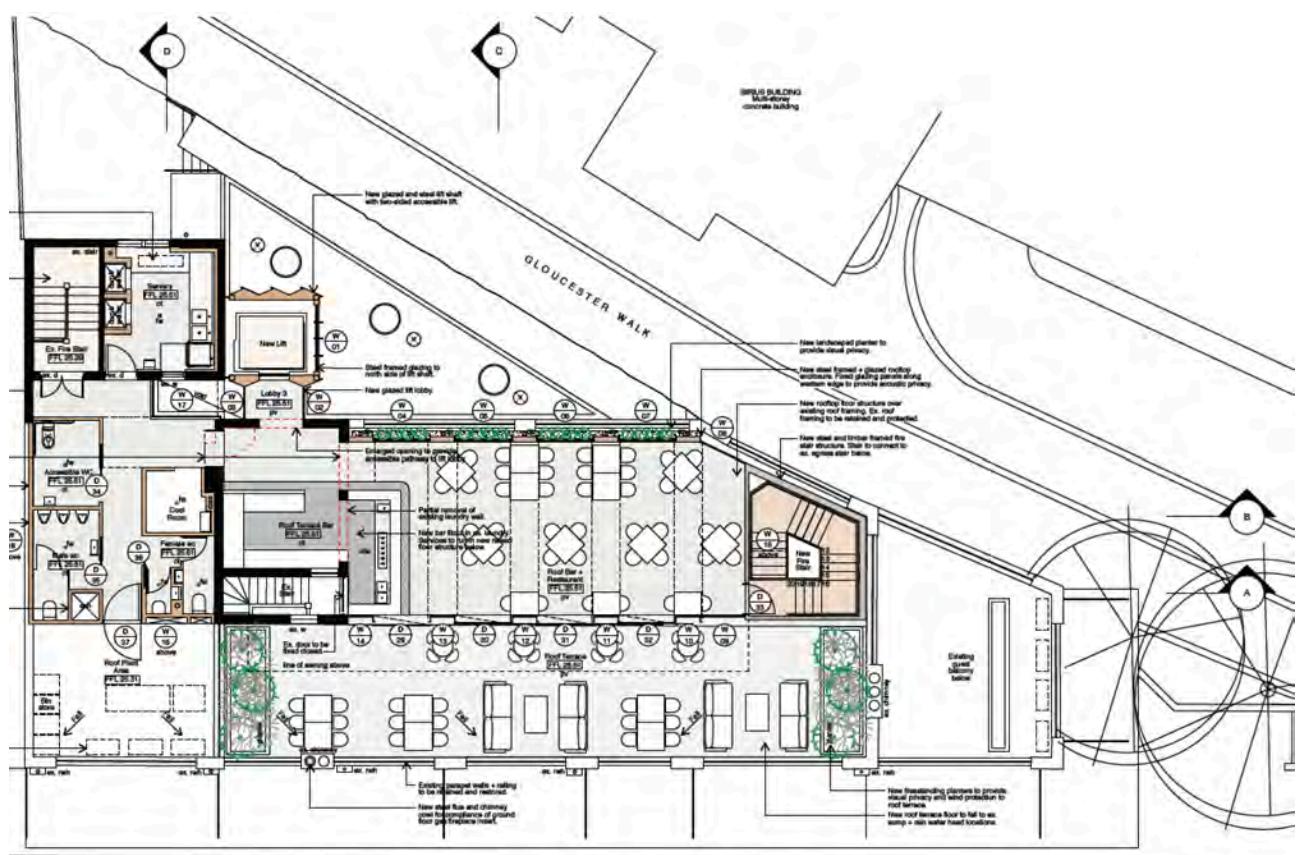
- Construction of a glazed passage for access to the new lift including new/enlarged openings in external walls.
- Removal of late 20thC ensuites from the existing southern accommodation rooms and conversion to staff areas incorporating an office, staff room with bathroom facilities and caretakers room with ensuite pod.
- Installation of a dumb-waiter shaft between the first floor kitchen and rooftop.
- Installation of an exhaust riser between the first floor kitchen and rooftop.
- Conversion of an existing room to provide compliant accessible accommodation including new door openings and adjacent accessible bathroom "pod"
- Construction of 5 new ensuite 'pods' within existing accommodation rooms including 3 new door openings.
- Extension of the existing northern stair to the roof level to create a fire egress, including partial removal of ceiling and roof.
- New fire rated doors to exit pathways, fire upgrade of existing doors to accommodation rooms and application of intumescent paint to ceilings.
- New acoustic insulation/separation between floors within existing floor cavity
- Upgrade of fire services, including sprinkler protection to hallways and rooms run within the existing floor cavity.
- Upgrade of mechanical services, including the installation of air-conditioning to the accommodation rooms.
- Upgrade of hydraulic and electrical services installed in existing floor cavities or new framed ensuite 'pod' walls.



PROPOSED SECOND FLOOR PLAN

**Roof Terrace Level - Bar + Restaurant, Service Areas, Prep Kitchen, Amenities + Plant:**

- Construction of a glazed passage for access to the new lift.
  - Conversion of the existing roof store area to a food service area including installation of two dumb-waiters to provide service from the first floor kitchen.
  - Conversion of the existing laundry into a bar service area.
  - Construction of new enclosed areas adjacent to the store and laundry to accommodate bathroom amenities and coolroom storage.
  - The creation of a low level internal opening through the existing chimney brickwork in the laundry wall for fire egress and general circulation access.
  - Construction of a new lightweight glazed rooftop enclosure on the western side of the roof in line with the existing laundry to create an acoustically screened weatherproof rooftop bar and dining area.
  - New paving to the existing eastern roof area to create an open-air roof terrace with soft landscaping planters.
  - Construction of a northern fire egress stair connecting to the existing access stair on second floor level below.
  - Structural upgrades to the existing roof structure and installation of new waterproofing.
  - A new roof plant area to accommodate mechanical and electrical services and store bins.



PROPOSED ROOF LEVEL PLAN

BCA + Services generally:

- General BCA upgrades including rewiring, fire separation and insulation works, acoustic insulation and separation works and sprinkler protection throughout.
  - Other building services upgrades including rewiring, air conditioning upgrades, hydraulic reconfiguration and upgrades, and mechanical exhausts.

## Built Form + Urban Design

### General Design Approach + Key Elements

The Mercantile Hotel refurbishment is conceived to maintain and enhance the original uses and spaces of the hotel while updating and expanding facilities in order to ensure the ongoing use and commercial viability of the hotel. The proposed program is a direct response to the changing needs and expectations of the users of the hotel.

