

Pyrmont Peninsula Place Strategy

Volume I | Project Analysis

PART A

We acknowledge and respect Traditional Owners across Australia as the original custodians of our land and waters, their unique ability to care for country and deep spiritual connection to it. We honour Elders past, present and emerging whose knowledge and wisdom has, and will, ensure the continuation of cultures and traditional practices.



Hassell

Level 2, Pier 8/9, 23 Hickson Road Sydney
NSW 2000

+61 2 9101 2000

Australia / Asia / United Kingdom / United
States

Collaborators:

PwC

VIAE Consulting

Kinesis

Cred Consulting

Atlas Urban Economics

Pentelic Advisory

IDC Australia

GLN Consulting

GML Heritage

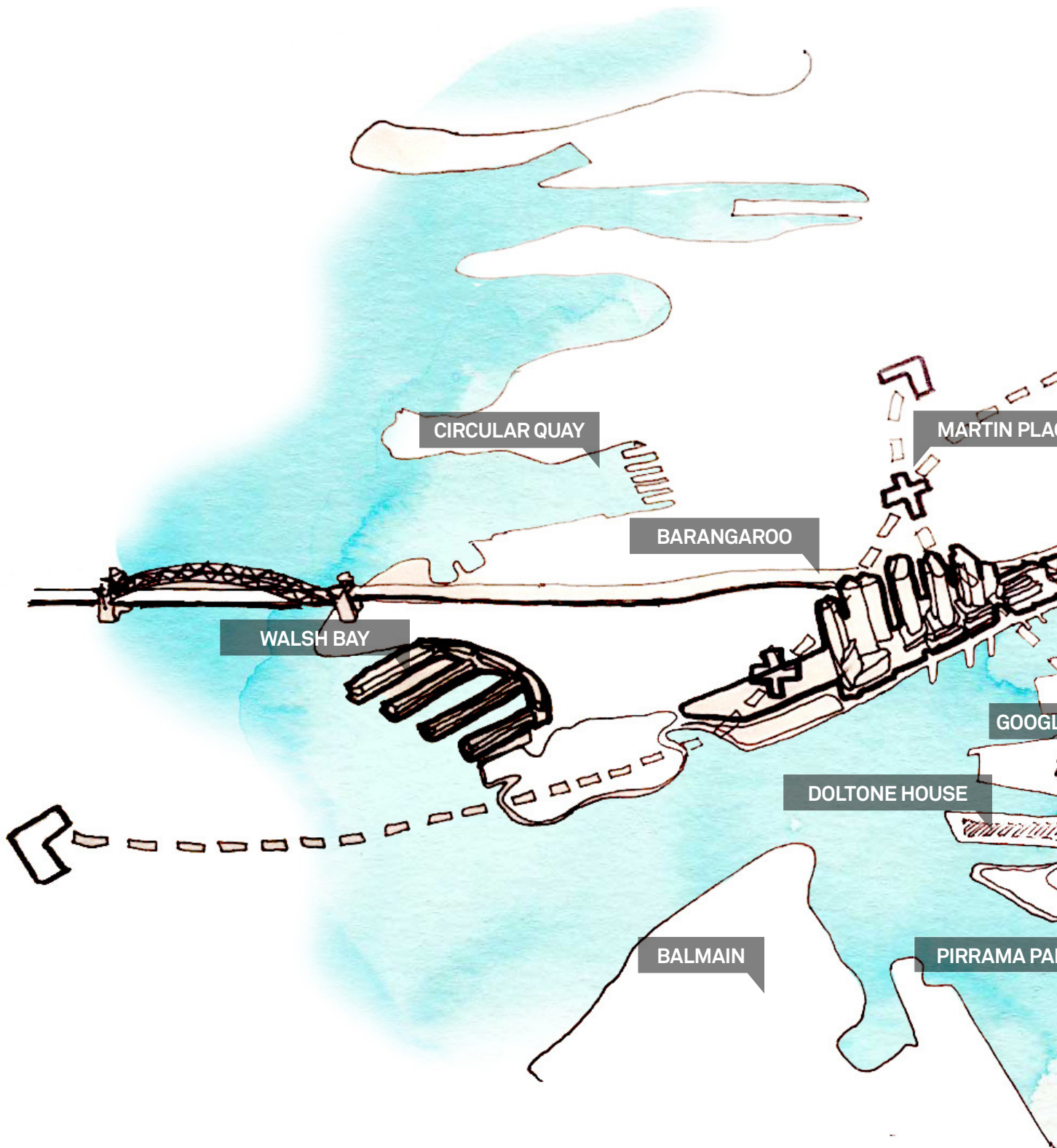
People Place & Partnership

This report has been
prepared for:



