



Figure 30

## Temporary public furniture

Moveable chairs and tables create a casual opportunity for people to stop and rest, with unlimited flexibility to move around creating social arrangements or in response to shade, sunlight and events.

Outdoor chairs and tables in Sydney are traditionally provided by cafes and restaurants as private areas for use by paying patrons. Recently the City has located City owned temporary furniture in several key public spaces (Sydney Square, Barrack Street) and made these available for use by all.

In George Street, moveable public furniture will provide the benefit of providing outdoor seating opportunities to activate the street unconstrained by the cost or operating hours of private business. It also allows the street to be activated outside times of peak pedestrian flows, such as during the evening or at weekends, with the ability to pack away to create additional space at peak times. The flexibility of moveable temporary furniture complements the strategy for temporary street trading. Food trucks or coffee carts could be located at moveable furniture sites providing additional activation and amenity (refer to p.35 'Street vending').

Temporary furniture requires storage space as well as management to ensure it is set up and packed away at appropriate times. Storage space for temporary public furniture is addressed in Part 5.4 of this report.

The selection of temporary furniture is critical to the success of its use. Furniture in George Street should make a positive contribution to the street environment and be compatible in design to the fixed furniture elements.

## Design recommendations

Movable public furniture may be located as shown in the block-by-block plans in Part 5 of this document.

- Chairs and tables are to be selected from a specific George Street palette e.g. page 28 & 29.

### Next steps for The City

- 2.4.1 Review the scope of the existing Chairs for Squares program to consider the provision of moveable chairs for use at specific identified locations within the George Street pedestrianised area. The chairs may be owned by Council or provided privately, for example, through a sponsorship scheme.



Figure 31



## Outdoor Dining

Outdoor dining can enliven the public domain during the day and night, allowing people to linger and spend time in George Street.

Recent community consultation for the Open Sydney strategy revealed strong demand for more opportunities for quality restaurants and cafés to open late at night. This included opportunities for outdoor dining, which at night help make the street safer by providing passive surveillance. In George Street this will complement the existing night time attractions of bars and cinemas.

Approval is required from the City of Sydney for public space to be used for outdoor dining, according to the Outdoor Cafe Policy. Generally a rental fee is payable to the City for the use of the space.

Consultation with the Retail Advisory Panel has indicated there are many regulatory and economic challenges to food and beverage operations in Central Sydney.

Strategies could be developed to encourage outdoor dining along George Street. The financial feasibility of outdoor dining on George Street could be increased by allowing operators to lease a reduced area during the winter months to reflect lower use demands.

## Design recommendations

A high level of consistency and quality is to be achieved for outdoor dining furniture elements. Outdoor dining proposals must comply with Council's Outdoor Cafe Policy as a minimum. In addition the following design criteria should be met:

- Outdoor dining applications on George Street will be assessed case by case, with regard to spatial constraints and surrounding flex-zone uses.
- A high level of design quality will be required in any application for outdoor dining on George Street.
- Chairs and tables are to be selected from a specific George Street palette e.g. page 32 & 33.
- Removable market style umbrellas may be approved where shade is not available from awnings or buildings.
- No signage or branding should be permitted on outdoor dining elements.
- Demarcation of outdoor dining areas should be minimal and limited to markers within the ground plane. Planter boxes should not be used.
- Further research and design controls may be required to respond to demands for waiters stations, due to the small internal areas likely to be available for food and beverage leases on George Street.

### Next steps for The City

- 2.4.2 Investigate specific requirements for possible outdoor dining furniture in the George Street pedestrianised area as part of the Outdoor Cafe Policy review.
- 2.4.3 Investigate the use of core trading hours and seasonal flexibility to ensure activation in the afternoon and evening, and respond to seasonal requirements.





Figure 32

## George Street temporary furniture palette

The quality of furniture in the public domain plays a key role in reinforcing George Street as the city's iconic civic spine. To maintain a high level of consistency and compatibility with permanent public domain elements, a suite of temporary furniture for use along the length of George Street will be developed.

An example of such a range of temporary furniture has been selected that meets the criteria outlined in the City of Sydney Outdoor Cafe Policy. This requires tables and chairs to be:

- strong, durable, waterproof and weather resistant;
- designed for commercial outdoor use. The design must not contain parts that are likely to cause damage to the pavement;
- safe and comfortable. Particular care should be taken with any sharp edges, and hinges or other moving parts to ensure that they do not present a potential hazard to their users;
- folding or stackable for storage; and
- non-reflective.