The areas of the most interventions are generally contained within the areas of the hotel that have been significantly altered in use and configuration over the years. This includes the ground, first and second floors of No.27 George Street, the rear ground floor area of the hotel containing later shed structures, and the disused rooftop. Services upgrades are proposed throughout to meet BCA requirements and to ensure the hotel provides reasonable fire safety measures for its ongoing hotel and accommodation usage.

New external elements are designed to reveal the original spaces and features of the site, and to be distinct from the early heritage structures. At the rear of the main buildings in the western area of the site the removal of the existing later sheds and lean-tos will reveal the original sandstone retaining wall. Then three key new elements proposed in the gap between the rear of the original hotel building and the Gloucester Walk retaining wall. The insertion of the new lift is aligned within the step-out of the rear of No.27 George Street. The new ground floor amenities are set back from the sandstone wall and have a green roof over that provides a green lush outlook from Gloucester Walk. At the rear of No.27 a new seating courtyard is proposed to activate the rear of the building and provide space to the retaining wall.

The new rooftop elements are conceived to be distinct from and complementary to the existing hotel building in form and material, with a highly articulated form so as to break down the scales and not to compete with the solid massing of the original structure.

Within the ground floor of the hotel the new works are proposed predominantly within the old shop building (No.27) that currently accommodates the unsympathetic sports bar and gaming room. These areas are to be adapted to create a new bistro dining area, opening up the former shop and connecting it to the new rear courtyard. Internally on the upper floors of the hotel the new interventions are designed to be inserted within existing spaces and to be fully reversible.



### Rear External Works - Demolition of existing services and structures + creation of a new dining courtyard

On the ground floor below the level of the Gloucester Walk pedestrian pathway, the existing masonry and iron kitchen, storage and amenities structures that date from the mid-1980's are to be demolished. These areas are noted in the CMP as "intrusive" and have a negative visual impact on the adjacent Gloucester Walk.

The condition and use of the existing ground floor amenities structure has a number of negative impacts on the public domain along Gloucester Walk. At present, numerous items of mechanical plant and other services equipment are located on the roof, along with exposed service pipework, vents, and exhausts. In addition, there are numerous ancillary structures, store sheds, cool rooms and equipment to the rear. The upgrade and consolidation of the hotel services will eliminate the clutter and negative visual impact of the current building. The demolition of these structures will also reveal the significant sandstone retaining wall at the rear of the site.

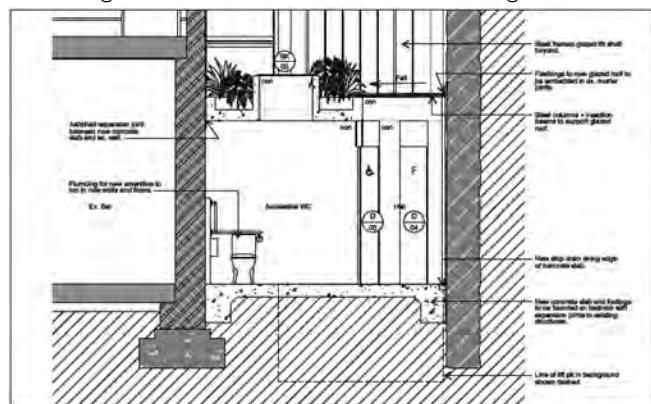
In the area behind the former shop (No.27) a small early attached outbuilding that is currently hidden by storage sheds will also be revealed and retained. This opening up of the area at the rear of the shop will create a new open dining courtyard at the south west corner of the site, with the backdrop of the sandstone retaining wall behind. The courtyard will be connected to the proposed ground floor bistro dining, with sight lines from the hotel and through the hotel from George Street to the wall, providing an understanding of topography and history of the site. The courtyard will also allow the original form of the hotel to be appreciated from the west and provide visual interest and activation to Gloucester Walk above. To the south of this courtyard it is understood that PMNSW may in the future provide a connection to the existing open courtyard space at the rear of the adjacent Sergeant Majors Row terraces.

#### Rear External Works - New Amenities

To the rear of the main hotel building (No.25), new amenities are proposed for patrons that are to be compliant under BCA provisions for the capacity of the hotel, including an accessible facility. It should be noted that the existing amenities on the ground floor for hotel patrons are well below the required number and there is no accessible or ambulant toilet. The new amenities structure will sit within the footprint of the existing kitchen and undersized bathroom facilities. The structure will also include a discrete bin store to support the operations of the hotel.

The amenities are configured with the circulation passageway at the rear along the length of the early sandstone retaining wall so that this can remain exposed. A glass roof has been proposed over the passageway to provide a largely uninterrupted view of the sandstone wall from below through the glazing and allow natural light into the passageway and to wash the wall. This glazed roof will also visually separate the new amenities building addition from the sandstone retaining wall, with the aim for this to appear as a protected outdoor space.

In contrast the amenities structure itself is to be constructed with a concrete roof that will be planted with native ferns and shade tolerant species. A number of domed skylights will provide natural daylight into the amenities below. The soft landscaping on the roof of the amenities will provide a green outlook from Gloucester Walk above and is designed to positively contribute to the public domain of Gloucester Walk, creating visual engagement between pedestrians and the building, further contributing to the activation of the area.



#### Rear External Works - New Lift

Between the new elements of the south east courtyard and the amenities structure, a new lift is proposed to provide equitable access to all levels of the hotel including the rooftop area. It will serve both hotel residential guest and patrons of the bar and dining areas.

The lift forms a vertical element running adjacent to the existing rear of the building and set back from the surface and edges of the original masonry structure so as to be structurally independent and to allow the original form of the building to be legible. The eastern lift shaft wall aligns with the edge of the existing lightwell on the upper levels of the former shop building.

The height of the lift shaft has been set by the minimal lift over-run required to access the roof level, with the final height aligning with the brick capping of the existing chimneys. The excavation required for the lift pit is 1.4m including the concrete of the lift pit. The location and impact of excavation has been reviewed in the archaeological report.

The lift shaft itself is to be steel framed with glazed faces to the north and south, and metal clad blades to the east and west. The glazing to the north and south will create transparency through the lift structure when viewed from the northern approach along Gloucester Walk to the brickwork texture of the existing building beyond. The glazing is articulated with vertical framing to play against the horizontal banding of the hotel brickwork. The lift car is also proposed to be glazed to minimise obscuring the existing building, provide a sense of movement and activity on Gloucester Walk and create views down to Gloucester Walk.

The western solid blade wall of the lift shaft is proposed to be clad in zinc panels arranged in a concertina layout. This articulation is designed to break down the mass and scale of the lift element while providing visual privacy to the buildings across Gloucester Walk. The concertina form will create a play of light and shadow across the facade as pedestrian approach along Gloucester Walk. It should be noted that the view of the lift shaft is screened from Gloucester Walk to the south by the existing building, with the lift only visible from the northern approach along Gloucester Walk and the area immediately adjacent.



