

VOLUME 1  
MASTER PLAN &  
CONCEPT DESIGN

CAIRNS ENTERTAINMENT PRECINCT

PHASE 1  
MASTER PLANNING + CONCEPT DESIGN REPORT

July 2011

CACOX RAYNER ARCHITECTS





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# SECTION 0

## BRIEF ANALYSIS AND CONSULTATION PROCESS

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## 0.1 INTRODUCTION

This report describes the CA-Cox Rayner led response to the Architectural Consultancy Services Brief for the proposed Cairns Entertainment Precinct (formerly Cairns Cultural Precinct) Phase 1.

The report comprises, as required, two Master Plan options and two Architectural Design options for the proposed Concept Design.

A purpose of generating these options is to enable the Cairns community to participate in the planning and design processes. This participation has played a fundamental role in the evolution of both the Master Plan and Architectural Design options.

In addition, the Master Plans and Concept Design have been prepared in response to a wide range of briefing documents and specialist reports including:

- Outline Theatre Design Brief
- Acoustic Brief
- Museum Planning Brief
- Accessibility Brief
- Ports North Buffer Report
- Ports North Overriding Objectives
- Heritage Report
- BCA Compliance Report
- Traffic Engineering Report
- Thermal Insulation and BCA Modelling
- Fire Engineered Solution

The Master Plans and Concept Design have been informed by the work of the following consultants that were engaged for Phase 1.

Business Planning and Design Management	Savills Project Management
Theatre Planning	Marshall Day Entertech
Acoustic Consultant	Acoustic Studio
Town Planning	Urbis
Cost Planning	WT Partnership
Structural Engineering	Aurecon
Civil Engineering	Cardno
Mechanical and Electrical Engineering	Steensen Varming with MGF
Vertical Transportation	AECOM
Maritime Consultant	GHD
Traffic Engineering	Arup
ESD Consultant	Arup
BCA Compliance	Certis Building Certification
Heritage Advice	Converge Heritage
Land Surveying	Brazier Motti

Separate reports from consultants are provided in Volume 2: Consultants Reports. The overall process has been undertaken under the direction and guidance of Linda Cardew in the role of Cairns Entertainment Precinct Project Manager.

## 0.2 COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

Community consultation has been a significant part of the Master Plan and Design Process during Phase 1. CA-Cox Rayner has continued the consultation that commenced with stakeholder groups prior to the architects appointment and established and lead a series of planning and design consultations with the broader community during the development of the Master Plan and Concept Designs.

The consultation process has comprised of four workshop phases, each involving two sessions at 3-5pm and 6-8pm on the following dates:

Tuesday 3 May 2011	Inception Workshop
Tuesday 24 May 2011	Master Plan Workshop
Tuesday 14 June 2011	Preliminary Concept Design Workshop
Tuesday 12 July 2011	Concept Design + Architectural Options Workshop

Each workshop process has comprised a series of tables with each having up to ten community members considering a range of issues and potentials. A member of the CA-Cox Rayner team acted as coordinator for each table and recorded the feedback during the session. This feedback is summarised in **Appendix 1: Community Consultation Workshops**, and more detailed notes are available upon request.

As noted in the Introduction, the community consultation has formed an intrinsic part of the Master Plan and Concept Design development, informing and influencing overall strategies as well as specific components of the project.

The community consultation workshops have been highly productive with little negativity to either the development of a Cairns Entertainment Precinct or to the planning and design as they progressed over the approximately 11 week period.

The fourth workshop was the last of the formal workshops scheduled for the project involving the broader Cairns community that were scheduled for the project. However, it is intended that community consultation will be maintained throughout **Phase 2: Development Application Phase** in a variety of forms which may include:

- additional broad Cairns community workshops
- community representative workshops
- user groups including Ports users

For the latter process, attendees at the fourth workshop who were interested in ongoing involvement in the design process recorded their names and contact details.

## 0.3 USER GROUP CONSULTATION

User group consultation is in its early days however the general community consultation process began to identify relevant user groups to inform the Phase 2 Development Application process. The following groups have, however, been consulted to commence the user group process.

### Multicultural Advisory Group (MAG)

Council's Multicultural Advisory Group had ongoing involvement in the design process. To date, this group has had primary interest in the scope and nature of the community facilities such as a community kitchen, rehearsal spaces and practice rooms.

### Performing Arts Centre Group (PACG)

Performing arts and stakeholders had been previously consulted by council to inform the development of the theatre and acoustics planning briefs. A further consultation was attended by;

- KickArts Contemporary Arts
- End Credits Film Club
- Cairns Convention Centre

### School User Group (SUG)

Similarly, a further consultation was held with school representatives and James Cook University. This group currently comprises Mossman State School with James Cook University, with interests in community facilities, arts, workshops and inclusion of community arts organisations.

### Port Douglas Community Group (PDCG)

This group has yet to be convened.

It is anticipated that a number of additional User Groups will be formed for consultation during Phase 2.

## 0.4 INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

In early 2010, Council had met with a number of indigenous organisations, Traditional Owners, and indigenous performers to establish needs for the purpose of spatial and facilities planning. While members of the Cairns indigenous community have attended some of the community consultation workshops, the process of focused indigenous consultation commenced toward the end of the Concept Design phase. To assist the process, Council has engaged **Indij Design (Andrew Lane and Francoise Lane)** and **Seith Fourmile** as consultants.

A meeting with these consultants was held on Tuesday 12 July 2011 to outline the indigenous community consultation process. This workshop included the four relevant Cairns tribal groups, as well as the broader Cairns indigenous community and extending out to peoples in the wide far north Queensland and Torres Strait region.

The establishment of the indigenous consultation follows extensive pre-Phase 1 consultation by the Project Manager Linda Cardew to ascertain protocols and other aspects of importance for the consultation process.

A summary of outcomes of the first Indigenous Community Consultation Workshop is as follows:

### Physical Connections

1. What are the physical things within your country that make you feel that you are in a special place?  
*(Examples might be the trees around you, a freshwater creek or rocky boulders)*

- Exposed stones /rocks represents the story around the creation of Cairns and the outer reef
- Rainforest people
- Reinforce strength of rainforest at entry – noted museum as an important aspect of the precinct
- Rainforest trees - Blue Fig tree used for shields
- Shields have scorpion crest on as symbol
- Clan territory ranged from Mossman to Edmonton, 8 groups within clan
- Scars were made into the trees to act as marker to define boundaries and routes
- Fire Sticks - made of Redwood
- Trees to define seasons

2. Are there materials, trees (eg healing/bush tucker) or symbolic objects that you would like to see or not see incorporated into the entertainment precinct? *(It is important that the design team be made aware of what is appropriate to include and what would be an inappropriate inclusion)*

- Fires were lit by outsiders coming into a new territory as a mark of respect to the owners of the territory
- The interpretation of this could be an appropriate way to respect the site boundaries

3. Are there any sight lines to places of significance that could be incorporated into the design?

- Sight lines
  - View to closest tribe is towards the Ranges of Yarrabah
  - View south into Trinity inlet or “birthplace of people” is the womb, this is sacred
  - Mt Whitfield to west is important
  - To south-east – Mt Sheridan “White rock”

### Spiritual Connections

4. We understand that there is public and private knowledge of storylines that connect country to people. Do you feel comfortable in sharing some elements of song lines or storylines that may be put forward for consideration in the CEP? (Share only what you are comfortable in sharing)

- Elders only to comment

### Cultural Practices

5. What cultural practices do you have in your community that would not fit under the banner of performance that may be accommodated at the entertainment precinct? (Examples could be the Festival of the Light, NAIDOC week events)

- Rainforest Festival
- Define and expose indigenous health through exhibitions
- Cultural workshops
- Place for Cape communities to meet
- Teaching / education of aboriginal culture and history
- Hands on learning about the culture

6. When you think of your connection to country, what day to day activities come to mind and are there things that could be in the entertainment precinct that could facilitate these activities? (Examples could be hunting, swimming, food preparation, traditional cooking)

- Cooking and eating food
- Teaching
- Making shields
- Dance and song – at gatherings
- Stomping ground – Red dust
- Dance floor to be dirt and grass
- Place for Men’s business
- Place for Women’s business
- Currently use Fogarty park as a dance site
- No orientation required to dance
- Bush tucker – Salt water mussels and clam shells

### Further Questions

7. Is there a history to the precinct site that you feel should be shared/represented in the precinct? (A heritage consultant is involved on the project but we would like to hear your stories as well)

- Elders only to comment

8. How can we make a space that is inclusive of the indigenous community? (What is it that would make you feel welcome while you were there?)

- Sculpture interpretation of
  - Shields
  - Fire
- Audio – to explain history
- Node example – Cairns esplanade

9. What are the impediments to this? (What are the things that will make it difficult for us to do this?)

- Funding
- Time frame for consultation to all elders
- Information needs to be exposed to all especially museum artefacts and the relocation of them
- Research of discussions, need to define what is in current archives and how these can be incorporated within – i.e. Brisbane museum has significant artefacts
- Public liability – Safe and covered
- Communication of all cultures to bridge gap

## 0.5 CAIRNS CITY CENTRE MASTER PLAN 2011

Concurrent with the preparation of the master plans and concept designs for the Cairns Entertainment Precinct, Cairns Regional Council has been undertaking a Cairns City Centre Master Plan (CCMP) with Architectus acting as lead consultant. The CEP project team has met with Architectus on two occasions during Phase 1 in order to optimise the integration of the CEP into the city centre.

Both project teams recognise the immense importance of the CEP as the primary catalyst for change and enhancement of the city centre, and its capacity to stimulate community and cultural life as well as the tourism economy. The CEP site is identified as the first 'catalyst site' able to contribute to the revitalisation of the city centre, and the CCMP foresees its potential to generate a thriving arts and cultural business precinct in the Grafton, Hartley, Lake and Wharf Streets area.

Specific discussion centred on the future role of Grafton and Lake Streets as 'green' corridors linking the CEP with the heart of the CBD, and the triangular planning structure linking the three nodes of the CEP (culture and entertainment), the Esplanade (recreation and dining) and the Shields / Abbot Street intersection (City Centre). Also discussed was the appropriateness of terminating the greener Grafton Street in the CEP's major public plaza. It was recognised that the Master Plan should incorporate a covered pedestrian way between the CEP and the proposed Council multistorey carpark on Hartley Street.



CairnsCity Centre Master Plan 2011 -  
Public Space Structure - City Triangle

## 0.6 BOARD OF URBAN PLACES, QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT ARCHITECT, AIA QUEENSLAND CHAPTER PRESIDENT

At the culmination of the master planning process of Phase 1, the two Master Plan Options were presented for independent professional appraisal to the Queensland Government Board of Urban Places, the Queensland Government Architect, Philip Follent, and the AIA Queensland Chapter President, Peter Skinner. The design processes and strategy used to generate both Master Plan Options were strongly supported, however Master Plan Option 2 was considered to be a preferable outcome. A copy of the letter from Associate Professor Peter Skinner is attached in Appendix 2 to this report.

The Board of Urban Place's main comments related to the precinct's integration with the Cairns CBD and with Cairns Cityport in particular. The Board elected to form a small working group to investigate the wider context in which the CEP is sited, which may generate information to assist the CEP project team in the next phase.

## 0.7 PORTS NORTH CONSULTATION

Ports North is the land owner and the Development Authority for the CEP site which is provided on a 99 year lease to Cairns Regional Council. Ports North is the developer of Cairns Cityport which extends from the edge of The Esplanade Lagoons in the south through to and including the CEP site. The southern half of Cityport has been redeveloped over the past decade to a Cairns Cityport Master Plan which is currently being upgraded. The most recent waterfront development is the Cairns Cruise Liner Terminal which is housed within the historic Wharf Shed No 3, refurbished for the purpose. Wharf Shed No. 2 is about to be refurbished as a multifunction venue along with the adjoining wharf apron into plaza, garden and pavilion spaces.

Ports North intends to continue to utilise the wharf and the port road on the waterfront side of the CEP site for port operations, and these areas are required to be inaccessible to the public. The wharf will also be used as a second Cruise Liner berth, during which it will be isolated by customs control.

A possibility which has received favourable consideration by Ports North is for the site to be extended over the ports service road above the height required for port trucks and other vehicles. It is recognised that this extension is subject to detailed technical and operational analysis, however it would enable public spaces to cantilever out to generate improved views over Trinity Inlet and to create a greater sense of visual interaction between the precinct and the waterfront.

