

Transport for NSW
OFFICIAL

Central Precinct

Revised Public Domain Strategy

April 2025



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1. Introduction

The Public Domain Strategy builds on the aspirations and stakeholder feedback received from the public exhibitions of the Strategic Vision, Strategic Framework and Draft Central Precinct State Significant Planning Framework. It is the result of an iterative design process undertaken over the past three years by the Design Team in collaboration with Transport for NSW (TfNSW), and in consultation with the State Design Review Panel (SDRP), Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI), City of Sydney (CoS), other key government stakeholders, and community and technical consultants.



This report is a revised version of the Public Domain Strategy submitted as a response to submissions in September 2023. It has been revised to respond to focus on four areas of the site; Central Square, the Western Gateway, Regent St Sidings and Prince Alfred Sidings. This report presents the proposed public domain strategy for these areas of the Central Precinct.

This revised Public Domain Strategy (2025) is to be read in conjunction with the Place Strategy and Urban Design Framework (2025) to gain a holistic understanding of the future renewal opportunities at Central Precinct. The Urban Design Framework (2025) outlines the urban design responses and presents the proposed changes to the urban design framework.

The Place Strategy, Urban Design Framework and Public Domain Strategy establishes the Reference Master Plan for Central Precinct. The proposed master plan described within this report is based on a thorough understanding of the strategic drivers of the precinct, the local urban context and character, heritage values, social and environmental matters, and technical constraints, combined with extensive design development testing.

2. Design Principles

Design with Country

- To start with a consideration of Country. Ensure that Aboriginal culture and heritage is embedded in the approach to design and development of the precinct.
- To ensure that the design allows users of the precinct to connect with the **history, stories, people, culture and contemporary meaning of Country**.
- To embed a strong **connection with Country** within the design of core public spaces and places.
- To create a sense of **welcome to Country**
- To connect to **Sky Country** and cosmology
- To acknowledge and **heal the past**, in particular the history of Platform 1 and the Stolen Generations
- To reconnect **Redfern and the Harbour**
- Connect to country through **sandstone** materiality
- To create cultural **meeting place** for Aboriginal people
- To **replace the landmarks** of Country in a meaningful way
- To **restore the sounds** of Country
- To build upon the legacy of Sydney Trains as an Aboriginal employer
- To **embed living culture and language** including through technology, art and place naming
- Provide community space and facilities for Aboriginal people

Heritage

- To design in response to the heritage of the site.
- To improve the setting of **iconic heritage** places through design that respects the history and meaning of place.

Public Domain

- To ensure the public domain supports the continued **efficient and safe** operation of Central Station as Sydney’s main public transport hub, including the integration of all levels of pedestrian activity below ground, at ground and station level.
- To ensure the public domain **integrates** with the adjoining fabric of southern Central Sydney and Haymarket, and connects with the nearby communities of Surry Hills, Redfern and Chippendale.
- To create a **vibrant, diverse** public domain that includes movement and dwell spaces in a permeable, comfortable and safe people-oriented network of parks and plazas.
- To create a public domain that attracts people from across the city because of its **unique** places and strong sense of community.

Open Space

- To create a **network of high quality parks and plazas** with high levels of amenity and comfort including sun and daylight access, wind protection, safety and comfort.
- To create **Central Square one of three new squares for Sydney**. This will integrate and enhance Railway Square and the Western Forecourt, and align with the western entry to Central Walk.

Social and Community

- To ensure social and community infrastructure is **embedded within the precinct** to foster a vibrant, inclusive and welcoming sense of place.
- To create spaces that can be shared by many different people to encourage a sense of real **community**.
- Create a safe and intuitive precinct that promotes **social access and inclusion** for all types of people, regardless of abilities and needs.
- Create a precinct that responds to the current and future needs of transport customers, workers, residents and visitors, including those of the broader local community.

Sustainability

- To embed environmental, economic and social sustainability into the fabric of the public domain, displaying best practice initiatives to ensure a **green, biodiverse precinct**.

3. Public Domain Plan

The proposed public domain provides a high quality network of new and revitalised public open spaces, civic and urban plazas and courtyards.

The Sydney Terminal Building will be set in an iconic public landscape consisting of major new CBD spaces including Central Square.

