



# Tea House Melbourne

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28 Clarendon Street Southbank

Heritage Victoria Permit Application

Design Response Report

April 2024

Prepared for Clarendon Tea House Pty. Ltd.

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# 1. Architectural Statement

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# 1. Architectural Statement

The iconic Tea House building has barely been touched by the rapid transformation of the Yarra River’s banks in recent decades. Dramatic densification has nevertheless obscured what was once the precinct’s most prominent and ambitious landmark.

The challenge of re-instating the site’s prominence, while enhancing its heritage value, is achieved with the introduction of a series of sympathetic companion buildings, creating a city within the city - with the Tea House at its heart.

Consisting of seven inter-connected built forms, ranging between three and 27 storeys high, the proposal creates a vibrant and inter-woven social landscape, with hospitality and flagship retail at the lower levels, interspersed with co-working and creative industry incubation space, and hotel uniquely addressing “Melbourne-ness” with connection to the Tea House.

Publicly accessible spaces weave through the site in a series of ascending terraces connecting the ground plane to the garden rooftops of the stepped building forms.

All aspects of the proposal, from the site arrangement and volumetric massing, to activation, materiality, proportion and detail, have been derived from close analysis and inspection of the Tea House building - re-interpreting its qualities and aspirations in light of contemporary technological, cultural, and physical contexts.

The proposal focuses on creating a place centered around the Tea House, one that is a vibrant, living piece of city, rather than a museum that aims to freeze time.

## Project Data

Site area	2,948 m2
Gross Floor Area (GFA)	19,089 m2
Net Lettable Area (NLA)	13,811 m2
F.A.R *	6.47 : 1
Commercial Area Lettable Area	4,293 m2
Retail/Hospitality Area Lettable Area	1,585 m2
Car Parking Spaces	70 spaces
Bicycle Parking Spaces	240 spaces

\*Note: Floor Area Ratio (F.A.R) is calculated by dividing Gross Floor Area by the Site Area (SA)  
 F.A.R = GFA / SA





## 2. Urban Context

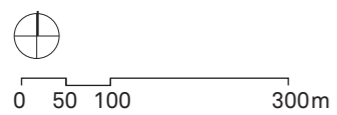
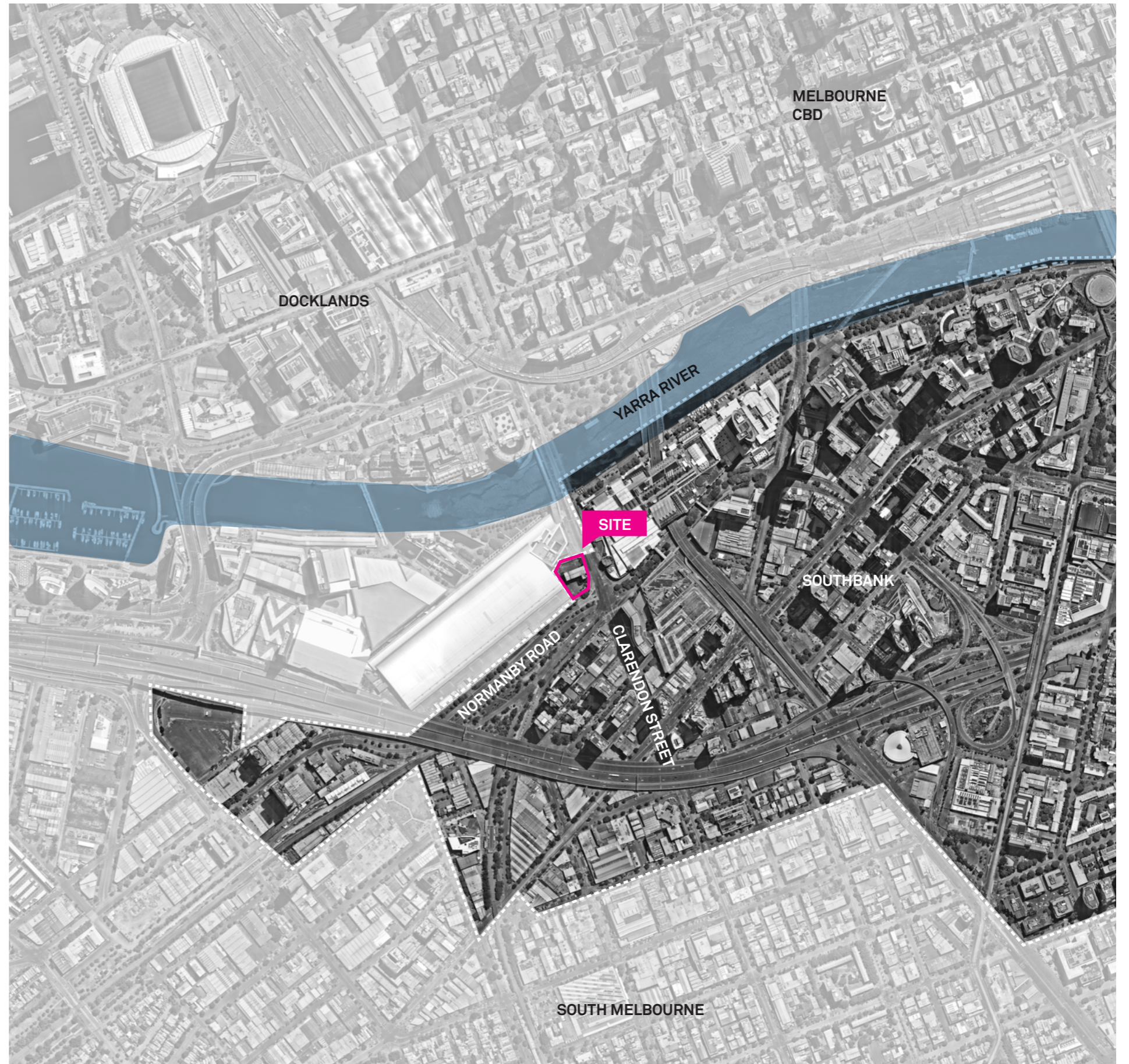
## 2. Urban Context

### Location

Subject Site:  
28 Clarendon St, Southbank, Victoria

The site is situated at a unique focal point between the CBD and South Melbourne at the convergence of transportation and logistical routes.

It is an often overlooked and intimate site within a context of large cultural and entertainment complexes.

