

Sydney Park brick kilns and chimneys

We invite your feedback on the concept design for stabilisation and landscaping the historic brick kilns and surrounds at Sydney Park.

We consulted the community earlier this year, and you told us you wanted a more welcoming space that celebrates the brickmaking history of the area.

The new concept design includes:

- stabilisation and reinstating of roof structures on the brick kilns
- better access to the area from the Princes Highway
- materials, signs and design to tell the story of the brickworks
- a raised lawn area and plaza spaces for small outdoor gatherings.

Scan the QR code for more info and to register for an online info session on Wed 13 July, 5.30pm to 6.30pm



Contact us

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Looking north towards brick kiln chimneys, 2013
City of Sydney / Brett Cornish



St Peters Regional Park, 1982
Source: NSW Heritage Library [2936]



Context

Brick kilns precinct

Sydney Park



Watercolour sketch of concept design, courtesy Tonkin Zulaikha Greer Architects and JMD Design

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Forest Scene on the Sea Coast between Port Jackson and Botany Bay, the Blue Mountains in the distance. 1832, by John Thompson (State Library of NSW, DL PXX 31)



Newtown Brickyard Leases, 1825
Source: M2 811.1825/1881/1 , Z/M2 811.1825/1881/1



Aerial survey, 1949
Source: City of Sydney Archives [A-00880357]



St Peters tip and brickwork chimneys, 1971
Source: City of Sydney Archives [A-00052945]



Brick kilns in 1982
Source: NSW Heritage Library [2936]

Historical context

Before European settlement, Sydney Park would have been a forest of turpentine and ironbark trees.

It was also referred to as the 'Kangaroo Ground'. Local Aboriginal peoples, the Gadigal and Wangal, hunted kangaroo on the grasslands here, and fished and camped at the swamps, creeks and rivers that crisscrossed the area.

The Newtown-St Peters area (including Sydney Park), was known as the District of Bullanaming (or Bulanaming) in the beginning of the 19th century.

A number of brick, pottery and tile works were established in the area from the early 19th century. The rich alluvial soil in the Newtown-St Peters-Alexandria area was considered ideal for gardens and orchards, as were its clay beds for pottery and brickmaking.

The area was originally split into smaller plots used by individual brick makers who likely had their own smaller pits.

From 1887, Josiah Gentle began buying up land on the site of today's Sydney Park for the Bedford Brick Works. His business survived when others did not because Gentle invested in steam-powered machinery and modern kilns. Following his death in 1912, his three sons carried on the business.

There were a number of Aboriginal workers employed at Austral's St Peters Brickworks. Richard Alexander (Alec), William Donald (Don) and Adam Eatock were some of the Aboriginal employees at the brickyards in the 1920s. Later Aboriginal workers at the brickyards came from the Port Macquarie area.

In 1936 Austral Brick Company bought out the Bedford Brick Works and operated on the site until 1970.

In 1948, the deep clay brick-pits became a major municipal waste depot for Sydney. Household rubbish was dumped in the former brick-pits until 1976.

When St Peters tip was finally closed, a final layer of soil and building rubble was placed over the former brick-pits to create a new regional park. In 1991 ownership of the Sydney Park site was transferred to South Sydney Council, and to the City of Sydney once the two councils merged in 2004.

Further reading

Dictionary of Sydney, 'Sydney Park: kangaroo ground to brickpits' dictionaryofsydney.org/entry/sydney_park_kangaroo_ground_to_brickpits

City of Sydney, 'History of Sydney Park' cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/histories-local-parks-playgrounds/history-sydney-park