Glazed lift lobbies and lightweight 'bridges' connect the lift to all four levels of the building and are located to utilise existing window openings that are to be enlarged to provide an accessible entry to each level of the building. These are also designed to minimize the bulk and scale of the links and maximise transparency and views to the original building beyond. These bridges are only visible from the northern approach.

#### **Rooftop Bar and Dining - Design, Massing, Materials, Articulation + Detailing**

The new rooftop bar and dining area will provide additional seating area for the hotel within the existing licensed capacity. This new area will provide revenue to support the investment in upgrades for the whole of the hotel. The rooftop bar and dining area is envisaged to be patronised at lunch and in the evenings with an emphasis on food service. It will provide a unique outlook for visitors and guests south over the rooftops of The Rocks and north to the Harbour Bridge. The rooftop area incorporates indoor and outdoor seating areas, patron amenities, a service bar, kitchen servery connected by dumb waiter to the kitchen below, coolroom, outdoor screened plant area, existing and new fire stairs.

Key factors taken into consideration in the design of the rooftop structure include:

- Views to the rooftop from the surrounding streets and buildings
- Views from the rooftop to the Harbour Bridge
- Acoustic separation and visual privacy to the Sirius Building to the west
- Weather protection and climate control
- Equitable access and accessible facilities
- Fire egress
- Structural loads on the existing roof
- Servicing

The rooftop of the Mercantile Hotel is visible within the context of The Rocks and Sydney CBD when viewed from the Sydney Harbour Bridge. The rooftop is also overlooked by the neighbouring Sirius Building to the west and is visible from Gloucester Walk on its western boundary. The new rooftop areas of the Mercantile Hotel have been specifically designed to minimize any negative impact on the existing heritage fabric of the building and the heritage context. The new structures have been designed to read as a sensitive, complementary, contemporary addition visually distinct from the existing building and subservient to it. The protection of the amenity of adjacent public and private spaces have been key in the development of the design.

The arrangement of the proposed new rooftop locates the main public areas of service bar and seating areas on the rooftop of the main hotel building (No.25), with the services and back of house areas located on the rooftop of the former shop (No.27). The new built forms have been arranged to sit along the western edge of the roof and align with the existing laundry building on No.25 rooftop. This positioning creates a 3.8m setback to George Street, minimizing the visual impact

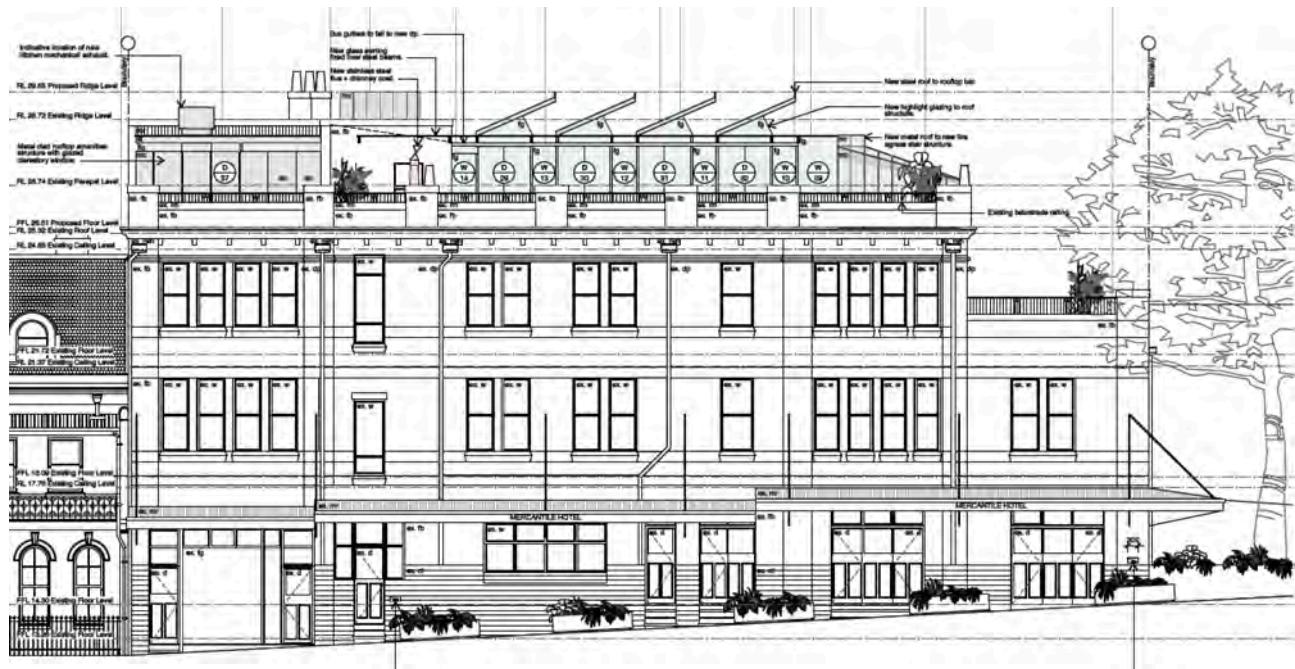
from the street, and provides a protective acoustic and privacy barrier to the west to Gloucester Walk and the Sirius building. The existing laundry, store room and stair structures have been sensitively adapted to suit the new program.

The existing roof structure is to be augmented to enable the structural capacity to be upgraded to current NCC requirements, the waterproofing membrane upgraded, and a new raised floor surface constructed across the whole of the rooftop area.

The key components of the proposed rooftop arrangement are:

- A main service bar - located in the existing disused laundry building on No.25
- A covered / enclosed patron seating area - located adjacent to and in line with the existing laundry building on the No.25 rooftop
- Northern fire egress stair - adjacent to the enclosed seating area as an extension of the existing fire stair below
- An outdoor patron seating area - located on the eastern side of the No.25 rooftop
- A coolroom and amenities area - located adjacent to and in line with the existing laundry building on the No.27 rooftop
- The kitchen servery - located in the existing store room on No.27 rooftop
- Southern fire stair - the existing stairwell in the former shop building No.25
- Mechanical plant area - located in an open air area adjacent to the amenities area

For clarity, the design, massing and detailing of each of these elements is discussed separately below.