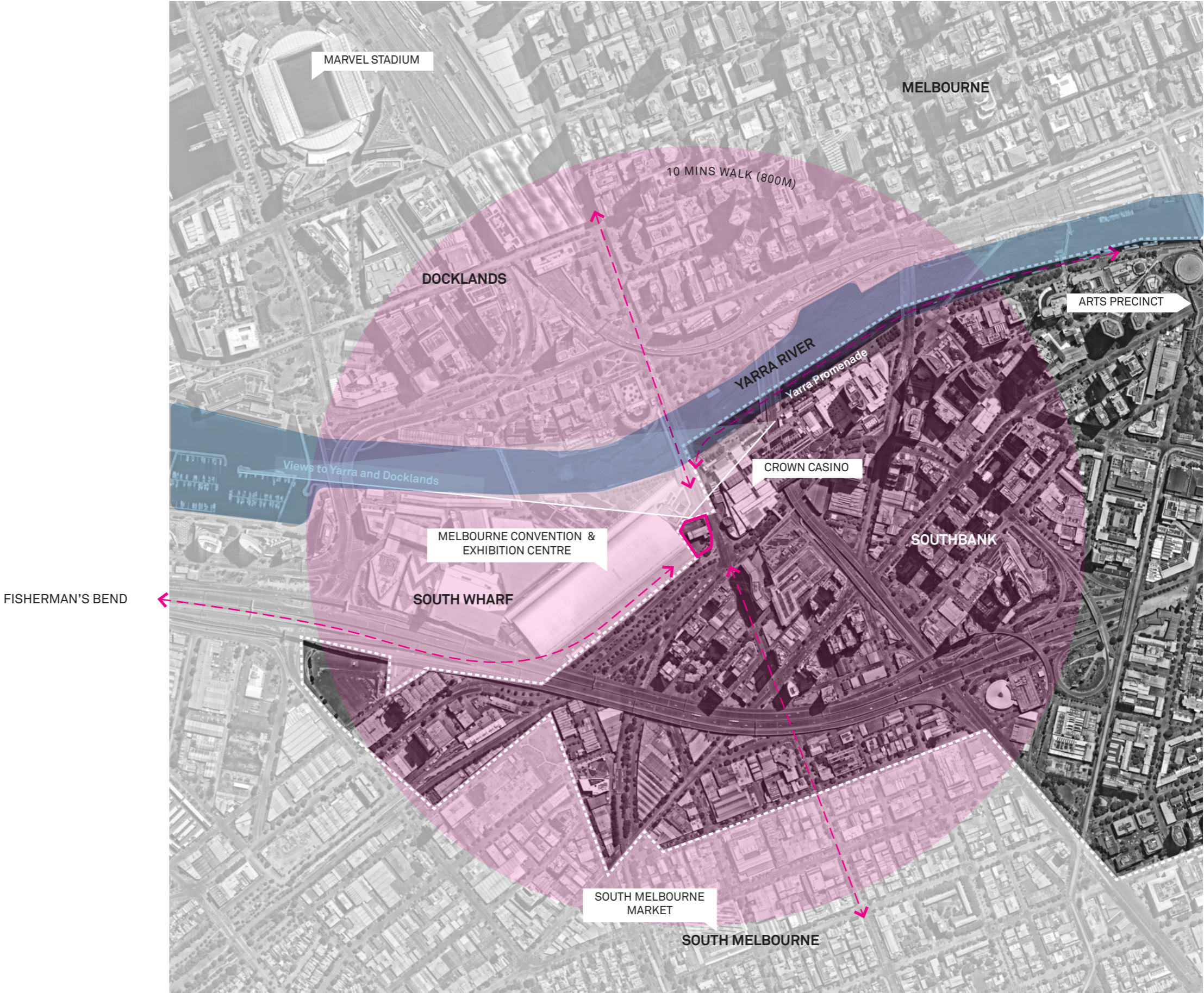


## 2. Urban Context Connections

Located within comfortable walking distance of the CBD, the Yarra Promenade, South Melbourne Market, the Arts Precinct, Docklands, the site is well connected to the greater Melbourne urban area.

This site is located on a link that ties together the North, South, East and West, with close proximity to the major road network - West Gate Fwy, Kings Way and City Road.

Its strategic location also presents the site itself as a future gateway to Fisherman's Bend from the CBD.



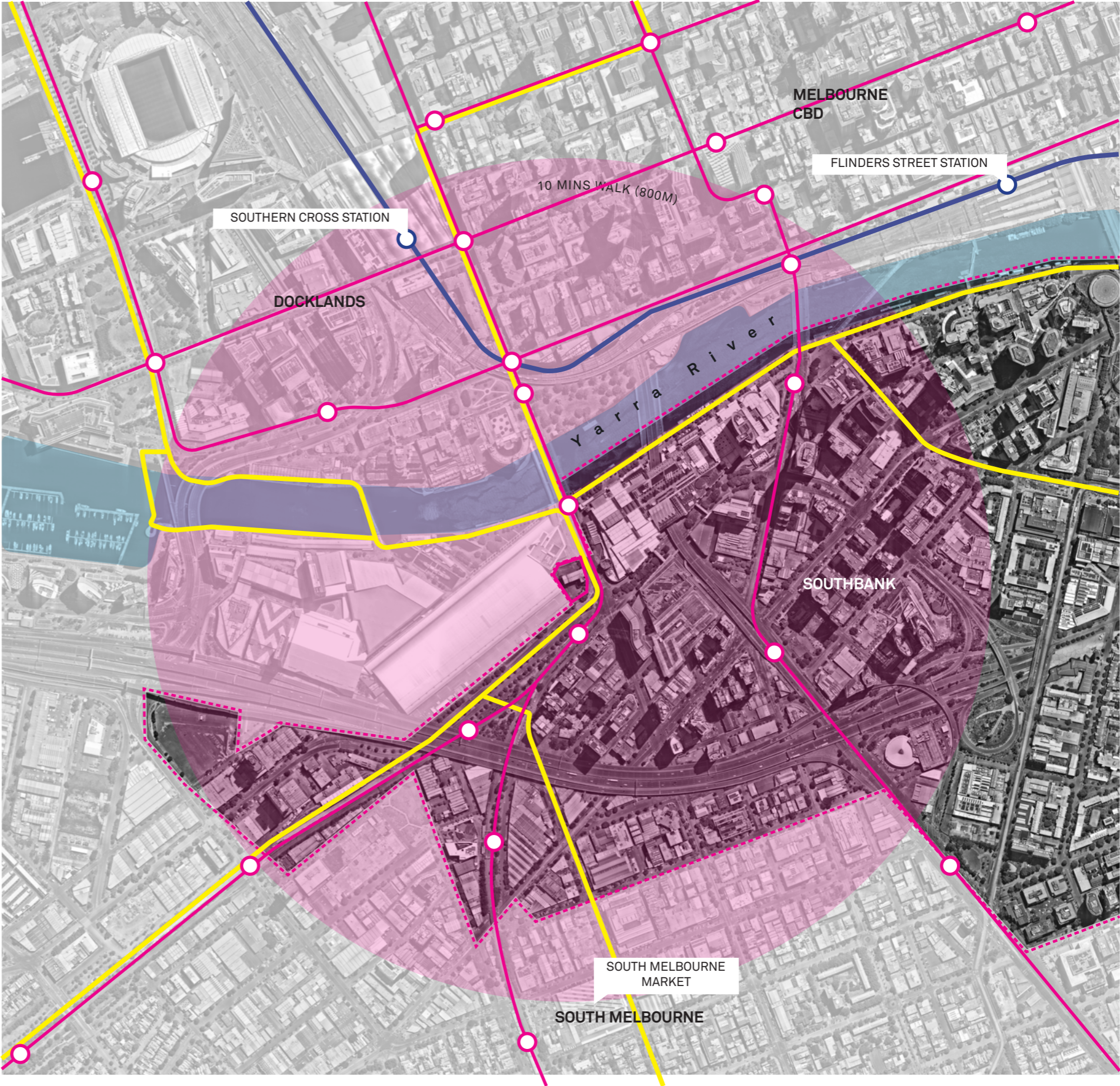
## 2. Urban Context

### Transport

Sharing its Eastern and Southern boundaries with Clarendon Street and Normanby Road, the site is situated at one of the main thoroughfares within Melbourne South precincts, acting as a gateway site to South Melbourne, Fisherman's Bend, Southbank and the CBD.

With the site's proximity to Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre and Crown Entertainment Complex, the site sits within a vast network of transport routes, presenting opportunities for the public to access the site via a myriad of ways.

The site is connected with tram routes running down Clarendon Street and Normanby Road, connecting the site with inter modal change to Southern Cross Station, which is also within comfortable walking distance. It is also within close proximity to the main bicycle trail, Capital City Trail.