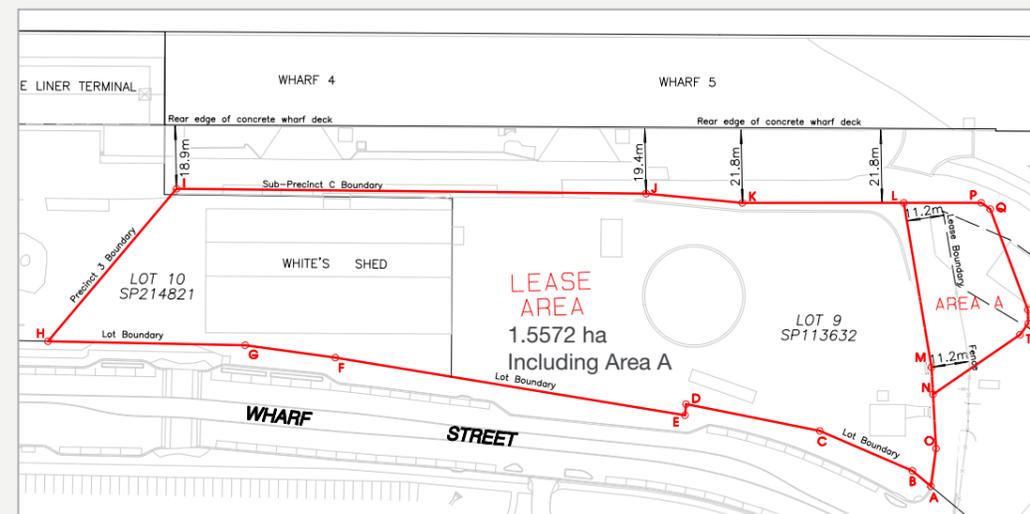
To assist the CEP Master Plan Process, Ports north provided a series of 'overriding objectives' which were required to be met either in-principle or by technical compliance. The master plan has been sufficiently addressed to ensure that they can be resolved to facilitate submission of a compliant Development Application in Phase 2.

### 0.7.1 CEP Site Area Modification

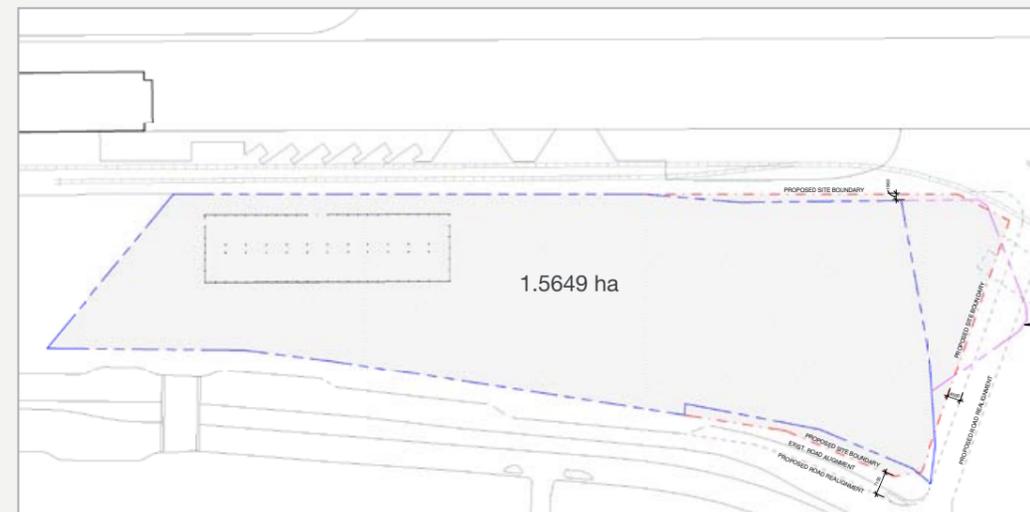
At commencement of the master plan process, the CEP site had a total area of 1.5572 hectares comprising a major parcel and a minor parcel called 'Area A'. 'Area A' was described as an additional site area that would be made available for the CEP if it was deemed necessary for the project. The shape of 'Area A' reflects a previous architectural design for the CEP.

As the master plan work progressed, it became apparent that the shape of 'Area A' constrained the planning, yet additional area was necessary for the CEP to function, especially with respect to creating public and community spaces. A second issue was that the 'Area A' site straddled the existing port service road, linking Wharf Street to the wharf area, which needs to continue to function. Ports North gave permission for the CEP project team to investigate an alternative road alignment and site area on the basis that the overriding objectives were uncompromised.

The solution agreed in principle with Ports North is a new road running straight out from, and broadly perpendicular to, Wharf Street. The alignment provides a new site area of 1.5649 hectares. As with the previous 'Site A' parcel, the CEP site boundary encroaches into areas leased by Quicksilver and Seaswift, for which solutions have been identified for further investigation. The accompanying diagrams illustrate the previous CEP site area with the 'Site A', and the preferred new CEP site area.



Previous CEP site area with 'Site A'



Preferred revised CEP site area with new part link road

## 0.8 CAIRNS ENTERTAINMENT PRECINCT PRELIMINARY CLIENT PROJECT BRIEF

The Cairns Entertainment Precinct master plans and concept design have been prepared in response to a wide range of reports and other documents which inform the planning and design process.

The specific brief for the project, however, comprises separate parts for the Performing Arts Centre and for the Museum. A number of technical briefing documents accompany the brief. It is anticipated that on completion of the Phase 1 studies, the brief will be updated.

In summary, the brief encompasses the following main components:

**Performance Space 1 - Main Theatre:** a proscenium auditorium for theatrical and concert performances with seating in the range of 1,000 – 1,200 seats, the actual number to be determined by concurrent Business Case analysis. This component is to include an orchestra pit, flytower, backstage and side stages.

**Performance Space 2 - 450 seat flexible theatre:** A flexible, multi-format theatre based upon a flat floor with retractable seating configurations. It is to include a technical gallery but no flytower.

**Rehearsal Space:** A space matching the stage area of Performance Space 1, suitable for full dress rehearsal and capable of being a performance space in its own right. It has been considered to be able to work as a flexible function and community venue.

**Front-of-House:** Front-of-house to include foyers, bar/restaurants, box office and amenities appropriate to the scale of the venues.

**Back-of-House:** Full range of back-of-house facilities to serve the different venues for loading, technical support, green room and dressing rooms, stores, workshops and food service facilities.

**Community Hub:** A series of flexible and dedicated facilities for community use to be finalised during the design process and community consultation, but to include a community kitchen, media and recording spaces.

**Museum:** A non-research based exhibition museum embodying the cultural and natural history of the region.

**Public Space:** A range of public spaces ranging in use from community gathering to recreation, to outdoor performance capabilities for many arts practices.

**Carparking:** A nominal 300-400 space carpark.

During the course of Phase 1, the brief was reviewed, in part due to community feedback and also due to site and planning analysis. Points for review include:

- addition of an Assembly Room to accommodate large groups prior to performances in the theatres
- addition of a floor to the Museum principally for administration
- reduction in carparking to approximately 200 spaces

With respect to the carparking reduction, it is to be noted that the briefed 300-400 space carpark was based upon the ability to utilise the whole site for basement parking, which is not possible due to the presence of White's Shed, the lack of effective width of site between White's Shed and Wharf Street, and the need for a large drainage and services easement across the site to the south of White's Shed. While the carparking could be distributed into two basement levels, a second basement would be extremely expensive and unachievable within the project budget.

In addition to the above, the following components have been requested to be included in the project:

- additional community facilities, including 'end-of-trip' facilities
- public art
- relocations of port lessees (Quicksilver) related to site definition

An additional major component of the project not considered in the original brief is the provision of substantial canopy structures over the public spaces.

Lastly, the brief makes reference to a possible bridge connection over Wharf Street to link Cairns Convention Centre to the CEP. This link is indicated on the master plans and concept design, however requires further consideration as to its necessity and with regard to whether or not it is to be included in the CEP development project.



# SECTION 1

## CONTEXT

1.1 Introduction

1.2 Physical Context

1.3 Community Priorities

1.4 Role Of Cairns Entertainment Precinct

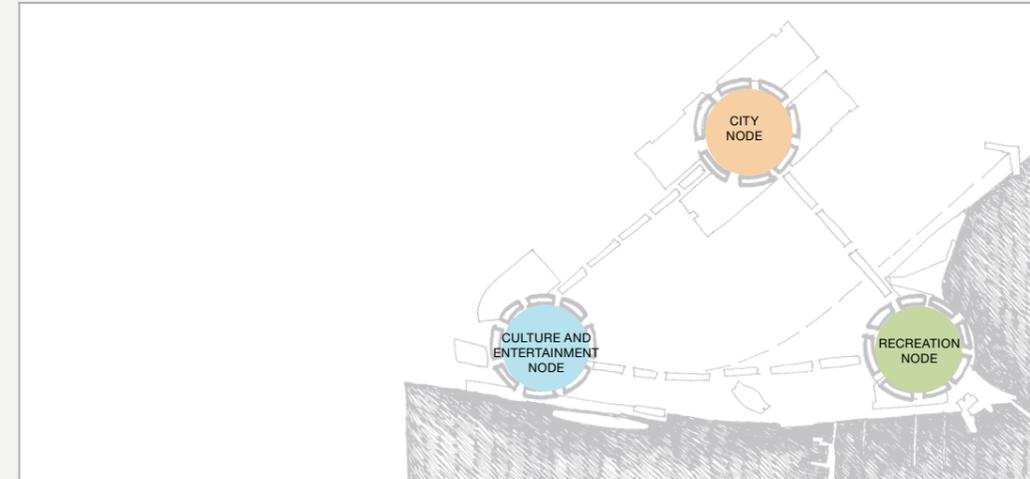
## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

The proposed development of the Cairns Entertainment Precinct (CEP) is occurring at a time when Cairns and Far North Queensland have been confronting major issues. These include rising unemployment, among the highest in Queensland, the continuing difficulty in economically enlivening the city centre and the impacts of Cyclone Yasi all of these being interrelated.

The planning of the Cairns Entertainment Precinct also parallels the creation of the Cairns City Centre Master Plan 2011, and a major revision of the Cairns Cityport Master Plan, generating the opportunity for the CEP to be well integrated with both the city centre and the port revitalisation.

The diagram above right describes a potential structure for the city centre which casts the CEP as one of three major activity nodes, the others being the Esplanade Lagoons / Parkland (recreation node) and the Shields / Lake Street intersection (city node). The tripartite diagram pre-emptes a future of seamless integration between the City Centre and Cityport. It also provides rationale for the selection of the CEP site which at present may seem to some as being remote from the centre of the city.

The diagram suggests that, in terms of pedestrian access, the CEP will be approached from two primary directions, one through Cityport and the other through Lake and Grafton Streets. The City Centre Master Plan envisages that these streets, in particular Grafton Street, will become distinctive tropical boulevards and pedestrian 'spines'.

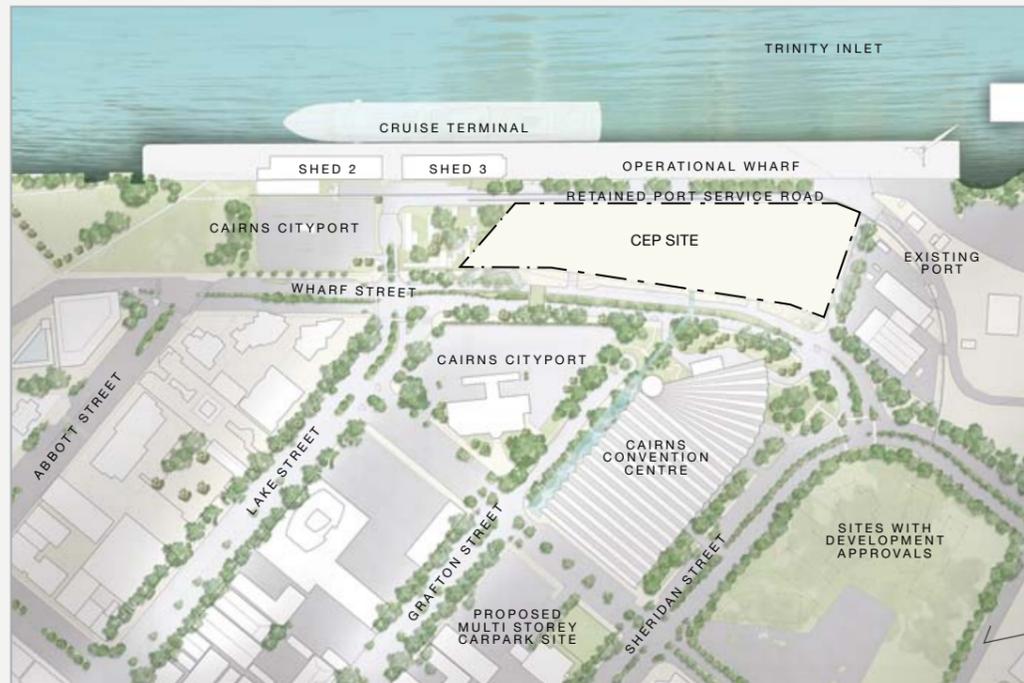


Principle of three major nodes identified in both this study and Cairns City Centre Master Plan



Cairns City Centre Master plan 2011 - Interpretation of green CBD spines with CEP site location

## 1.2 PHYSICAL CONTEXT



Site definition and context

### Site edges

The CEP is a long linear site occupying the southern end of the Cairns Cityport waterfront, and the northern end of the Seaport Precinct. The site stretches from the recently revitalised Cairns Cruise Liner Terminal (CCLT) and the industrial working port.