Preference should also be given to locally designed and manufactured furniture where available.

## Design recommendations

Explore the use of colour to create an identity for temporary furniture in George Street.

Develop a palette of chairs and tables (such as that illustrated on the facing page) for inclusion in the City's Outdoor Dining Guidelines for George Street.



## Contemporary

- designed and made in Australia
- chair weight 5.9kg
- stackable (up to 6)





## Bistro

- designed and made in France
- chair weight 4kg
- foldable



## Minimal

- designed and made in Australia
- chair weight 5kg
- stackable (up to 6)



## Street vending

To support its function as the city's north-south pedestrian spine, we have prioritised pedestrian movement in transforming George Street.

Pedestrian numbers in George Street will be monitored following the introduction of light rail, and opportunities for permanent kiosks will be reviewed over time. Services have been allowed at key locations if kiosks are needed in the future.

In 2020, mobile/temporary street vending is the preferred approach to provide amenity and activation while retaining flexibility to accommodate peak pedestrian flows.

Currently in Sydney mobile street vending is characterised by food and beverage traders operating:

- Food trucks;
- Food vans; and
- Coffee carts.

The operation of food trucks and vans is regulated by the City's Mobile Food Vending Vehicles Local Approvals Policy.

Street vending in George Street could be expanded to include other types of retail trading, and a broader range of mobile street vending infrastructure could also be developed outside the current registered trucks/vans. Encouraging innovative and interesting street vending will enliven George Street and will provide attractions in the public domain outside traditional business hours.

## Design recommendations

Mobile street vendors can be located within the activation zone shown on block-by-block plans in Part 6 of this document.

Street vending in George Street should be of high quality, consistent with the iconic nature of the street.

### Next steps for The City

- 2.4.4 Investigate specific locations within the George Street activation zones (refer to Part 6) for the operation of food trucks and mobile street vending as a transitional activation measure.



Figure 36



Figure 37



Figure 38



Figure 39

## Events and cultural opportunities

George Street has been home to many significant public events, including both celebrations and demonstrations. Increased public space through pedestrianisation opens up opportunities for more events like this. However the light rail raises a new range of constraints in hosting public gatherings.

Closing George Street for major civic parades will be subject to light rail operational constraints and require Transport for NSW approval.

The public domain infrastructure of George Street needs to provide flexibility, to accommodate a range of potential public and cultural events over the future life of the street.

The flex-zone also provides an opportunity for seasonal programming, or temporary uses (such as ticketing, information, or small installations) relating to specific cultural events such as the Festival of Sydney.

## Design recommendations

- Provide 3-phase power at key locations along the length of George Street, incorporated within Smartpoles. Preferred locations for 3-phase power are indicated on plans in Part 5.
- Install George Street Smartpoles with programmable 'beacon' lighting.
- Investigate capability for Smartpoles to support banners.

### Next steps for The City

2.4.5 Develop an events strategy and supporting guidelines and procedures for Central Sydney, providing coordination and direction for a curated approach to George Street related events.



Figure 40



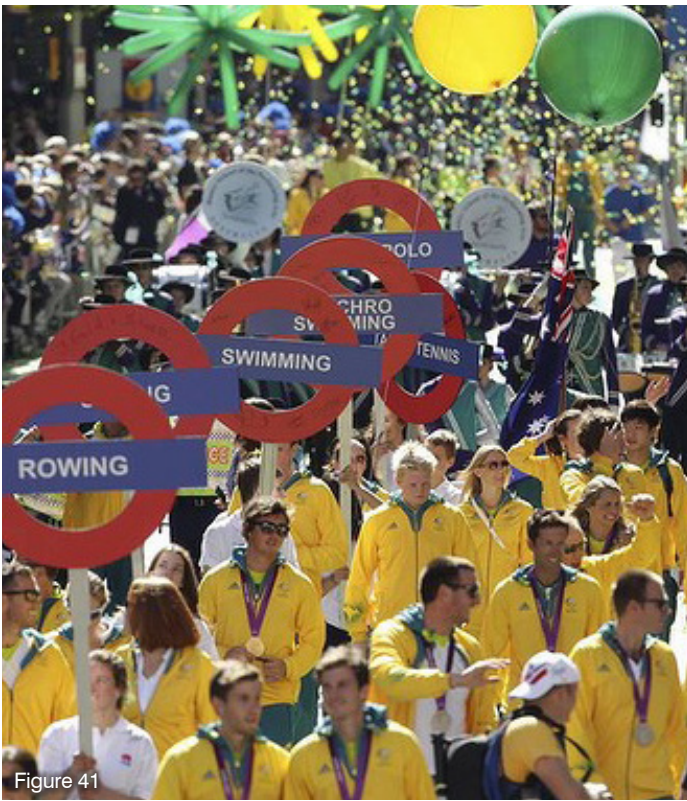


Figure 41



Figure 42





Figure 43 - 343 George Street - former Commercial Bank building now home to retail store Burberry