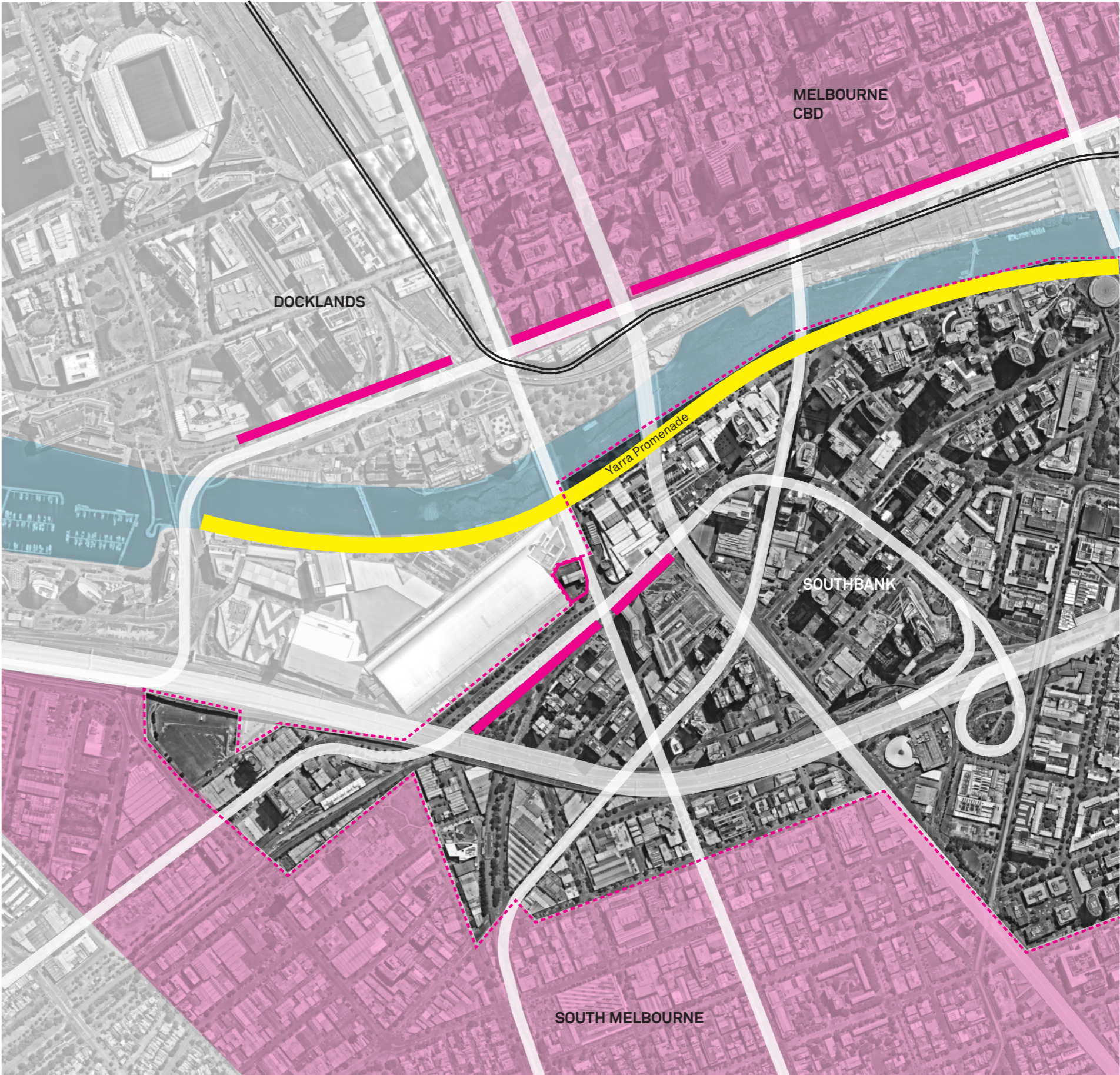


## 2. Urban Context

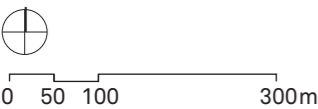
### Borders + Thresholds

The site sits in an interstitial zone between defined high-rise edges to the north (the CBD) and south (commercial & residential precincts south of Normanby Road).

The Yarra, and the promenade along the river's edge act as additional Eastern and Western borders and thresholds that the site negotiates between.



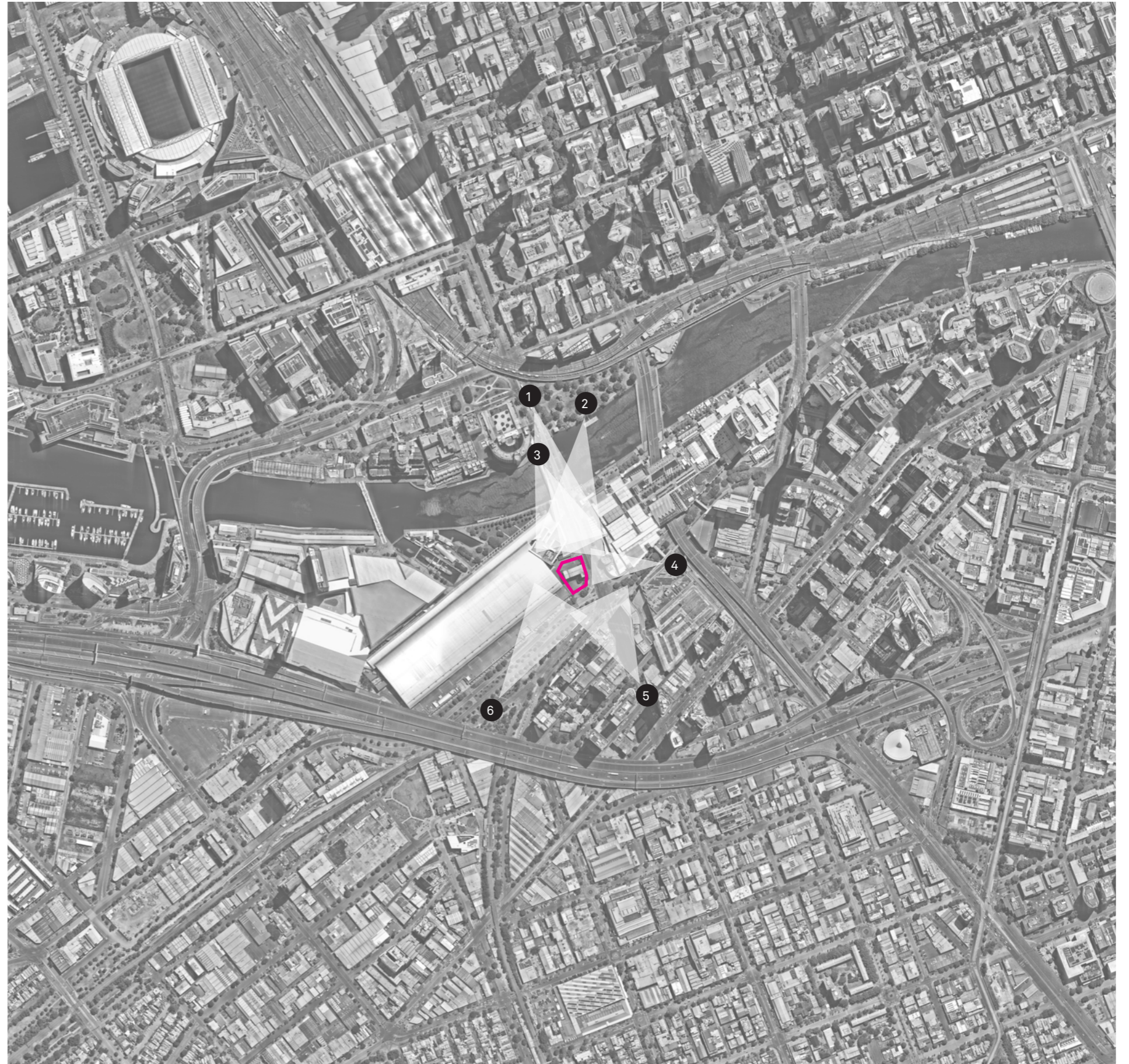
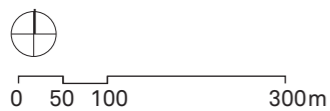
- High Rise Edges
- Yarra Promenade



## 2. Urban Context View Analysis

Southbank has developed beyond recognition since construction of the Tea House, and its former prominence has been lost behind the Exhibition Centre to the North, and the high-density commercial & residential precincts to the South. While the building remains visible, its prominence has been severely degraded.

- 1 The Tea House is visible, however its presence is overwhelmed by the flamboyance of the MCEC and the over towering backdrop of the Southern commercial & residential precincts.
- 2 Similarly from Batman Park, the Tea House is not sympathetically framed by the Crown Casino or MCEC and has no engagement with the skyline.
- 3 On approach from the North, the Tea House steps forward but is obstructed at ground level by fencing and a hydrant booster installation.
- 4 From the South East, views are partially obstructed by established landscaping, however this is the most sympathetic interaction between the historic building and its contemporary context.
- 5 From the South, the Tea House is especially exposed and neglected, with no building forms or landscape context to negotiate between the major road network and steel and glass high rise precinct, and the heritage building.
- 6 From the West, the building is visible, however this is not an approach that offers much in the way of public amenity or heritage value. The approach is along Normanby Road past the MCEC service yards and elevated car park.