The western edge of the site is formed by Wharf Street which curves to connect into Sheridan Street, opening up a slightly wider portion of the CEP site at its southern end.

The eastern side of the site is formed by an existing port service road which connects the frontage of the Cruise Liner Terminal to the industrial working port. Ports North requires this road to remain fully operational for port vehicular use for the foreseeable future. Between the road and the waterfront is a concrete wharf which is also to remain operational. This wharf will also be used as a second cruise liner berth when required. Consequently, both the port service road and the adjoining wharf are inaccessible at all times to the public and for any servicing of the CEP.

### Cairns Convention Centre

The CEP has a direct relationship with the Cairns Convention Centre (CCC) which occupies a similar footprint of land to the CEP site. The CCC's main address is off Wharf Street, however in recent times the main porte cochere has become seldom utilised. A consideration for the CEP project is the potential to provide a pedestrian bridge linking the CCC and CEP such that the CEP theatres and other spaces can be used for conferences and exhibitions associated with the CCC.

### Cairns Cityport

The land to the north of the CEP site extending down to the Hilton Hotel is Cityport land which is intended by Ports North to be developed as a series of residential and/or commercial buildings or hotels, in accordance with the Cairns Cityport Master Plan. This master plan is currently being revised by consultants for Ports North.

Across Wharf Street is a large angular site which is also proposed to be developed by Ports North, as part of Cityport, for a series of medium/high rise buildings. The capacity of these sites adjoining the CEP site to be developed for commercial and/or residential uses offers good potential for integration of the CEP with the city centre.

The land in front of the Cruise Liner Terminal is currently a park that was created as part of the upgrade of the terminal. A triangular portion of this land forms part of the CEP site and it protects the sight lines along Lake Street to White's Shed on the CEP site and to Trinity Inlet. The remaining land is identified in the Cityport Master Plan for development, however its long term use as public space would be a significant asset to the CEP and to the Cruise Liner Terminal, particularly for wayfinding.

To the north of the Cruise Liner Terminal is Wharf Shed No.2 which is proposed to be upgraded in the short term for a variety of potential uses such as markets, exhibition spaces and function spaces. To its north is a wharf apron that also is to be upgraded into parkland and a series of small pavilions. The upgrading of the wharf apron and the shed will mean that there will be continuous public access along the waterfront from Marina Point (Cairns Yacht Club) through to the CEP (although not along the waterfront adjoining the CEP itself).

### 1.3 COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

In terms of the context around the CEP, the community consultation process informed the prioritisation of the following improvements:

#### Multistorey Carpark and Covered Way

Cairns Regional Council intends to develop a multistorey carpark on a site, opposite Cairns Convention Centre, on the corner of Hartley and Grafton Streets. The current expectation is for the carpark to accommodate in the order of 600 spaces, intended to stimulate CBD activity through enhanced vehicular accessibility. This carpark is also seen by the community as a major benefit for access to the CEP, and there was strong support for the provision of a covered way linking Hartley Street to Wharf Street along Grafton Street.

It was considered that, if a bridge over Wharf Street was built between the Cairns Convention Centre and the CEP, it could also provide shelter for street-level pedestrian crossing.

#### Covered Setdowns

Strong demand was expressed for covered setdown frontages along Wharf Street opposite Grafton Street and within the triangular space at the northern end of the CEP site.

### Public Transport

In conjunction with the current Cairns Transit Network, many community members expressed the need for improved public transport to the CEP along Wharf Street and connecting into the city centre. While it was recognised that the need may not be required until further Cityport land is developed, planning and provision for public transport were strongly requested.

### Waterfront Interface

The community recognises that the port service road and wharf are required for port uses and thus to be inaccessible to the public. However, considerable support exists for cantilevering parts of the CEP development over the port service road to facilitate closer visual contact with Trinity Inlet, and to reduce visual exposure to port vehicles. This potential has been in principle accepted by Ports North.

## 1.4 ROLE OF CAIRNS ENTERTAINMENT PRECINCT

In addition to providing public facilities needed by the community for the next 50 years, the Cairns Entertainment Precinct is intended to act as a major stimulant to activity in the city centre, as a catalyst for economic revitalisation, and as a significant tourism attractor.

The form of the buildings and spaces can contribute substantially to these objectives, however it is the cultural and entertainment events which will generate enduring attraction.

The Cairns Entertainment Precinct is conceived to embody and reflect the cultures of not only the Cairns region but those reaching up through Cape York to the Torres Strait Islands, and potentially acting as a hub of cultural activities for the Pacific Islands.

This wide outreach entails that the theatres and outdoor performance venues will cater for many types of performance, and the museum will represent the wider region as well as Cairns.

Importantly, the CEP has been seen throughout the community consultation process as being a 'hub' for many regional communities to gather, and for cultural, community celebrations in Cairns to be broadcast via broadband, to the remote communities of the Cape, the Gulf, and the Pacific Rim. Such diverse community activity would potentially differentiate the CEP from conventional cultural precincts.

# SECTION 2

## MASTER PLANNING

- 2.1 Strategy and Process
- 2.2 Master Plan Option 1: Single Level Plaza
- 2.3 Master Plan Option 2: Dual level Plaza
- 2.4 Master Plan Options Comparison

## 2.1 STRATEGY AND PROCESS

The consultant team was required to prepare two master plans with the purpose of enabling the community, in workshop consultation, to participate in stating preferences by comparative analysis, and to provide options for the site as required by the State Government under its Deed of Grant Funding with council.

The process commenced with the preparation of a revised Functional Brief based on the brief that had informed the previous feasibility study but augmented by further performance requirements of the theatres and community facilities.

This revised brief was translated into functional diagrams and areas which were tested on the site configuration for fit and functionality. Generally, the functional brief was categorised into five main zones being:

- **Performing Arts Centre (PAC)**
- **Public Spaces**
- **Community Facilities**
- **Museum**
- **White's Shed**

The process demonstrated that the Performing Arts Centre (PAC) component needed to be located in the southern half of the site for the following primary reasons:

- large vehicle service access to the site is only available from the proposed service road that forms the southern boundary of the site
- the requirement for three performance venues – 1000/1200 seat proscenium theatre, the 450 seat flexible theatre and the rehearsal theatre – to be co-located in the one complex requires maximum site width

Having established the general extent of footprint required for the PAC, it became evident that the Museum component needs to be sited in the linear space between White's Shed and Wharf Street, such that the major public space can be centralised and addressed by both the PAC and the Museum.

Thus, the site and the functional brief determine the position of the components on the site.

As there remained the imperative to develop two Master Plans, it was agreed that they should relate more to different cross-sectional designs than planning configurations. The two Master Plans were entitled Single Level Plaza Option and Dual Level Plaza Option, with the following primary differences:

**Single Level Plaza Option 1:** This option creates the major public space (plaza) and circulation at near-ground level (RL 3.35), with the theatres and their foyers also at this level. The plan provides a mezzanine level for access to the upper seats of the main theatre with a small external plaza.

**Dual Level Plaza Option 2:** This option raises the main plaza up some 5.3 metres higher than in Option 1 to RL 8.65. The aim of the strategy is to improve the flood and storm surge resilience of the theatres and their support facilities, and to provide the public with elevated views over the port service road and wharf to Trinity Inlet. The strategy results in a part lower (street) level plaza and foyer, part elevated plaza and foyer, and a further mezzanine level and foyer.

The two options share many planning commonalities, however they also encompass fundamental differences that formed the points of discussion during the Community Consultation Workshop 2.

Following the consultations, the community overwhelmingly chose Option 2 as the preferred option, however it was agreed to continue to develop both Master Plan options in order to compare a range of other criteria than were discussed in community consultation, and with Cairns Regional Council, including:

- cost implications
- technical criteria, such as acoustic exposure to the port
- risks, such as damage from climatic events
- program and sequence of development

## 2.2 MASTER PLAN OPTION 1: SINGLE LEVEL PLAZA

This Master Plan option locates the main public space (plaza) and circulation at RL 3.35, just above the level of Wharf Street and approximately equivalent to the existing wharf.

For comparison purposes to Option 2, the Master Plan in this option, is characterised by the following:

### Performing Arts Centre (PAC)

The PAC is virtually all at one level, except for a relatively small mezzanine level required for access to Main Theatre upper balconies; and the orchestra pit of the Main Theatre sited below the plaza level.

The Main Theatre is centrally sited with a large side-stage to the east and a shorter side-stage to the west, as agreed with the Theatre Consultant. The 450 seat Flexible Theatre is sited along Wharf Street where its foyer can enliven the street and where it is readily identifiable from the street. The Rehearsal Space is located on the wharf side.

The three theatre spaces are positioned so that they can be accessed collectively from a continuous foyer system, or independently if required. The foyers are arranged so that they can be opened up to the public plaza areas enhancing their flexibility.

The PAC in this option is serviced by a combined Food and Beverage, Waste and Theatres Loading Dock from the southern boundary road.

### Public Plaza

The public plaza in this option is virtually all at one level, and extends from Wharf Street through to the site's eastern boundary. The plaza extends along the western edge of White's Shed as a pedestrian way through the site to the Cairns Cruise Liner Terminal forecourt.

An outdoor performance space is created as an amphitheatre terraced down about a metre to the southern end of White's Shed, with the idea that White's Shed could be opened up at its southern end for backstage uses.

### White's Shed

White's Shed is conceived as accommodating primarily community uses, with a series of flexible spaces created along the eastern side for arts and crafts workshops, rehearsal and practice spaces, meeting and function venues, and the like. The remainder of the interior space is kept as a large volume that enables appreciation of the dramatic scale and volume of the shed, and of the quality of the historic conveyor belt 'spine'. This space is intended for large gathering uses such as for functions, markets or exhibitions.

