

1A Constitution Avenue Design Report

Capital Property Group

Design Report

June 2024

BATESSMART™

170 years of
transformative thinking.



Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of country throughout Australia and recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and culture. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.





**170 years of
transformative
thinking.**

Bates Smart is a city-making design practice. We combine architecture, interior design and urban design to create places and spaces that improve people's lives. We have been transforming Australian cities for 170 years, improving our surroundings, our opportunities, our growth and our quality of life.

Client

Capital Property Group

Design Team

Architecture Bates Smart

Landscape Redbox

Services NDY

Traffic SCT Consultants

Civil/Hydraulic Sellick

Structure/Facade TTW

Certifier Steve Watson Partners

Project Number S12641

Melbourne | Sydney | Brisbane

Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Country | Gadigal Country |
Turrbal and Yuggera Country

batesmart.com

ABN 68 094 740 986

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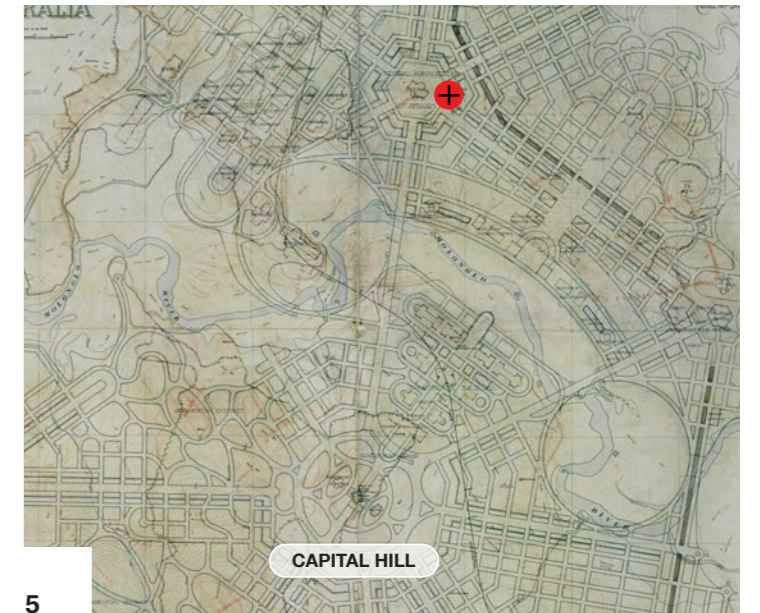
1.0 Vision

Our vision is to create a building that responds to its unique location in the Griffin's design, both reinforcing the circular form of Vernon Circle and City Hill, while transitioning into the linear formality of Constitution Avenue.

A curvilinear mass timber verandah wraps the urban frontage, with a civic colonnade extending the public domain, and creating a humane office space above. The façade expression of shō shugi ban like finishes sympathetically extends the language of Constitution Place while creating a unique response that minimizes solar heat gain.

Mass timber structure, natural unfinished materials and unadorned structure minimize embodied carbon, while allowing a clarity of structure and spatial expression.

The design extends 1 Constitution Place along Constitution Avenue, while simultaneously creating a unique identity through a formal colonnade and mass timber verandah expressed along the urban frontages.



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Pictured

1. Marion Mahony Griffin: Competition Scheme 1912
2. Constitution Place Building B Facade Close-up, Bates Smart
3. Constitution Place Building A Arcade & Facade Detail, Bates Smart
4. Native flora regrowth after bushfire
5. Federal Capital Competition Plan, Marion Mahony Griffin



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Our vision extends Constitution Place into City Hill. The proposal is an elegant boomerang form that addresses both Vernon Circle and Constitution Avenue. The facade expression unites it with other civic buildings in the precinct while introducing innovations in sustainable design.



2.0 Context Analysis

Country

Our aim is to design a contextually responsive building which draws upon the unique natural characteristics of the site's topography, geology and flora.

The site is located close to a natural elevated vantage point that affords easy access to the Molonglo River. Sight lines to surrounding natural landmarks and connectivity to the waterfront remain relevant considerations.

The original native vegetation is likely to have been open grassy woodland, including distinctive species such as the dulwa (She Oak), bargan (Yellow Box), and nummerak (Silver Wattle) each with traditional significance and utility in indigenous knowledge systems. Many species have adapted to cope with fire events.

The land forms now referred to as Mount Ainslie and Black Mountain remain prominent natural landmarks visible from the site, and are a source significant geological history and beauty.