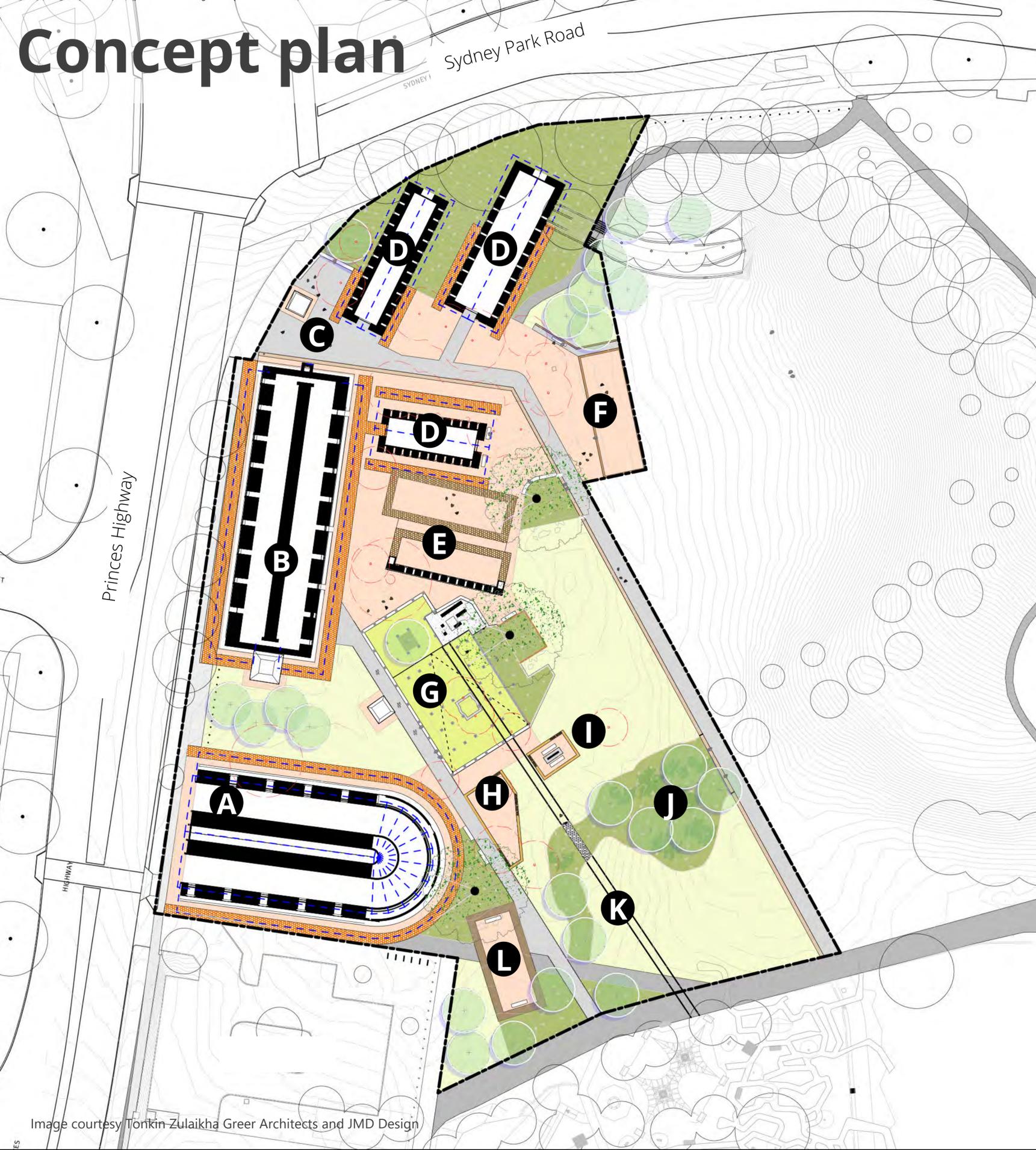
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Concept plan