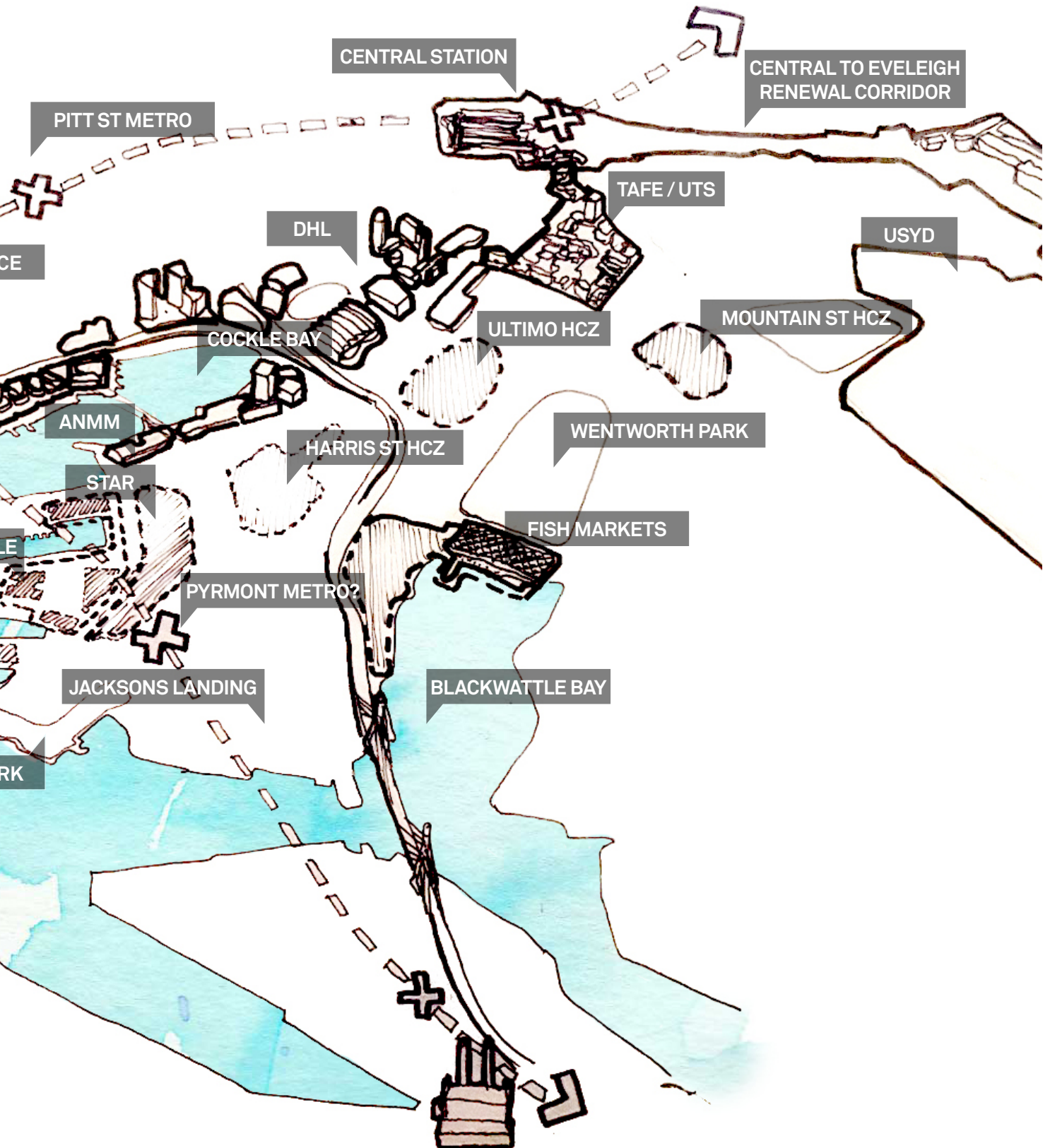
Planning,
Industry &
Environment

1	Introduction	5
2	Historic Context	17
3	Strategic Context	29
4	Peninsula Analysis	39
5	Next Steps	75



1

Introduction



Pymont Peninsula is home to a unique mix of heritage fabric, diverse residents, creative industries and international destinations.

It has a key role in driving connectivity along the Innovation Corridor to link Sydney CBD, Central to Eveleigh and future Bays West precincts. It will leverage its heritage, event, education, media and technology anchors to provide benefits to the entire Harbour CBD.

Executive Summary

The NSW Government has initiated work to plan for the future growth and enhancement of the patchwork of communities and precincts described as the "Pyrmont Peninsula".

The key objectives of this work was outlined by the Greater Sydney Commission which are:

- Align development with the GSC Region and District Plans with particular focus on the role of the innovation corridor.
- Develop a place strategy.
- Implement the place strategy.

To assist in assessing opportunities that realise these objectives within the peninsula, Hassell in collaboration with the project team, the NSW Department of Planning, Infrastructure and Environment (the Department), NSW Treasury and Transport for NSW is preparing a strategic framework for discussion with stakeholders and the community.

The Framework is a high-level document that:

- Considers the broader physical, historical and cultural context.
- Informs the decision making on opportunities within the study area.
- Is a basis for stakeholder discussions, public consultations and potential Government endorsement.

The project team commissioned by the Department has examined the broader relationship of the Pyrmont Peninsula to the 'Harbour CBD' as defined under the Greater Sydney Region Plan and Eastern District Plan. In doing so, opportunities to provide greater differentiation between the peninsula and Harbour CBD's precincts have been identified to foster its unique economic purpose and role as a key connector in the fabric of Sydney's future growth and success.

The framework will outline necessary urban design considerations, potential projects and establishes a logic for evaluating the merit of future proposals.

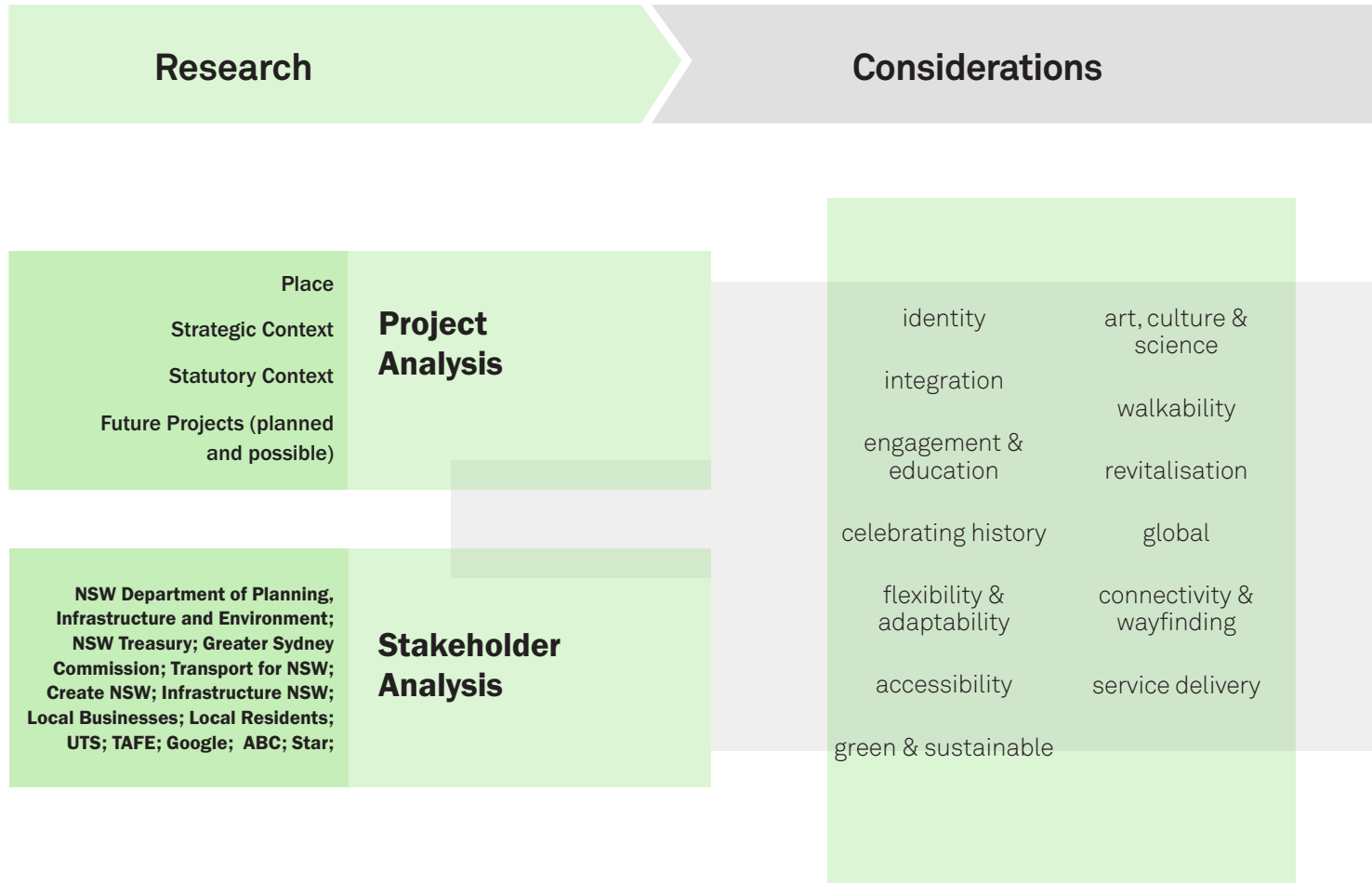
The framework, when understood with the Economic Development Strategy and Implementation Plan, provide the best chance for an integrated peninsula that creates a connected and successful Harbour CBD.