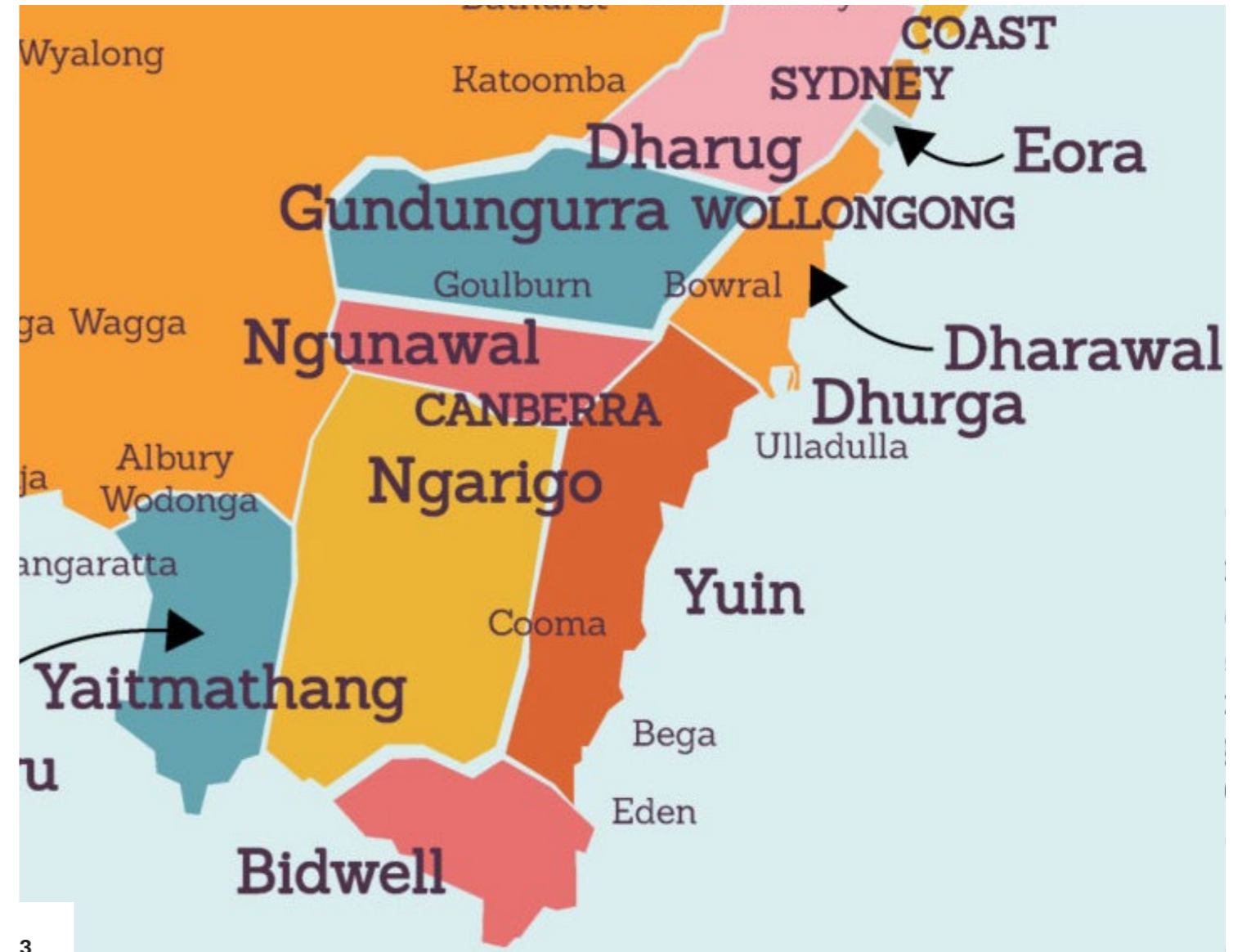
The site holds knowledge and memory, embodied in Country and these threads of story about people, place and land will need to emerge through a further process of engagement with the Aboriginal community and traditional knowledge holders. Until this process can unfold, our inspiration draws on initial research of the site and is expressed through use of colour and texture.



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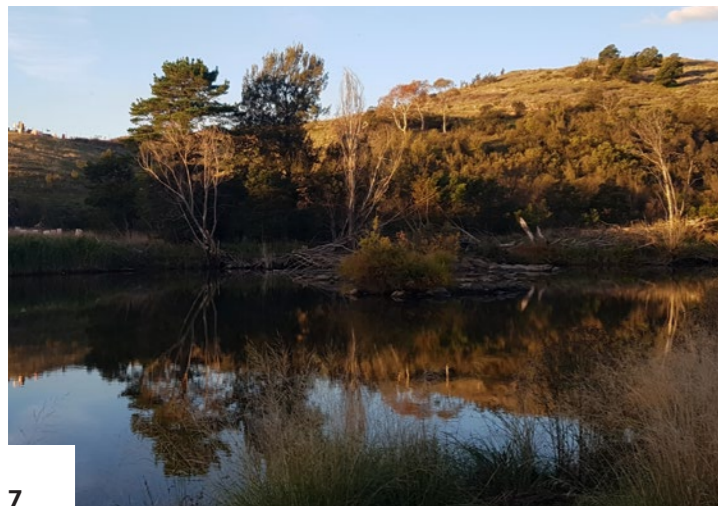
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"There were many footprints here before; there will be many more to come"