Figure 44 - 367 George Street - Apple Store

## 03

# Building use

**George Street is lined by a wide variety of building uses that traditionally vary in character along its length.**

In the south between Central Station and Park/Druitt Streets uses have a finer grain. These are characterised by retail stores and a predominance of food, beverage and hospitality offerings relating to the Chinatown precinct. The area north of Town Hall to King Street is the retail core, with larger floorplate and higher-end retail tenancies, and shopping centres such as the Queen Victoria Building and the Strand Arcade. North of King Street, the historic banking and civic buildings around Martin Place transition to more commercial character, with ground level lobbies to commercial towers becoming more frequent.

Recently however, uses along George Street have undergone a subtle shift:

- Historic civic and banking buildings are turning over to retail uses (such as around Martin Place). This has created interesting relationships at ground level due to the limited transparency of these types of heritage buildings.
- Refurbished commercial buildings are now incorporating large floorplate retail tenancies at ground level.
- George Street is becoming a desirable address for international brands and flagship stores, which often demand large and double-storey frontages.
- Large-scale new development along George Street is increasingly focusing on residential rather than commercial uses.

Several factors have contributed to these changes:

- The changing spatial needs of the finance and banking sector has resulted in these tenants preferring purpose built large floorplate buildings.
- Large amounts of commercial floorspace is/will be available in the present and near future with the completion of stage 1 Barangaroo.
- The uplift to property values along George Street with the commitment to light rail and the public domain upgrade requires larger and higher-end retail tenants to meet rent demands.
- These issues have several implications for the future of George Street and may indicate the need for policy intervention or incentives to achieve retail variety and diversity.

International case studies provide good examples of main streets and iconic streets where a diversity of small and large retail is balanced with food and beverage and service provision. The development/planning context, management strategies and key policies that have achieved these outcomes are discussed over the page.



## Case Studies

### Regent Street, London

Regent Street is an example of a carefully curated shopping street. Under the management of The Crown Estate (on behalf of the Regent Street Partnership), retail and commercial tenants are selected to create a balance of large international brands and small-scale, local specialty shops as well as high quality offices.

The Regent Street Partnership is committed to significant ongoing investment in the public domain to ensure the street environment complements high-quality retail.



### Times Square Precinct, New York

Times Square in New York has undergone a transformation in terms of the quality of the public domain for pedestrians as well as the quality and range of uses lining the streets and spaces. The Times Square Alliance is a not-for-profit organisation working to improve and promote Times Square.

The alliance undertakes data collection and dissemination, tracks retail activity and encourages more diverse retail offerings through targeted marketing and promotional material. In a form of place management, the alliance works with brokers and representatives of the real estate community to meet the needs of the growing number of people who work and live in Times Square.





Figure 47

### 3.1 Fine grain

**'Fine grain' describes the small-scale spaces which provide a vital layer of lower cost, diverse and often specialised activities within a place (City of Sydney Fine Grain Review 2012).**

With buses and traffic removed from George Street, façades that are currently closed to the street with large and inwardly-focused tenancies can be transformed into engaging and lively frontages. Many small tenancies and multiple openings create diverse, stimulating and attractive streets. Along the length of George Street, they also introduce a vertical façade structure at ground level, which helps to make walking distances feel shorter. The importance of fine grain frontages for Sydney streets was articulated by Gehl Architects in their Public Spaces/Public Life study. It has been integrated into the City's Sustainable Sydney 2030 vision and underpins the Central Sydney planning controls.

Small-scale, fine grain tenancies provide an opportunity for smaller operators to trade outside traditional retail hours to create a truly 24-hour street with a range of experiences and activities on offer.

Increasing the fine grain tenancies and services within the buildings that address George Street is also critical in de-cluttering the street and delivering additional space for pedestrian movement and outdoor uses. Without fine grain active uses incorporated within buildings, kiosks and other temporary elements will be required within the public domain to enliven George Street.

Fine grain retail can be provided in new development or retrofitted into existing buildings with underused space at ground, basement or first floors. Examples of underused spaces providing opportunities for fine grain are mapped in Part 6, and include commercial lobbies, ATM rooms and colonnades.