Sydney Park Road

Princes Highway



Legend

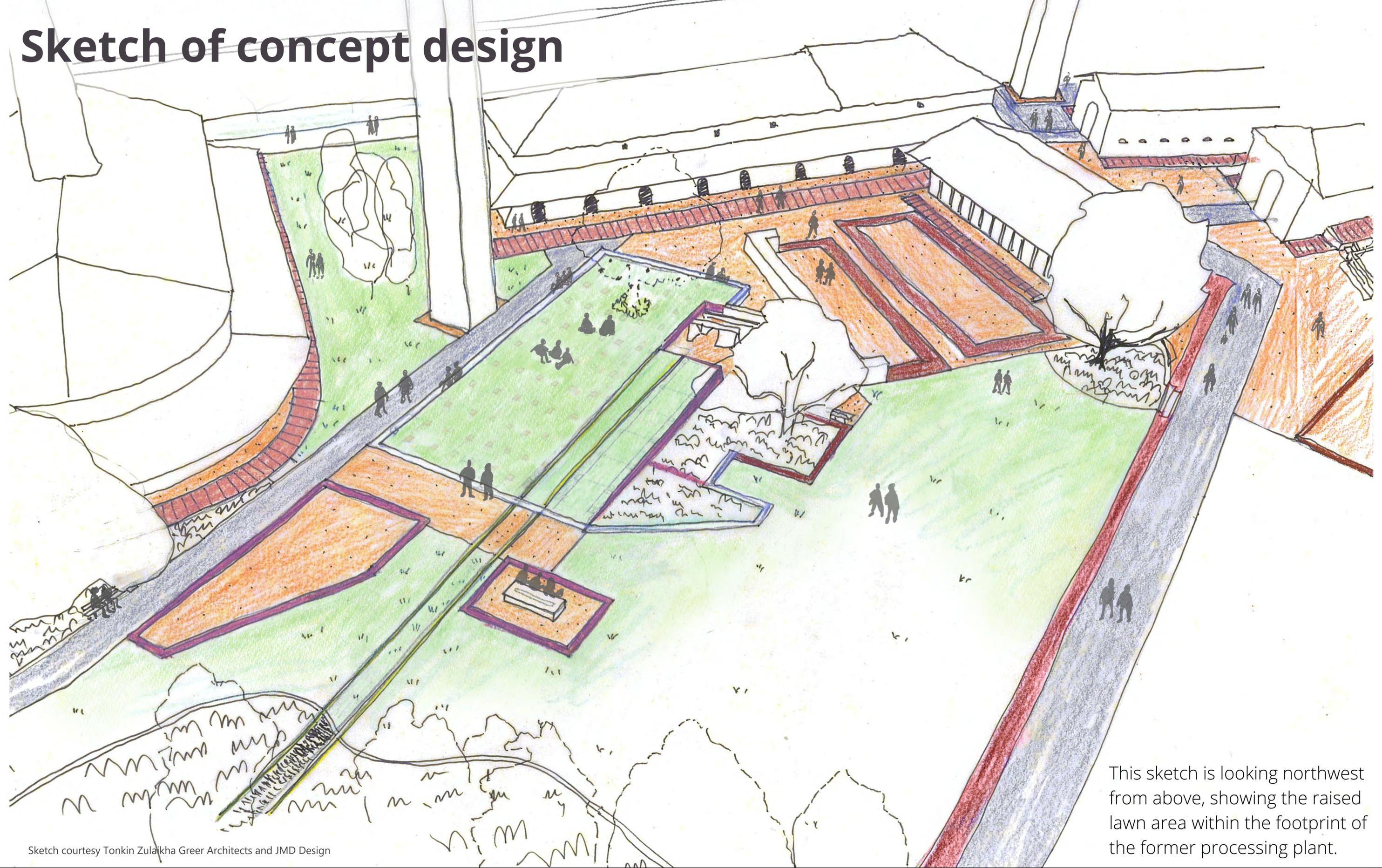
- A** Hoffman kiln
- B** Hardy patent kiln
- C** Improved access from Princes Highway
- D** Down draught kiln 1, 2 & 3
- E** Footprint of demolished down draught kilns 4&5
- F** Footprint of oil bund building
- G** Footprint of processing plant
- H** Footprint of machine workshop
- I** Footprint of boiler room
- J** Memory of brick pits
- K** Memory of railway line
- L** Footprint of down draught kiln

- Trees to be retained*
- Trees to be removed*
- New trees*
- Mass planted area
- Deco granite paving
- Special brick paving
- Turfed area
- Extent of heritage footprint
- Extent of heritage narrow gauge railway
- Roof line
- Shale mulch path through brick pit
- Insitu concrete seating