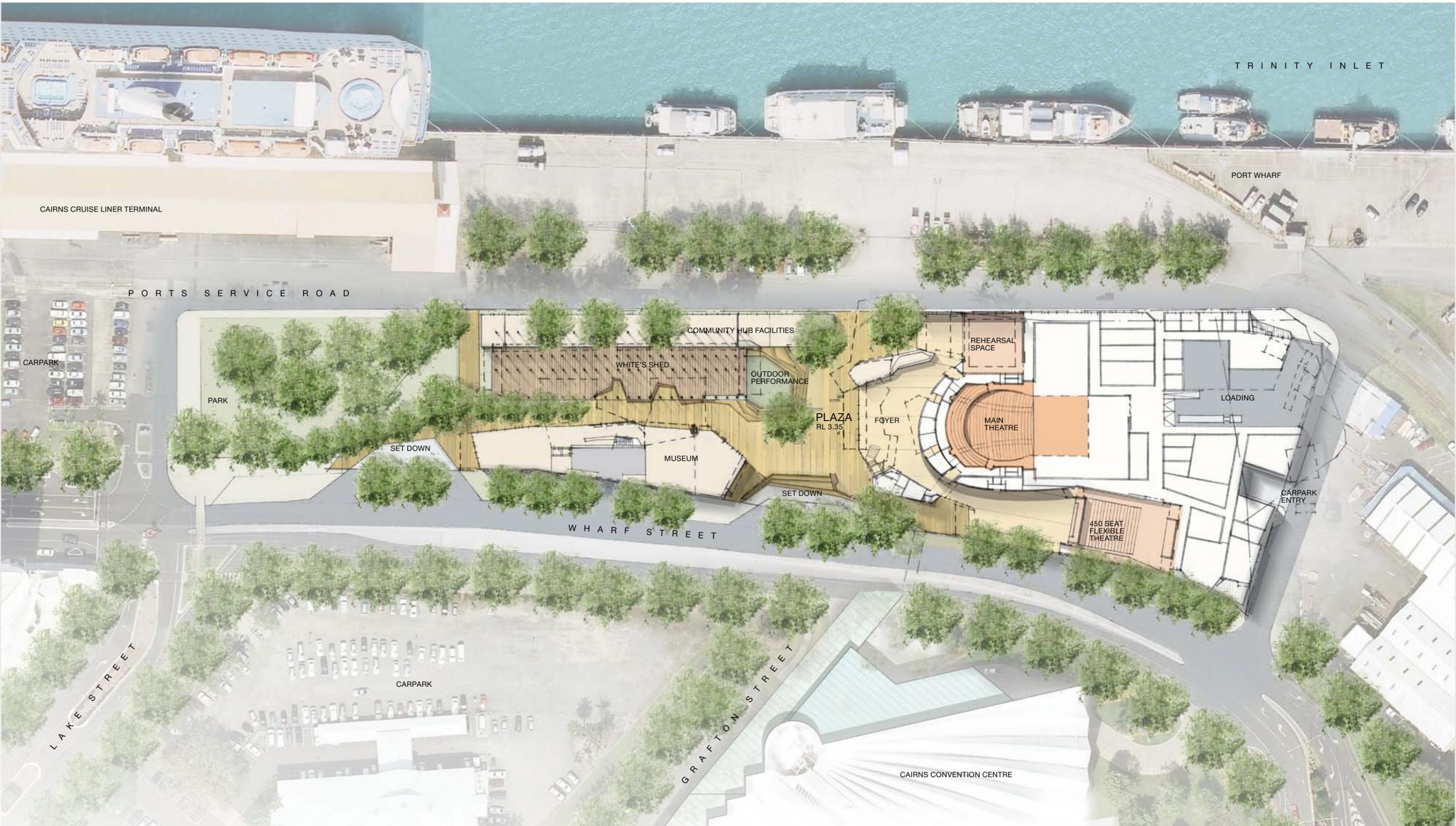
The western side of the shed is penetrated by parts of the adjoining proposed museum spanning over the pedestrian way and creating the potential for the museum and White's Shed to function synergistically.

### Museum

The Museum forms a linear plan between White's Shed and Wharf Street. In this siting, it can both activate Wharf Street and connect into White's Shed. Its northern end creates an address for the precinct to the Cairns Cruise Liner Terminal forecourt and its southern end activates the public plaza. The site is also significant in that it forms a link between Cairns Cityport and the Performing Arts Centre, providing opportunities for strong public engagement at ground level.

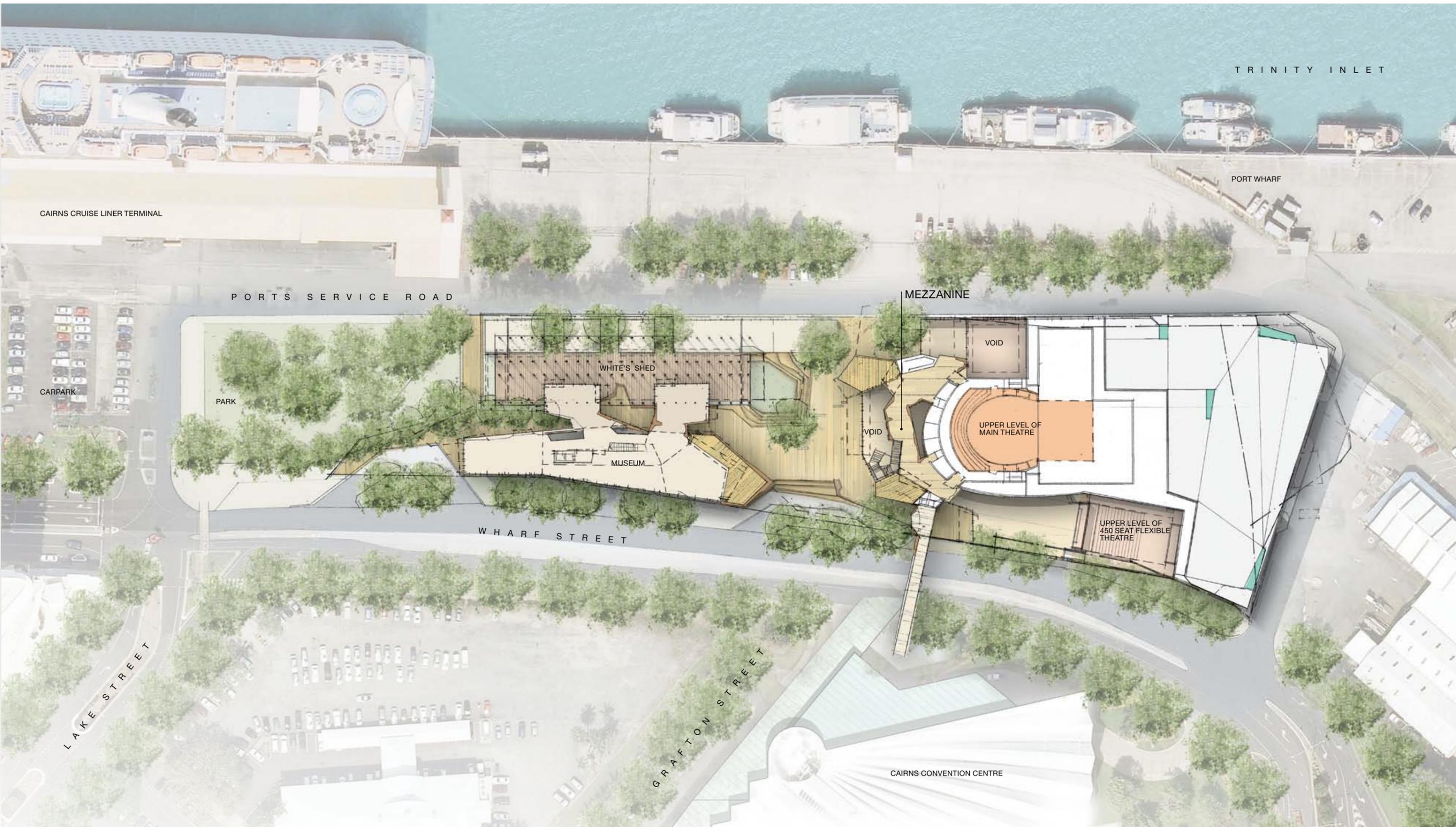
# MASTER PLAN OPTION 1: SINGLE LEVEL PLAZA

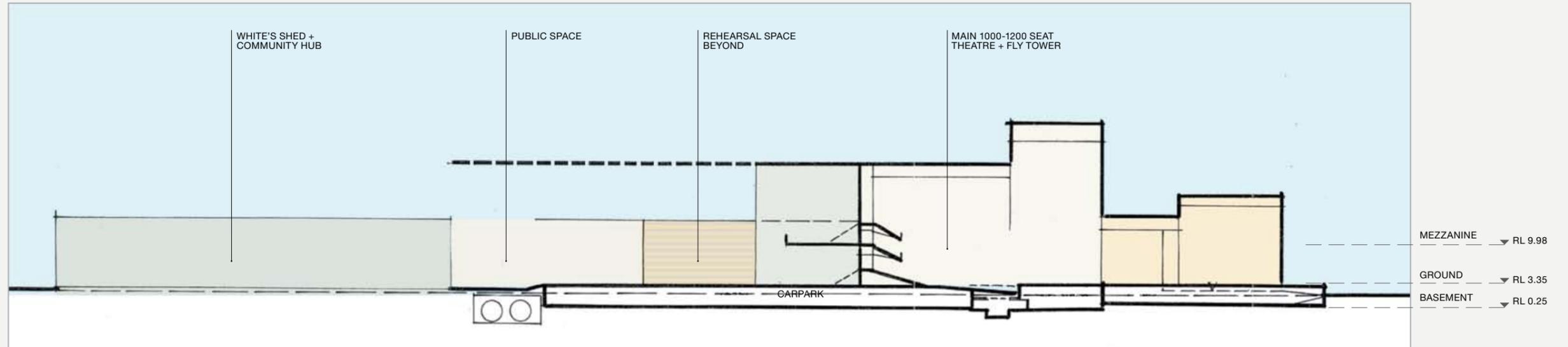
Lower Level Plan



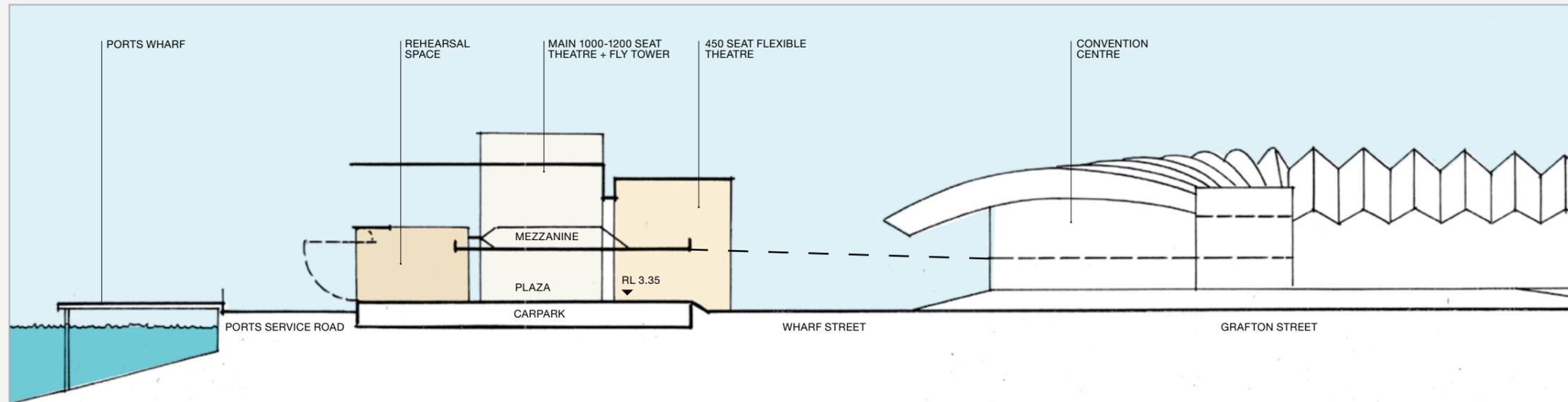
# MASTER PLAN OPTION 1: SINGLE LEVEL PLAZA

Upper Level Plan





Long Section



Cross Section

## 2.3 MASTER PLAN OPTION 2: DUAL LEVEL PLAZA

Option 2 locates the main public spaces over two levels (RL 3.35 and RL 8.65), such that the Main Theatre can be elevated to the upper level. This arrangement enables the back-of-house areas to be configured onto two levels with separated docking facilities.

### Performing Arts Centre (PAC)

The Main Theatre and the Flexible Theatre are accessed at the upper plaza level. The Flexible Theatre is reversed in siting to Option 1, and stretches along the eastern side with its foyer enjoying views over Trinity Inlet. Thus, the Rehearsal Space is sited on the Wharf Street side, however due to the two levels of plaza, it is located at the lower plaza level where it can activate the street edge.

The back-of-house areas are distributed over two levels, generally stores, performer change facilities, orchestra pit and sub stage, technical rooms administrative offices, and mechanical plant at the lower level, and at the upper level are the main side stages, Green Room and Star Dressing Rooms, and technical offices. The configuring of back-of-house on two levels generates a more compact arrangement on the site than Option 1, with separate loading docks for stage sets / scenery and for waste / food and beverage.

### Public Plaza

The Public Plaza comprises two levels, at RL 3.35 and RL 8.65, with the upper plaza being the main approach space to the Main Theatre and the Flexible Theatre.

The upper plaza accentuates the shape and depth of the outdoor performance space which is otherwise the same location as in Option 1, adjoining the southern end of White's Shed.

The two plaza levels overlap each other to an extent which enables community 'hub' facilities to be positioned between the overlaps. This configuration promotes the use of the lower plaza as predominantly for community activities and use of the upper plaza as predominantly for theatre arrival and functions.

### White's Shed

White's Shed is configured similar to Option 1 as there are not yet available specific brief functions for the use of the shed. These functions are intended to be derived from detailed community and community arts group consultation sessions subsequent to the Concept Design Phase (Phase 1).

### Museum

The Museum is also configured similar to Option 1 as it is awaiting a detailed functional brief to be determined in conjunction with the Queensland Museum. The Museum footprint is 1,200m<sup>2</sup> per level, it can achieve Gross Floor Areas of 3,600m<sup>2</sup> over 3 levels or 2,400m<sup>2</sup> over 2 levels.