#### Rooftop Service Bar (existing laundry):

The existing enclosed laundry room on the rooftop is currently used for hot water storage units and other incidental storage. It is proposed to be adapted to form the main entry to the rooftop area and accommodate the new bar servery area. The laundry is at the centre of the rooftop areas and forms the fulcrum of the rooftop circulation. The proposed modifications to the existing structure include new passageway openings to connect to the lift, the rear service areas on the rooftop of No.25, the enclosed seating area and to the service counter. The laundry structure including roof, eaves and ceiling structure, is to be retained. The adjacent service stair to the lower levels will remain as existing with doors and windows temporarily fixed closed.

The proposed connections are vital to the functionality and feasibility of the rooftop area. Various options for alternative circulation routes were explored during the design development. These included openings in the parapet wall on the eastern

side of the laundry and openings elsewhere in the laundry wall. These options were discounted due to the negative impacts associated with additional circulation space which then created an increase in the enclosed area footprint and overall massing. The proposed centralized connections and openings result in a compact and spatially economical arrangement that has the least impact on the bulk and scale of the proposal overall.

The connection between the roof area of No.27 and the back-of-house roof area over No.25 provides circulation to the amenities, kitchen servery and coolroom, and the southern fire egress staircase. The passageway opening requires the removal of an area of the now disused chimney. The new access opening is to be of a minimum width and height so that the existing chimney above, including chimney pots, are retained above the roofline to maintain the original external form and appearance of the chimney. The other new openings are all set in from the corners of the laundry room to retain nibs to the side and walls over so that the spatial quality and form of the original room is legible.

#### *Enclosed Patron Seating Area:*

Connected to the north of the existing laundry building is the proposed enclosed patron seating area. This seating area is designed as fully enclosed to provide both weather protection for patrons and acoustic separation to Gloucester Walk and the Sirius Building to the immediate west of the site.

Key design considerations for the enclosed seating area were to provide an open “rooftop” atmosphere with strong visual connections to the surrounding buildings and rooftops and to create a largely transparent enclosure that would maintain views to the Harbour Bridge to the north from both the rooftop and through the structure from Gloucester Walk. The design also considers the impact on the views from the Harbour Bridge above. The enclosure has been designed to be ‘seen through’, rather than ‘seen’.

To achieve this, the form of the rooftop enclosure broken down to a series of smaller repeated roof elements. Conceived as a contemporary take on a traditional saw-tooth roof, this arrangement minimises the bulk and scale of the addition. The spacing and arrangement of the individual roof forms is derived directly from the nibs of existing parapet masonry walls of the building.

Formed in lightweight steel and glass, the angle of the roof elements has been established to create clear views up to the Harbour Bridge from key locations on Gloucester Walk and from within the enclosure. The high point of the roof aligns with the existing chimney brickwork of the hotel. The highlight glazing of the sawtooth form create transparency through the structure when viewed from the bridge itself. The north facing highlight glazing is protected from the sun by a fine steel overhanging eaves that minimise reflection and any apparent solidity and provide depth and articulation when the viewed from the bridge.

Between each of the angled roof planes is a low flat gutter, the width of and aligned with the adjacent parapet piers. At the southern end of the enclosure, a low section of roof over the service bar sits in below the gutter line of the existing laundry roof. At the north end a similar low roof area provides a low transition to the roof of the northern fire stair.

The eastern wall of the enclosed area aligns with the eastern wall of the existing laundry structure - an approximate 3.8m setback from George Street. This eastern side of the enclosed area incorporates sliding doors that can open to the outdoor terrace seating area. Over the doors a cantilevered glass awning provides weather protection to the door openings. The awning has a slight fall back to the primary roof structure to eliminate the need for secondary drainage or additional structure.

The western wall of the enclosure is set-back behind the existing roof parapet line. This western section of the existing parapet currently consists of brick piers with wire mesh infill panels. The mesh panels are proposed to be removed and infilled with brickwork to match the detailing of the remaining brick parapet walls. The existing parapet walls sit at approximately 1.4m above existing roof level and will provide a high level of screening to the rooftop structures beyond. Behind the parapet a new planter box is designed to provide further visual screening to and from Gloucester Walk and the Sirius Building to the west. The wall of the enclosed seating area that sits behind these planters consists of fixed solid and glazed panels that reflect the repeated structural roof forms above. This articulated elevational treatment provides acoustic separation and reduces the scale of the addition as well as creating a sense of transparency and openness when viewed from Gloucester Walk to the rear.

Internally the rooftop seating enclosure is designed to be light filled, spatially open but with a deliberately intimate scale. The roof and wall structure has been designed to integrate internal lighting, air-conditioning and drainage to keep the visible structure uncluttered and prevent the need for secondary add-on systems.

The steel structure is designed to be fine in dimension and finely detailed, in deference to the solid masonry structure of the existing heritage building. The articulation of steel elements reduces the scale and the reflection on the glazing that could otherwise make the enclosure appear solid and intrusive. The sawtooth roof form creates a rhythm that reduces the apparent scale of the new structure and allows it to visually recede within its context, alluding to the rhythm of the existing building facade and the fine grain context of the area when viewed from near and far proximity. The steel elements of the structure are to be finished in a mid-grey micaceous oxide paint finish, a reference to the dominant form of the adjacent Harbour Bridge.

The structure of the enclosed seating area is not visible from George Street, allowing the existing George Street façade including parapet wall to remain unimpacted.



View from the south along Gloucester Walk;



View from The Harbour Bridge southern approach



Proposed view along George Street from south and north



#### Northern Fire Egress Stair:

The northern fire egress stair is an extension of the existing stair that connects the first and second floors of the hotel. The form of this stair is set by the existing plan arrangement of the stair below and the minimum height clearance required for access to the rooftop. The northern and western edges of the stair roof align with the top of the adjacent parapet walls

with a small overhang that creates a fine shadowline detail between the parapet wall and the roof behind. An oculus window at the highest point (at the top of the stair) provides natural light into the stairwell below.

The traditional standing seam zinc wall cladding and roofing responds to the neutral dull silver/grey of surrounding rooftop materials and has a recessive appearance against the rich coloured brickwork with its bold painted band detailing.

Internally the new stair connecting to the second floor to the rooftop is set in from the existing lath and plaster walls to provide visual separation between old and new elements and so as to maintain all of the decorative cornices in the existing stairwell.



Proposed view from Gloucester Walk (north)

#### Outdoor Patron Seating Area:

The outdoor patron seating area is located along the eastern George Street side of the rooftop. It is located behind the existing parapet walls on the east and creates the setback to the enclosed seating structure to the west. The new enclosed area also creates an acoustic screen to the Sirius Building on the west. A freestanding landscape planter to the south provides visual screen to the adjacent rooftop services plant area over the dividing parapet wall on the roof of No.27. A freestanding landscape planter to the north provide privacy screening to the existing outdoor guest terrace on the level below.