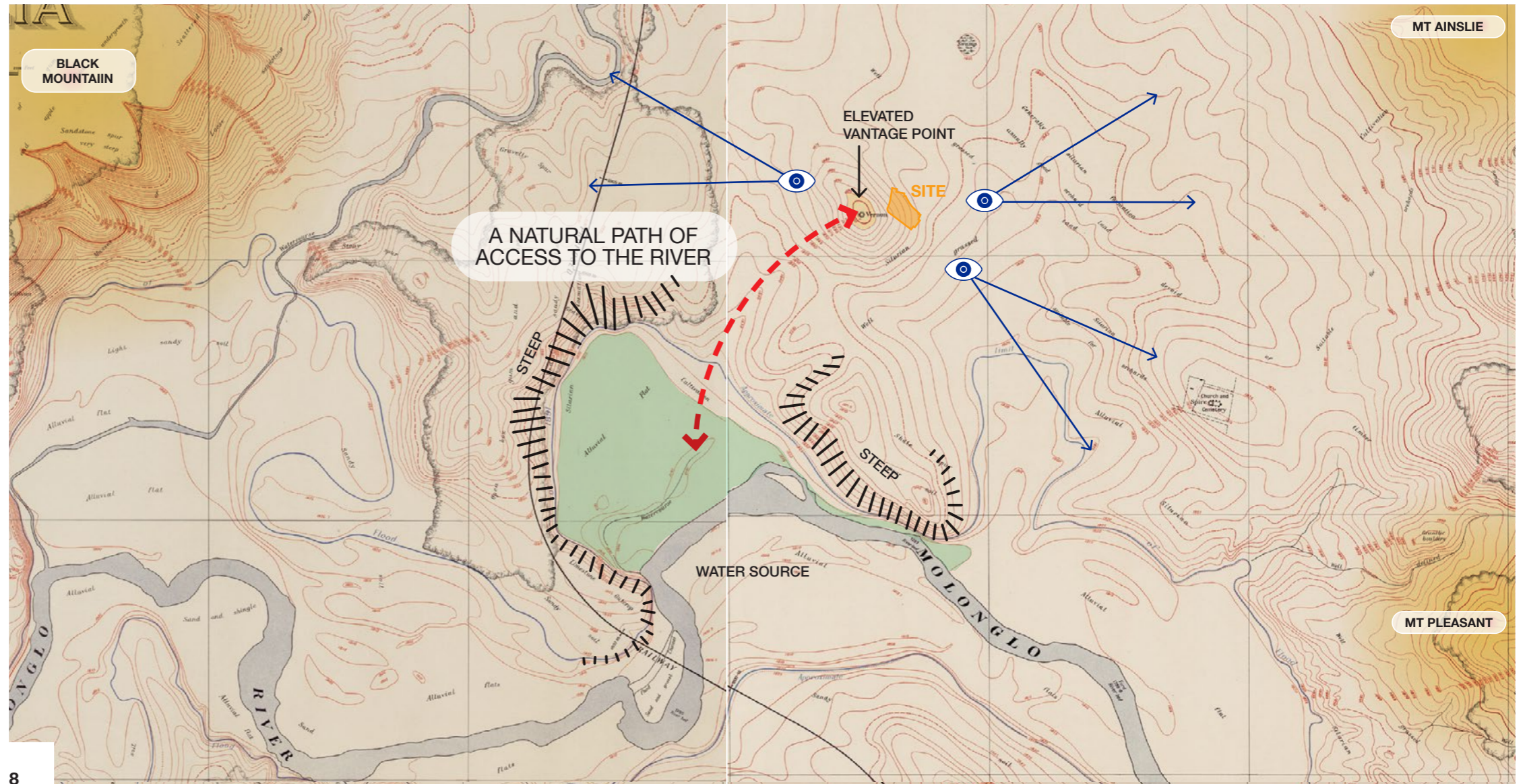
- Richie Allan, TOAC

Pictured

1. Brittle Gum (Eucalyptus Mannifera)
2. Fire-charred *bargan* (Yellow Box Eucalyptus) bark
3. Map of Aboriginal Language Use, via Reconciliation NSW
4. Hawkins Volcanic Suite, Found at Mt Ainslie
5. *nummerak* (Silver Wattle) foliage
6. Brittle Gum Eucalyptus Mannifera foliage
7. Molonglo River
8. Site topography considerations overlaid on Federal Capital Competition contour map
9. Black Mountain sandstone
10. Kangaroo Grass/Wambuwuny Gungil (Wiradjuri)
11. Native flora regrowth after bushfire
12. Limestone found at Molonglo River
13. *dulwa* (Drooping She Oak)
14. Eucalyptus Mannifera Bark



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2.0 Context Analysis

Historic Context

Walter Burley and Marion Mahony Griffin won an International Design Competition for the design of Australia's capital city in 1912. The plan provides a highly innovative design for a Garden City which celebrates the importance of the unique site on which it sits.

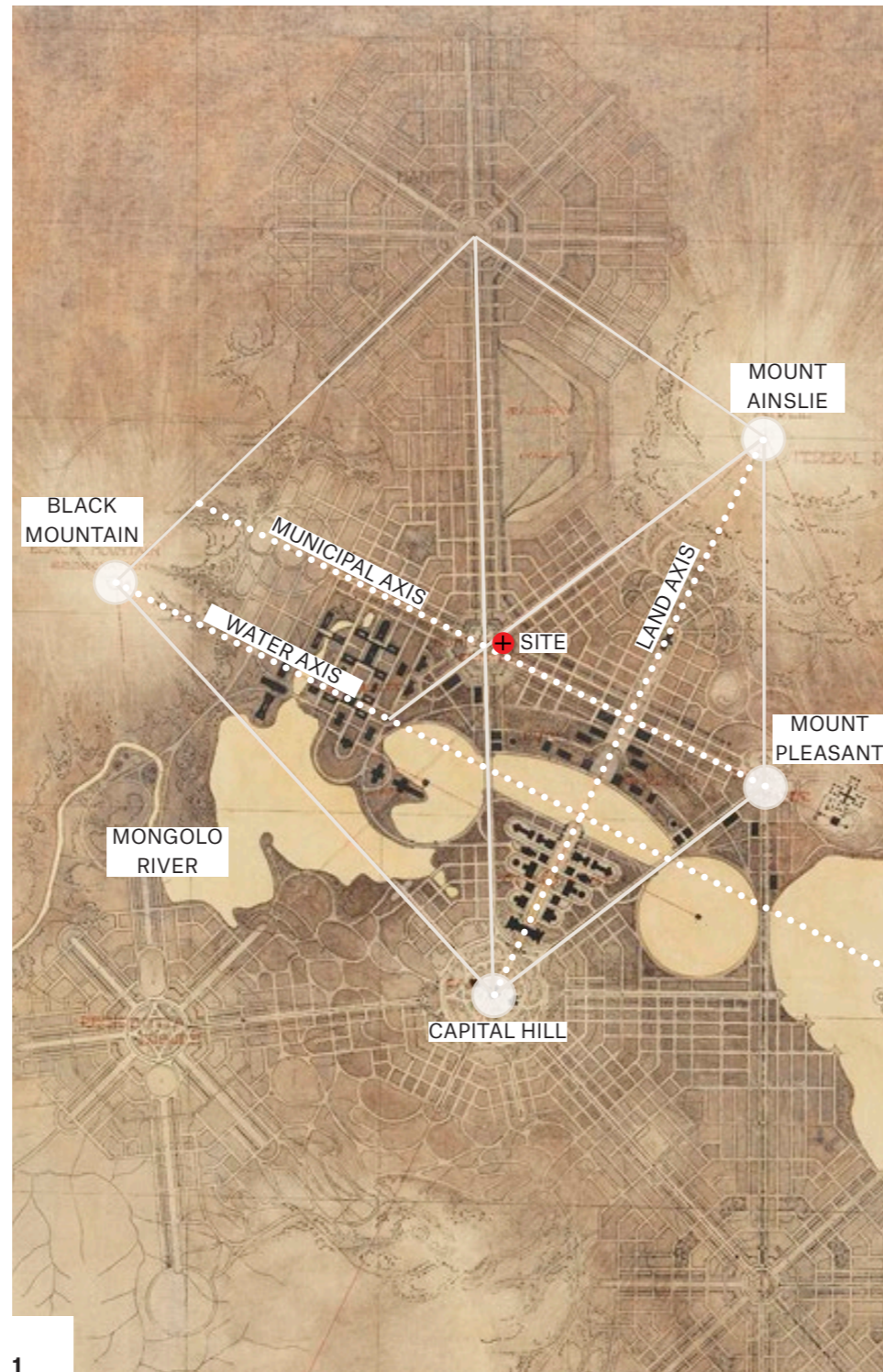
The Griffin's plan utilises the natural landforms and topography of the Canberra Valley, namely Mount Ainslie, Black Mountain, Mount Pleasant and Kurrajong Hill (now Capital Hill - Parliament House) as termination points to great vistas. The axes connecting these conspicuous landmarks inform the orderly arrangement of the city, and set the stage for prominent display of Federal public buildings.