As in Master Plan Option 1, the museum site is in a pivotal position between Cairns Cityport and the Performing Arts Centre, generating exceptional opportunities for public engagement with the Museum. The further main benefit of the site is its co-location with the historic White's Shed, offering opportunities with respect to linking the museum with this important historic structure.

### Other Facilities

The Dual Level Plaza option provides an opportunity (that is unavailable in Option 1) for incorporating a significant 'Community Hub' set of facilities between the two plaza levels. This Community Hub area would be an ideal location for a Community Kitchen that has been identified in the Business Case as an important CEP component (See Lower Level Plan over page).

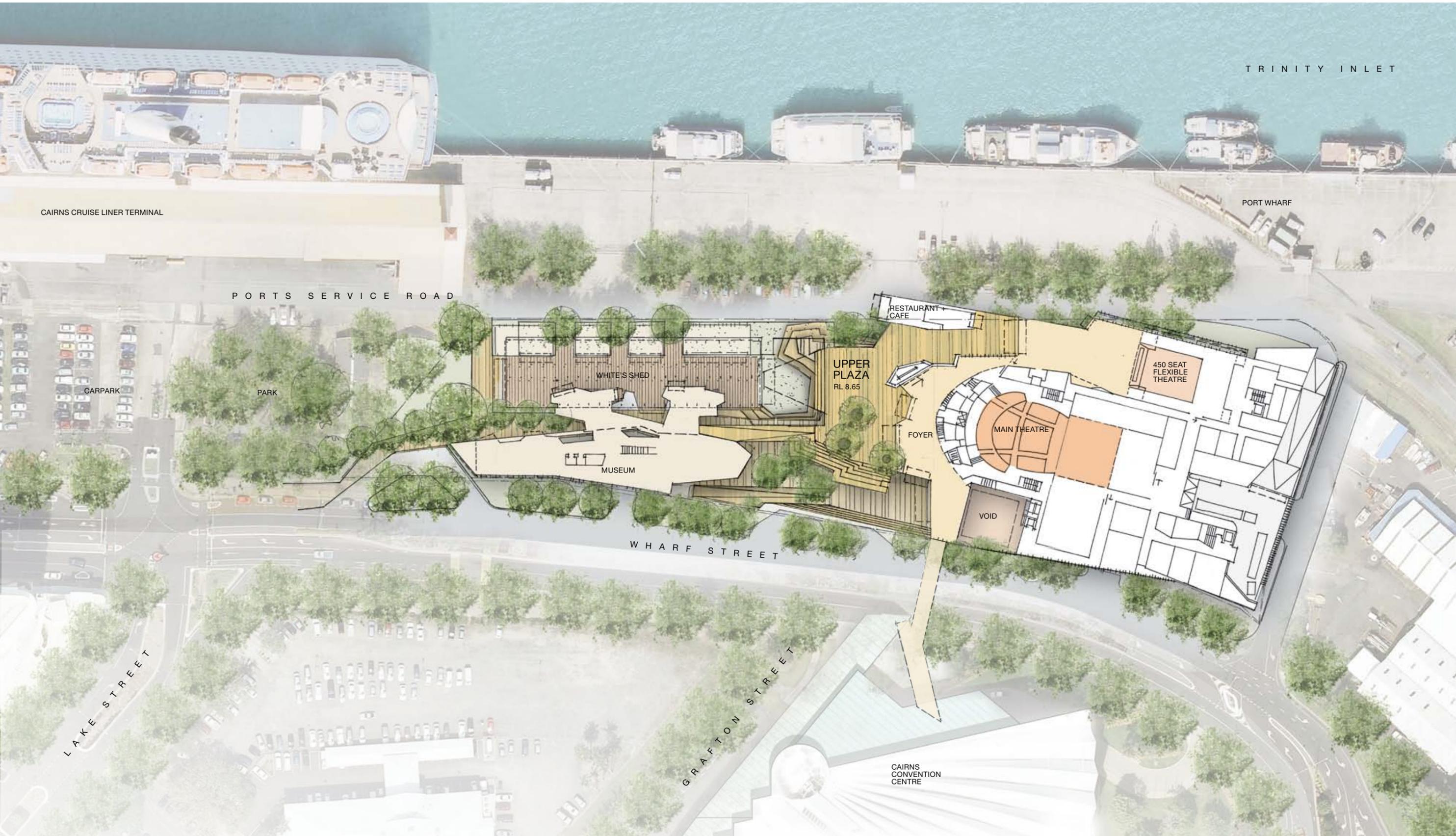
# MASTER PLAN OPTION 2: DUAL LEVEL PLAZA

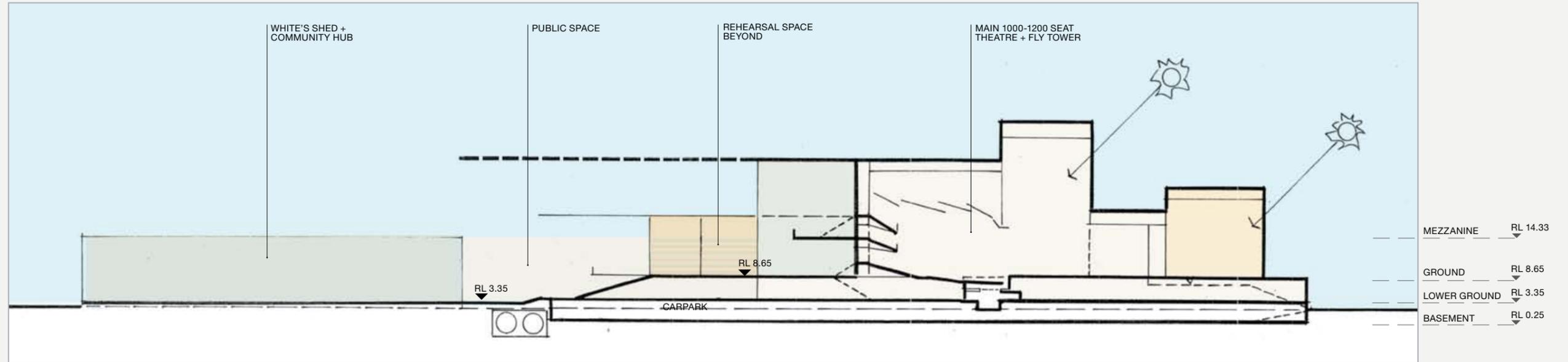
Lower Level Plan



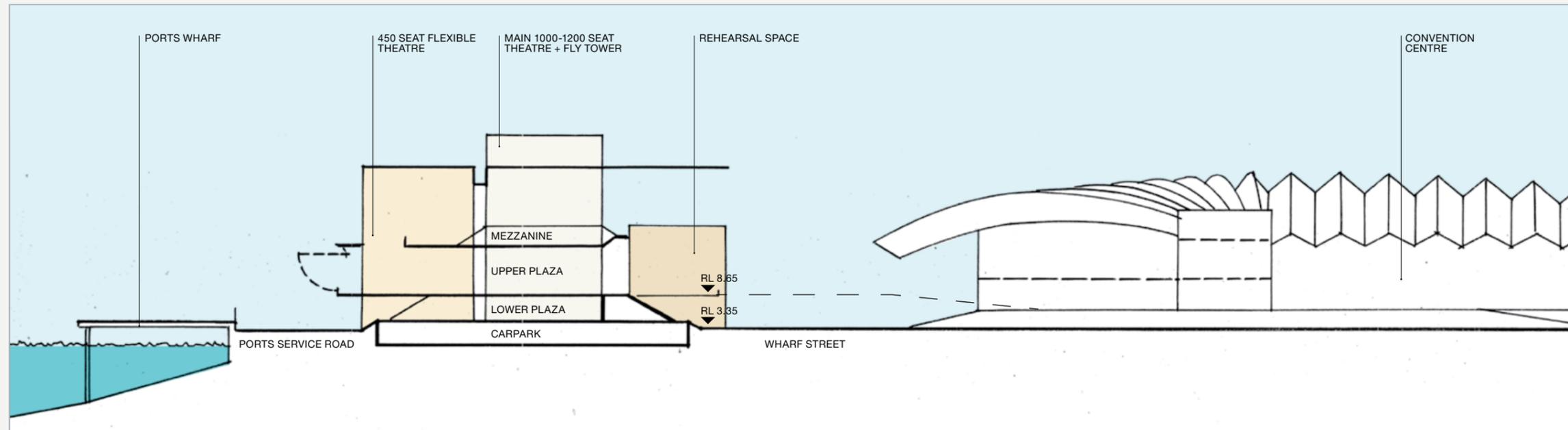
# MASTER PLAN OPTION 2: DUAL LEVEL PLAZA

Upper Level Plan





LONG SECTION



## 2.4 MASTER PLAN OPTIONS COMPARISON

Community consultation played a significant role in generating comparative analysis between the two Master Plan options, in addition to evaluations undertaken by the consultant team.

Although not unanimous, there was stronger support for Option 2 over Option 1 for the following reasons:

<b>PAC and Back-of-House</b>	Over two levels, Option 2 accommodates more BOH area and flexibility within a smaller footprint than Option 1.  The two levels also facilitate separate loading dock provisions for stage set / scenery and F&B / waste leading to more efficient operation than Option 1.
<b>Flood and Storm Surge Resilience</b>	Option 2 locates the main theatres some 5.3 metres higher than in Option 1, thereby providing greater flood and storm surge immunity. In addition, the Orchestra Pit in Option 1 would be below lower plaza RL 3.25 and would require tanking to prevent water penetration.
<b>Views</b>	Option 2 elevates much of the public plaza above the adjoining port functions, affording panoramic unimpeded views over Trinity Inlet and beyond, whereas in Option 1 the outlook is unavoidably into the port activities.
<b>Theatre Siting</b>	The community preferred the location of the Flexible 450 Seat Theatre on the Inlet side of the site where its foyer and possible bar and restaurants would gain dramatic evening views out over water, rather than looking into Wharf Street. The community also preferred the siting of the Rehearsal Space at the lower plaza level along Wharf Street where it would be most accessible for community uses (clubs, functions, bands, community arts performances).
<b>Community Facilities</b>	The community noted that Option 1 offered less opportunity for integrating community facilities (such as a combined Community/Catering Kitchen) with the public plaza spaces, whereas Option 2 generated different levels for community uses and for theatre-going.
<b>Cairns Convention Centre Bridge</b>	Should a pedestrian bridge be constructed linking the Cairns Convention Centre to the CEP, it would connect better into the Upper Plaza in Option 2, which is unavailable in Option 1.

There were few negative comparisons identified for Option 2 in relation to Option 1, with the following noted only as issues to be resolved.

<b>Flytower</b>	The Main Theatre flytower is necessarily 5.3 metres higher in Option 2 due to the lifting of the height of the theatre levels. As it was the flytower which, in another form, caused a wide degree of public consternation in previous concepts for the precinct, there exists some sensitivity to the impact of the flytower mass on the cityscape.
<b>Accessibility</b>	Some concern was recorded regarding accessibility for people with disabilities and for the elderly in climbing some 5.3 metres higher to the upper plaza and theatres. However, it was generally accepted that a lower level foyer with lift access to the upper level would overcome this concern.

In terms of the Museum, the community accepted that its siting between White's Shed and Wharf Street is the most suitable with the desire for it to have strong visual relationship to the street and to the pedestrian spine between it and White's Shed.

There was also strong support for integrating White's Shed and the Museum through overhead building components penetrating into the shed, and through White's Shed accommodating community arts and children's activities that enhance the sense of creating a 'living museum' which participates in the ongoing life of the city.