#### Coolroom + Amenities:

The southern section of the proposed addition on the rooftop of No.27 houses the patron amenities and coolroom. It has been designed as a simple flat roof form that sits below the adjacent parapet walls of the existing laundry, stairwell and store. When viewed from above from the Harbour Bridge the addition is predominantly screened by the existing structures.

The eastern wall is set back in line with the existing laundry wall at 3.8m from the George Street frontage. The southern elevation of the addition is visible above the roofs of the adjacent terrace row from the southern approach along George Street, so the southern wall is set slightly back from the existing parapet wall below with zinc cladding panels used as a recessive material beyond the face of the existing brickwork.

The internal height of the amenities and coolroom within is set at a minimum 2.4m, with a highlight glazed strip set under the ceiling line used to create a sense of spaciousness. The amenities are designed with a central access corridor to provide visual privacy from the seating and lift entry. The coolroom will store food and beverage supplies for the rooftop bar and kitchen area, minimizing the need for additional services risers through the hotel and reducing pressure on the relatively minimally sized lift and dumb waiter arrangement.

The amenities area also incorporates and consolidates various mechanical and service risers from the floors below. The proposed kitchen exhaust riser sits below the line of the existing adjacent chimney and is set back from the George Street edge of the building to minimize visual impact.

*Kitchen Servery:*

The kitchen servery is accommodated within the existing store room on the rooftop of No.27. The existing storeroom is to be fitted out with a raised floor and internal wall and ceiling structure to protect the existing internal fabric of the room. In the southwest corner two new dumbwaiter risers will provide service connection to the new kitchen below on the first floor.

*Southern Fire Egress Stair:*

The southern fire stair is an existing stairwell structure on the rooftop of No.27. Egress is provided to this via a corridor that also connects the amenities and kitchen area to the lift entry, bar and enclosed seating area. The roof over this corridor is a low glazed roof to provide natural light and also to allow the roof to sit below the existing eaves of the stairwell and kitchen servery building.

*Outdoor Plant Services Area:*

To the east of the amenities area is an open roof area that will accommodate services and plant. The corridor through the amenities area also provides access to this rooftop service area which accommodates bin storage and air-conditioning outdoor units.

This area is screened behind the existing parapet walls when viewed from George Street below. It is largely screened when viewed from the Harbour Bridge above by the existing parapet walls and the new and existing rooftop structures. The planters proposed to the south of the outdoor seating area provide separation and screening from the patron areas.

## Internal Works

### ***Bistro, Kitchen and Associated Works***

The changing nature of hotel trade has meant an increasing emphasis on food to complement the more traditional bar service of the hotel. This reflects the changing demands of patrons and the changing nature of The Rocks area with more local office workers and a changing local residential demographic, as well as the ongoing tourism market.

The original dining room of the hotel has recently been refurbished with new furniture and is often full, as are the George Street footpath dining areas. The proposed expansion of the hotel's dining facilities includes:

- Refurbishment of the existing sports bar and gaming room as an elegant bistro dining area,
- A new outdoor courtyard seating area between the hotel building and sandstone retaining wall to Gloucester Walk.
- Construction of a new commercial kitchen within the first floor of the former shop building to serve both the ground floor and rooftop.

It is proposed to expand the ground floor dining areas of the hotel with the addition of a new bistro dining area in the former shop building at No.27 George Street. This area is connected to the main hotel building via internal steps constructed in the mid-80's. It is currently being used as a sports bar and gaming lounge with TAB facilities, numerous TV screens, poker machines and associated equipment detracting from the decorative features of the heritage building. These are proposed to be removed and it should be noted that gaming machines are not proposed to be retained in the reconfigured hotel.

The new bistro dining area is designed to take advantage of the views into the space provided by the shopfront glazing arrangement on George Street. The removal of the existing heavy timber sports bar that currently fills this space (dating from the mid-80's) and the reinstatement of the adjacent hallway wall to provide a fire separated egress to George Street from the floors above, will restore the original proportions of the space and its lineal form. The existing opening between the sports bar and the gaming room is proposed to be widened, retaining the wall above so as to preserve the spatial reading of the original room. This will provide physical connections for staff and patrons and will create a visual link through the spaces from the shopfront to the courtyard dining area beyond.

In the existing gaming room, a new service bar is proposed incorporating a dumb waiter that will service the dining area from the kitchen located above. The location of the dumb waiter in this rear area means that the existing decorative ceilings in the former shopfront area will remain intact. At the rear of the existing gaming room the window joinery is proposed to be modified to provide a compliant accessible doorway to the rear courtyard area within the width and overall height of the existing opening.

This visual connectivity through to the rear courtyard and sandstone wall below Gloucester Walk allows for a greater understanding of the topography of the area and the history of the development of the site.

#### *First Floor Kitchen:*

The existing kitchen areas of the hotel are extremely undersized and are located in a lean-to area adjacent to the current patron amenities to the west of the main hotel building. This area is to be demolished, to be replaced by the new lift to provide access to the upper floors, and by the expanded amenities that are required for compliance with the BCA.

The new kitchen is proposed to be located on the first floor in the former shop building. This allows the accessible ground floor areas of the hotel to be opened up for use by patrons and utilises an area of the hotel that was not originally designed for guest accommodation. The existing unsympathetic ensuites and bathrooms in the former shop building are proposed to be removed.

The fit-out of the commercial kitchen to the first floor is to be installed within the layout of existing rooms. Original heritage fabric, including fireplaces, floor linings, skirting boards, picture rails and decorative cornices are all to be retained and protected. Over these new framing will support new floor wall and ceiling linings and accommodate services. Services risers are designed to have the least possible impact.

The exhaust for the kitchen is consolidated into a single vertical service riser, which has been located above the previously modified Hall 4 within a new lowered ceiling cavity. The required make-up air intake for the kitchen exhaust has been

located within an existing window opening to the rear light-well. This requires the removal and onsite storage of the existing window joinery, however this is considered to have much less impact on original building fabric than an alternate solution of a 1m x 1m vertical service riser running through two levels of the building.

The new dumbwaiters that service the ground and rooftop levels have been located in the rear less significant room which has had recent bathroom fitouts on the first and second floors, with existing recent plasterboard wall and ceiling linings. The kitchen wash-up area is also located in this area.

#### ***Staff Areas + Caretaker Accommodation Works (Second Floor, No.27)***

Above the proposed kitchen area, the second floor of No.27 is currently not connected to the second floor of the main hotel building, making it difficult to access for external guests. This area is proposed to be utilised as staff areas including an office, staff room with amenities and accommodation room for use by overnight staff or caretaker.