The framework provides Government with a spatial and urban logic to inform decision making in the peninsula, Harbour CBD and the relationship to the broader context.

This report is the first volume of the framework which consolidates the current strategic and physical context of the peninsula, creating a baseline understanding from which strategies for future change can be developed.

Place Strategy
Structure

The Strategic Framework document is structured into four volumes with the following objectives.



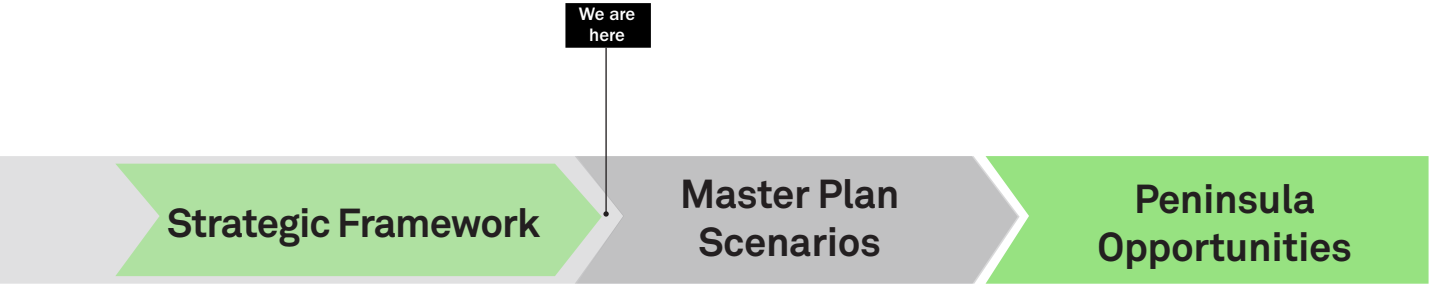
A thorough background analysis of the existing place, strategic plans and statutory context as they relate to the peninsula has been undertaken. Further input from a range of key stakeholders in the peninsula has identified key issues and opportunities that have informed the framework.

The background research is synthesised into a collection of key considerations which when combined, begin to reveal common emerging opportunities and issues facing the future of the peninsula.

Volume 02
Strategic Framework

Volume 03
Master Plan
Scenarios

Volume 04
Implementation
Projects



Criteria supporting each
of the ten directions

-  Development that complements or enhances the area
-  Jobs and industries of the future
-  Centres for residents, workers and visitors
-  A unified planning framework
-  A tapestry of greener public spaces and experiences
-  Creativity, culture and heritage
-  Making it easier to move around
-  Building now for a sustainable future
-  Great homes that can suit the needs of more people
-  A collaborative voice

B

A

Opportunity 1

Opportunity 2

Opportunity 2

C

The strategic framework clarifies and specifies what is important and what needs to be fixed to deliver the future amenity and outcomes.

The master plan scenarios help define and validate a set of criteria will be defined against which future projects and opportunities within the precinct can be more objectively assessed by the government.

A number of opportunities will be identified within the peninsula to deliver on the objectives set out in the framework.



02/Pyrmont Peninsula Place Strategy Study Area

Background

Since establishment of a British colony in Sydney Harbour and the displacement of Aboriginal people who lived in the area, the peninsula has been developed in an ad-hoc manner to meet the needs of the changing economy of Sydney as it has grown and expanded. It has seen intense change around the land/water interface and holds remnants from each stage of its history.

Whilst aspects of the peninsula have seen intense planning, renewal and investment, there has not been a clearly articulated and integrated framework for the peninsula – one that secures its cultural meaning, improves connectivity and legibility and enables a more cohesive approach to guiding development since Sydney Regional Environmental Plan No. 26 – City west was prepared in the 1990s.

Scope

This framework is focused on the review area defined by the Greater Sydney Commission under the 'Western Harbour Precinct including the Pyrmont Peninsula Planning Framework Review'.

The peninsula is a key residential and employment area for the City with the highest population density for the Metropolitan Area and an even greater worker population alongside international and metro destinations of Darling Harbour, Sydney Fish Market, Powerhouse Museum and TAFE/UTS.

Purpose

The project purpose is to develop a vision and plan which will allow for Pymont Peninsula's continuing evolution in ways that maximise its economic and social potential, while protecting and enhancing the area's unique heritage, liveability and long-term sustainability.

This document compliments the project's purpose in understanding the current conditions that will impact on propositions for future change within the peninsula.

The framework recognises previous work undertaken by organisations including Infrastructure NSW, Create NSW and the City of Sydney but seeks to find a broader and shared position based around a 'neighbourhood' or 'sub-precinct' approach to 'place' in the context of the Harbour CBD, City Centre and Innovation Corridor.

It is a design-led methodology, seeking to balance the multiple and sometimes competing agendas, establishes a spatial and urban logic that can inform decision making at various scales for the area, respect heritage, grow communities, and fostering a public experience.