The site lies at the commercial centre of Canberra, at the termination of Constitution Avenue adjacent to City Hill, one of the primary nodes in the Griffin's plan. The Griffins termed Constitution Avenue the 'Grand Boulevard of the National Capital', due to its intersection between the commercial buildings along the 'Municipal Axis', and the cultural buildings on the 'Land Axis'. City Hill is a landscaped space ringed by a roundabout, Vernon Circle, and with a second hexagonal circuit, London Circuit, defining the blocks of the Civic precinct.

It is a symbolically charged location within the Griffin's master plan. The Griffins envisaged City Hill as 'a forested park enclosed by buildings'.

Source

'The Griffin Legacy', National Capital Authority, 2004



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Marion Mahony Griffin: Competition Plan 1912



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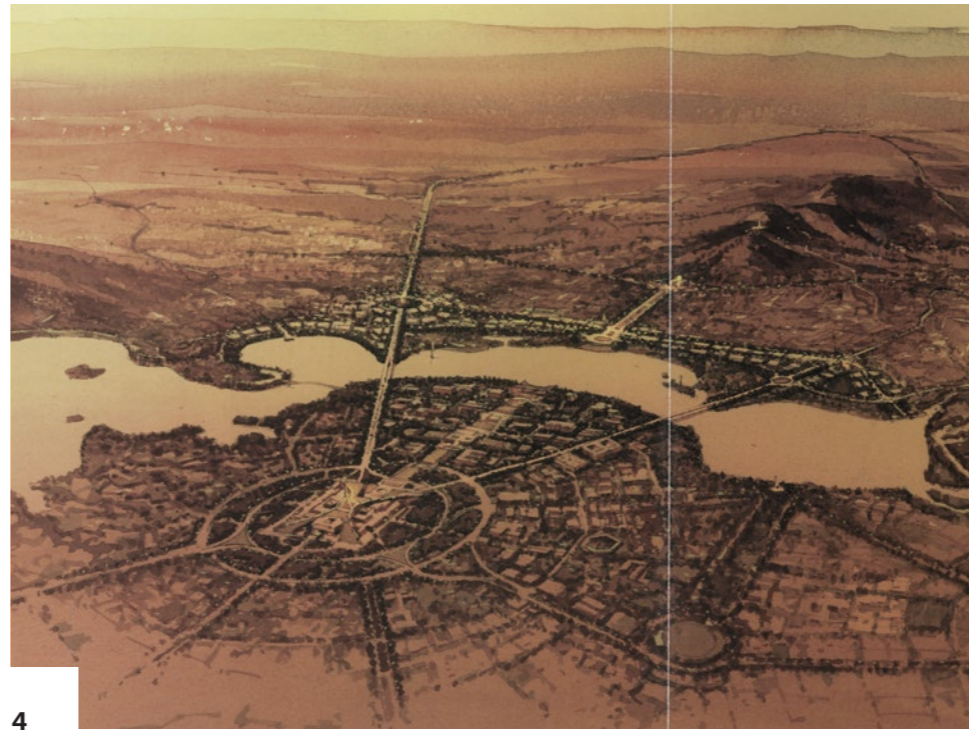
Canberra City Aerial Photographs - 1968

Pictured

1. Canberra City Aerial Photographs - 1968
2. Marion Mahony Griffin: Competition Plan 1912
3. 1918 Griffin Topography Plan
4. Aerial view of the Griffin Plan
5. Map of Contour Survey for Griffin Plan
6. Marion Mahony Griffin: Competition Perspective