*to be finalised during design development

Image courtesy Torikin Zulaikha Greer Architects and JMD Design

Sketch of concept design



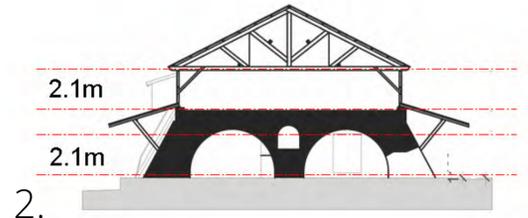
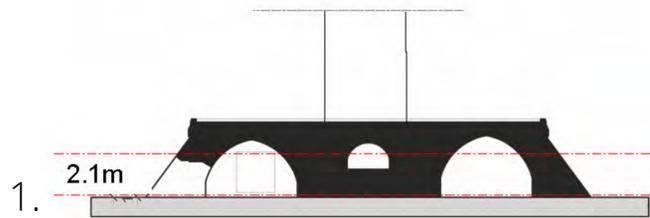
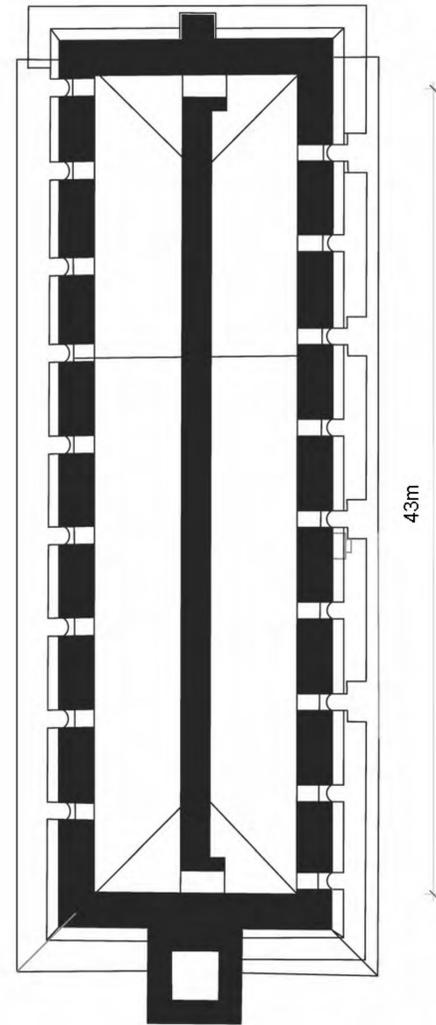
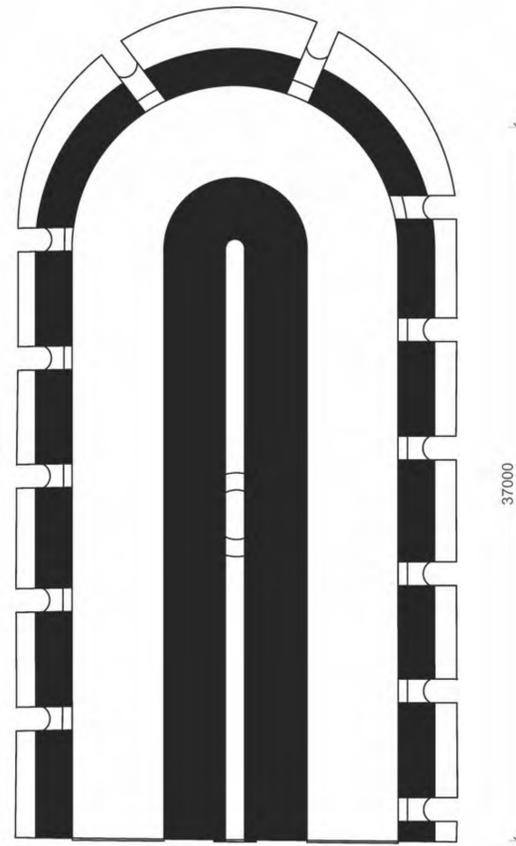
Sketch courtesy Tonkin Zulaikha Greer Architects and JMD Design

This sketch is looking northwest from above, showing the raised lawn area within the footprint of the former processing plant.

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Hoffman and Hardy patent kilns



3.



4.



5.



The bricks fired in the Hoffman and Hardy patent kilns were known as 'commons' bricks. Commons bricks were a standard brick type with no special surface treatment.