- Public spaces
- 1

Eddy Avenue (Upgrade)
- 2

Eddy Avenue Plaza (Upgrade)
- 3

The Grand Concourse (Upgrade)
- 4

Regional Coach Terminal
- 5

Central Square
- 6

Railway Square (Upgrade)
- 7

Henry Deane Plaza (Part of Western Gateway Sub-precinct, not within this rezoning proposal)
- 8

The Goods Line
- 9

Mortuary Station Gardens



Character Areas

Together, the northern public spaces create a major civic destination - a series of connected urban spaces centred on the Sydney Terminal Building.

The southern public spaces provide public space addressing the mixed use and residential communities adjacent.

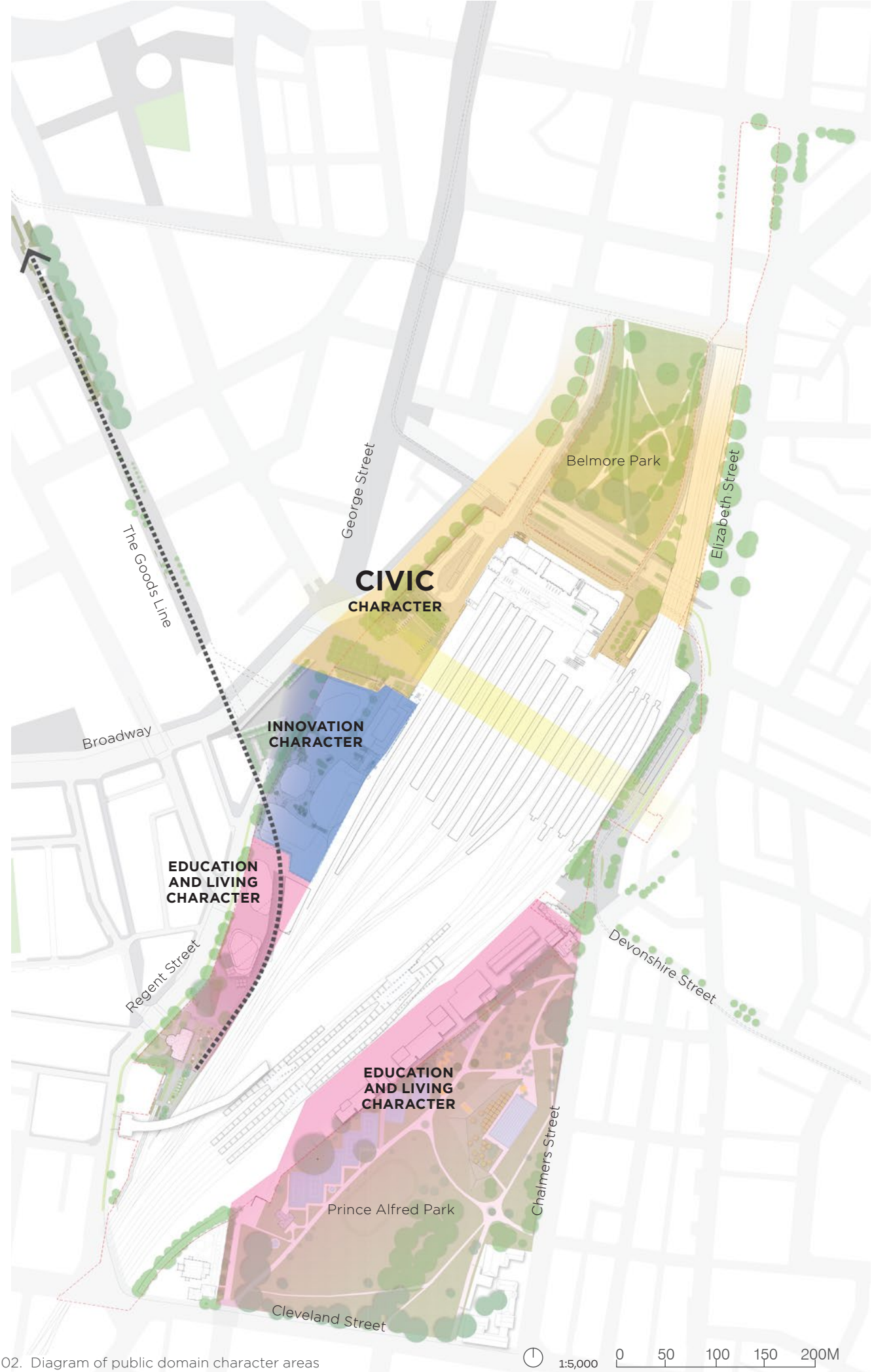
The civic public domain of the north is a network of linked spaces, each with different opportunities. The spaces connect to surrounding parks via green links and through a careful resolution of levels.