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View from Mount Ainslie

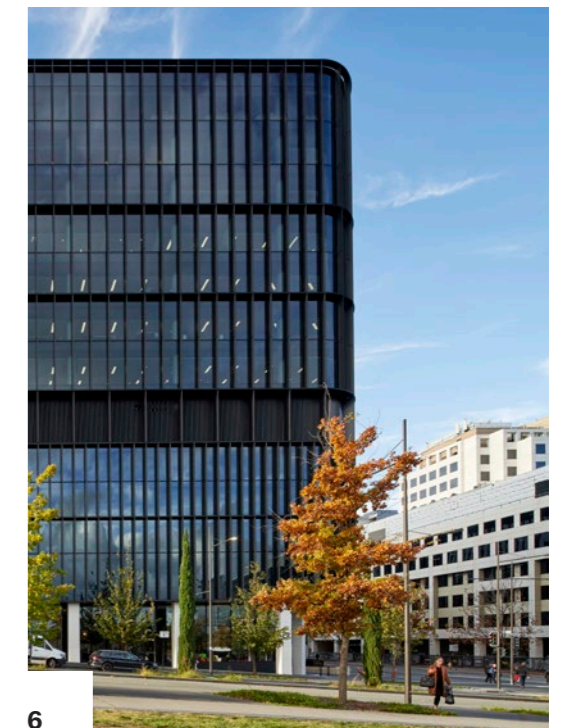
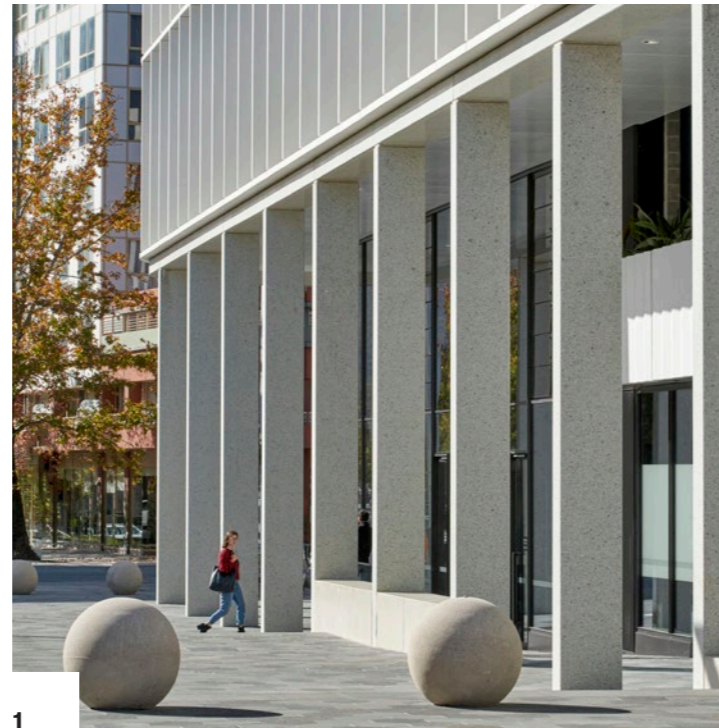
2.0 Context Analysis

Current Context

Vernon Circle in Canberra stands as a testament to the city's commitment to civic architecture, seamlessly blending modernity with a sense of strength and purpose.

The architectural landscape of this circular hub is characterized by imposing structures that boast strong forms and vertical articulation, creating a visual language of solidity and sophistication. Clean lines and bold geometric shapes dominate the circle and our vision is to add to this continuity.

The vertical articulation not only adds a sense of grandeur to the architectural ensemble but also enhances the overall urban experience by adding a finer grain to the street. As pedestrians and vehicles traverse the circular space, they are greeted by an array of structures that exude a commanding presence, creating an environment where civic pride and architectural excellence converge.



Pictured

1. ACT Legislative Assembly Collonade, Civic Square
2. Aerial view of City Hill and Vernon Circle
3. Proposed Canberra Theatre Development, Henning Larsen, Architectus & Arup
4. Constitution Place, expressed facade - Bates Smart
5. Legislative Plaza
6. Constitution Place - Bates Smart