Hoffman kiln

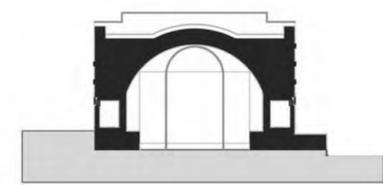
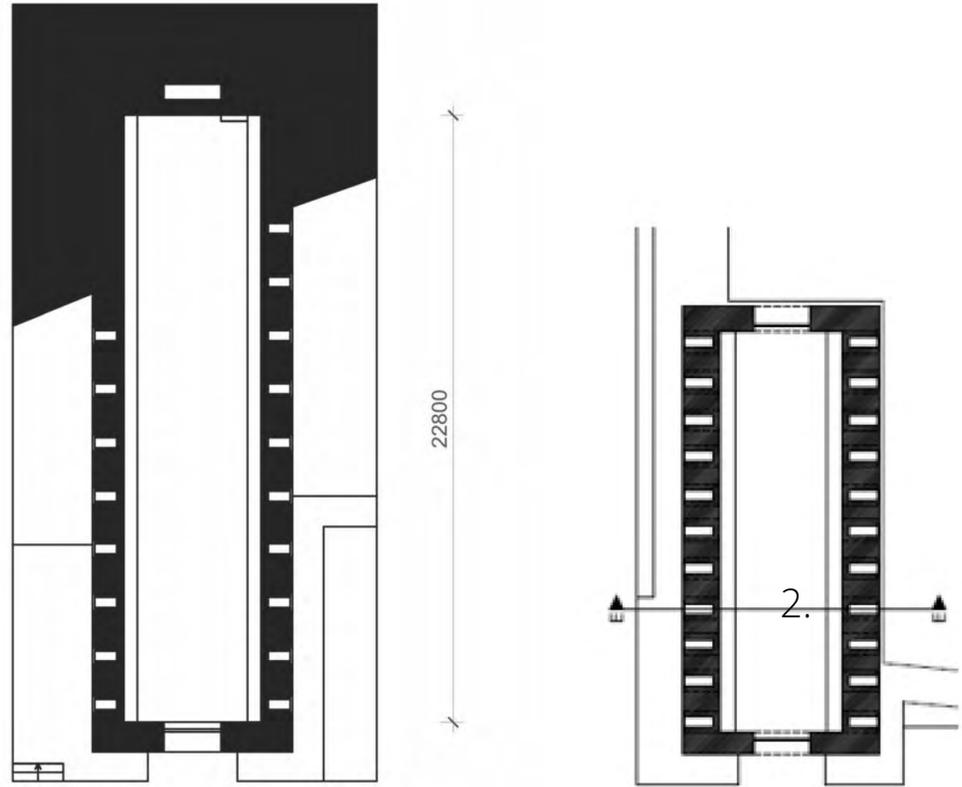
Work on the Hoffman kiln includes removal of the temporary propping and permanent stabilisation of the arches, re-pointing and repair of brickwork, and a reinstating the original metal roof and awning structures.

Hardy patent kiln

Work on the Hardy patent kiln includes removal of the temporary propping and permanent stabilisation of the arches, re-pointing and repair of brickwork, and repair of the timber roof structure over the mezzanine.

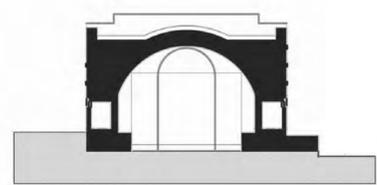
1. Diagrams showing the footprint and height of the Hoffman kiln
2. Diagrams showing the footprint and height of the Hardy patent kiln
3. Example of an Austral and J. Gentle brick. Source: Inner West archives
4. Photos showing existing condition of Hoffman kiln
5. Photos showing existing condition of Hardy patent kiln

Down draught kilns 1, 2 and 3



Down Draft Kilns 1 + 2

1.



Down Draft Kiln 3

2.



3.



The down draught kilns fired 'face' bricks. Face bricks are made especially for facing purposes, by selecting clays to produce desired colour or by special surface treatment.