1 Looking South from Spencer Street



2 Looking South from Batman Park



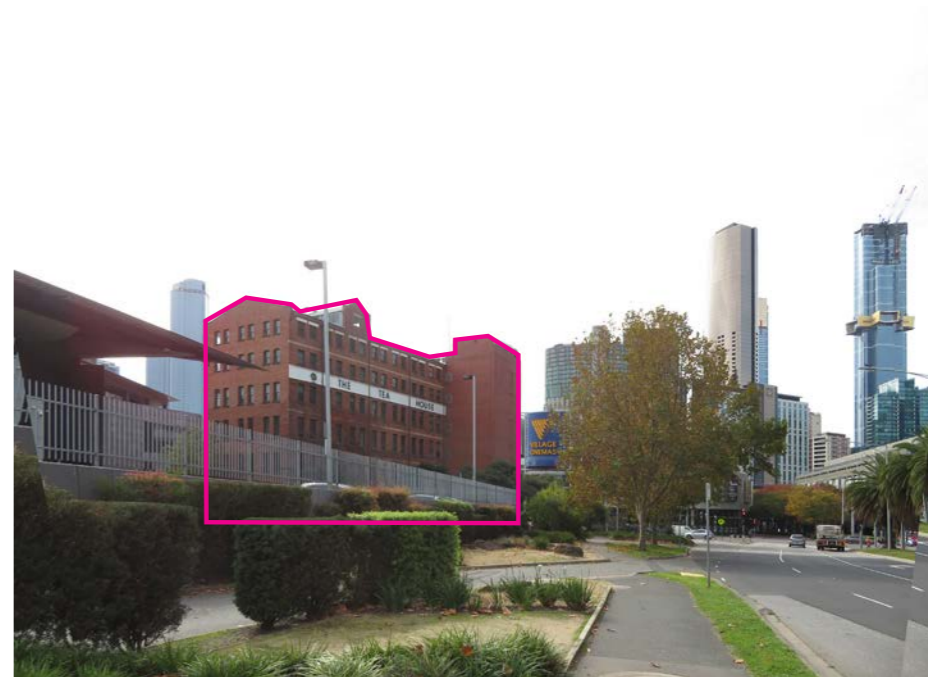
3 Looking South along Clarendon Street (MCEC entrance)



4 Looking South from Spencer Street



5 Looking North along Clarendon Street



6 Looking North-East along Normanby Road

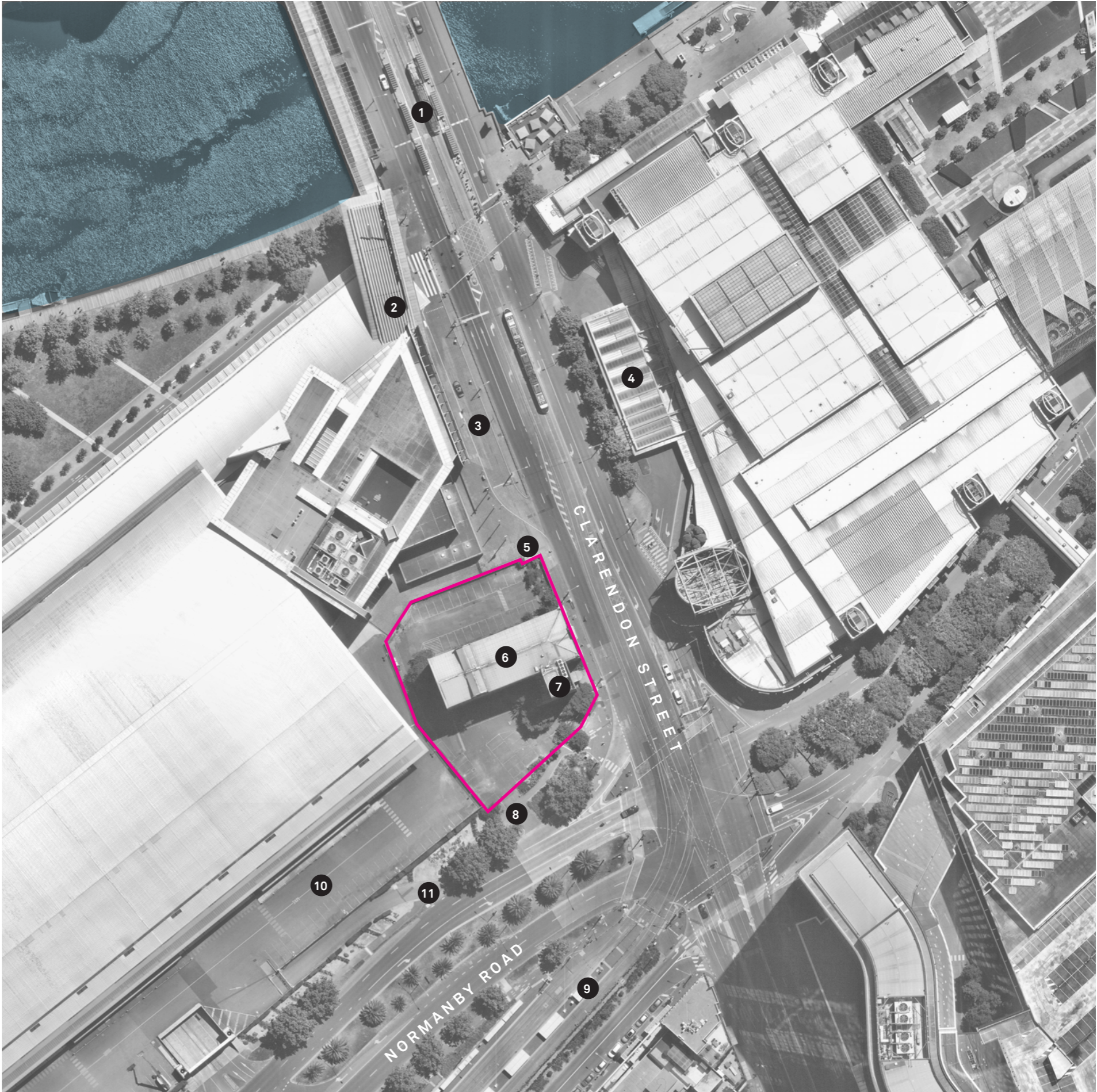
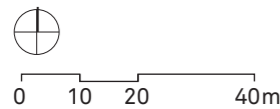




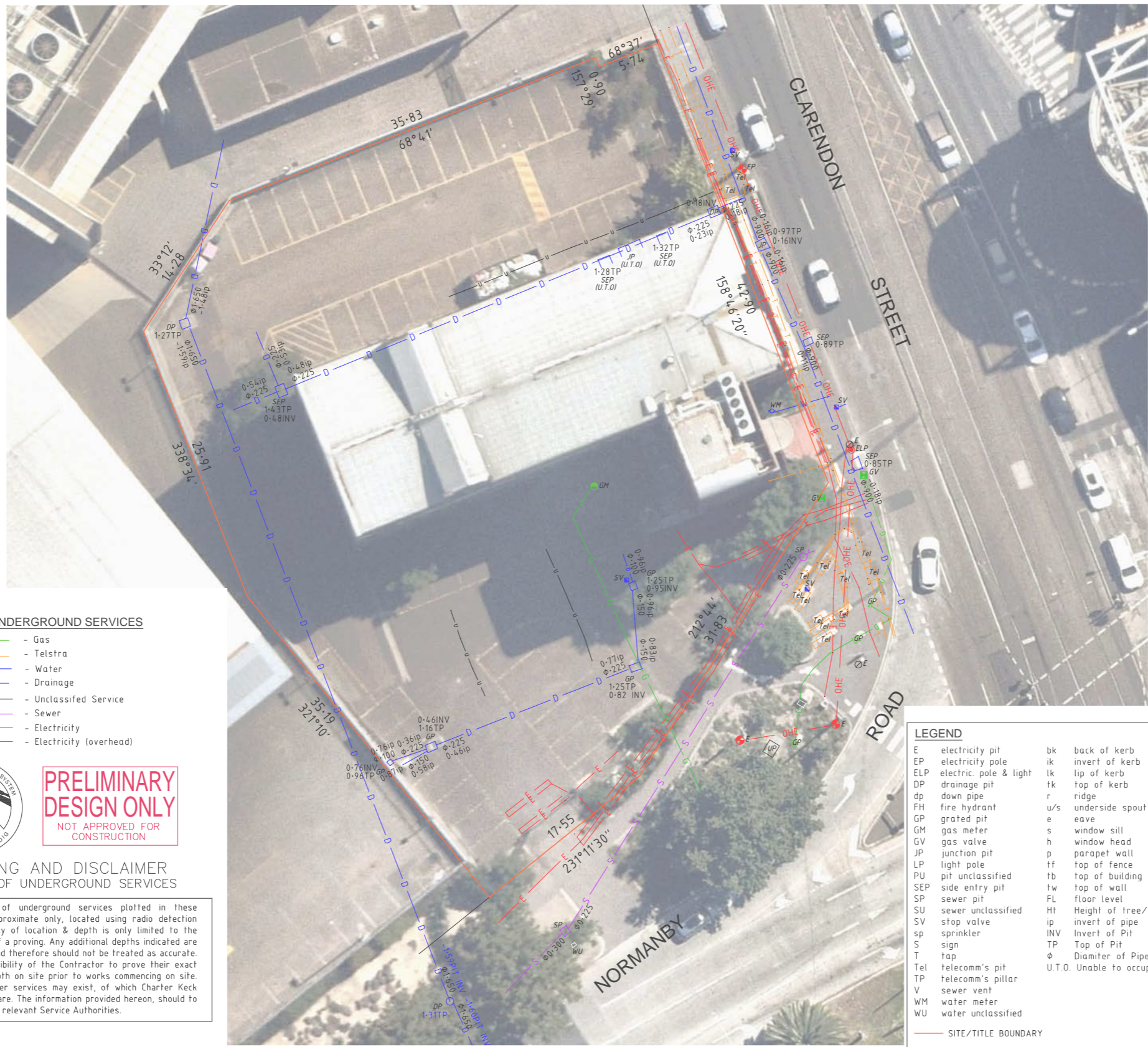
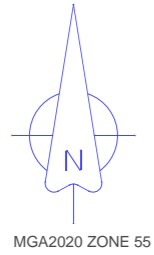
### 3. Site