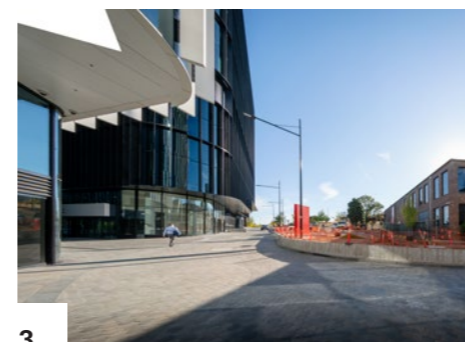
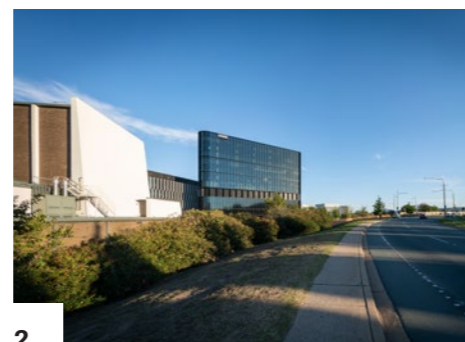
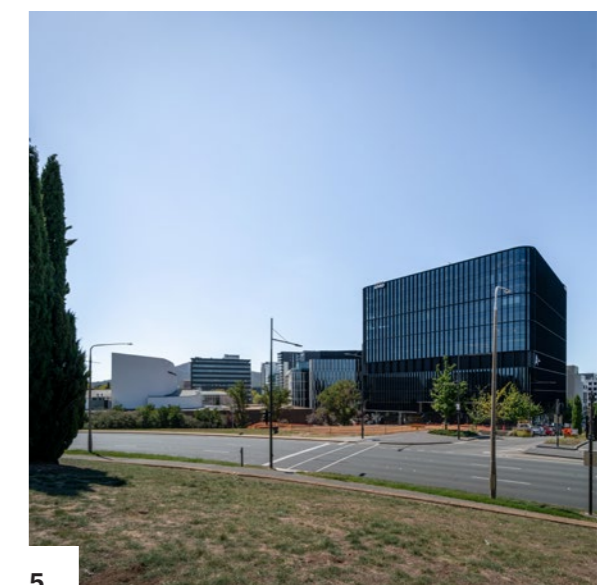
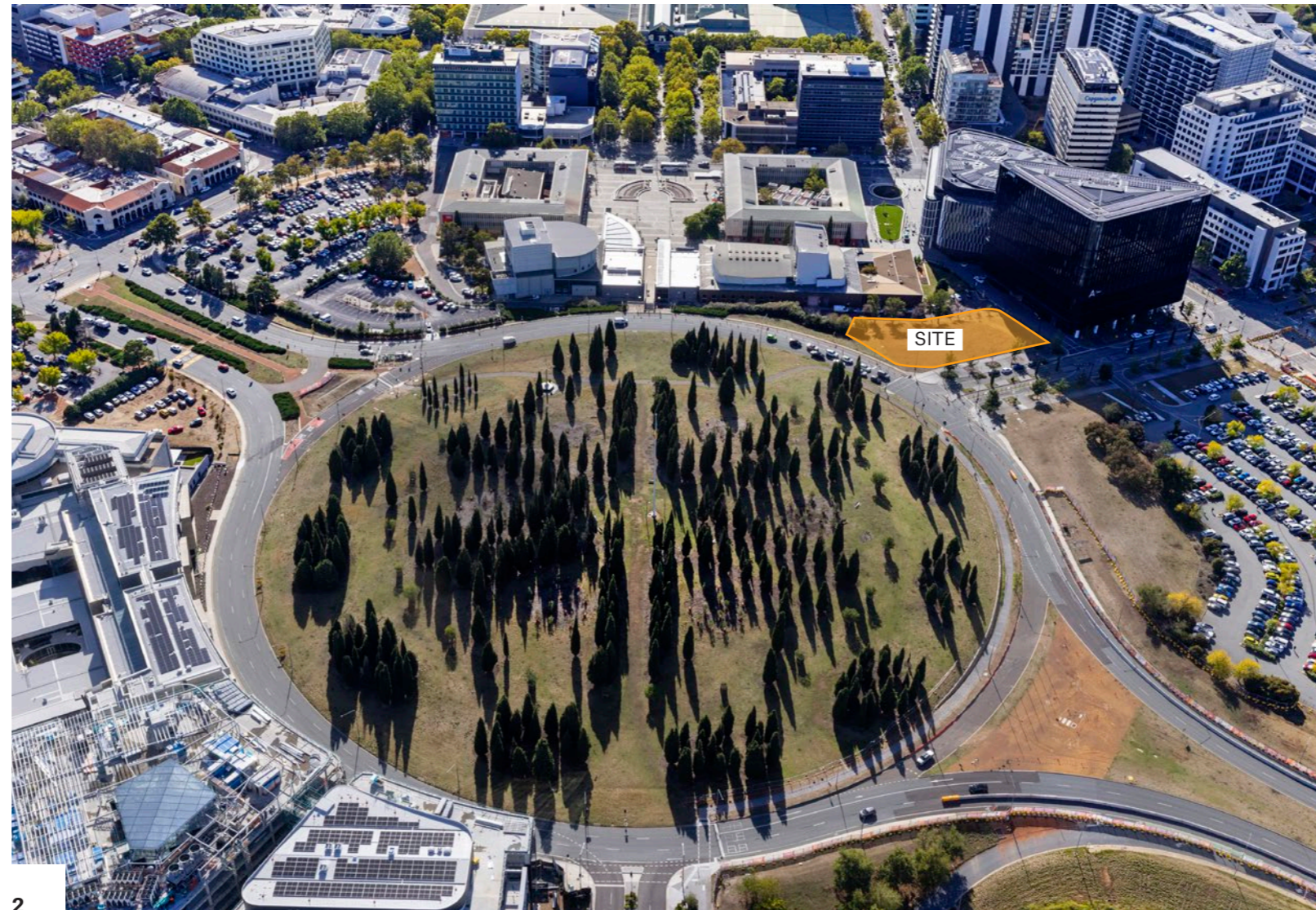
2.0 Context Analysis

Location

The site sits on a prominent elevation that offers breathtaking panoramic views of Canberra's skyline. Once above Level 02 views would be uninterrupted all the way to the Parliamentary Triangle and Lake Burley Griffin.

City Hill sits adjacent to the site offering immediate views out to lush greenery and well-maintained landscaping. This prime location along Vernon Circle offers a visually appealing gateway to various iconic landmarks and government buildings.

Vernon Circle also serves as a key traffic hub and roundabout for Canberra. The circle connects major roads, including Commonwealth Avenue, Northbourne Avenue, and London Circuit through Constitution Avenue, facilitating smooth vehicular movement through the city.



Pictured

1. Aerial View of City Hill & Site with Mount Ainslie to the right and Black Mountain to the left
2. View Looking South Along Vernon Circle
3. View Looking South Along Knowles Place
4. Elevational View Looking North Towards Site
5. View Looking East from City Hill
6. View Looking North at Corner of Vernon Circle & Constitution Avenue

2.0 Context Analysis

Landuse

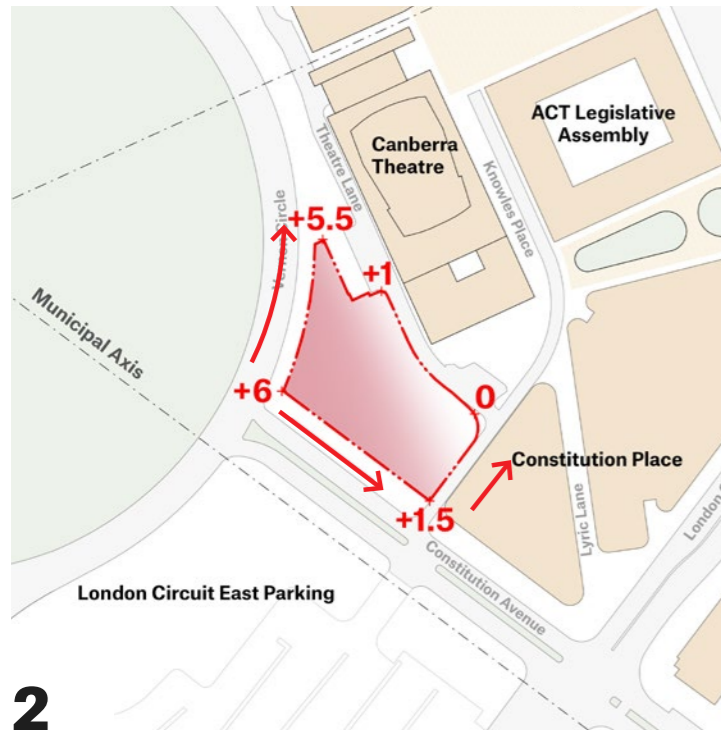
The buildings around Vernon Circle are primarily civic and government buildings supported by ancillary commercial, cultural and hospitality buildings.