It anticipates the following:

- Connectivity through and within the peninsula that is focused on people and the street experience is critical for the broader success of the innovation corridor including Bays West and the Camperdown-Ultimo Collaboration Area.
- Harris Street and Pymont Bridge Road are key streets that provide identity and connectivity which will drive economic growth if the current emphasis on regional vehicle movements are reduced.
- A continuous active transport loop which extends around the peninsula to connect the Camperdown-Ultimo Collaboration Area to the Bays Precinct and SITP via Jones Street, Banks Street, Bowman Street, Pirrama Road, Murray Street, Pymont Street and the Goods Line will enable business to business movements that enables collaboration and innovation.
- The reconfiguration of access to and from the Western Distributor will enable the place based outcomes desired to overcome topography and expand the sense of place that is loved by Pymont residents and workers.
- Investment in sustainable precinct based infrastructure and the public realm is required to deliver on the strategic objectives of the Metropolitan Region Plan and deliver the 30 minute city at a local level.

Role of the document

The framework is a strategic level document that identifies an overall vision, set of objectives and guiding themes for the Pymont Peninsula, its context and the city more broadly.

To support this vision, this analysis report consolidates the strategic and spatial understanding of the peninsula and defines a series of challenges, constraints and opportunities to be addressed under the structure plan and sub-precinct master plans.

There are a number of key considerations impacting its preparation including:

- Recognising NSW Government commitments for provision of a new fish market building.
- Recognising the NSW Government commitment to retain the Powerhouse Museum in Ultimo.
- Recognising and evaluating the existing master plans, frameworks and studies that have been prepared for the study area.
- Understanding the many relationships and barriers (topographic and infrastructure) within and around the peninsula.
- Working with diverse stakeholders (including State and Local Government) to achieve a shared vision.
- Consideration of the current and future use of important buildings and spaces.
- The need to articulate a clear framework for the assessment, design and delivery of future proposals.

Lessons to be Learnt

A benchmarking study was undertaken to examine the ways in which the Pyrmont Peninsula Place Strategy could learn from how other jurisdictions have grappled with developing places that have certain thematic correlations to the Peninsula.

This study took as its primary objective to research and understand relevant precedents for complex city centre fringe areas undergoing natural transition to higher intensity use.

This objective was further filtered through the layers of:

- Adjacency to water.
- Clustering of innovation focused industries.
- Heritage areas and fabric.
- Presence of residential communities.

This study identifies a number of key considerations when addressing aspects of growth within the peninsula.



03/ Pearl St Triangle, DUMBO
(Totem Brooklyn)

Good governance and investment in place over the long term provide for good growth.

In 2012 a coalition of entities commenced work on a strategic plan to ensure that the nascent tech cluster of Down Under Manhattan Bridge Overpass (DUMBO) would continue to grow through ensuring adequate office space, activation of underutilised areas and bridge the gap between start-ups and established businesses.

Unveiled in 2013, the strategic plan for the 'Brooklyn Tech Triangle' identified a range of projects that have been implemented across governance, connectivity, infrastructure, public domain, land use and identity by public and private sector. In 2016 the number of tech companies within the area had doubled and the strategy was deemed a model for economic development in urban areas by the American Planning Association.



04/ Old Street Roundabout, London
(Guardian UK)

Focusing only on anchor tenants reduces diversity and innovation.

East London Tech City describes a geographic area on the fringe of central London which had seen a clustering of start-up tech companies focused on the Old Street Roundabout around 2008 as a result of cheap rents and proximity to the CBD.

Reporting by the Guardian UK in 2016 notes that whilst Government's aim to attract investment and relocation of anchor tenants was successful, commercial rents had doubled in the 8 years since its initial recognition leading many smaller innovative companies to move out of the area in order for their businesses to afford rents.



Regional road infrastructure limits the benefits of public investment.

Southbank precinct is adjacent to Melbourne CBD, historically an industrial area the precinct experienced heavy urban renewal in the 1980's to transform into a dense mixed use precinct. Since 2000 there has been significant investment in the riverfront area which has created a vibrant night time destination anchored by the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre, Crown Casino and Melbourne Arts Precinct however despite significant renewal, the benefits are largely restricted to the riverfront itself. The precinct is undermined by disconnecting road infrastructure which is reinforced by podium parking and an uninviting street public realm.

The 2010 structure plan recognises the need to reverse the impacts of arterial roads identifying overcoming disconnection, a new streetscape vision and connected, permeable neighbourhoods as critical to the future success.



A strong sustainability framework underpins good amenity.

Managed by Waterfront Toronto, the Toronto Waterfront has a primary goal of creating vibrant and sustainable places for people who live, work, play and draw inspiration from the waterfront.

It has developed two sustainability frameworks (2005 and 2017) which highlight four strategic initiatives of sustainability, connectivity, affordability and innovation.

Its 2005 strategy addressed the 11 themes of energy, land use, transportation, sustainable buildings, air quality, human communities, cultural resources, natural heritage, water, materials, waste and innovation. It also contained performance measures to track progress against each.

To date it has enabled the construction of multiple commercial and residential projects, all of which have achieved gold or platinum LEEDS certification.

Investment in flood protection has added \$5.1bn to the Canadian economy and enabled development to meet ambitious targets like 20% of all residential units being affordable and that waterfront habitats are restored to vibrant and healthy aquatic ecosystems.



Incremental renewal alongside master plan precincts delivers a rich urban experience.

Sitting on the opposite shore of the Brisbane River from Brisbane CBD, South Bank contains many similarities to Darling Harbour with state convention and exhibition facilities, metropolitan museums and a mixture of land uses that have progressively back-filled the industrial land uses that have moved further away from the CBD fringe.

Behind the metropolitan anchors is West End which, despite significant gentrification in recent years, has maintained its reputation as a vibrant destination. Its live music venues are a cornerstone of this experience where small venues continue to be testing grounds for newer local bands and the comedy scene.

It has a strong presence of community pride and diversity of population supported by nearby Universities and TAFE.



08/ U-Bahnhof Elbbrücken, Hamburg
(NordNordWest)

Delivery of infrastructure at the right time and location enables growth and private sector investment.

Similar to Pymont, Hafencity's orientation, water (the Elbe) and arterial road (Willy Brant Strasse) made integration of the precinct into the city's transport and connectivity network challenging.

Planned as a dense, mixed use city expansion, an essential requirement for sustainable development is an efficient public transit system. The city's transport master plan had been completed prior to Hafencity being conceived however, given the importance of the area to the economic growth of the City as a whole, planning for a Subway (U-Bahn) extension from the city centre was undertaken with construction commencing in 2015 servicing the west and central sections of the master plan area.