These areas can largely be accommodated with the existing room arrangement, with some additional partitions and the incorporation of new bathroom “pods” within the existing rooms. These bathroom pods are proposed to be detailed to preserve the existing interior linings and detailing, constructed as rooms within rooms.

#### ***Guest Accommodation Works***

In order to provide for the ongoing use of the first and second floors as traditional hotel style guest accommodation a number of upgrades are required for safety, compliance and ongoing market viability. These are:

- The provision of private ensuites to rooms rather than the shared bathroom arrangement of the current layout.
- Provision of equitable access to the accommodation floors and the provisions of accessible accommodation rooms and bathrooms.
- Upgrades to fire safety including fire egress, fire separation, acoustic separation and sprinklers.

#### ***Bathroom/Ensuite Pods:***

The existing room arrangement of the hotel rooms along the hallway will allow for one room in three to be converted to accommodate two bathroom pods serving the adjacent rooms. The existing non-original bathrooms of the hotel are proposed to be removed and these areas converted back to the original room layout. New direct access doors are proposed from each of the accommodation rooms, with the doors designed to be clearly read as new openings with simplified detailing. The northern rooms on each floor are of a size and scale that will allow for small bathroom pods to be carefully inserted within the space of the rooms.

The new bathroom pods have been designed to be fully reversible, with new services contained and reticulated within the new framing. The framed walls, floors and ceilings of the bathroom ‘pods’ are to be set-off existing walls by a minimum of 35mm to protect existing heritage fabric, including skirting boards, picture rails etc. Where an ensuite pod is proposed within the accommodation room, it will be detailed with raised floor and lowered ceiling so as sit as an object within the original room and allow the rooms spatial qualities to be clearly read.

Where original hallway doors are made redundant by the conversion of rooms to ensuites, these will be left in place and fixed closed with perimeter smoke seals.

#### ***Accessible Accommodation:***

The new lift will provide equitable access to the first and second floor accommodation rooms. The existing office on each level will be converted to a small lobby / reception area that will connect to the existing stair and hall.

The accommodation room on each of the first and second floors adjacent to the new lift lobby can be converted to provide accessible accommodation through the introduction of a new access door of compliant width directly from the lobby and the conversion of part of the adjacent room to accommodate a fully compliant accessible bathroom.

#### *Accommodation Fire Safety Upgrades:*

Upgrades to fire safety for guest will require some works to the existing hall on the first and second floors. New fire doors are to be installed at each end of the main hallway in order to separate the hall from the stairwells at each end. The doors will sit behind the line of the existing hall archways and be left open to be operated on failsafe close mechanisms linked to the building fire detection system.

The halls and northern fire stair will also have the existing carpet replaced with timber overlay floor on protective underlay to comply with smoke hazard management and requirements for spread of flame. The doors to accommodation rooms will be upgraded with perimeter smoke seals, self-closers and fire retardant intumescent paint.

Sprinklers will also be installed throughout the accommodation rooms utilizing the existing floor cavity for service runs. Sprinklers will be reticulated along corridors with pipework running to the rooms either side and sprinkler heads positioned to provide coverage to the rooms with minimum fabric and aesthetic impact. Where sprinkler pipework needs to pass across floor framing, minimum notching into framing will be undertaken under heritage architects and structural direction.

#### *Accommodation Acoustic Upgrades:*

The existing hotel has no acoustic separation between floors, including between the hotel areas and accommodation areas above. As part of the proposed upgrades the floors of the first and second floor accommodation will be carefully lifted for new services and sprinklers to be installed. At this time acoustic insulation can be installed within the floor cavity and a 4mm acoustic impact layer can be laid under the existing floor boards. Over this carpet will be laid in accommodation rooms and a timber overlay flooring on underlay laid over hallway areas.

#### *Services upgrades:*

The existing building services in the hotel are largely non-compliant with current standards. The upgrade of services is proposed to include:

- Fire services including EWIS and sprinklers throughout.
- Electrical upgrades including re-wiring and electrical board upgrades.
- Mechanical upgrades including the installation of kitchen exhaust and air conditioning.
- Hydraulic upgrades including new hydraulic services for ensuites, bathrooms, kitchens and bar service areas and removal of redundant services.
- General BCA and services upgrades throughout the buildings for compliance with currently building and fire safety regulations within the constraints of the heritage fabric of the building.

The upgrade of building services, including, fire, hydraulic, electrical and mechanical have been designed to minimise impact on the heritage fabric of the original building and to minimise the visual impact of the spatial qualities of the internal rooms. The methodology and installation of services is to follow the following principles:

- All new services to be installed in new framed walls or within new or existing floor cavities
- Existing penetrations/fixing locations to be re-used for new services
- Existing floorboards are to be carefully removed and re-laid to install new services to Heritage Architect direction
- No services to be chased in existing masonry walls
- New lighting fixtures + switches to generally use location of existing
- Sprinkler services to be installed within existing floor cavities above each floor with sprinkler heads to locally penetrate existing ceilings as required for compliant coverage
- Where required, only minimum notching of floor joists to be done to allow installation of services.

Vertical service risers have been located in the zone of new framed walls or infilled openings where possible. Where this is not possible, service risers have been located in the most appropriate locations to maintain the original form and proportion of the existing rooms. In addition, service risers have been grouped to limit the number of new riser locations required.

### Air-conditioning:

The accommodation rooms will be served by individual AC air handling units fixed above the new ensuite pods. Supply and return air to the accommodation room is through 3 x small 250mm diameter penetrations through the existing internal walls.

The back-of-house offices will be serviced by individual AC split system units fixed to new wall framing with service reticulation in new or existing cavities.

The kitchen preparation and washing areas are served via AC fan coil units installed above the new ceiling framing with ductwork and services installed in the new cavity.

The ground floor bar + bistro areas will be served by a combination of AC units. To the main bar area, a new AC fan coil unit is to be installed above a new acoustic suspended ceiling panel over the stage area. Existing AC supply vent locations are to be used in the secondary bar area. The lower bistro area is to be served via two fan coil units installed behind the infilled wall opening. A new fire rated bulkhead will be installed above the fire egress corridor to house the equipment. The new bulkhead is to be installed below the existing cornice and the services are to be installed in the new framed wall.

The outdoor condenser units for the proposed AC units are to be located on the rooftop plant area and second floor balcony. The condenser units have been located behind the existing parapet walls where possible to limit the visibility from higher vantage points. In addition, planter beds are proposed to provide visual screening.

### Environmentally Sustainable Development

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The environmental sustainability measures and principles adopted with the proposal have been independently assessed by Northrop Consulting Engineers. An ESD report is included with the application.