Canberra Theatre Centre and Canberra Museum sit adjacent to the North of the site. To the east is Constitution Place which comprises government offices, KPMG and the Adina Hotel. The ACT Legislative Assembly also sits within close proximity to the site.



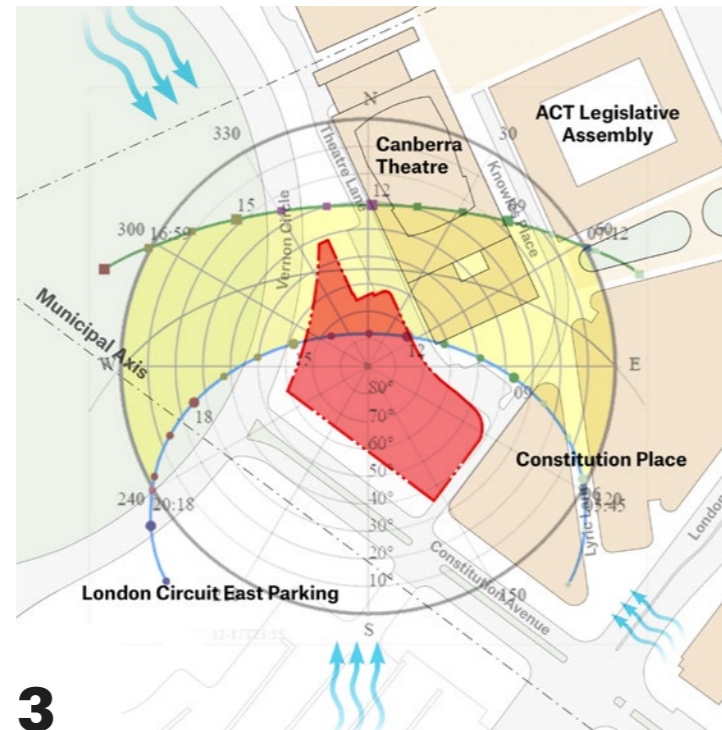
- Subject Site
- Civic Buildings
- Commercial Offices
- Retail
- Hotels
- Cultural & Recreation
- Residential

3.0 Site Analysis



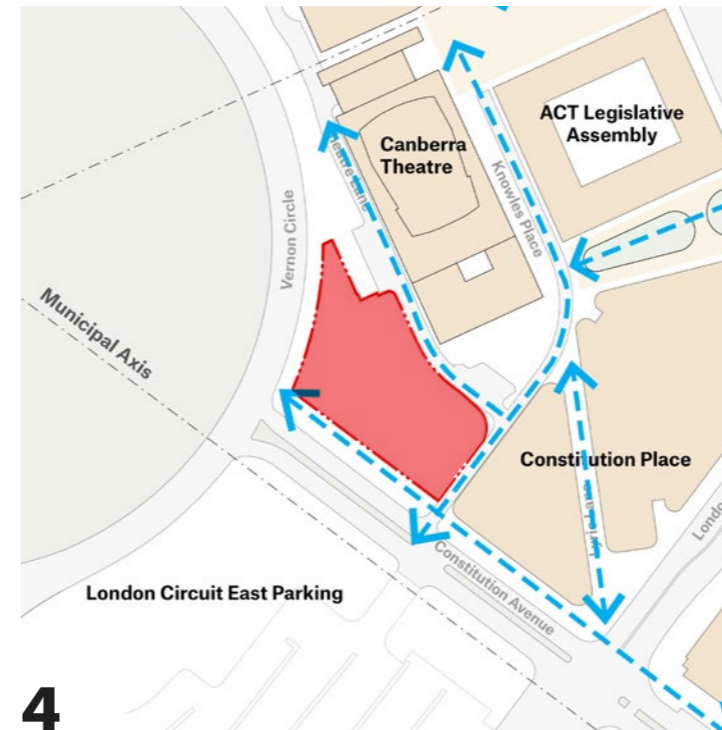
2
Topography

The site has a rise of 6 metres from Theatre Lane on the Eastern boundary to Vernon Circle on the Western boundary.



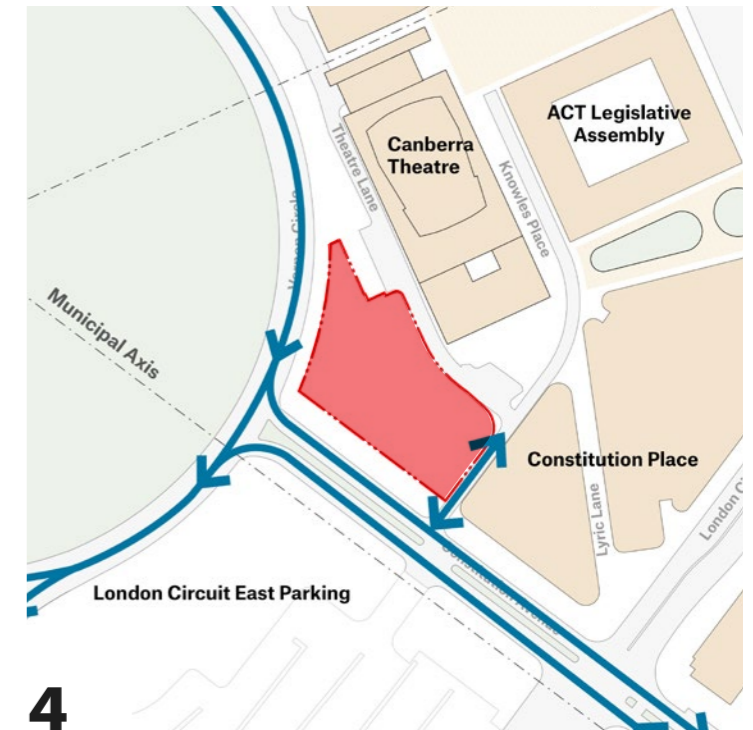
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Solar & Wind

The site has excellent solar access to the north. However the prominent frontages and facade of the building are to the West, South and South-West, providing high level of natural ambient light to the floor plate. Facade shading will be required where the frontage is due West. Some shading may occur in the future due to the Canberra Theatre development.