This initial investment has since been supplemented by construction of a regional rail station (S-Bahn) to provide access to its eastern edge.

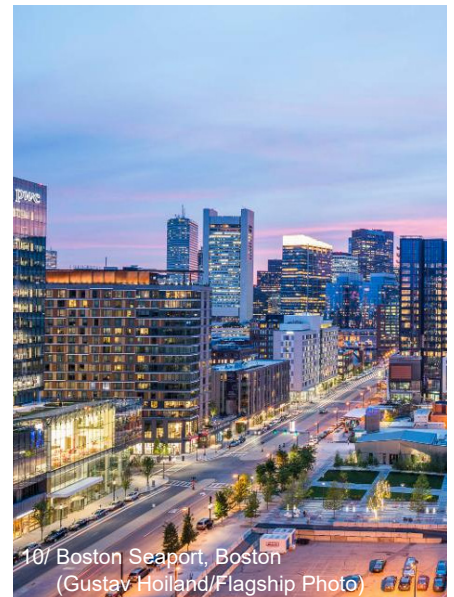


09/ Cornell Tech Campus, New York
(Cornell University)

Breaking down silos creates opportunity.

Seen as a first of its kind, Tata's investment in the Cornell Tech campus on Roosevelt Island was seen as a significant step in breaking down the barriers between research institutions and the private sector.

Unlocking institutional silos through co-location of business and research is identified as a key way to accelerate the commercialisation of research breakthroughs.



10/ Boston Seaport, Boston
(Gustav Holland/Flagship Photo)

Social diversity requires social investment locally.

Reporting in 2017 and 2019, the Boston Globe noted that despite the economic success of the Boston Seaport renewal, it was perhaps the city's 'whitest and most exclusive neighbourhood'.

Similar to Sydney, The City of Boston provides a requirement that developers contribute to affordable housing however this need not be provided within the development area. The result is an 'innovation precinct' which, combined with its poor public transport, has created an exclusive area where the significant benefits of public investment in an accessible waterfront and public space are restricted to those who can afford to be in the area.



11/ Pyrmont Peninsula



12/ Brooklyn Tech Triangle



13/ East London Tech City



14/ South Bank Melbourne



15/ Toronto Waterfront



16/ South Bank & West End Brisbane



17/ Hafencity, Hamburg



18/ Roosevelt Island, New York



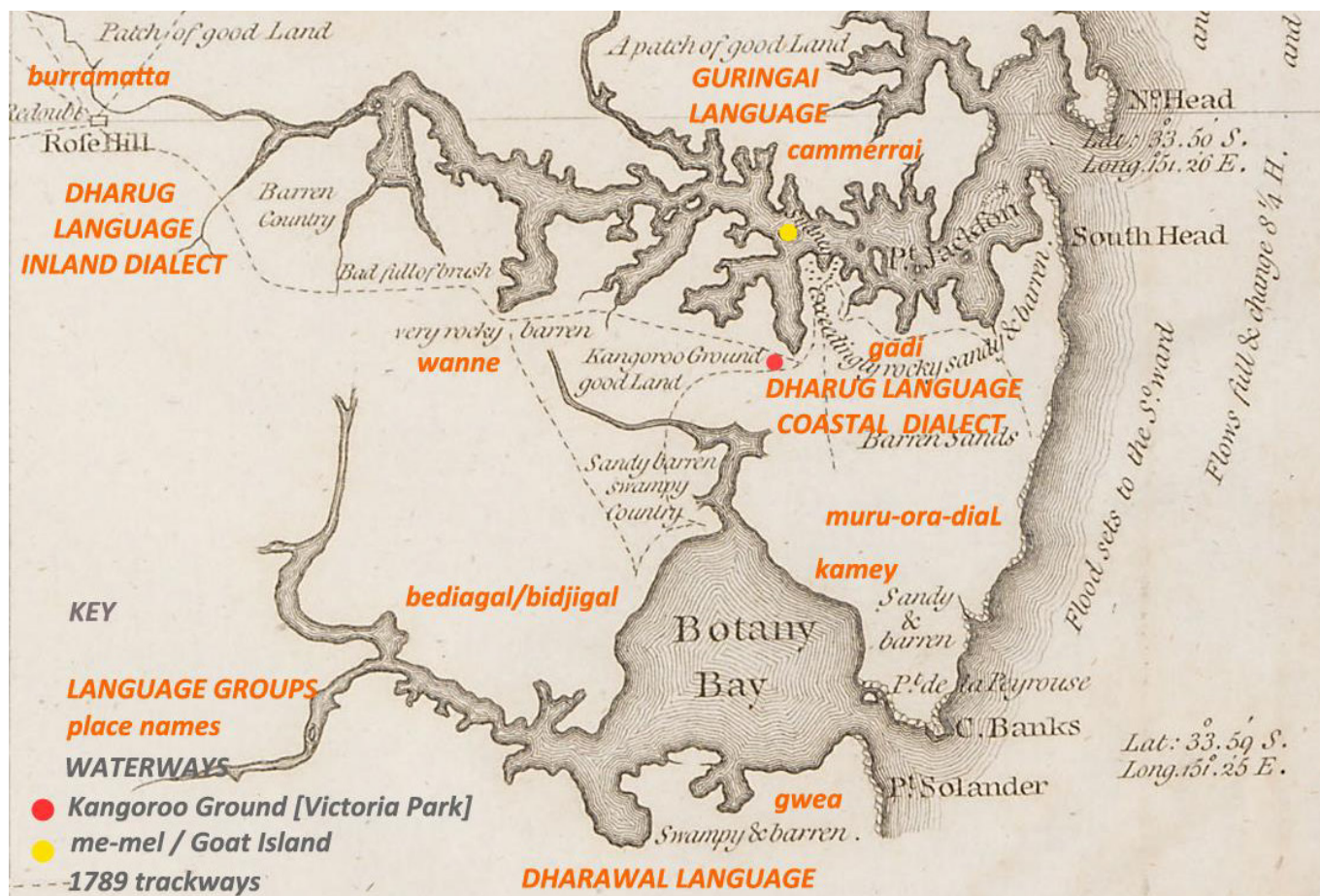
19/ Boston Seaport



20/ Watermark: Eora Country in 1793 showing the distribution of language groups and the approximate location of "kangaroo ground", Map: Walker, J. Overlay by Anne Burgess (2018)

2

Historic Context



21/ Eora Country in 1793 showing the distribution of language groups and the approximate location of "kangaroo ground", today's Victoria Park, marked with a red dot and the island of Me-mel, today's Goat Island, a Wangal landmark. Map: Walker, J. Overlay by Anne Burgess (2018)

A place of occupation and meaning for millennia

There is general consensus that Aboriginal occupation of Australia has existed for 60,000 years and certainly for many thousands of years before the arrival of the first fleet in 1788.