### 3. Site Location

- 1 Tram interchange station
- 2 MCEC entrance
- 3 MCEC drop off
- 4 Crown casino drop off and entrance
- 5 Hydrant booster along MCEC service lane
- 6 Tea House building
- 7 External stair and lift shaft (not original)
- 8 Existing site vehicle access point
- 9 Tram stop
- 10 MCEC elevated service zone
- 11 MCEC service vehicle exit



### 3. Site Survey



- LEGEND UNDERGROUND SERVICES**
- G - Gas
  - T - Telstra
  - W - Water
  - D - Drainage
  - U - Unclassified Service
  - S - Sewer
  - E - Electricity
  - OHE - Electricity (overhead)



**PRELIMINARY DESIGN ONLY**  
NOT APPROVED FOR CONSTRUCTION

**WARNING AND DISCLAIMER**  
BEWARE OF UNDERGROUND SERVICES

The alignments of underground services plotted in these drawings are approximate only, located using radio detection methods. Accuracy of location & depth is only limited to the immediate area of a proving. Any additional depths indicated are electronic only and therefore should not be treated as accurate. It is the responsibility of the Contractor to prove their exact positions and depth on site prior to works commencing on site. Furthermore, other services may exist, of which Charter Keck Cramer are unaware. The information provided hereon, should to be verified by the relevant Service Authorities.

**LEGEND**

- |     |                       |        |                     |
|-----|-----------------------|--------|---------------------|
| E   | electricity pit       | bk     | back of kerb        |
| EP  | electricity pole      | ik     | invert of kerb      |
| ELP | electric pole & light | lk     | lip of kerb         |
| DP  | drainage pit          | fk     | top of kerb         |
| dp  | down pipe             | r      | ridge               |
| FH  | fire hydrant          | u/s    | underside spout     |
| GP  | grated pit            | e      | eave                |
| GM  | gas meter             | s      | window sill         |
| GV  | gas valve             | h      | window head         |
| JP  | junction pit          | p      | parapet wall        |
| LP  | light pole            | ff     | top of fence        |
| PU  | pit unclassified      | tb     | top of building     |
| SEP | side entry pit        | tw     | top of wall         |
| SP  | sewer pit             | FL     | floor level         |
| SU  | sewer unclassified    | Ht     | Height of tree/pole |
| SV  | stop valve            | ip     | invert of pipe      |
| sp  | sprinkler             | INV    | Invert of Pit       |
| S   | sign                  | TP     | Top of Pit          |
| T   | tap                   | Ø      | Diameter of Pipe    |
| Tel | telecomm's pit        | U.T.O. | Unable to occupy    |
| TP  | telecomm's pillar     |        |                     |
| V   | sewer vent            |        |                     |
| WM  | water meter           |        |                     |
| WU  | water unclassified    |        |                     |
- SITE/TITLE BOUNDARY

**NOTES**

THIS PLAN HAS BEEN SPECIFICALLY PREPARED FOR COSTAFOX AND IS NOT TO BE REPRODUCED FOR USE BY PARTIES OTHER THAN THE ABOVE MENTIONED WITHOUT THE PRIOR WRITTEN CONSENT OF CHARTER KECK CRAMER.

**SERVICES**

ALL SERVICES SHOWN HEREON HAVE BEEN DETERMINED BY DIRECT MEASUREMENT WHERE POSSIBLE. IF DIRECT MEASUREMENT WAS NOT POSSIBLE ON THE DATE OF SURVEY THEN THE LOCATION OF THAT SERVICE HAS BEEN DETERMINED FROM SERVICE AUTHORITY RECORDS. PRIOR TO ANY DEMOLITION, EXCAVATION OR CONSTRUCTION ON THE SITE, THE RELEVANT AUTHORITIES SHOULD BE CONTACTED TO ASCERTAIN THE POSSIBLE LOCATION OF FURTHER SERVICES AND DETAILED LOCATION OF ALL SERVICES.

ALL NOTES SHOWN HEREON ARE AN IMPORTANT AND INTEGRAL PART OF THIS PLAN, MUST REMAIN ON THE PLAN AND BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE PLAN DETAIL.

1	28-04-20	ORIGINAL	SJC
Rev.	Date	Description	Init.

Project	28 CLARENDON STREET SOUTHBANK
Client	COSTAFOX
Title	UNDERGROUND SERVICES SURVEY

Title Description  
Certificate of Title: Vol.11125 Fol.725  
Last Plan Reference: CA 2179 ON TP914577H  
Parish: MELBOURNE SOUTH  
Crown Allotment: 2179  
Crown Portion: -

Survey datum: MGA2020 Zone 55  
Level datum: A.H.D. vide PM344 MELBOURNE SOUTH, R.L.4.272

Contour interval N/A

Surveyor RB Date of Survey 04.15.20  
Drawn SC Date 28.04.20

Checked SC

Surveyors Reference J143454

CAD Reference J143454 - 28 Clarendon Street, SOUTHBANK FL(Ver.1)