4
Pedestrian Movement

Pedestrian access to the site can occur via footpaths adjacent to major roads, or via pedestrian laneways to the east, linking the site to Civic Square and the commercial and retail areas of Canberra's CBD.



4
Vehicular Movement

Major vehicular movement is southbound around Vernon Circle, connecting Northbourne Avenue to Commonwealth Avenue. Constitution Avenue connects to Vernon Circle East of the site. Majority of vehicular access to the site will be via Theatre Lane.

4.0 Design Concept

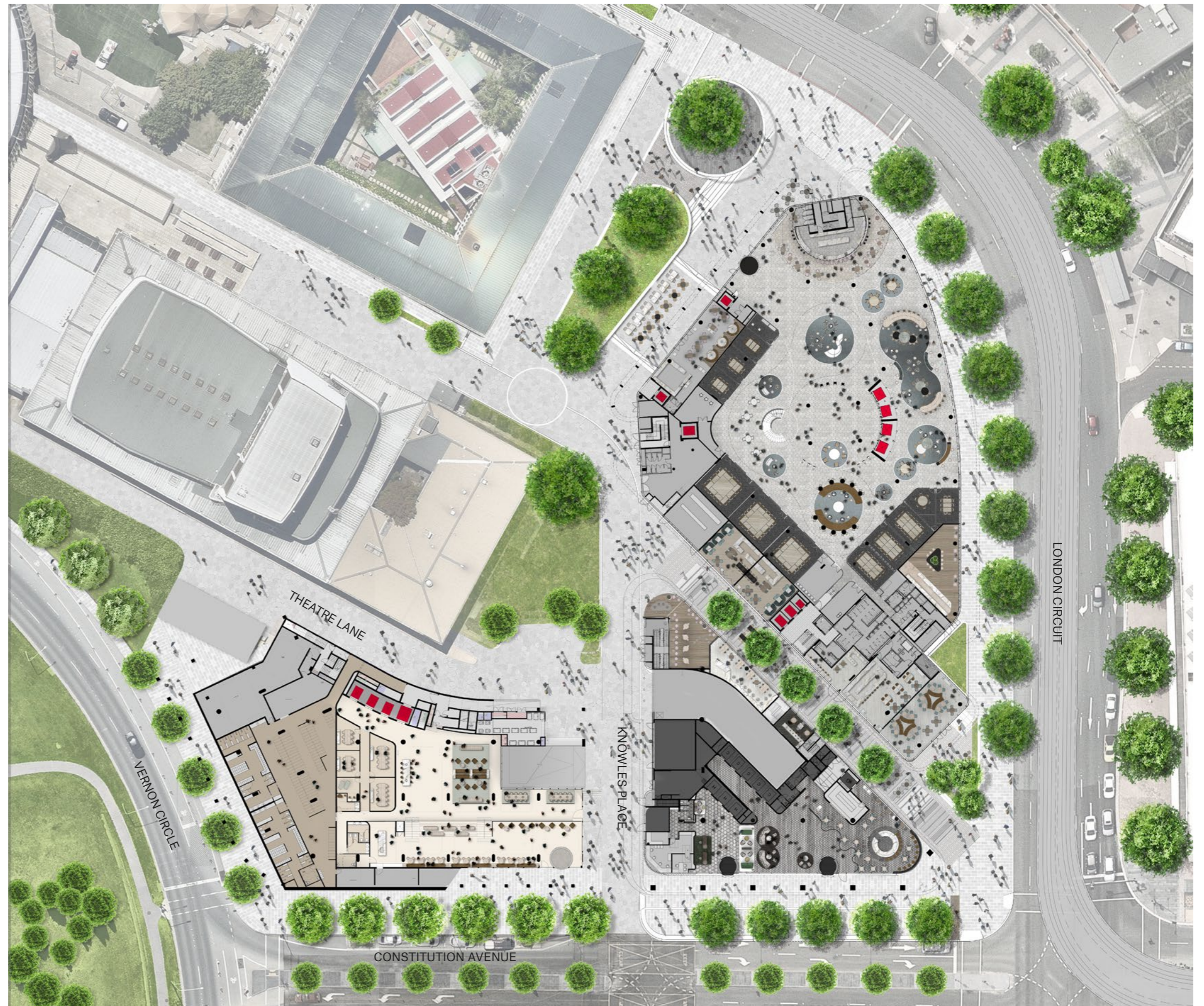
The Masterplan - One Precinct

Three Buildings, One Precinct

The site completes the Constitution Place precinct by extending the arcade and streetwall from Constitution Avenue onto Vernon Circle. The undercroft arcade is continued along Constitution Avenue from Constitution Place's Building A into the proposed verandah and onto Vernon Circle.

Knowles Place is maintained as a shared way extending pedestrian connectivity from the new development back to the retail laneway precinct within Constitution Place. This extends the public domain precinct and integrates the developed retail and amenity offerings with both 220 London Circuit and 1 Constitution Avenue.

Both lobby and vehicular entries are off Knowles Place providing perfect sightlines into the Theatre's Courtyard and Legislative Plaza adjacent to the ACT Legislative Assembly.





We propose a hybrid structure with an activated timber verandah extending along Constitution Avenue into Vernon Circle. Clear glazing expresses the warm timber interior sleeve while the exterior fins are a darkened finish that engages with the dark palette of Constitution Place.