The first levels above and below the street provide additional opportunities to activate the streetscape and accommodate fine grain uses without the rental costs associated with street level frontages.

The City's Fine Grain Review 2012 identified the opportunity for upper and lower ground floor uses to provide an additional layer of activation in Central Sydney. As well as providing additional services which do not require a street frontage, using upper level spaces also creates an opportunity for unique engagement with the public domain and passive surveillance of the street.

Along George Street there are many examples of retailers with a basement or first floor level presence. Both basement and first floor retail uses fall predominantly within the personal services sector, with food and drink operators the second most common.

To further encourage these types of tenancies, basement and first floor retail space with direct access from the street could be considered for Floor Space Ratio concessions. This would encourage specialist retailers, restaurants, bars and other uses to bring another layer of diversity and activity to the City Centre.



## Design recommendations

Implement existing active frontage controls for new development and refurbishments. These require a fine grain of tenancy entries with 15-20 separate tenancy entries per 100m of frontage. An alternative standard is the 6m approximate frontage width to constitute fine grain under the City's Fine Grain Review 2012.

## Next steps for The City

3.1.1 Investigate excluding all new fine grain tenancies at street level, and basement/first floor (where directly accessible from George Street), where each tenancy is a maximum size of 100m<sup>2</sup>, from inclusion in Floor Space Ratio, where it is secured (similar to the existing Local Environmental Plan Lanes development floorspace provision).

3.1.2 Investigate a place management process for George Street/Central Sydney.

A Place Manager could work with property owners and leasing agents to coordinate:

- Available space inventory and marketing;
- Landlord relations and strategic leasing strategies; and
- Active tenant recruitment.

**Fine grain examples:**



Figure 48 - Workshop Cafe on George Street (previously a stair well)



Figure 49 - Cafe on King Street (previously a bank vault)

**Fine grain opportunities:**



Figure 50 - Telstra commercial foyer - underused space



Figure 51 - Bank ATM rooms - underused space





Figure 52 - Lower level music venue



Figure 53 - Lower level small bar use



Figure 54 - Upper level restaurant and bar uses

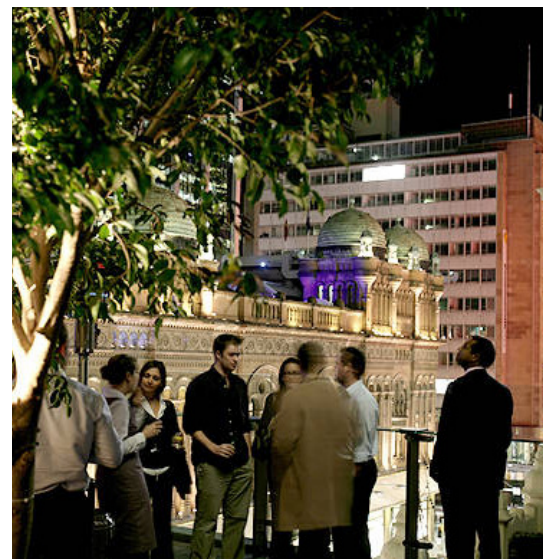


Figure 55

## 3.2 Public rest rooms and storage

### Public rest rooms

Access to public amenities such as toilets and parents rooms is important to encourage people to visit and spend time in and around George Street. At present access to these facilities is limited, with few publicly accessible toilets available along the length of George Street. There is a particular gap in the provision of public toilets along the pedestrianised area. Many of the existing facilities have limited opening hours. Given the predicted growth in pedestrian numbers, the provision of additional public amenities accessible at all times of day is a priority.

To prioritise pedestrian movement and provide an uncluttered public domain, it is desirable to incorporate facilities such as these within buildings along the street rather than within kiosks in the public space. Redevelopment and refurbishment of existing buildings provides the only opportunity for new public amenities. It is important that the need for these facilities is recognised and communicated to developers at the earliest possible stage. Development incentives are to be provided to encourage their inclusion where possible.

### Policy recommendations

- Universally accessible public amenities (toilets and parent rooms) should be encouraged in all development/refurbishment projects along George Street, particularly along the pedestrianised area.
- Access to public toilets should be provided beyond business opening hours.

### Storage space

As pedestrian movement is given priority along George Street, public domain activation elements must be temporary or transient. Elements such as moveable seating, umbrellas, pop-up installations and event infrastructure may need to be packed away and stored during peak times, or seasonally. Access to proximate storage space will determine the feasibility of many of these temporary uses.