Blackwattle Bay is noted under the Blackwattle Bay Aboriginal Cultural Advice and Community Engagement Findings Report as the home of the Wanngal, with their country starting at Memel (Goat Island) and extending west to Parramatta. The Gadigal lived to the east in the current CBD with Pyrmont Peninsula potentially being a natural border between these two clans.

Sydneybarani.com.au notes evidence of settlements in the area

near Broadway between Mountain Street and Blackwattle Lane.

This place was Pirrama (rocking stone), a recognition of its robust yet dynamic geological foundation.

Its complex ecologies of harbour edges, creeklines and swampy bays, flat fields and bushland were places of occupation, hunting and fishing. The area around Ultimo was likely a favoured kangaroo hunting ground. To the west, a freshwater creek (later known as Blackwattle Creek) flowed from swampy lands through a valley thick with wattle trees into the harbour. To the east, a unique fresh water source – a natural spring.



22/ Reconstruction of Pyrmont Peninsula's original topography (John Broadbent, 2010)

A layered and evolving place



23/ A View in Port Jackson 1789, Richard Clevely, from the collections of the State Library of New South Wales [a7225030 / DL PXX 84, 30]

A source of natural sustenance

Just as the lands and waters of Pirrama had sustained people for many generations, its natural richness attracted the interest of early colonialists.

Captain John Macarthur led a picnic expedition to the peninsula in December 1806, its natural spring inspiring the naming of Pyrmont (the same name as spa town in northern Germany).

It is reported that colonial occupation of the peninsula was relatively limited up until the 1830s, with the original people remaining there for many years, observing the growing colony across the harbour waters.

An era of land subdivision and development had begun.

In 1795, Thomas Jones was granted 55 acres of land at the northern end of the peninsula, soon after sold to Obadiah Ikin, then to Captain John Macarthur for a gallon of rum.

Ultimo was established as the estate of Doctor John Harris, a 34 acre grant by Governor King in 1803.

This area was used as farmland for more than 50 years, when Harris subdivided and sold off much of the land. A grid of streets and blocks was created at this time, laying the foundation for the contemporary urban structure of the peninsula. The Harris family also constructed the first residences of the area, a terrace row on Wattle Street.



24/ Pyrmont, showing cattle in a field with sandstone boulders c1871, American & Australasian Photographic Company, from the collections of the State Library of New South Wales [a5743127 / PXA 933/127]



26/ Sandstone details Pirrama Rd, Pyrmont:
Photography Jean – Francois Lanzarone



25/ Tischbauer, 1893, Pyrmont Quarry

A resource for building the city

By the mid nineteenth century, the Pyrmont Peninsula was a focus of industry, trade and production – the powerhouse of the emerging modern city.

The first major industrial incursion occurred in the 1840s, when Darling Island was joined to the mainland, forming the city's main shipyard. Subsequent wharf, factory and warehouse development saw the draining of swamplands, covering of creeklines and modification of the harbour edge. A new goods line, carved through the peninsula, linked industrial sites to the greater Sydney region. The first Pyrmont Bridge, opened in 1858 with the current swing bridge built in 1902.

Pyrmont is renowned for its quality sandstone – and the major quarries established to extract this precious resource. Charles Saunders, also licensee of the Quarryman's Arms Hotel, was the biggest quarrymaster, overseeing three quarries nicknamed Paradise, Purgatory and Hell Hole. Pyrmont sandstone was used to build Sydney Town Hall, the University of Sydney and magnificent civic buildings on Macquarie and Bridge Street.

By 1900, the peninsula was home to more than 30,000, many who worked locally.



27/ County Council of Sydney stone yard,
Wattle Street Pyrmont, 1930s
[A-00022729]



27/ Sandstone disturbance through quarrying and railway/wharf construction on Pyrmont peninsula (John Broadbent, 2010)



28/ Darling Harbour 1946, NSW Records
[A014001417]



29/ Plan of Sydney with Pyrmont,
[M2 8.11.17/1836/2]

An exploited and degraded environment

Pyrmont's role in building the modern city is clear – as is the impact of the extractive industries that it housed. The peninsula became a place of abrupt cuttings, modified water edges and contaminated land. Natural systems were disrupted, communities forced to live alongside noisy and unhealthy industries.

In the mid twentieth century, many industries closed down or relocated to cheaper suburban locations. The community followed, with the population of the peninsula dwindling to less than 2000 by the 1980s.



30/ Pyrmont Power Station & Pyrmont Goods Yard, Jane Bennett 1988

Major industrial employers – including the Ultimo Powerhouse, Pyrmont Power Station and CSR factory – closed operations. These sites sat derelict for a number of years.

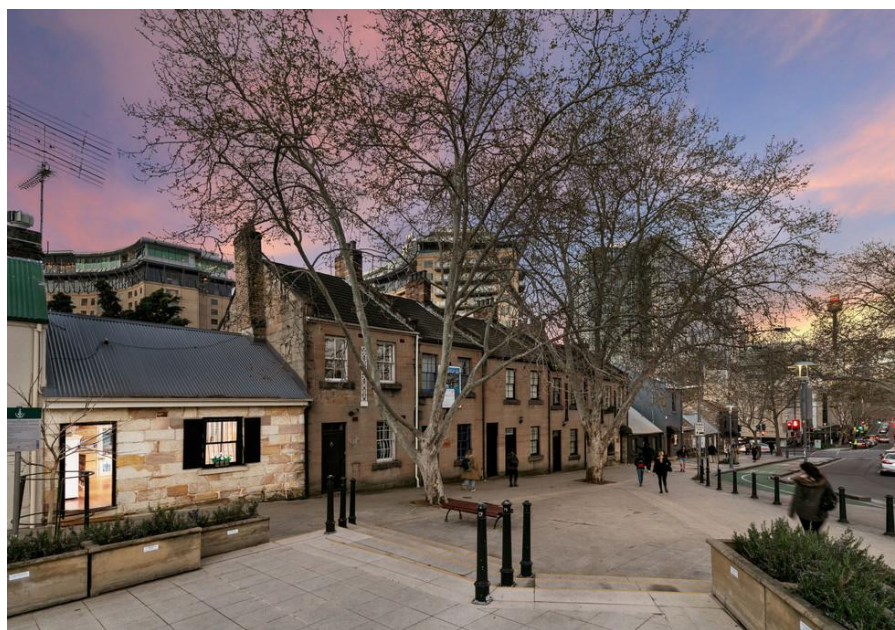
The Western Distributor, linking the Sydney Harbour Bridge to the western suburbs, was built in the 1970s. This elevated motorway effectively sliced the peninsula in two, disconnecting the communities of Pyrmont and Ultimo.