### 2.4.1 Conclusion and Recommendation

Based upon community response and the project team's comparative analysis of the Master Plan Options, it is concluded that Option 2 (Dual Level Plaza) is considerably superior to Option 1 (Single Level Plaza) for the following major reasons:

- Greater back-of-house capacity with same or smaller site area utilised
- Superior flood and storm surge positioning
- Enhanced and unimpeded views to Trinity Inlet
- Ability to centralise Community Hub Facilities with access to plaza
- Ability to have community activities on lower plaza while theatre activities occur on upper plaza
- Improved ability to connect bridge to Cairns Convention Centre if required

It is thus recommended that Option 2 forms the basis for the preparation of the two required Concept



# SECTION 3

## CONCEPT DESIGN

- 3.1 Strategy and Process
- 3.2 The Two Architectural Options
- 3.3 The Concept Design Planning
- 3.4 Performing Arts Centre Concept
- 3.5 Museum and White's Shed Concept

### 3.1 STRATEGY AND PROCESS

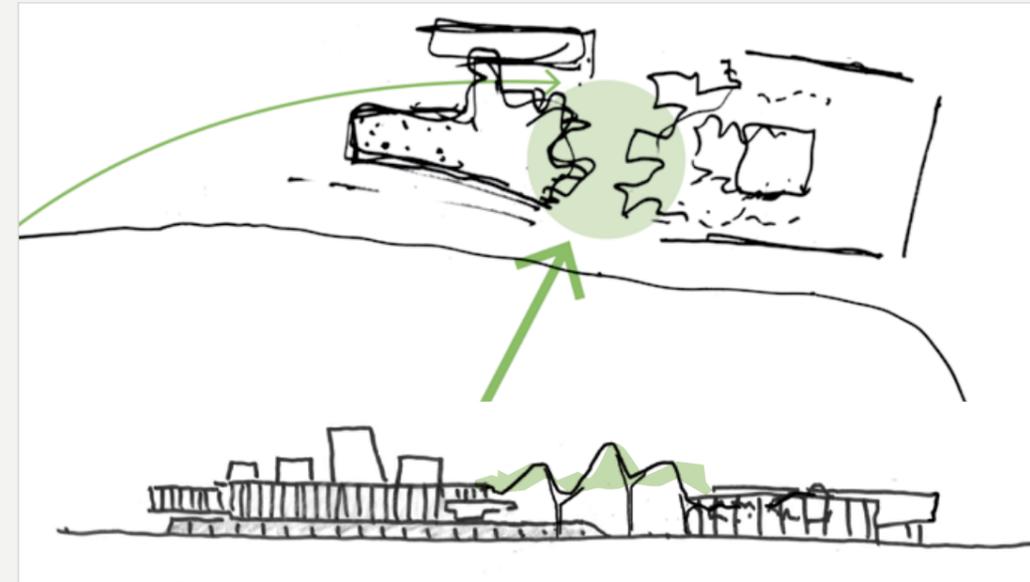
It was agreed with Arts Queensland to develop both Master Plan options further, even though the community, Ports, external independent reviewers and project team generally preferred Option 2 for the dual level plazas. As costing of the Master Plan options has been undertaken concurrently with their development, it was recognised that it is important to have both Master Plan options developed to the same level of resolution.

However, for the purpose of creating more detailed architectural designs, it was agreed to develop Master Plan Option 2 as the Concept Design for which different architectural designs could be developed, noting they could be adapted to Option 1 if necessary.

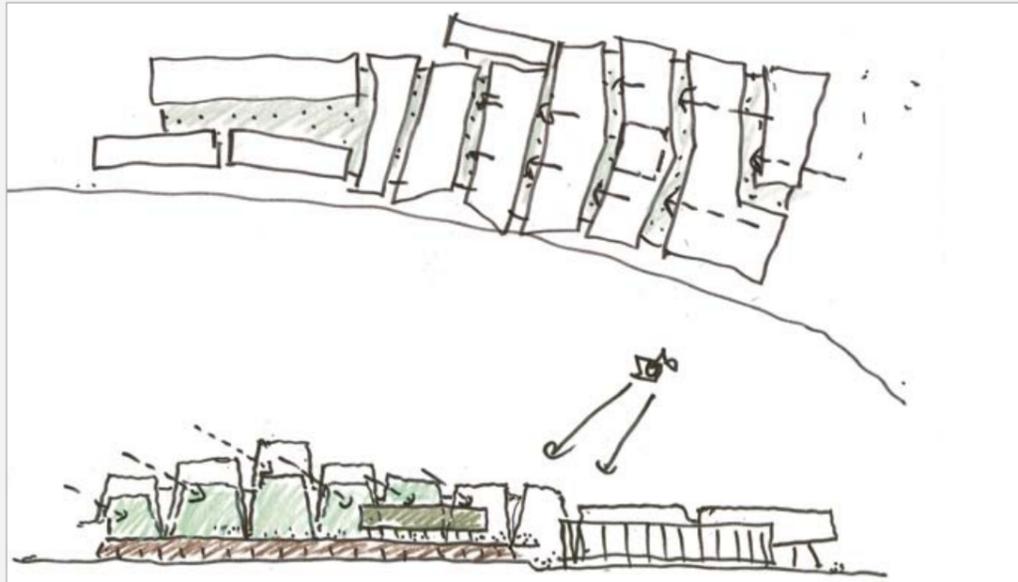
The focus of the Architectural Design options is the form of public spaces and the roofscape over the precinct, and in particular over the public plaza spaces. The reasons for this emphasis are as follows:

- Community consultation placed repeated emphasis upon the need for outdoor public spaces to be sheltered from rain and sun in Cairn's tropical climate.
- The community regards the public spaces as being vital with regards to community engagement with the CEP, and as important as the theatres and museum.
- The community generally does not want to see the main theatre's flytower as a dominating element, and would prefer that the roofscape integrates the flytower into the overall composition.

Thus in developing two Architectural Design options, the community consultation process has played a significant role. In addition, the requirement of the design process to produce 2 Master Plan and 2 architectural design options has enabled the project team to evaluate by comparative analysis the most



Architectural Design Option 1: 'Architectural Rainforest' concept diagram



Architectural Design Option 2: 'Layered Roofscape' concept diagram

### 3.2 THE TWO ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN OPTIONS

appropriate form and character for the precinct in order to meet the brief's and community's aspirations.

From a range of alternatives, the project team chose to develop the following two architectural options due to strong philosophical and functional rationales.

#### Option 1: 'The Architectural Rainforest'

'Architectural Rainforest' is a loose terminology to describe the potential for the canopies over the central public spaces to adopt organic shapes and to perform environmentally with greater effect than conventional canopies might do.

A catalyst for this concept is the Cairns City Centre Master Plan's strategy for 'greening' Grafton Street into a verdant tropical boulevard, linking City Place to the CEP's public space heart. The 'Architectural Rainforest' would form a climax to the Grafton Street corridor and would signify the public space as a major nodal point in the city.

#### Option 2: 'The Layered Roofscape'

The primary aim of this concept is to devise a series of roof forms that can rise and fall over both the buildings and the public space in a consistent expression, such that the flytower in particular is incorporated into the overall composition.

The concept comprises a series of parallel channels and 'box-shaped' roofs which tier down at the northern and southern ends, and rise up at the public space and again at the flytower. The shapes are based upon an abstraction of the repeated rectilinear forms of shipping containers and of the long linear forms of wharf sheds, producing both a visual and metaphoric contrast to Option 1.

The two options were presented at Community Workshop 3 as initial sketches, and were developed into realistic three dimensional images for Community Workshop 4. Both concepts were positively received, primarily because the concepts celebrated the public / community spaces rather than accentuating the flytower, and because the roofs were regarded as appropriate elements to express the iconic identity of a major public precinct in a tropical climate.

Both options are applied to the same Concept Design plans and are considered to be adaptable as the design develops into Phase 2.

### 3.3 THE CONCEPT DESIGN PLANNING

The Concept Design is based upon the Master Plan Option 2 which configured the precinct with dual plaza levels.

**The following plans** illustrate these two levels (Lower Level Plan and Upper Level Plan) as well as a Mezzanine Plan which provides access to the balcony seating of the Main Theatre.

The concept design also proposes a 200 space basement carpark, accessed off Wharf Street.

The plans have generally been developed by first allocating the areas and configuring the functions of the Performing Arts Centre, utilising the proposed realigned service road at the southern end of the site (and agreed in principle with Ports North). This functional planning determined the position of the Main Theatre and its associated side stages and backstage. Simultaneously, the Flexible Theatre was configured with its foyer along the eastern edge of the plan at the same level as the Main Theatre, and the Rehearsal Space was incorporated along the Wharf Street edge at the lower level.

**The resulting footprint** determined the potential area of the public plazas distributed over the lower and upper levels. Two major components of the plaza 'zone' were generated:

- an external performance space / amphitheatre adjoining the southern end of White's Shed, and;
- a combined Community and Catering Kitchen inserted between the two plaza levels, along with a range of amenities

The two different levels of plaza, connected by staircases, facilitated the formation of an 'organic' plan of stairs, gardens, voids and alcoves such that the plazas both read as interconnected spaces and as a series of outdoor performance venues.

**The Museum** preliminary planning brief, prepared by Queensland Museum, is yet to be definitively briefed, and is therefore indicated as a notional architectural solution at this stage. It is conceived as a three level building which penetrates into White's Shed along its western wall (assuming removal of the existing 'lean-to'). The penetrating elements are intended to assist in stabilising the deteriorated structure of White's shed, and to create opportunities for functional and visual interaction between the Museum and White's Shed.

**White's Shed** is also only notionally designed to act as a flexible community building, containing a series of lettable spaces and large rooms that can be utilised for arts and craft workshops, small music venues, function and meeting spaces, rehearsal spaces and the like. The majority of the interior is, however, left as a large volume facilitating appreciation of the history of the shed, its volume and the craftsmanship in its fabrication.

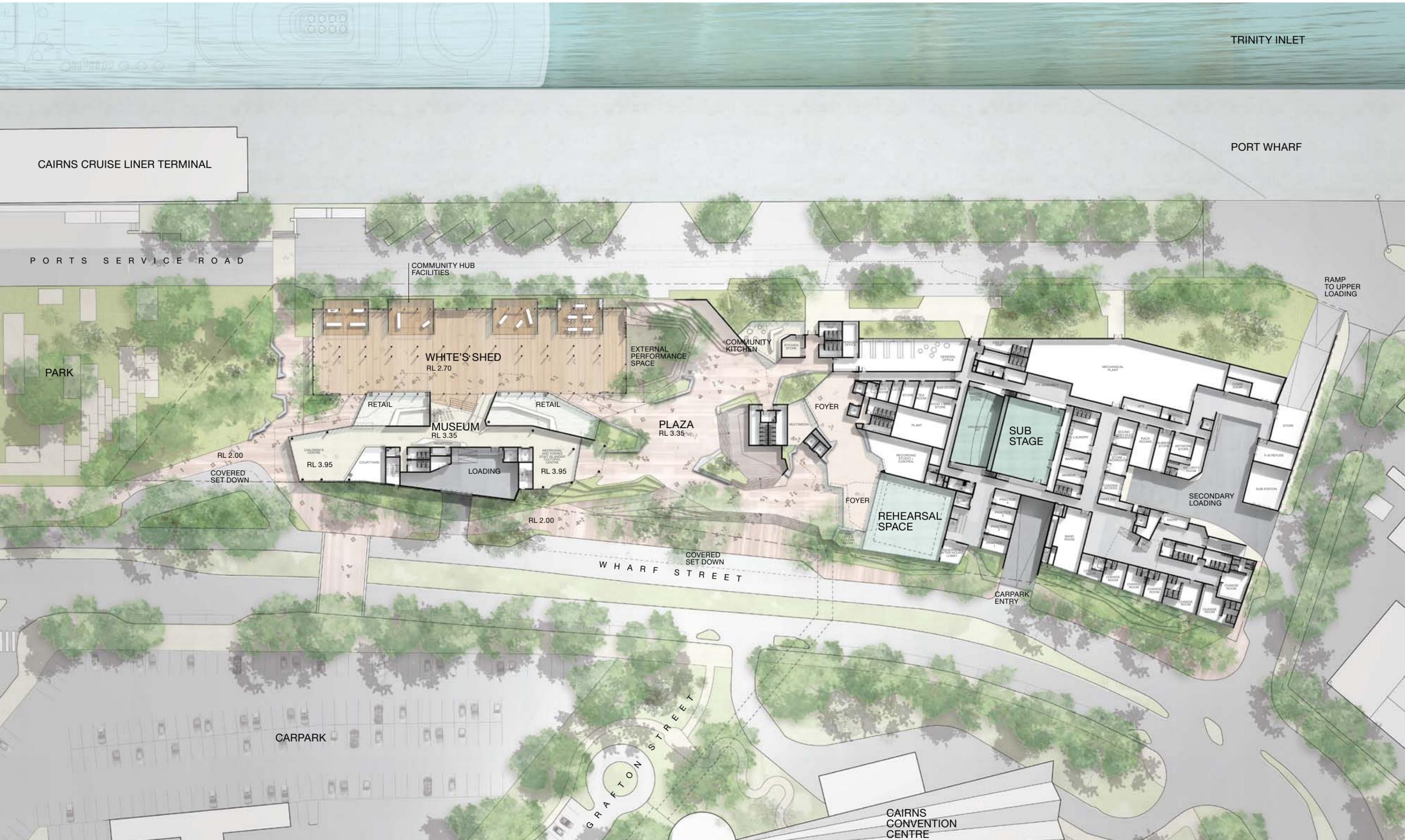
**Vehicular Setdown** to the precinct is planned in two locations:

- at the northern end of Wharf Street and within the triangular plaza space designated as part of the CEP site
- at the central public plaza off Wharf Street

Both setdowns are proposed to be covered by lower canopies than the main public space canopies. Carpark access to the approximate 200 space carpark is proposed to be from Wharf Street under the Performing Arts Centre.