The proposed works achieve high standards of environmentally sustainable design by employing strategies of re-utilising existing building fabric and materials, using high quality materials with long life spans and minimal maintenance requirements, using sustainably sourced materials, using low water and energy use fittings, and re-vitalising the existing building to enhance its productive use in the future. Specifically:

- The new lift and rooftop is to be constructed of high quality materials suitable for the semi-marine environment to ensure durability, low maintenance requirements and a long life-cycle.
- Timbers used are to be sustainably harvested.
- The new elements of the interior have been designed as an assembly of "loose fit" pieces capable of adaptation to future uses of the premises. This philosophy aims to reduce the potential redundancy of the fit out as the use of the premises evolves over time.

## Visual + View Impacts

The view of The Mercantile Hotel from the Sydney Harbour Bridge was noted of high significance from numerous consulting authorities, including, the Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority (SHFA) / Place Management New South Wales (PMNSW), and this has been taken into consideration in the design of the new rear addition and rooftop structure.

The visual and view impacts of the proposal have been independently assessed by K. I. Studio who concluded that “the proposal would enhance the vibrancy to the area and provide a new perspective of the visual interface with the surrounding historic fabric. The proposal would have a limited effect on the general precinct.” Existing and proposed views of the proposal have been included with the application.

The assessment analysed nine views looking towards the proposal from a number of different viewpoints. Key viewpoints include Bradfield Highway (Sydney Harbour Bridge), Gloucester Walk, and George Street. These viewpoints were considered to be of a low-moderate degree of sensitivity due to their heritage context, with the impact in these cases considered low-moderate or negligible.

Some of the design measures employed to mitigate any possible adverse impacts on views include:

- The new rooftop structure has been set-back from the existing building façade in order to maintain sightlines of the full façade of the building from bottom to the top, hence limiting the visual presence of the proposal.
- The scale and massing of the rooftop structure has been articulated to be sympathetic to the scale and texture of the surrounding context and urban environment when viewed from the Sydney Harbour Bridge.
- The use of lightweight and transparent materials, and materials of colour and form that sit unobtrusive within the existing rooftop context.
- The materials selected allow for an extremely fine structure with minimal obstruction of views through to the façade.



Proposed view from the Sydney Harbour Bridge (east)

## Appendix – Design Consultation

Hi Chris

I have reviewed Welsh & Major's sketch plans (SK05-11 incl., rev C) for the Mercantile against the CMP for the site following our walk around last week.

The major interventions include:

#### Ground floor

- Removal of existing kitchen and toilets from the western side of the building
- Installation of a new lift and toilets in this area
- Installation of a dumb waiter to the hallway to the former shop
- New openings between the former shop and kitchen, and to the western wall of the former shop's kitchen

#### First & second floor

- Installation of new fire stairs within north-western corner of former shop building, and new access bridge to Gloucester Walk
- New kitchen within former bedroom over shop
- New kitchen preparation within eastern bedroom over former shop
- Installation of new ensuites within former bedrooms
- Installation of new fire stair within former bedroom to hotel, and access bridge to Gloucester Walk

#### Roof

- Continuation of lift, dumbwaiter and two sets of fire stairs to roof
- New bars & new toilets
- Retractable awning

#### General comments:

In my comments below, I have used the room numbering from the CMP.

Future documentation should indicate proposed interventions overlaid on the CMP significance diagram.

The works should be designed to retain the clear legibility of the former shop and hotel which were separated from each other by a dividing wall, including the separate roof terraces.

The works should also aim to retain/conserve significant fabric and to retain/reinstate the original spatial layout.

It is important to clarify what additional works, and therefore what heritage impacts, would be triggered by the proposal, including fire upgrading works such as upgrade of doors, fanlights, windows etc.; upgrade of active fire protection system such as sprinklers; additional services and their reticulation etc.

#### New lift

- The intervention of the new lift should be able to be handled successfully as a contemporary element, external to the building, on the basis of providing improved access to the building, subject to careful selection of materials and detailing of interface with existing building etc.
- The proposed entry through the former external wall of the building in G06 can be supported.
- The proposed southern connection through to the kitchen at the rear of the former shop building, G11, which would involve the removal of the significant fireplace should be reconsidered – either by removing this connection or by relocating the lift to the east to avoid the penetration at this location.
- Photomontages are required to indicate the visual impacts of the new lift and roofed link over.

#### New southern fire stair and access bridge

- Explore whether the requirement for the southern fire stair and egress bridge to Gloucester

Walk can be removed by reinstating the former hallway, stairway and egress to George Street as indicated in Environet report (p.10).

- If this is not possible, the proposed new stair and access bridge may be able to be supported, subject to detail of structure, balustrade etc., and based on confirmation that no additional elements are required – eg. roof over, enclosing walls, security door at Gloucester Walk etc.
- Investigate whether the access bridge can align with fenestration over.
- Provide photomontage showing bridge.

#### New northern fire stair and access bridge

- The new fire stair within bedrooms 1.15 & 2.15 can be supported, including the access bridge to Gloucester Walk.
- Investigate whether the works can be carried out without the need to widen the existing window opening.
- See notes below re rooftop impacts

#### New toilets to ground floor

- The proposed demolition of the non-significant kitchen and toilets (G07 & G09) is supported
- The proposed new toilets located in this former external space are considered an acceptable intervention; detailing should allow for separation between the former external wall of the original hotel and the new elements; new elements should be designed to eliminate obscuring or fixing into the early stone retaining wall to the west.
- The original concrete steps between E03 & E04 adjoining the retaining wall should be retained as evidence of the former stairs to Gloucester Walk.
- The glass roof over the western end should not be attached to the retaining wall.

#### Gaming lounge

- The proposed location of the new gaming room is unfortunate in its impact on the spatial layout within the main bar area; however, the original layout of this area has been substantially amended previously, and is considered acceptable, subject to detailing.

#### Former shop & shop kitchen

- Although the proposal to create a direct line of sight between George Street and the rear courtyard would provide obvious benefits, the existing wall between G10 (shop) & G11 (kitchen) is significant and should be retained as original fabric and as evidence of the original spatial layout and use of these spaces.
- Likewise, elements of significant fabric to the west wall to G11 which can be retained while providing access to the proposed rear dining courtyard, should be kept in situ.
- The former hallway between the shop and the residential stairway has been substantially altered by new openings, and by the new bar; the proposal to remove the current bar and install a smaller bar is supported; detailing should allow legibility of the alignment of the wall between the hallway and the shop.
- The proposed dumb waiter within the former hallway – see comments re southern fire stair.

#### Dining room

- The preference is not to create a new opening through the original and intact west wall of the stair hall G05 unless required under BCA.