The building programs framing the civic spaces are cultural, tourism and commuter-focused, supported by retail.

The concept of underlying Country is introduced by interpreting the vegetation communities that once graced the site.

The northern public spaces around the Sydney Terminal Building create an opportunity to reconnect the station and Grand Concourse with surrounding streets by improving connectivity across level changes.

Central Station is expanding its capacity and functionality as the major hub of the NSW transport system. This expansion extends to the future public domain network.



02. Diagram of public domain character areas

4. Public Spaces: North

Existing

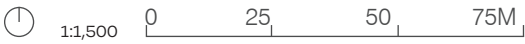
- 01 Belmore Park
- 02 Eddy Avenue Plaza

Proposed

- 03 Central Square



03. Plan of Sydney Terminal Building, Central Square, and Eddy Avenue Plaza





04. View looking east over Central Square towards Central Station Sydney Terminal Building.

Central Square

One of three new major public open spaces in Sydney’s CBD, designed to reshape the centre of the city. The new address to Central Station via the extension of Central Walk West.



05. Key Plan

Areas

- Minimum Area: 7,000m²
- Masterplan Area: 7,019m²

Character

- Primarily hard scape in character to cater for key pedestrian desire lines as well as events.
- A major civic-scaled plaza connected to the new station entrance and exit, Central Walk, which will provide access to most platforms of Central Station.
- A space that changes with the rhythm of commuter demands. At peak times able to cater for large volume pedestrian flows, particularly along the western walk extending to Pitt Street and also to the south through the Atlassian Link Zone and south west towards Broadway.
- The street tree planting scheme of the city extends into the southern half of this pedestrian path to offer shade, located to maintain key views to the Sydney Terminal Building. Views to the Clock tower are retained and enhanced through strategic framing of the view from Broadway looking north.
- The centre of the space is free of trees to ensure views to the clock tower are maintained.
- A terraced land form follows the original slope and sandstone retaining wall along Pitt Street. This slope should read as a seamless terrain to allow easy pedestrian transition from the square to the Grand Concourse and RL21 level walkway.
- Consider the terrace spaces as a garden. Working with the available fabric and design of the heritage gardens to understand potential for interpretation.
- Consider the original flora of the site including species found on sandstone ridges and in gullies.
- Provide spaces for groups of different sizes to dwell comfortably.

- Design the spaces at a scale that can be programmed and activated through a diverse range of public uses including events.
- Consider the programming and event usage of the space within a wider connected system of open space including Belmore Park, Railway Square, and the Grand Concourse.
- Provide a meaningful spatial relationship with the heritage setting - explore retention of physical form, visual relationships and interpretation of the history of the place.
- Locate a major artwork embedded in the ground plane to engage the tens of thousands of people who move through the space each day. (Key Move: Connecting with Country, Public Art Strategy and Wayfinding Strategy).
- Connections to Henry Deane and the expanded lower concourse spaces of the Sydney Terminal Building.

Amenity

- Comfortable place to move through as part of a large crowd with ample space.
- Places to linger in comfort.
- Meeting points.
- Defensible space to sit.
- A suitable level of shade provided through tree canopy.
- Suitable amount of solar provision to satisfy CoS requirements.
- Suitable scale of spaces for event use.
- Park achieves suitable wind amenity for a major public space.

Central Square



06. Plan of Central Square

Central Square



07. View of Central Square, looking towards the Sydney Terminal Building and the clock tower.

5. Public Spaces: South



08. Plan of The Goods Line, Mortuary Station Gardens, and Prince Alfred Park



Mortuary Station Gardens

Mortuary Station Gardens will be transformed into a garden open to the public for the first time, offering a unique and beautiful walled garden that brings history to life. It will be connected to the Goods Line path and include a wild play feature around the setting of the magnificent existing Fig Trees, allowing the space to become an important southern community space.



09. Key Plan

A State-significant historic rail site with:

- Minimum Area: 6,500m²
- Masterplan Area: 6,512m².

Character

- The original fabric of Mortuary Station including the building, platform, street garden and fence, rail yard and goods line alignment, tracks and walls will inform the future use, adaptation and approach to the site, making its history clear and legible.
- Maintain sufficient space to allow the buildings, elements and rail use to be understood and seen.
- Explore opportunities to view Mortuary Station building and Gardens from Regent Street and Prince Alfred Park.
- Interpretation should highlight Mortuary Station's principal use as part of the early Redfern Station development: that is it is an historic rail site first and foremost.
- Mortuary Station was connected directly to the Rookwood Cemetery. This unique historic connection could inform the design of the gardens.
- Explore connectivity via the goods line as another link between Redfern and Sydney Harbour.
- Potential for activation and public use, through links and a direct interface between the public and rail history.
- Explore opportunities for the adaptive re-use of the station building.
- Significant views and vistas in many directions will inform design approaches.
- Community focussed with amenity and facilities to serve the surrounding predominantly residential neighbourhoods.