More than ever, the peninsula was seen as a place to pass through on your way somewhere else. A second motorway proposal, the North Western Expressway, would have obliterated much of Ultimo.

This time, local residents worked with the Builders Labourers Federation to impose a green ban on the project, effectively setting in place a new appreciation of and direction for the peninsula.



32/ Inner West Light Rail, Transport for NSW

31/ Affordable housing on Macarthur Street.
Photograph by Eric Seirens

33/ Union Street Square, Real Estate View

A place of innovation and transformation

The strategic potential of Pyrmont Peninsula was recognised and supported under the federal government's Better Cities Program. In 1992, the City West Development Corporation was created to oversee the renewal of the peninsula, focused on housing provision, employment opportunity and the rejuvenation of streets and public spaces.

New models for the design and delivery of housing were created. Under the newly created City West Housing (CWH), a diversity of market, affordable and social housing was created, with design competitions and new quality standards setting the agenda for subsequent urban renewal across the city.

Derelict industrial sites were turned into residential neighbourhoods, office precincts and community assets. Heritage buildings transformed into contemporary apartments and workplaces.

The existing goods line was reworked as a commuter light rail, linking the community with the city centre. New parks were created at the harbour edge and existing squares like Union Street Square becoming the focus for growing communities.

Within this degraded and difficult context, a new era of innovation and transformation had begun.



34/ Aspire (light sculpture), Warren Langley 2010



35/ Cockle Bay, now Darling Harbour c1819-20 By Major James Taylor From the collections of the State Library of New South Wales [a928747 / ML 941]

An opportunity for a new urban approach

And now, there is the opportunity to consider the next phase of the transformation of the Pyrmont Peninsula.

Pyrmont-Ultilmo SA2 is the second densest populated region in NSW and third nationally after Melbourne and Potts Point-Woolloomooloo according to the 2016 ABS census data. The peninsula is now home to more than 20,000 people, and even larger worker population which accounts for 7% of the City of Sydney's GDP. It is the focus for a growing innovation industry, where global tech firms are headquartered alongside Australian start-ups.

It has historic terrace house neighbourhoods and significant

heritage buildings. It also has a major university, cultural institutions, the ABC headquarters and one of the world's biggest fish markets.

Since 2011, the NSW government has invested in a new and expanded Convention, Exhibition and Entertainment Precinct, developed master plans for a new fish market, undertaken planning for a new Powerhouse Museum in Parramatta and is considering investing in a new metro station within the peninsula.

This interest has been accompanied by private sector proposals for Harbourside and The Star as well as the loss of anchor companies to other locations in the metropolitan area. The need is apparent for

a coordinated planning regime that is place based to ensure that growth of the unique communities of residents and businesses are properly managed.

Pyrmont Peninsula has limitless potential.

It also has a long and significant past, a place with a story that stretches back millennia. It is a quintessentially Sydney place, a rocky peninsula surrounded by glittering blue.

This richness and complexity of the peninsula requires a new urban approach – one that can protect all that is valued in this place, while envisaging the next step in its evolution.

Historic development



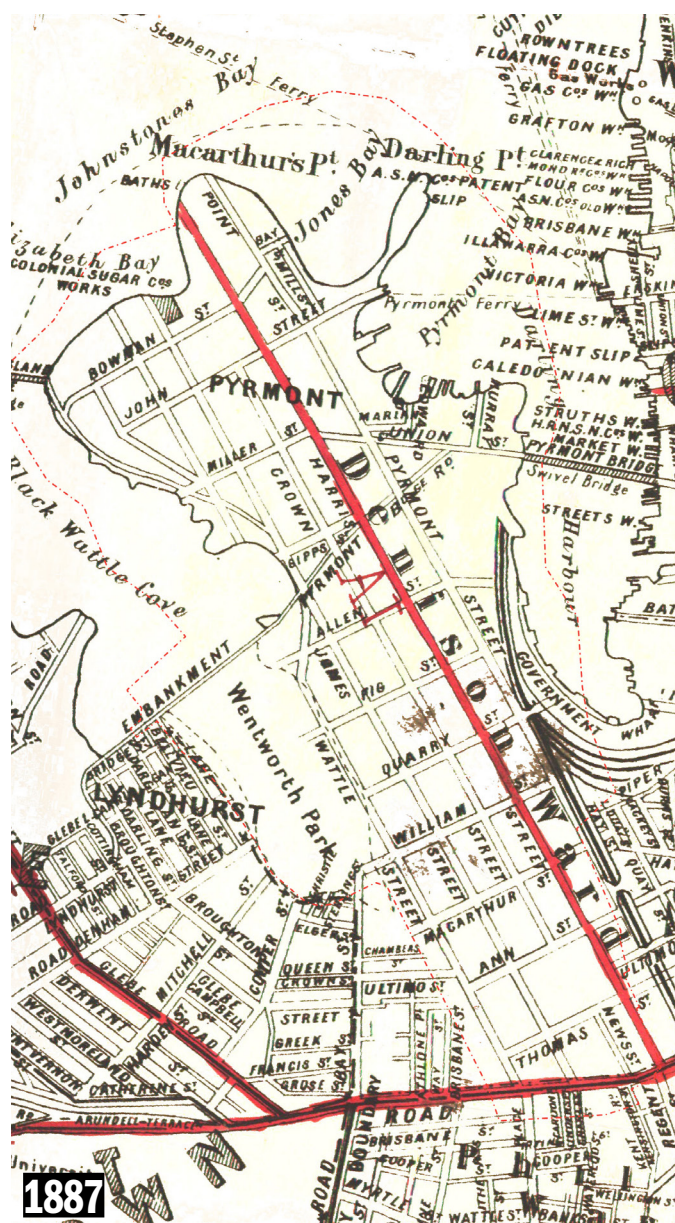
36/ Plan of Sydney with Pyrmont, New South Wales (M2 8.11.17/1836/2)

Initial subdivision of the Harris Estate and alignment of Harris Street and Union Streets. Much of this network remains with Pirrama Road approximating the original shoreline.