As City-owned storage space is not available along the length of George Street, including storage spaces within new/refurbished buildings is an important opportunity.

Incentives should be considered to encourage private development to make storage spaces available to the City.

### Next steps for The City

- 3.2.1 Investigate excluding public rest rooms directly accessible from George Street, and open to the public beyond normal business opening hours, from inclusion in FSR calculations.
- 3.2.2 Work with Transport for NSW to ensure public toilets at transport facilities continue to be accessible to the general public.
- 3.2.3 Include the provision of public rest rooms and storage space suitable for public moveable furniture in the negotiation of Voluntary Planning Agreements for development on George Street, where appropriate.

# George Street 2020 - A Public Domain Activation Strategy



Figure 56 - Existing publicly accessible toilets on and near George Street





Figure 57 - Signs, Degraeves Street Melbourne



Figure 58 - Existing signs, George Street South

## 04

# Building elements

The built edge defines the visual and spatial experience of George Street. It includes building elements such as:

- Signage;
- Awnings; and
- Building materials and finish quality.

These elements are considered in this section in terms of the specific character that they can create for George Street.

The City of Sydney is reviewing the Central Sydney Development Control Plan (DCP). Policy recommendations in this section will inform that review process.

### 4.1 Signs

Signs play an important role in defining the character of George Street. The type and amount of signage clearly contributes to the experience of different character areas along the length of George Street (Chinatown, the retail core and the commercial core).

In Chinatown, where shopfronts are smaller, the proliferation of under awning signs becomes a defining characteristic. The many signs are accentuated by the stepped awnings which respond to the slope of this part of George Street. As building footprints become larger around the retail core, signs is more sparse. In some cases one building will have many signs in the same style, for example the Queen Victoria Building and the MidCity Centre.

The Central Sydney DCP controls the size and shape of signage. DCP signage provisions are being reviewed, particularly for digital signage. The quality of signs and their impact on the experience of the street, particularly at night time, is important in achieving a high-quality iconic street.

The 2013 George Street Lighting Masterplan outlines a strategy for buildings lining George Street to create a 'backdrop' to the public domain at night. It includes facade lighting for heritage facades, but requires other facades to be recessive. It limits lighting levels for signs and billboards to 300 candelas/square metre.

#### Next steps for The City

4.1.1 Investigate amending the Central Sydney DCP provisions to include a George Street signage precinct.

This could apply to the pedestrianised area and be similar to the controls for Pitt Street, requiring signs to:

- Set guidelines for digital and animated signage;
- Be visually interesting and respond to the significant role of George Street as the city spine, a retail area and public gathering place;
- Be integrated with the architecture of the building;
- Not be internally illuminated light boxes unless under awnings;
- Be restricted in the number of signs per building to minimise visual clutter;
- Be compatible with light rail signage and legibility along George Street; and
- Limit lighting levels to 300 candelas/square metre. Existing signage with exceeding brightness should be operated at less than maximum brightness.

## 4.2 Awnings

Building awnings are an important part of the city's vernacular and contribute to a unique pedestrian experience in Sydney. They also provide important weather protection from both sun and rain, appropriate to Sydney's climate.

The pedestrian amenity provided by continuous awnings along George Street is a critical element in the delivery of a quality pedestrian environment with a high level of amenity. Awnings are required along the length of George Street under the Central Sydney DCP.

The City's awning controls have been tested against the spatial requirements of the light rail corridor to ensure adequate space for street trees and light rail infrastructure on George Street.

In addressing the objective for George Street to become a legible, iconic spine, building awnings along George Street should achieve a high level of design excellence. This is particularly important in the case of heritage buildings, where buildings originally housing banks and financial institutions are being converted to retail premises (such as in the area of George Street around Martin Place). These buildings have a history of retractable canvas awnings, as shown. The reinstatement of canvas awnings would provide an appropriate response to the changing use of these buildings.

### Design recommendations

Maintain the existing DCP spatial requirements for building awnings.

### Next steps for The City

- 4.2.1 Investigate including design excellence provisions for awnings along George Street in the Sydney DCP. These could require the use of high quality materials, finishes and detailing to contribute to an iconic street.
- 4.2.2 Investigate amending Sydney DCP Provisions to include recommendations for awnings or other weather protection for heritage building facades, such as:
  - Use of high quality retractable canvas awnings over building openings and within the geometry of building bays; and
  - A strip of clear glazing along the building edge of solid awnings to allow a continuous view of heritage facades.