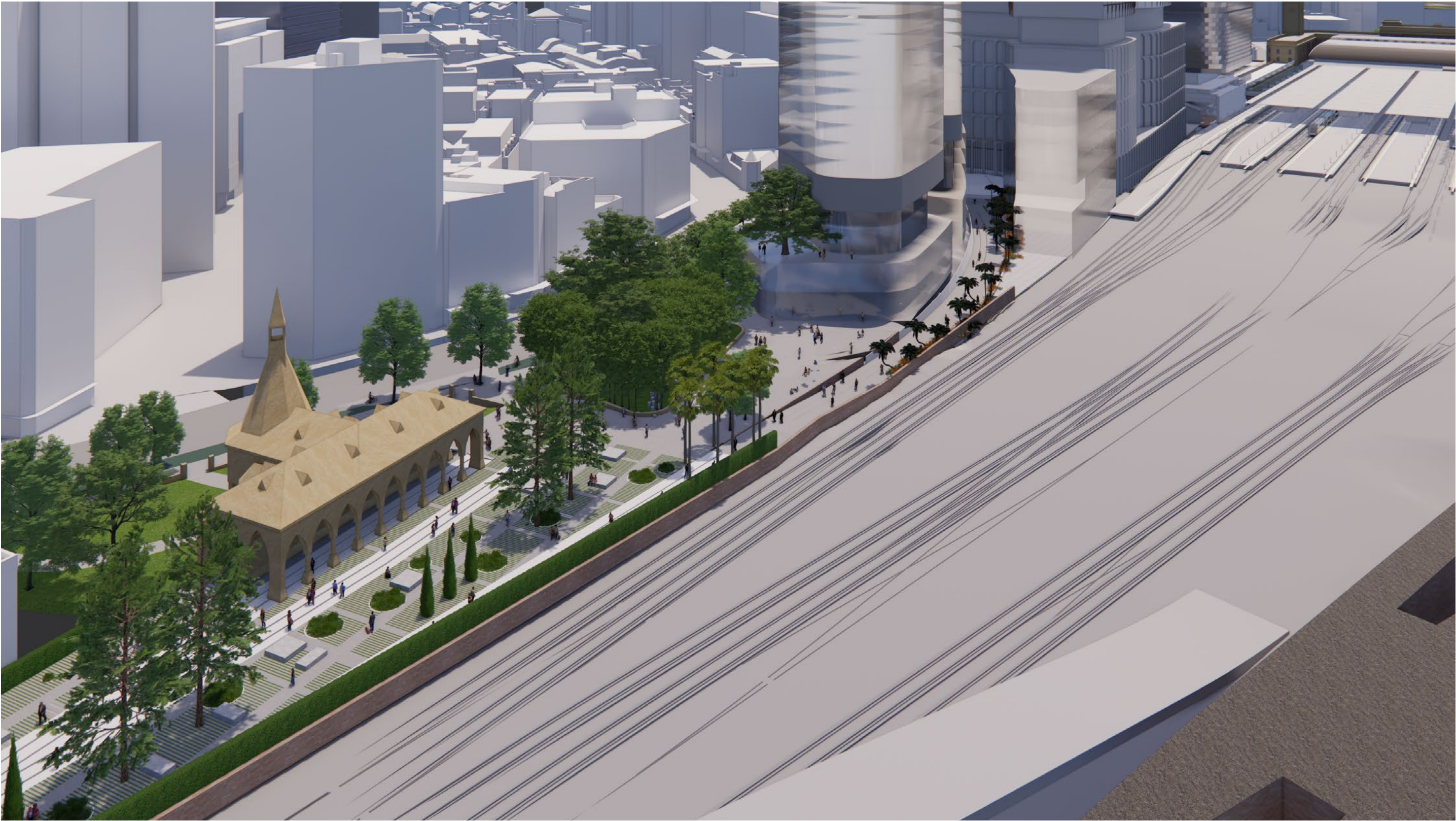
Amenity

- A space that creates a cool, green setting including the introduction of canopy trees on the rail side of the building.
- Good sight lines and pedestrian safety.
- The Gardens achieve suitable solar and wind amenity for a major open space.