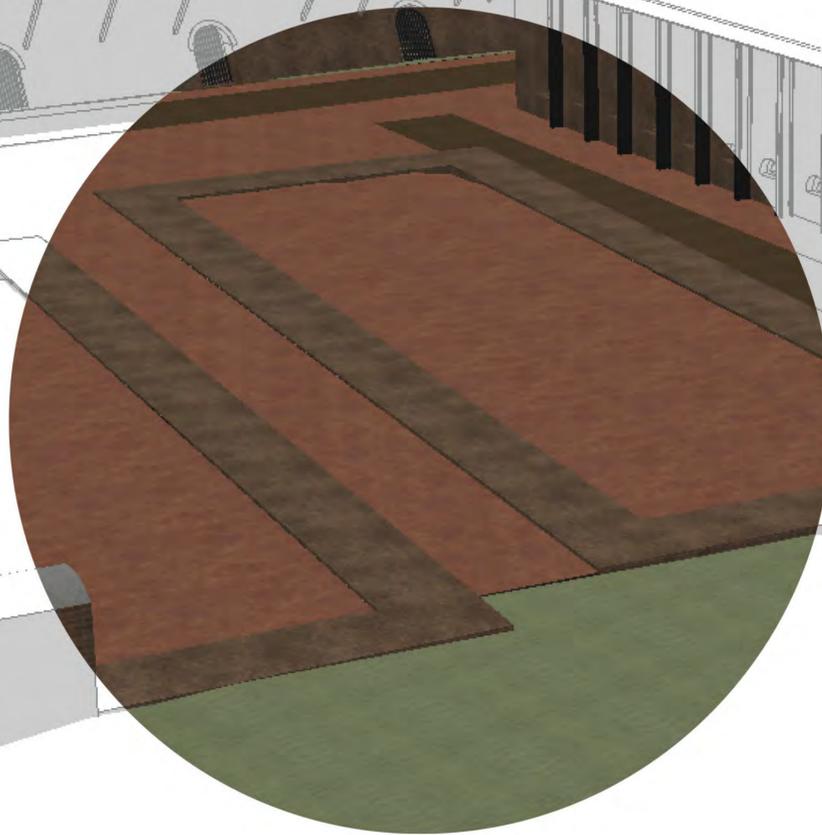
Work on down draught kilns 1, 2 & 3 includes the stabilisation of facades, re-pointing brickwork, treating steel sections, repair and reinstating the original metal roof structures and external vertical metal columns for structural stability.

Some areas that cannot be salvaged may require partial demolition and stabilisation of adjoining structures in a suitable fabric. Refer to Paddington Reservoir Gardens as an example of this approach.

- 1. Diagrams showing the footprint of down draught kiln 1, 2 & 3
- 2. Photos showing existing condition of kilns
- 3. Photo of Paddington Reservoir Gardens. Source: City of Sydney

Down draught kilns 4 and 5

Footprint of demolished down draught kilns



1982

(left) View of brickworks from Mitchell Road (Sydney Park Road).
Source: Heritage NSW Library, ref 2936



1984

(right) Austral Brick Company Brickworks, Barwon Park Road, St Peters.
Source: City of Sydney Archives [A-00022825]

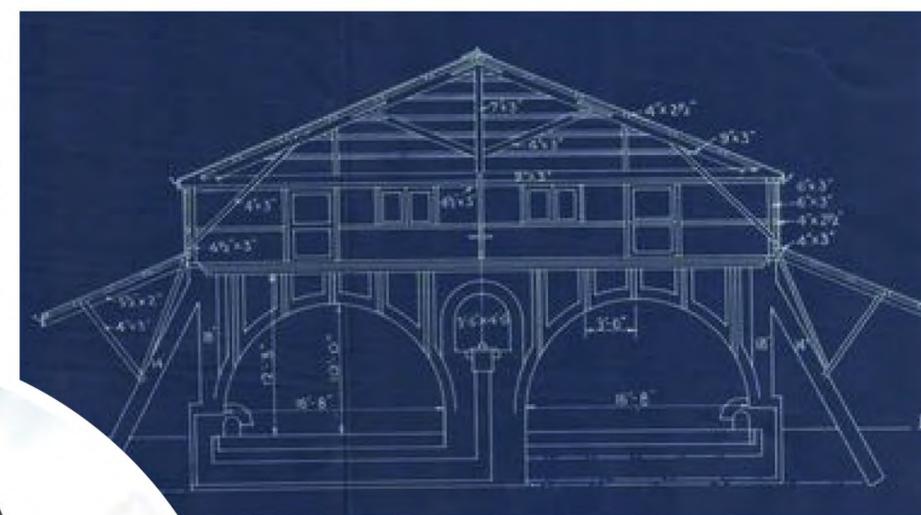
Image courtesy Tonkin Zulaikha Greer Architects and JMD Design

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Hoffman kiln

Interpretive façade from Princes Highway



New entry gates with opportunity to incorporate interpretive signage



1942

(above) Eastwood Brickworks. Section through Patent Brick Kiln A: 18 Chambers
Source: City of Parramatta, Research and Collections PRS88/055