#### First floor kitchen

- The proposed construction of a new kitchen 1.21 to the first floor is the major intervention into the building. Further concept design is required to clarify the impacts of these works, including service penetrations, service rises, dumb waiters, treatment of walls (including fire place), floor and ceiling, etc.
- The eastern bedroom 1.17 has been altered to accommodate an ensuite previously and the formation of a preparation area may have less impact – however further details about the impact of new services reticulation in this area should be provided.

#### New ensuites

- The former sitting room 1.04 is a significant space – detailing is required to indicate how this proposal can be effected without impact on the space.
- The adaptation of rooms 2.05, 2.07, 2.11 – 2.14, & 2.17 incl. can be supported.

- Concerns about impact or proposed insertion of new ensuite within the significant former sitting room 1.04, and to a lesser extent within bedroom 1.05.

Roof

- The proposed adaptation of the former laundry is acceptable.
- The proposed new toilets to the southern roof is considered acceptable, subject to the satisfactory management of the heritage impact of these services.
- Photomontages are needed to indicate impacts of the northern stair and the proposed framework for the awning; as discussed, these should be considered when viewed from George Street, but also from above – from Cumberland Street and from the Sydney Harbour Bridge pedestrian walkway.
- Consideration about the works required to create a trafficable deck at roof level, including any requirement for improved loading capacity, and the impacts of this work.
- Clear legibility should be retained of former roof terraces to the shop and hotel – ie, minimise penetration through the dividing wall.

As discussed, these works are beyond SHFA's heritage delegations, and will be subject to review and determination by the Heritage Division, OEH and the consent authority under the EP&A Act. They will also require a SCRA amendment. There is also a formal landowner's consent process internally which will involve review by other teams within SHFA who may have additional comments about particular matters.

I suggest that a meeting be organised with the consent agencies, once you have had the opportunity to refine the drawings. SHFA would be happy to attend.

Regards

Niall

Niall Macken  
Head of Heritage

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**Subject: The Mercantile Hotel, The Rocks - Meeting Notes 6 June 2017****Date:** 6 July 2017 at 4:05:57 PM AEST**To:** Miriam Stacy <[Miriam.Stacy@property.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Miriam.Stacy@property.nsw.gov.au)>,"[susan.kennedy@shfa.nsw.gov.au](mailto:susan.kennedy@shfa.nsw.gov.au)" <[susan.kennedy@shfa.nsw.gov.au](mailto:susan.kennedy@shfa.nsw.gov.au)>, Chris Major<[chris@welshmajor.com](mailto:chris@welshmajor.com)>, "[kpaterson@urbis.com.au](mailto:kpaterson@urbis.com.au)" <[kpaterson@urbis.com.au](mailto:kpaterson@urbis.com.au)>**Cc:** Maryana Stetsyuk <[maryana\\_stetsyuk@sja.com.au](mailto:maryana_stetsyuk@sja.com.au)>

Dear All,

Thanks for your time today.

As discussed at the meeting just noting some of the points raised for further consideration,

- Investigate the cellar requirements and future use in relation to potential archaeological resource and impacts.
- Review other items such as the lift in relation to potential archaeological resource and impacts.
- Rooftop rear balustrade – consider infilling with brick to tie in with other parapet walls to the rooftop.
- Dumbwaiter – Given the intactness of the pressed metal ceilings, reconsider options for the dumbwaiter location be relocated within the existing gaming area/rippled ceiling area.
- External door/windows leading out to courtyard – reconsider retaining and adapting this joinery, possibly with 2 doors with a fixed pane in the middle, as per the joinery and doors in the Mercantile bar area.
- Investigate the flooring in the bar area and options for new suitable DDA compliant floor coverings including carpet, please send through photos of the existing timber floor for review.
- Existing north end Stair – review options to retain and utilise existing stair as fire isolated stair as an BCA alternative solution in lieu of introducing a new stair through existing rooms.

Further to the above could you please send through the latest BCA report and any Fire Engineering Reports you have.

Thanks.

**Aaron Todd**  
**Senior Project Manager**

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Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Aaron Todd <[aaron\\_todd@sja.com.au](mailto:aaron_todd@sja.com.au)>  
**Subject:** FW: Mercantile Hotel presentation - feedback  
**Date:** 14 August 2017 at 10:11:03 AM AEST  
**To:** Chris Major <[chris@welshmajor.com](mailto:chris@welshmajor.com)>

Hi Chris,

Thanks for the presentation on Friday, Great Result!. please see some notes from Miriam below.

Kind Regards,

**Aaron Todd**  
**Senior Project Manager**

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**From:** Miriam Stacy [<mailto:Miriam.Stacy@property.nsw.gov.au>]  
**Sent:** Friday, 11 August 2017 12:35 PM  
**To:** Aaron Todd <[aaron\\_todd@sja.com.au](mailto:aaron_todd@sja.com.au)>  
**Cc:** Nicholas Fterniatis <[nick.fernatiis@property.nsw.gov.au](mailto:nick.fernatiis@property.nsw.gov.au)>; Kylie Seretis <[Kylie.Seretis@property.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Kylie.Seretis@property.nsw.gov.au)>  
**Subject:** Mercantile Hotel presentation - feedback

Hi Aaron

Nick and I are pleased with the design progress made with the Mercantile Hotel proposal.

Here are my comments for compiling and sending through to Chris Major:

- Welsh+Major are seeking SEARs for the SSD and SCRA variation.
- Lift shaft – a solid wall to western elevation would tie the lift back into the building, other walls could be of other materials and maybe transparent, yet to be decided.
- Roof top terrace and sawtooth roof design is coming along well. Use of materials still to be resolved. Confirm visibility of proposed roof top terrace enclosure in street context in relation to heights of neighbouring buildings Metcalfe Bond Stores and not visible from the Sydney Opera House.
- Roof proposal angles roof to maximise views to the harbour bridge.
- Modelling and materials for the roof top fire escape stairs still to be resolved.
- Ground floor plan issues with riser penetration through pressed metal has been well resolved – but moving to another room.
- External rear door to courtyard and floating floor appear resolved as well on ground floor.
- New materials and colours palate still to be resolved and should relate to current materials colours of the building. Not necessarily the same materials but need to relate comfortably.
- New work should be reversible where possible to allow easy removal, lift is set away from the building, pods for kitchen and bathroom elements proposal.
- New services to be introduced including fire upgrade with concealed sprinkler system, fire separation, acoustic separation.

Regards

**Miriam Stacy**  
**Senior Manager, Heritage**  
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Stephen Whelan <[stephenwhelan@hotmail.com](mailto:stephenwhelan@hotmail.com)>  
To: Chris Major <[chris@welshmajor.com](mailto:chris@welshmajor.com)>

15 August 20