SHEET 1 OF 1 SHEETS

SCALE	ORIGINAL SCALE	SHEET SIZE
2.5 0 2.5 5 7.5 10 LENGTHS ARE IN METRES	1:250	A2

**CHARTER KECK CRAMER**  
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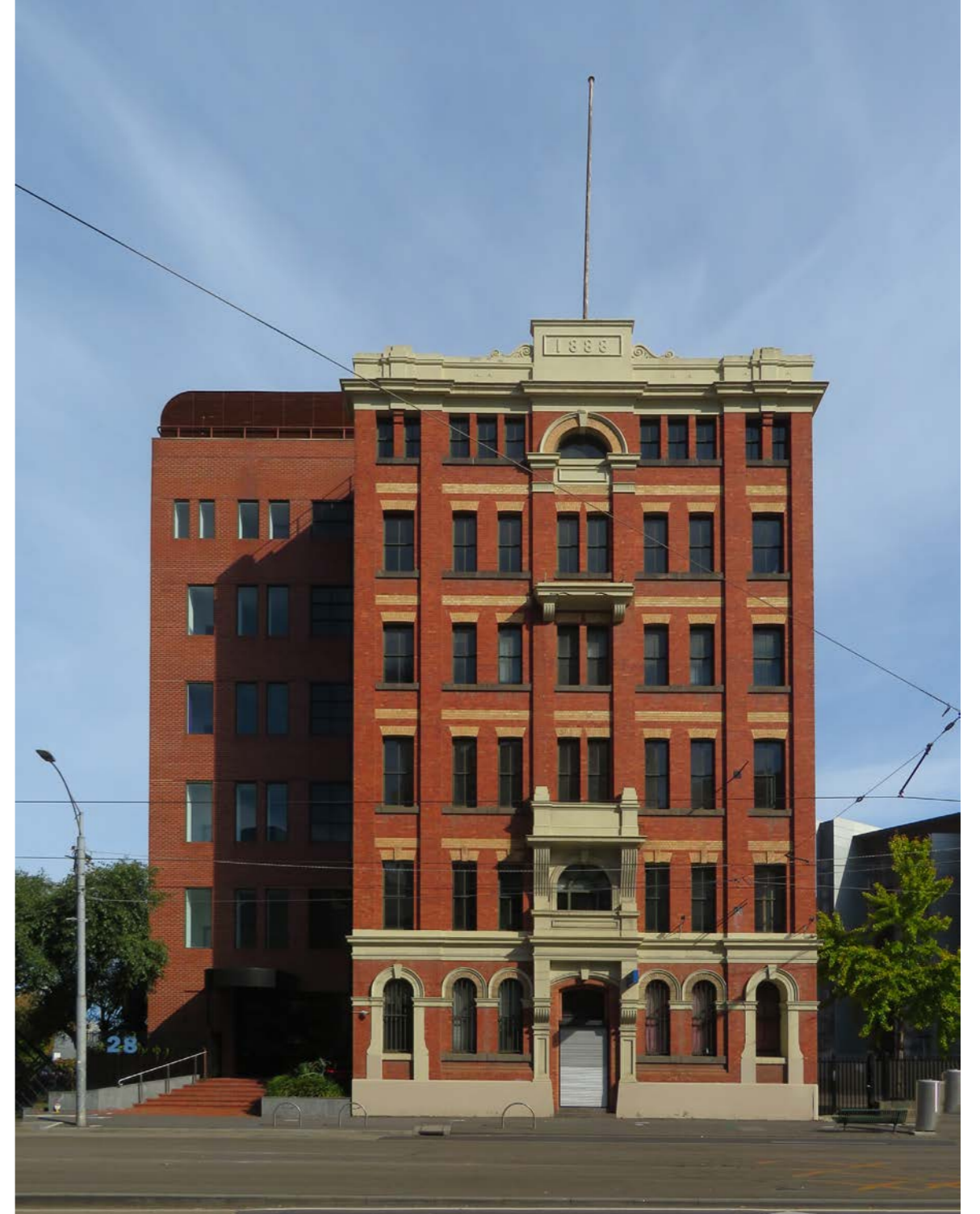
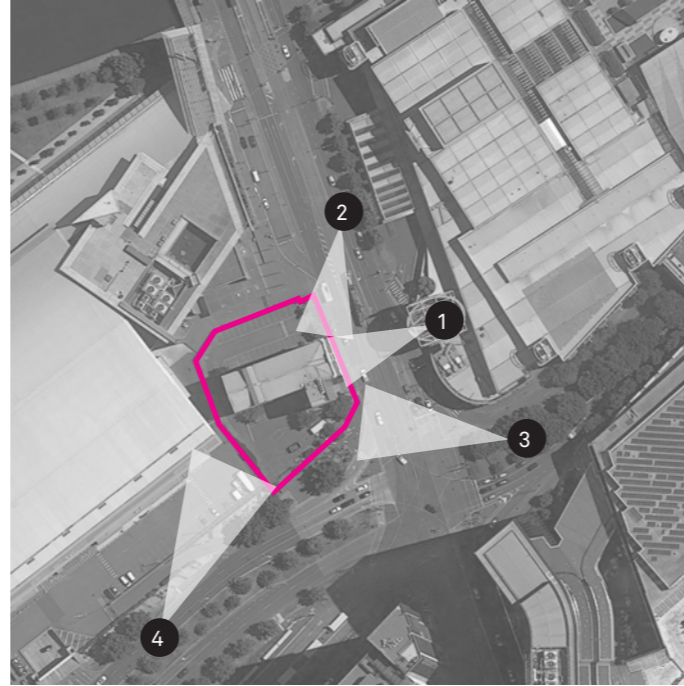
### 3. Site Photos

The Tea House Melbourne proposal with Snøhetta + Clarendon Tea House Pty. Ltd. + Aspect in close collaboration with Lovell Chen supports the future creative use of Robur Tea House and adjacent proposed works.

The Tea House building has always been anomalous - an exception to the prevailing urban language. Following its construction it stood with unique prominence in the interstitial space on the Southbank between the CBD and South Melbourne. It stood at the point of convergence of all of Melbourne's logistical and infrastructural routes. It has remained exceptional, as Melbourne has grown and transformed. The Tea House is uniquely untouched by the dynamics of the city's growth. An island within the city.

The historic building stands as a neglected artefact from the city's past, but one that currently lacks any presence or integration into the city.

The development of the site represents the reassertion of the precinct's forgotten history, and the reinstated presence of this landmark site. An outward growth of the Tea House's narrative and spirit, rather than the further encroachment of the city.



1



2



3



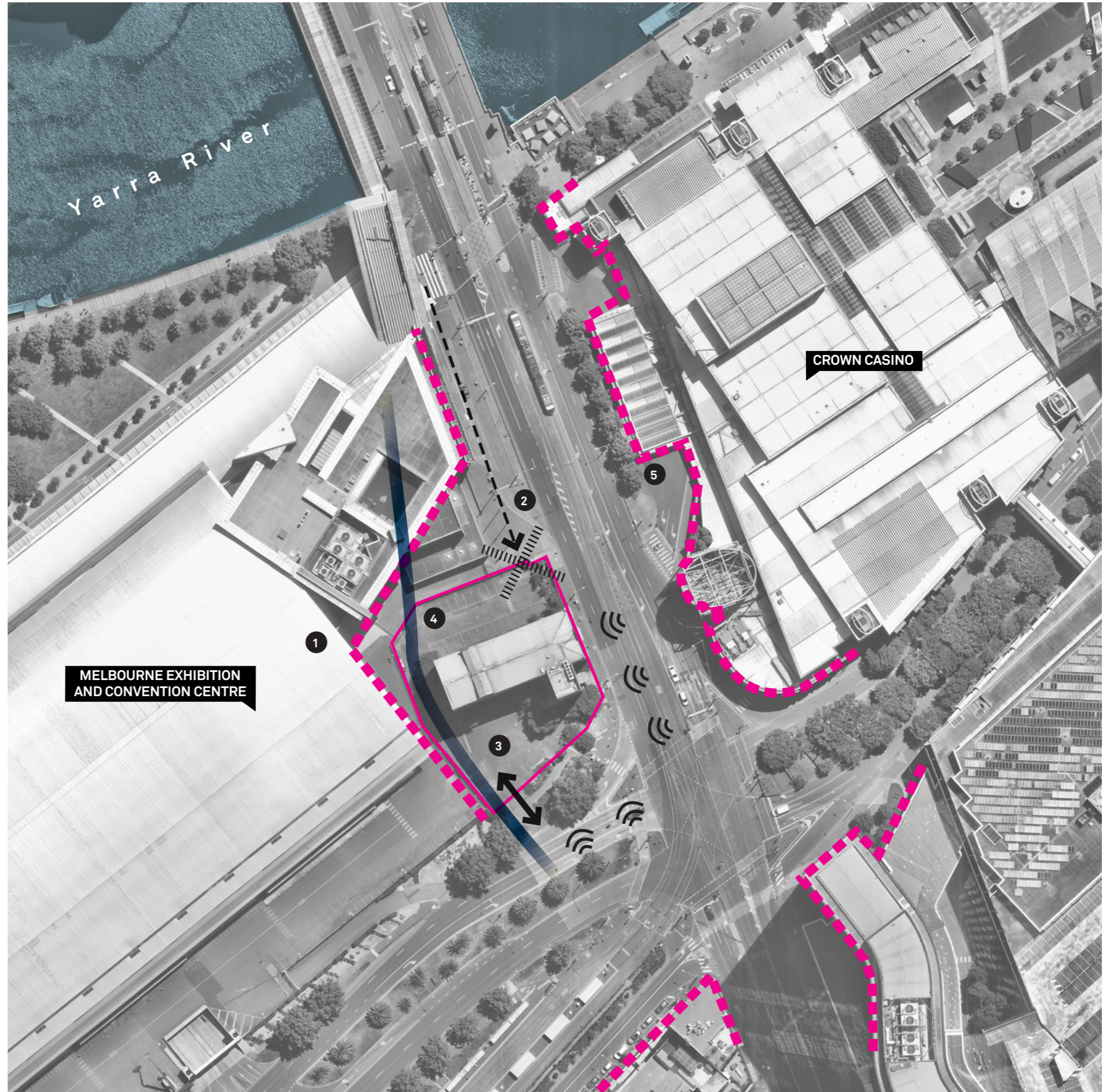
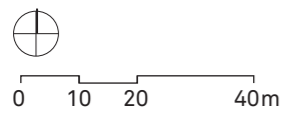
4

### 3. Site Constraints

Isolated from the neighbouring urban fabric by two major roads, the site is exposed to noise from different directions.

- 1 With Melbourne Convention & Exhibition Centre wrapping around the site on the Western side, and a North-West boundary, the site has sensitive edges to work with on the lower levels.
- 2 Visual and physical obstacle to the north of the site, obstructing connection to the Yarra promenade.
- 3 Highly constrained by the site's size and boundaries, the ground plane presents limited frontages and footprint for new build.
- 4 Storm water pipe located along the western boundary of the site.
- 5 Idiosyncratic adjacent building edges.