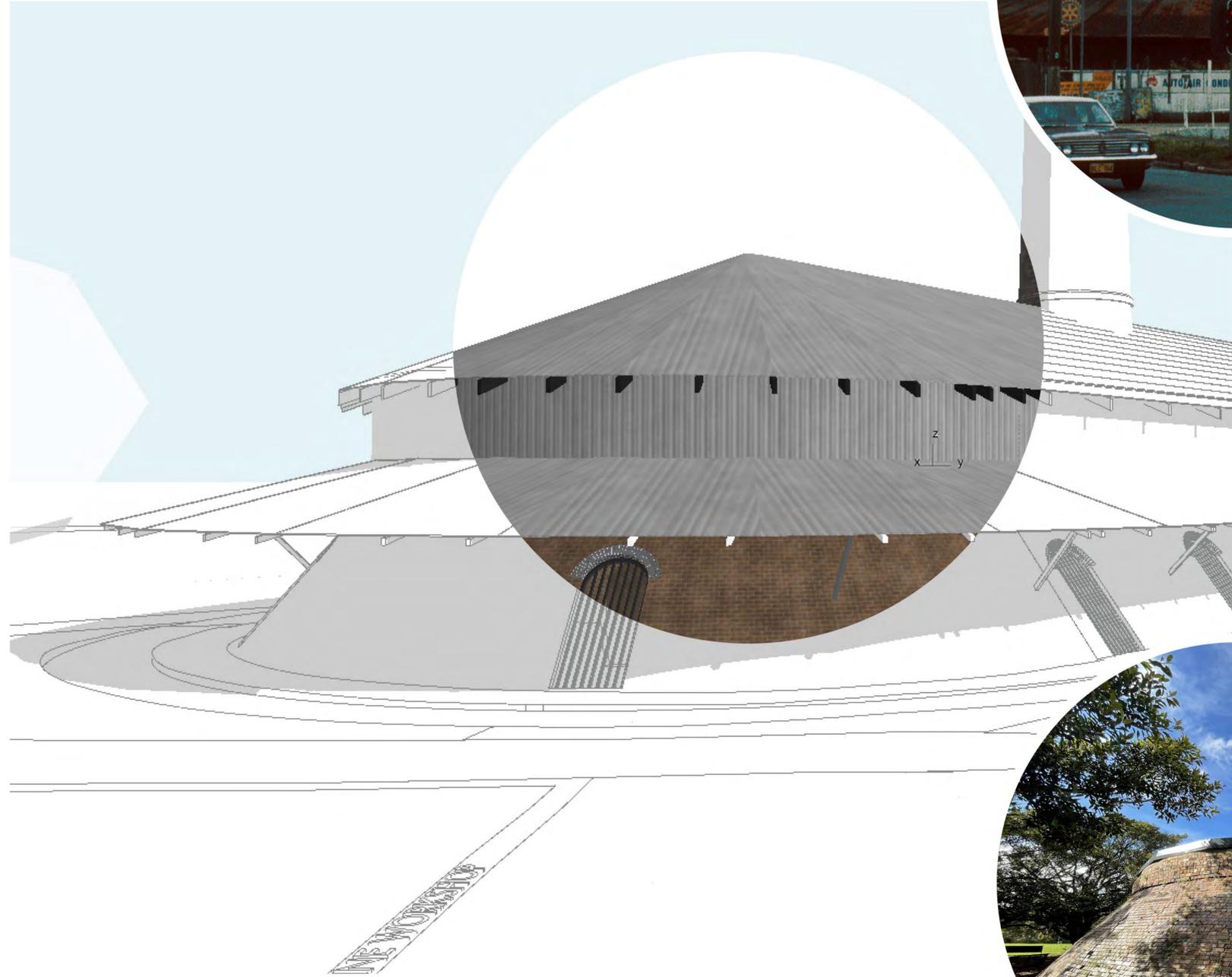
2022

(left) View of Hoffman kiln from Princes Highway showing existing 'cutoff' facade
Source: Google Streetview, 2022

Image courtesy Tonkin Zulaikha Greer Architects and JMD Design

Hoffman kiln

Reconstruction of upper level, roof and awning



1977

(left) Esso Service Station on King Street, St. Peters. Austral Brick Co Pty Ltd factory at 694-696 King Street, St. Peters, featuring brick kilns and chimney stacks, is visible in the background. Source: City of Sydney Archives [A-00062654]



1984

(above) Austral Brick Company Brickworks, Barwon Park Road, St. Peters. Source: City of Sydney Archives [A-00022825]



2022

(right) View of the Hoffman kiln showing existing curved end, security screens installed with wicket openings and parapet capping. Source: TZG Architects, 2022

Image courtesy Tonkin Zulaikha Greer Architects and JMD Design

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Materials and planting (north)

Concrete, red crushed granite, metal, crushed shale and brick paving will be used in the landscape to show the materials that would have been there when the area functioned as a brickworks.