Opportunities

- A 'wild play' playground would fulfil the need for more incidental play opportunities in this part of the site. It would be anchored around the large existing Fig trees.
- The podium interface with the northern edge of the Mortuary Station Gardens should present an active edge to the park, possibly suitable for a cafe or similar.

Mortuary Station Gardens



10. View of Mortuary Station, Mortuary Station Gardens, The Goods Line and Regent St Sidings

Mortuary Station Gardens



11. Plan of Mortuary Station and Mortuary Station Gardens

Central Precinct Heritage Framework, TZG, 2018

- The two railway tracks (the most westerly tracks in the Sydney Yard) that run into the building on its eastern side are of exceptional significance in that they evidence the historical processes that were undertaken at Mortuary Station, i.e., the rail transportation of funeral parties to Rookwood Cemetery
- These tracks may be used for the purposes of displaying locomotives or carriages in the future and form a key aspect of any interpretive plan for Mortuary Station.
- Existing railway tracks (2) that run into Mortuary Station from Sydney yard to be maintained and interpreted as part of a landscape design.
- The open structure of the pavilion section and porte-cochere of Mortuary Station are essential components of the building's design and construction. Do not interfere or obstruct the arched openings.

Key Considerations - Mortuary Station Gardens [for public domain]

- Remove intrusive elements that detract from the significance of heritage fabric and key views such as paving to the platform extensions and the Sydney Yards Access Bridge.
- An appropriate use should be found to enable the building to be used, cared for and appreciated.
- Ensure visual relationship between Mortuary Station building and the rail yards in maintained.
- Retain existing views to and from the Mortuary Station building.

Mortuary Station Gardens



12. Mortuary Station Gardens Key Plan

Heritage

- The connection between this garden and the Rookwood Cemetery landscape character could be explored in the garden design.
- Historic planting of Canary Island Date Palm, Hoop Pine, Pencil Pines, and their arrangement to create axial views, focal points and green rooms.

Conservation Management Plan, Artefact (2021)
5.2.2 Mortuary Station

- The closure of the Devonshire Street Cemetery in January of 1867 required effective transportation of the deceased to the new cemetery site.
- The dual mortuary stations at Rookwood and Central created a rail link between the city and the cemetery, allowing mourners to accompany their loved ones to their final resting place at the necropolis.
- Matching, highly decorative Gothic railway stations were constructed between 1868 and 1869; one in the necropolis and one along Regent Street just south of the first Sydney station. Designed by Colonial Architect James Barnet, the ornate buildings were built by construction firm Stoddart and Medways who emphasised the ornamental design of the stations by utilising both white and biscuit-brown Pyrmont sandstone, richly carved by local stonemasons Thomas Duckett and Henry Apperly.
- The distinctive Gothic design and landscape provided a tasteful and respectful setting for a family to gather before the final train ride.
- Trains would travel between Central and Rookwood daily, picking up mourners and coffins at various intervening stations.



13.



14.



15.



16.



17.



18.



19.

13: 1870-1875 Photograph of Mortuary Station. Image: Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales

14: 1865 photograph of railway station at Rookwood Cemetery. Source: NSW State Archives.

15,16: Photographs of characteristic historic planting at Rookwood Cemetery.

17: Canary Island Date Palm *Phoenix canariensis*

18: Hoop Pine *Araucaria cunninghamii*

19: Italian Pencil Pine *Cupressus sempervirens*

Mortuary Station Gardens



20. View of Mortuary Station and Mortuary Station Gardens

The Goods Line

There are several key opportunities to access and activate the southern extension of the Goods Line. Improved access and activation are critical due to the subterranean nature of the line divorced from the activity of the street.

Character

- The Goods Line south has a unique character of robust, large scale rail infrastructure. It includes interesting heritage fabric and opportunities for interpretive lighting.
- Lowered bus layover opens up more opportunities to activate the edge of the Goods Line.

Amenity

- The Goods Line will be primarily a movement space and also a popular and interesting environment connected to the publicly accessible Mortuary Station Gardens and north to the existing section of the Goods line and the Powerhouse museum.
- Possible activation and connections to the lower retail level of the Western Gateway, and to a food and beverage tenancy in the lower level of Regent Street Sidings.

Other

- There may be opportunities to engage the cultural destination of the Powerhouse with the linear park of the Goods Line. This could include curated displays or a museum walk. There would be particularly dramatic opportunities within the tunnelled parts of the Goods Line for large scale display of rail-oriented collections.
- Future redevelopment of Lee St substation site could allow for a direct connection with the Goods Line.
- Opportunity for low speed cycle access.