- Adjacent building edges
- Storm water pipe



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## 4. The Tea House

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### Historical Character + Identity

The Tea House building has always been anomalous - an exception to the prevailing urban language. Following its construction it stood with unique prominence in the interstitial space on the Southbank between the CBD and South Melbourne. It stood at the point of convergence of all of Melbourne's logistical and infrastructural routes. And, it has remained exceptional, as Melbourne has grown and transformed. The Tea House is uniquely untouched by the dynamics of the city's growth. An island within the city.

The historic building stands as a neglected artefact from the city's past, but one that currently lacks presence or integration into the city.

The development of the site represents the reassertion of the precinct's forgotten history, and the reinstated presence of this landmark site. An outward growth of the Tea House's narrative and spirit, rather than the further encroachment of the city.



Fig. 1—Map of the Melbourne from 1851 showing the South bank entirely undeveloped

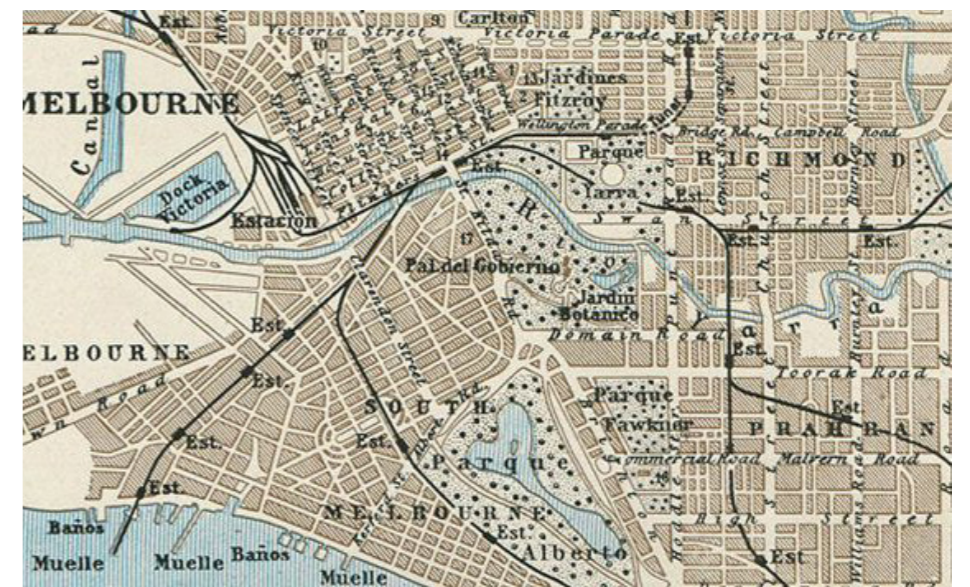


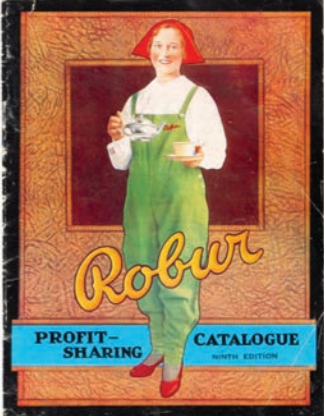
Fig. 2—Map of 1920s Melbourne, showing rapid development + infill that followed the Industrial Revolution

# 4. The Tea House

## Commercial Character + Brand Identity

The Tea House building's most prominent tenant 'Robur Tea,' which has given its identity the Tea House, has always had strong commercial history and rich stories behind its identity designs.

Clarendon Tea House Pty Ltd and Snøhetta have been working with a leading international place-making consultant ERA.co to gain a better understanding of the unique historical narrative of Robur Tea Building, along with its entrepreneurial commercial history that forms the part of the place narrative in development. This research with ERA.co has largely informed our activation strategy and interior design development to improve the ability to understand the Tea House building as a productive building in the city.



## 4. The Tea House

### Historical Site Arrangement

It is difficult to imagine, given the current state of development of the Southbank, but the Tea House building was for over a century the most prominent building on the Yarra's Southern edge.

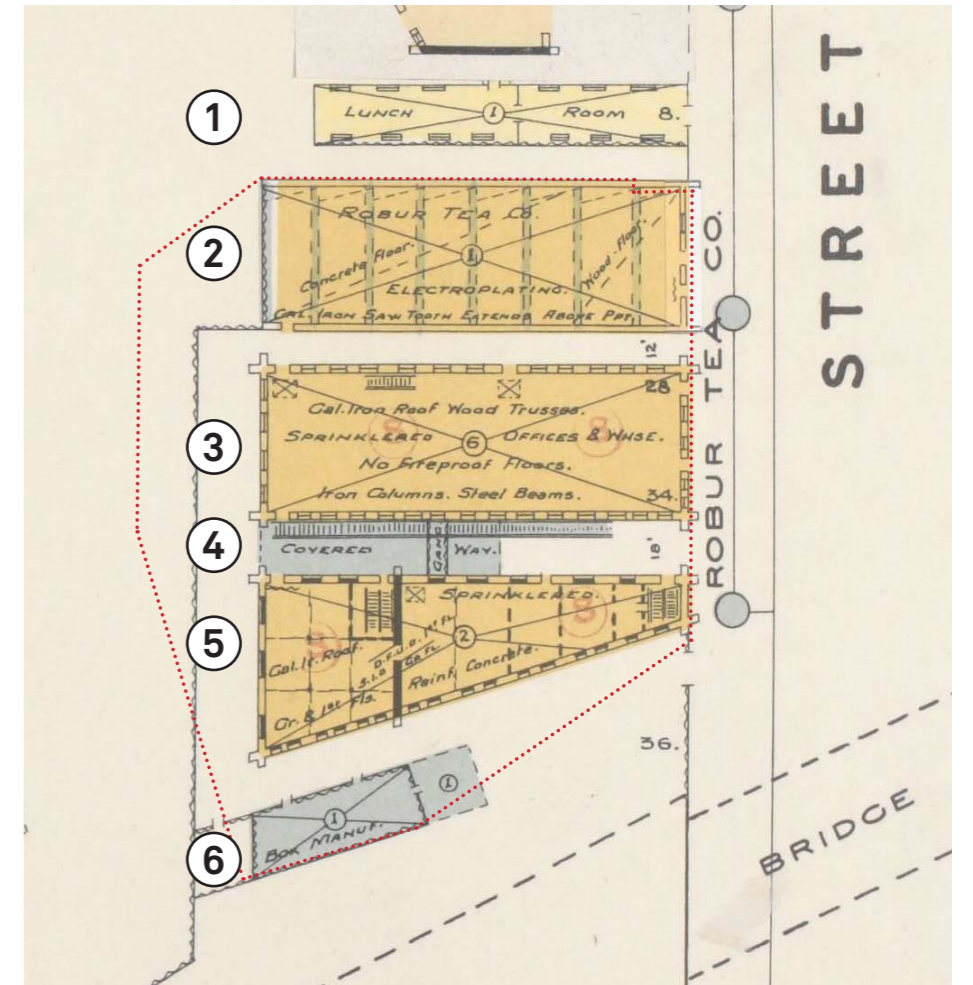
Surrounded by utilitarian 1-2 storey warehouse buildings, views of its six storeys of dignified Victorian brick and stonework were largely uninterrupted.

It stood as an island, and a beacon of commerce and industry, in its modest surrounds, and its iconic signage further improved its landmark status.

There is historic precedent on the site for additional building density. The adjacent photograph taken in 1968 shows several buildings to both the North and South of the Tea House building, as well as across Clarendon Street on the casino site.

Each of these buildings served a single purpose (see opposite page), and had a corresponding architectural expression. Furthermore, the buildings were separated by streets, which allowed for the movement of people and goods around the site. Within these streets and bridging across them, was a secondary network of stairs and bridges providing additional logistical connection.

This arrangement of a) a cluster of building forms, located to create b) a network of streets and spaces accommodating the movement of people and goods, is characteristic of vernacular architecture, whether it be Victorian industrial on Melbourne's Southbank, a European medieval village, or an ancient Medina.