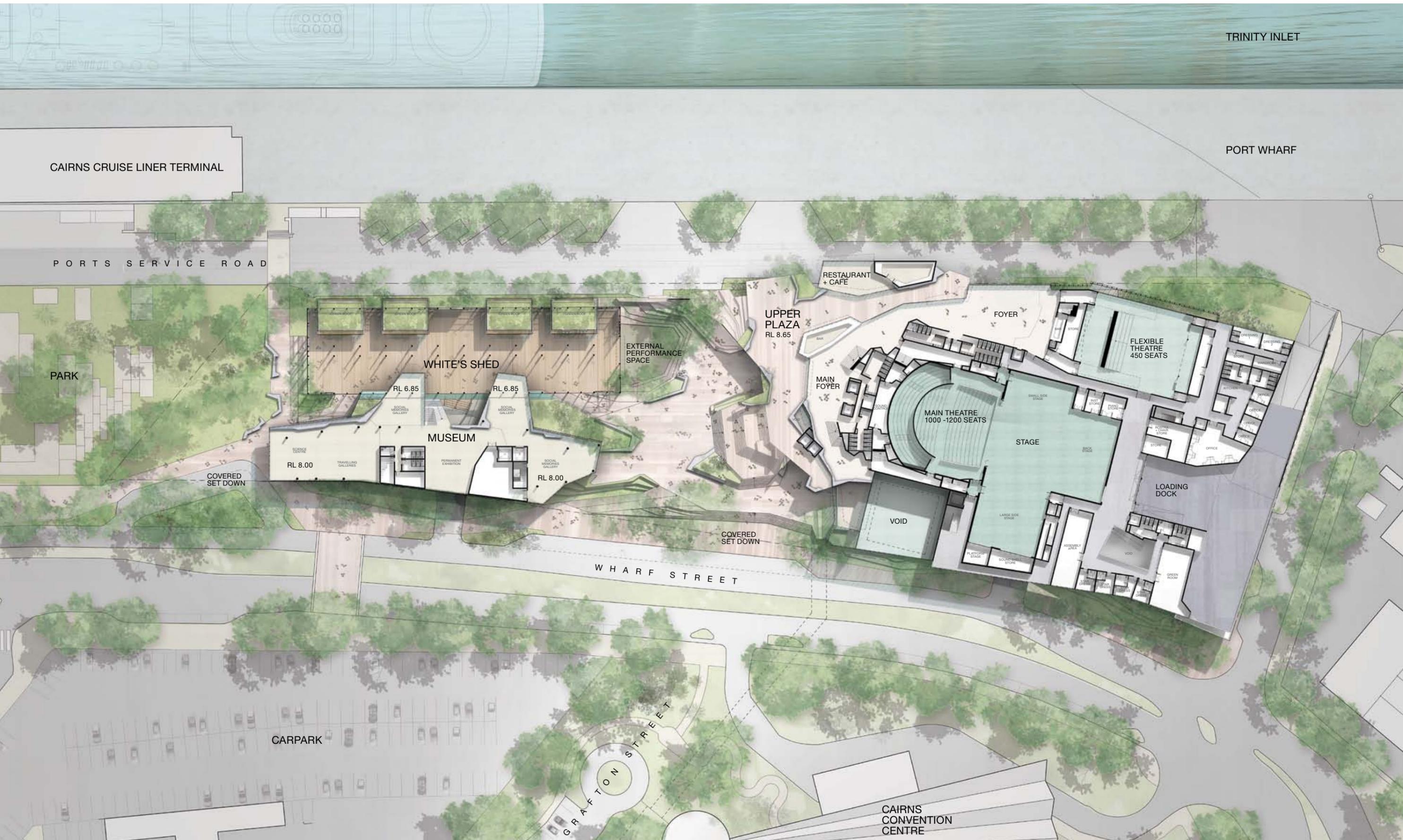
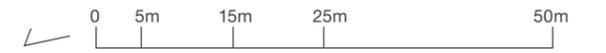
# CONCEPT DESIGN

Lower Level Plan

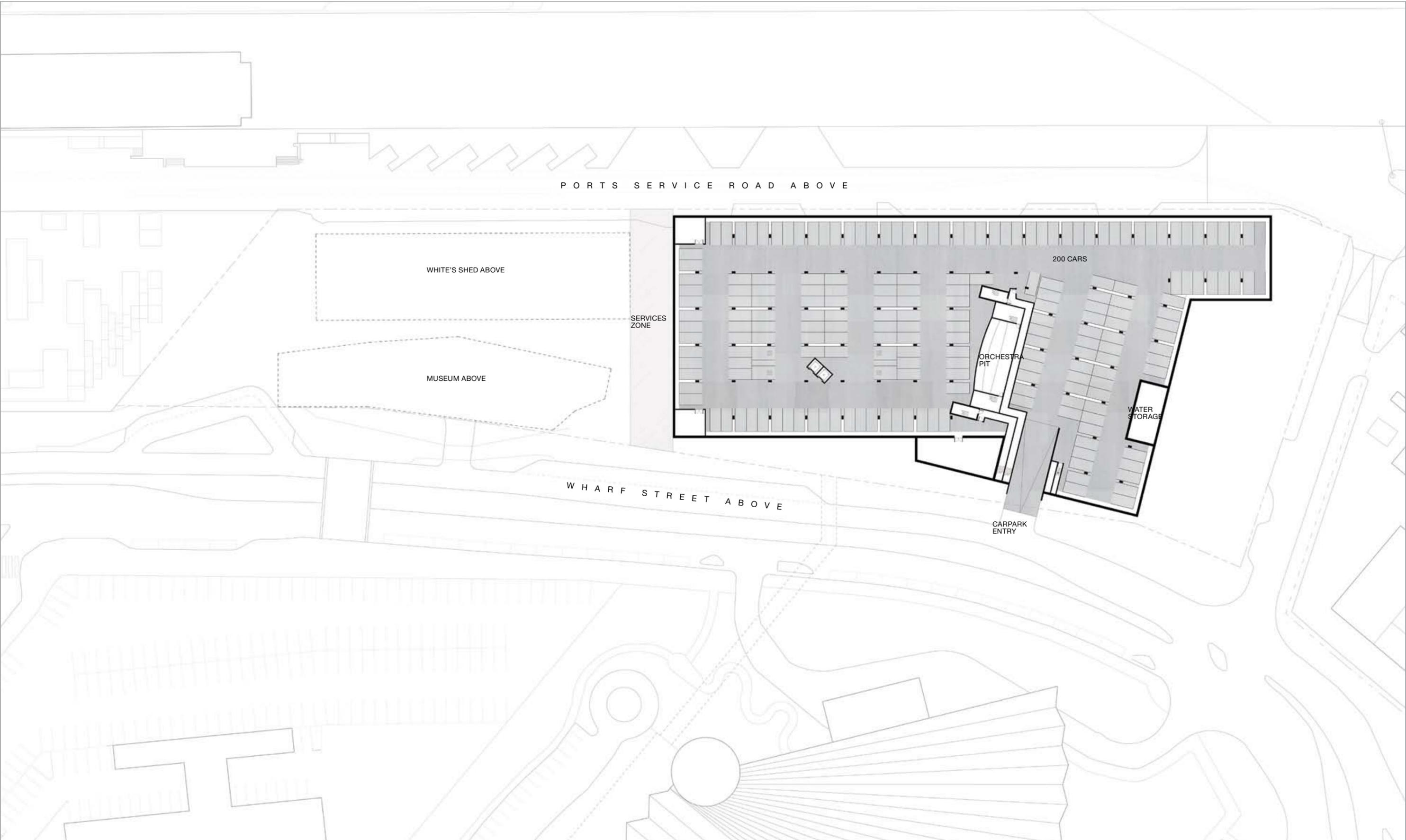


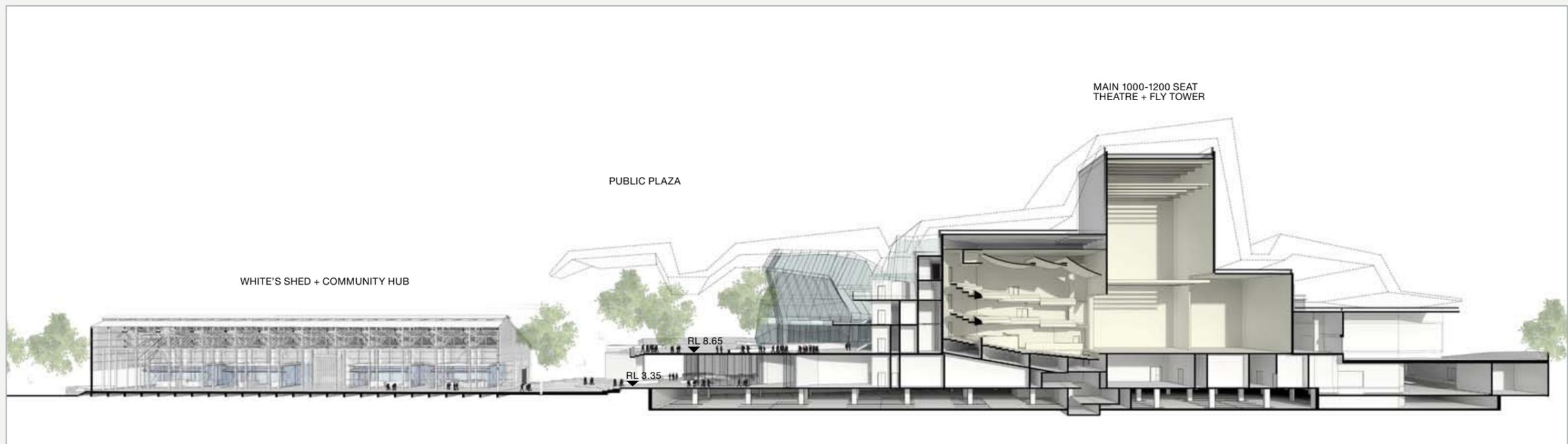
# CONCEPT DESIGN

## Upper Level Plan

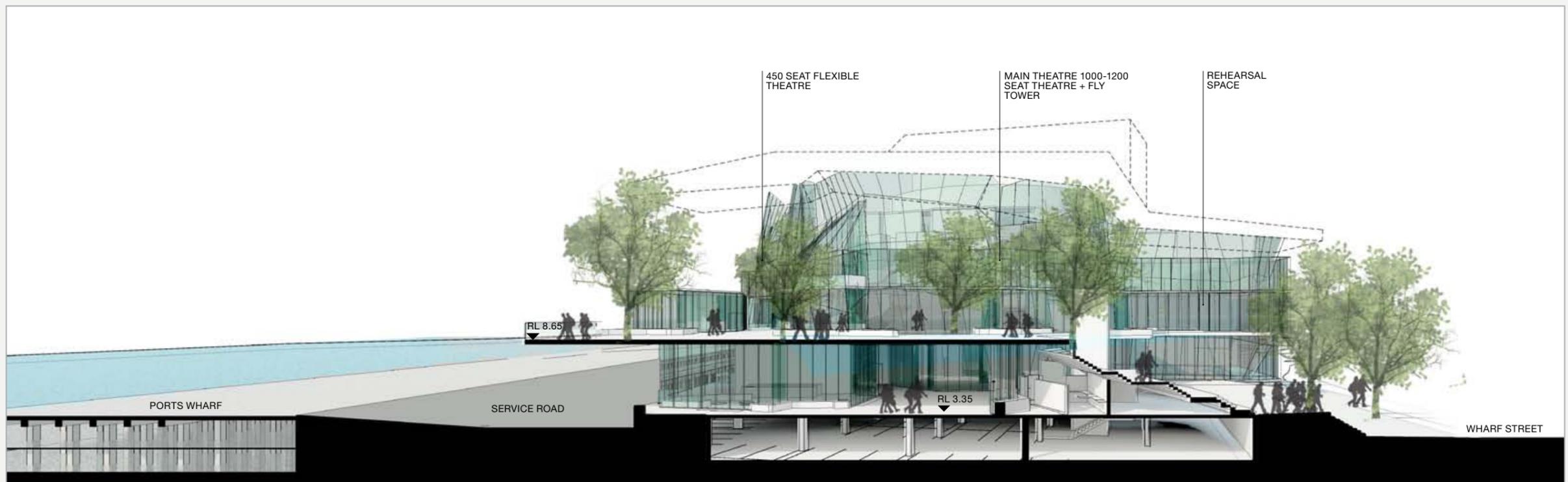








Long Section



Cross Section

### 3.4 PERFORMING ARTS CENTRE CONCEPT

This section illustrates the concept design for the Performing Arts Centre component of the project, including notional illustrations of the Main Theatre and the Flexible Theatre.