21. Photograph of art installation within the Goods Line tunnel 2017 (Image: Alex Davies)



22. Photograph of lighting installation at the Connaught Tunnel, UK. Image: Crosssrail



24. Photograph of lighting installation the Argyle Cut, Sydney. Image: Robert Montgomery



23. Plan of The Goods Line

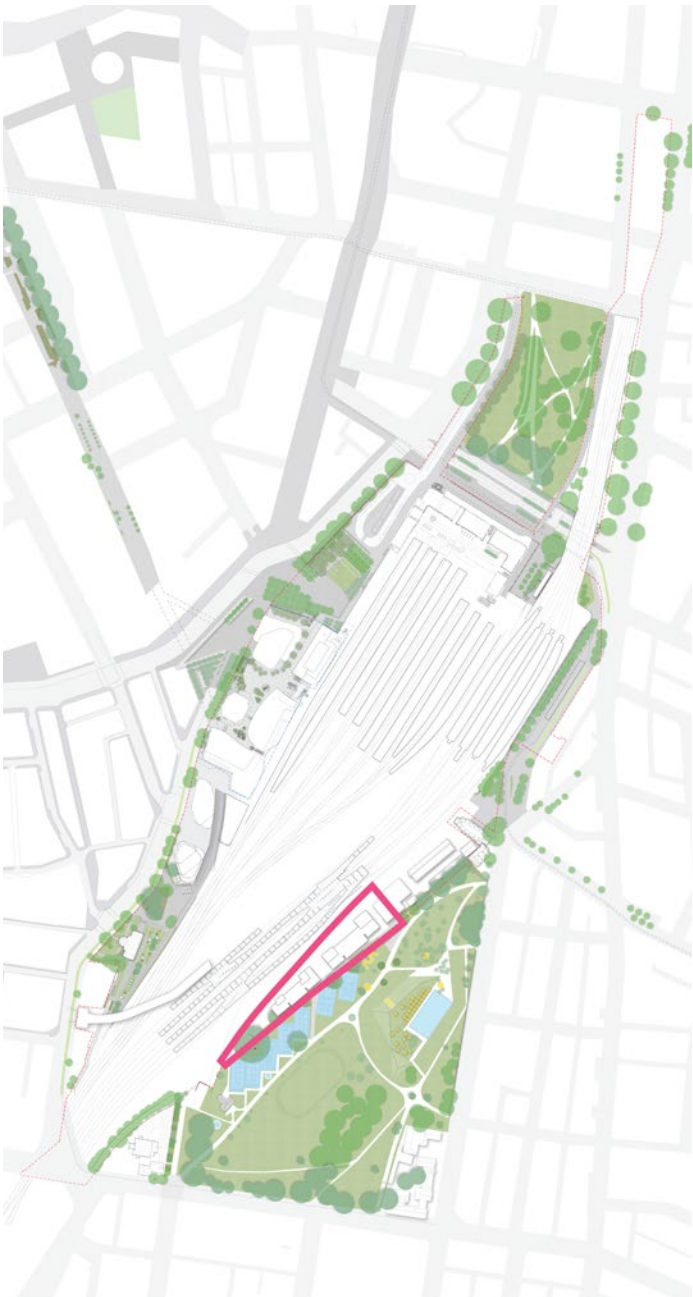
The Goods Line



25. View of the Goods Line, with rainforest gully planting, reinstated brick retaining walls of the cutting, and access beyond to Mortuary Station Gardens.

Prince Alfred Sidings

The Prince Alfred Sidings site provide an opportunity to activate the edge of the park, and bring the character and functionality of Prince Alfred Park to the edges of the rail yards.



26. Key Plan

- Character**
- The building is set between key heritage buildings and structures.
 - The active and passive characteristics of the park can address the development site along the rail edge.



27. Plan diagram showing heritage and historic buildings and structures



28. Plan diagram showing existing park character areas

Prince Alfred Sidings



29. Plan showing Prince Alfred Park, Prince Alfred Sidings, and Mortuary Station



Prince Alfred Sidings



30. View of the Prince Alfred Sidings buildings addressing the edge of Prince Alfred Park, with the Regent St and Western Gateway buildings in the background.

Prince Alfred Sidings



31. View of the Prince Alfred Sidings buildings addressing Prince Alfred Park, with the Western Gateway buildings in the background.