1. Lunch room
2. Electroplating workshop
3. 'The Tea House', Offices + Warehouse
4. Unknown
5. Unknown
6. Box manufacturing

## 4. The Tea House Current Condition

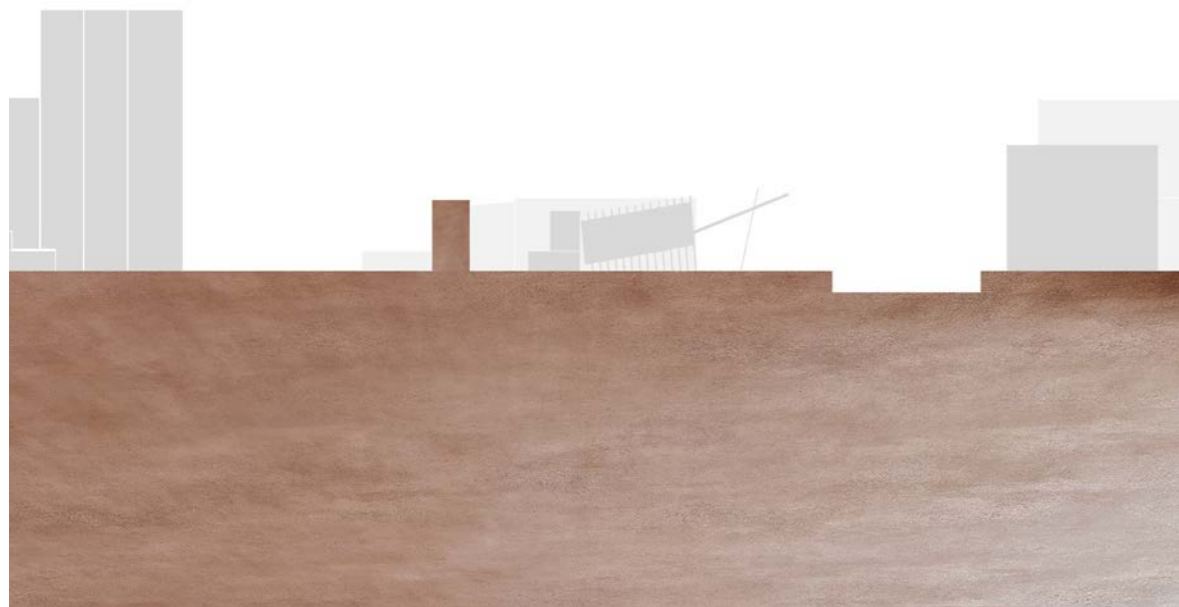
The Tea House building sits currently largely disconnected from the neighbouring network due to harsh and hard boundaries.

The current condition of the site has been carefully documented and investigated with Lovell Chen to bring the building back to once again be connected with the rest of the City, and be offered to the public.



## 5. Design Principles

## 5. Design Principles

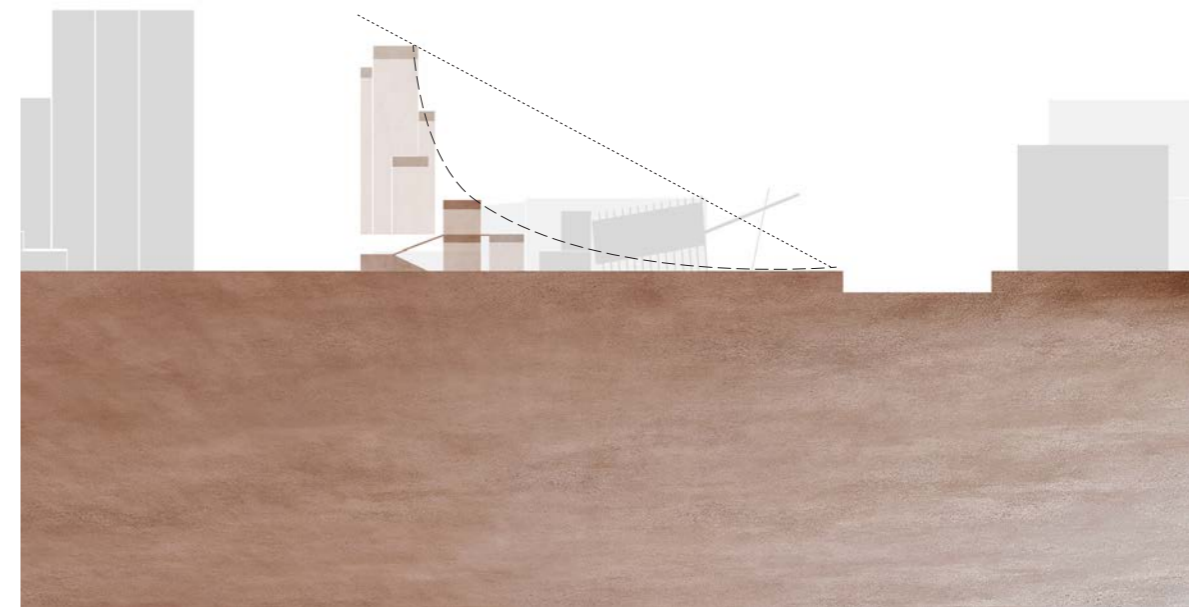


### Island (Landmark)

The Tea House building has always been anomalous—an exception to the prevailing urban language. Following its construction it stood with unique prominence in the interstitial space on the Southbank between the CBD and South Melbourne. It stood at the point of convergence of all of Melbourne’s logistical and infrastructural routes. It has remained exceptional, as Melbourne has grown and transformed. The Tea House is uniquely untouched by the dynamics of the city’s growth. An island within the city.

The historic building now stands as a neglected artefact from the city’s past, but one that currently lacks any presence or integration into the city.

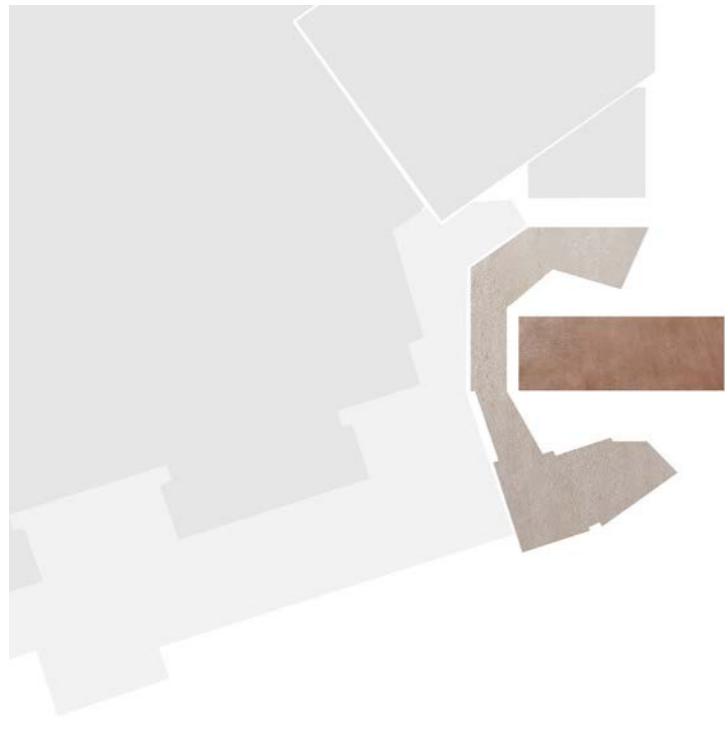
The development of the site represents the reassertion of the precinct’s forgotten history, and the reinstated presence of this landmark site. An outward growth of the Tea House’s narrative and spirit, rather than the further encroachment of the city.



### Transition

The stepped landscape connects a city-scale strategy of controlled building height to graduate between the river and the commercial precinct to the South, and a the human story of a traversable urban topography.

By employing a single, unifying compositional language for both the arrangement of building forms, and the organisation of internal public spaces, users are able to relate the presence of the site in the city to their direct experience of it.



### Ensemble of Forms

Additional structures, since demolished, occupied the site until the later part of the 20th Century. Each structure had a form that related to its specific purpose, and each stood in relation to the others in a way that created a network of spaces between for the flow of people and goods.

These complementary principles of an 'ensemble of forms' and a 'network of spaces', are the bases upon which the project massing has been developed.

The ensemble of forms allows for minute control of the presence and integration of the development into the city, while preserving the Tea House as the primary and most prominent building.

### Network of Spaces

The negative spaces created by the ensemble of forms, constitutes a microcosm of city - a network of unique public spaces each with its own distinct character and offering.

The anomalous and exceptional nature of the site is reinforced, by creating a distinct threshold around the perimeter of the site, within which the narrative and character is distinct from, but connected to, the City outside.





## 6. Massing, Density + Use