Different types of planting will be woven throughout the site for habitat, water management and visual appeal.

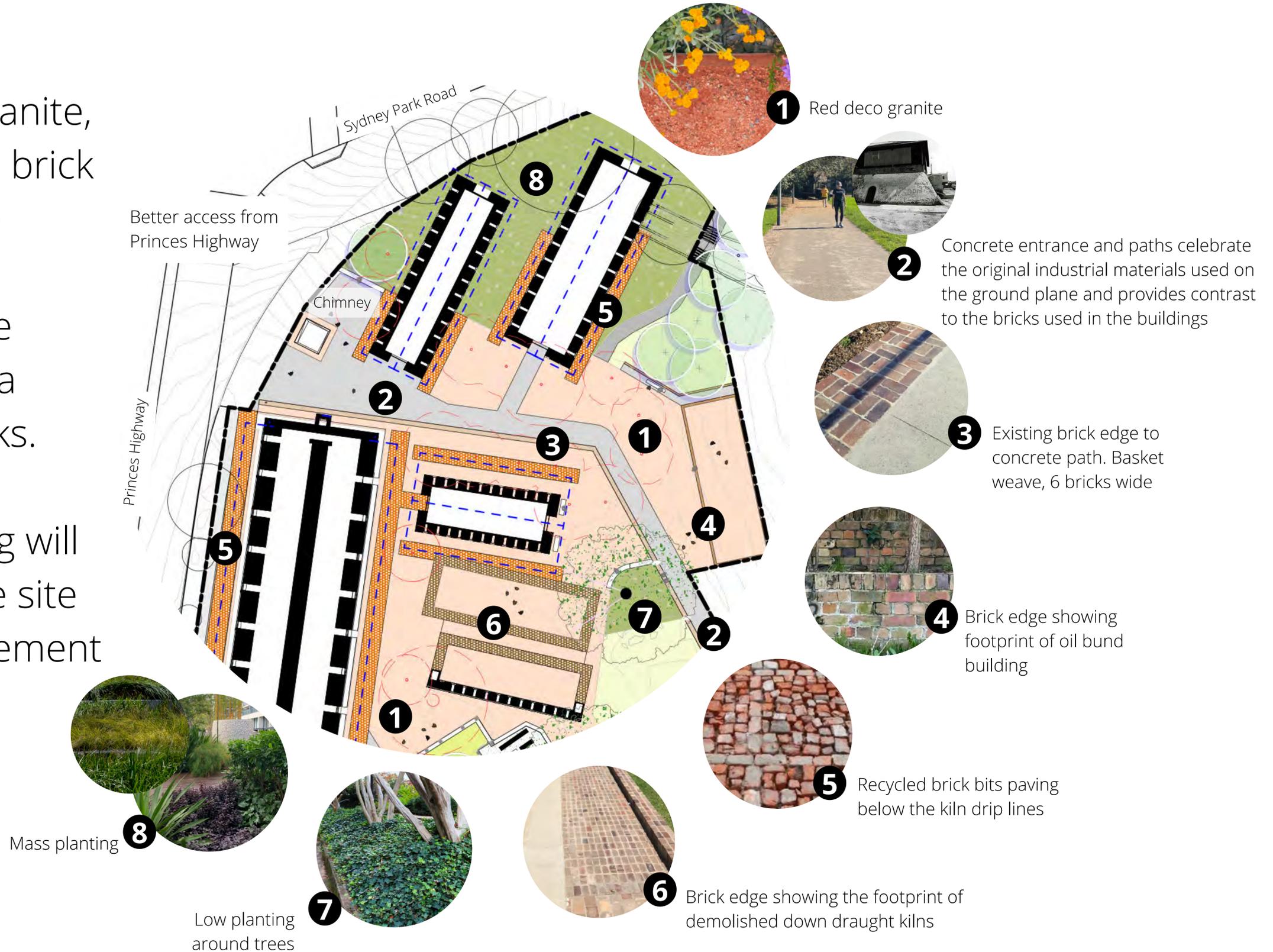


Image courtesy Tonkin Zulaikha Greer Architects and JMD Design