37/ City of Sydney (Shields) (A-00880420)

Early settlement of the peninsula as projected in the subdivision plan. Dwellings are focused around Harris (north of Union St), Union Street and Pyrmont Street.



38/ City of Sydney & Suburbs (Sands) (A-00880474)

The street grid as seen today is largely complete with only the shoreline still subject to variation. Blackwattle swamp has been reclaimed and the original bridge now a road.



39/ City of Sydney (A-00880475)

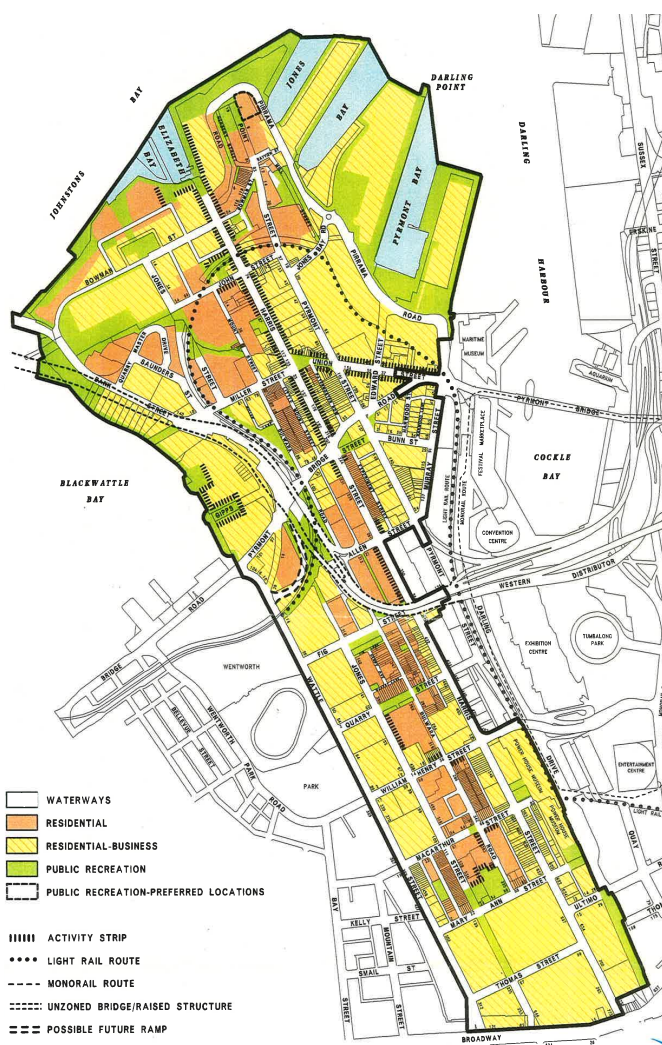
The Darling Harbour foreshore is substantially reshaped and Darling Island levelled and joined to land. The ridge of the peninsula is occupied by small dwellings and the western lots unoccupied as a result of quarrying activity.



1943

40/ Plan of Sydney with Pyrmont, New South Wales (M2 8.11.17/1836/2)

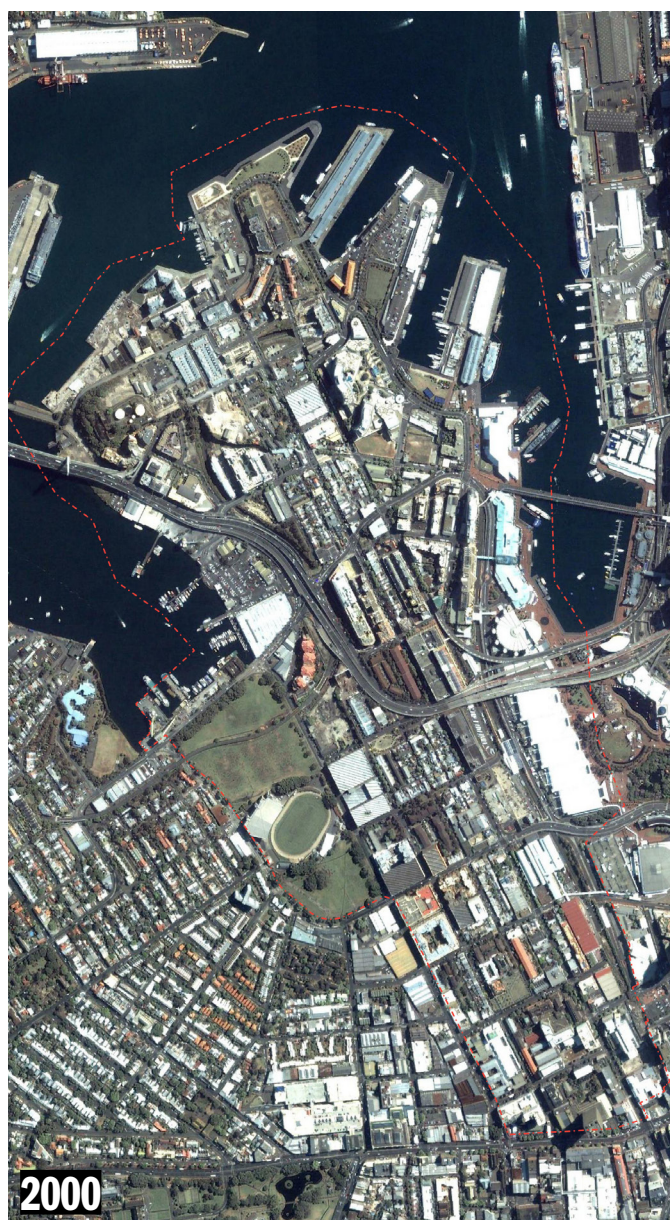
Rail cuttings are now visible around the headland which forms a dividing line between industrial uses on the shore and with houses along the ridge and stores mediating between the lower and upper levels.



1999

41/ SREP 26 Land Use Zones Map

Removal of rail sidings and all port uses with reconstruction of Darling Harbour into an entertainment precinct in the 1980's. Fig street cutting, construction of the western distributor (1995), The Star has been built.



42/ Nearmap aerial photo

Residential developments at Jacksons Landing are progressively being built commencing at the water's edge. The water police site is still in occupation with Pirrama Park being only partially built.



43/ Nearmap aerial photo

The Citywest Master plan is complete including Jacksons Landing and Pirrama Park. Darling Harbour is renewed with new convention, exhibition and entertainment facilities and the new communities of Haymarket and Central Park.