The concept design for the Performing Arts Centre includes its proposed relationships with the public plaza areas.

With regard to the Main Theatre, the perspective shows two upper balcony levels. This configuration was drawn for the maximum envisaged seating numbers of 1,200 seats. Should the theatre be limited to 1,000 seats, the uppermost balcony would be deleted.

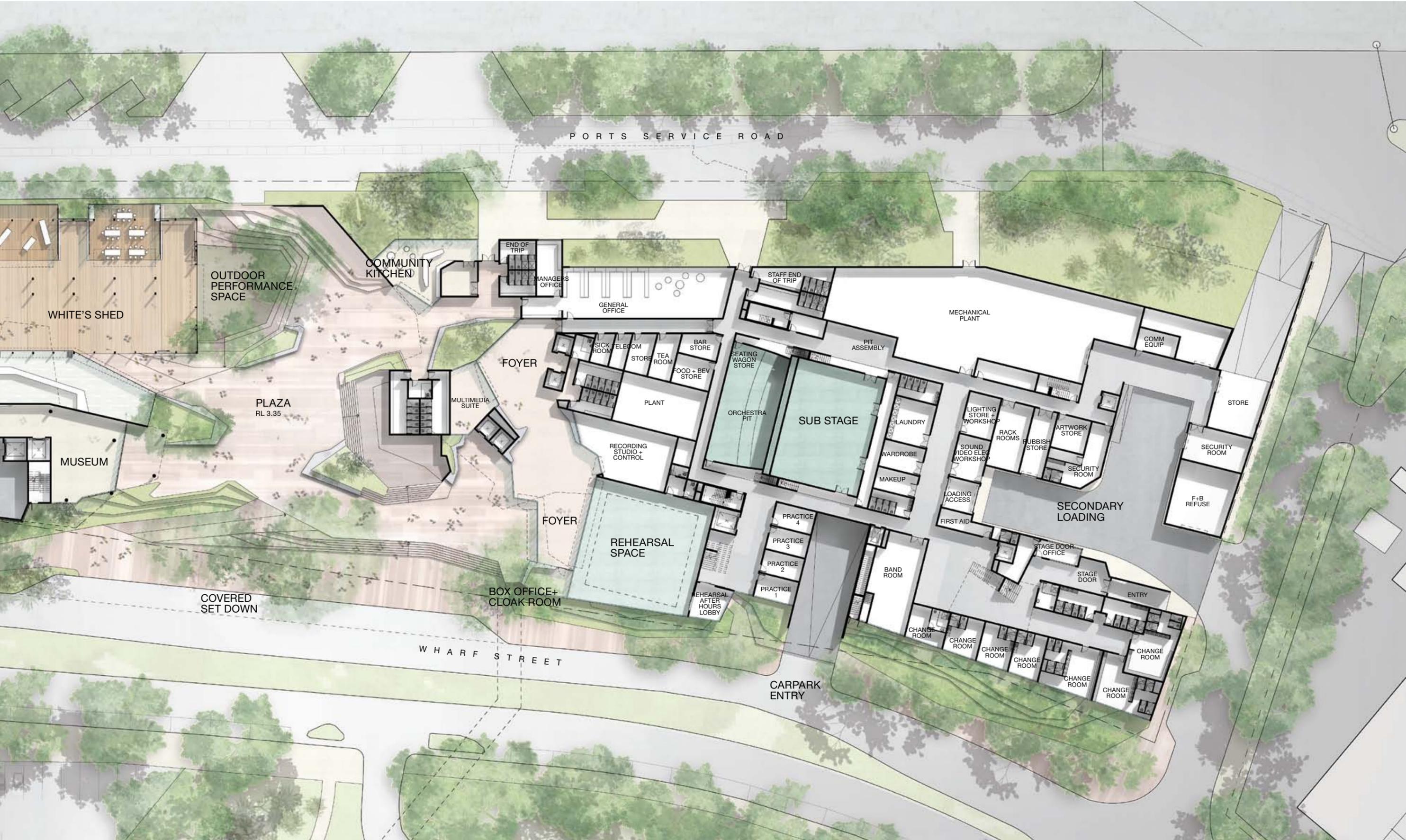
**The Back-of-House** planning identifies the main space uses at each level. The most significant aspects of these plans are as follows:

- Loading and delivery services are provided on two levels. The lower level (noted as Secondary Loading) is primarily for Food and Beverage, Waste and Workshop / Stores servicing, whereas the upper loading is primarily for stage set-up and scenery. Both docks deliver into the centre of the Back-of-House area, providing direct and efficient service access to the Main Theatre and Flexible Theatre.
- The Main Theatre and the Flexible Theatre are able to operate concurrently utilising their contiguous foyer spaces, or independently as required.
- The Rehearsal Space is accessed from the lower level foyer of the whole Performing Arts Centre. It is served from the rear via the lower level loading dock

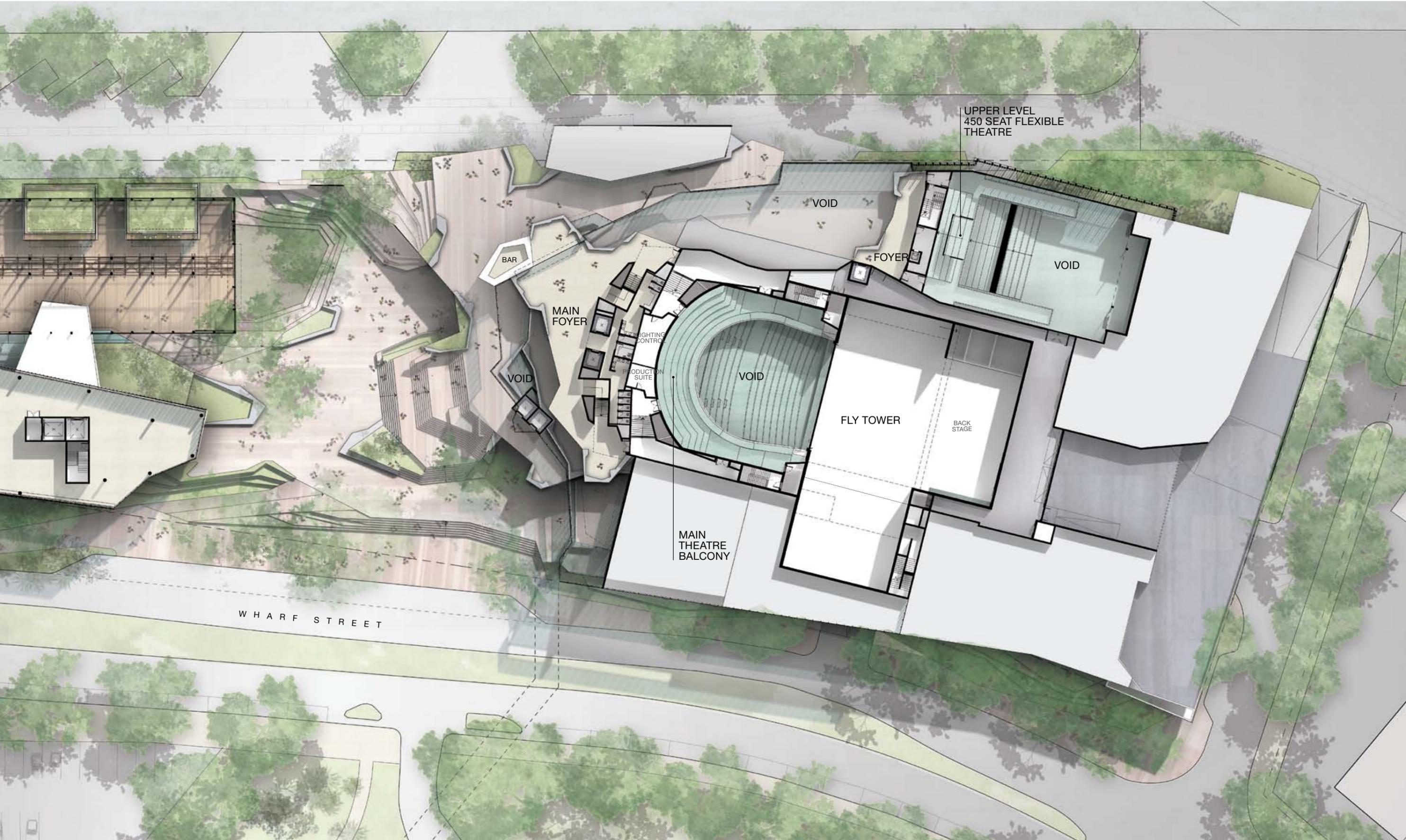
The plan requires considerable design development and should be regarded as relatively notional. One of the key issues to be resolved is the architectural interface along the street and port edges at the lower level, for which one solution may be to build up landscape berms and gardens.

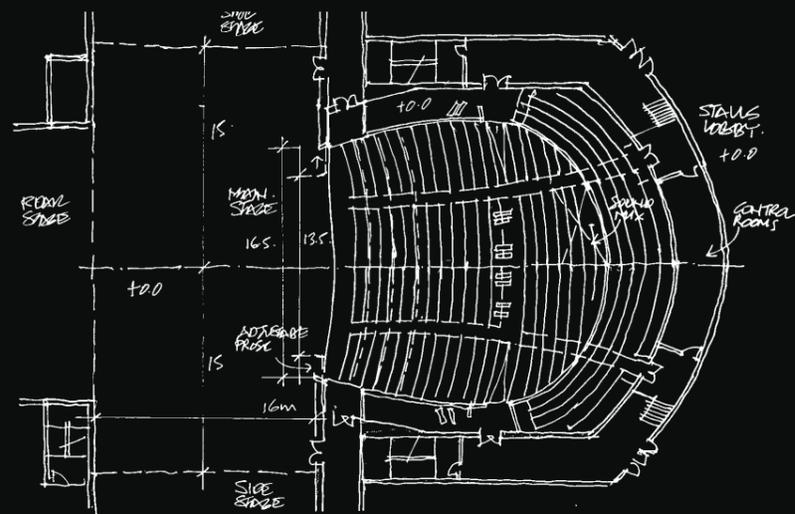
Within the public space realm, a major component is the Community/Catering Kitchen which was not included in the original project brief. It is seen by much of the community as a key asset and attractor of community use. An aim of the kitchen is for it to serve food out to the lower level plaza and amphitheatre. This kitchen will also be designed to meet on site commercial catering needs.

Generally, it is considered that the Performing Arts Centre component is efficiently planned and represents a good fit to the available site area, and it offers patrons the experience of exceptional spatial quality, connection to external spaces and outlook.

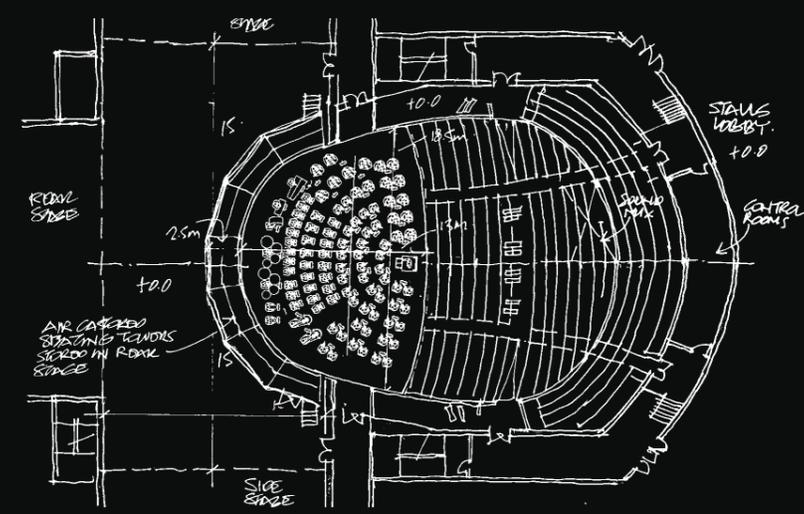




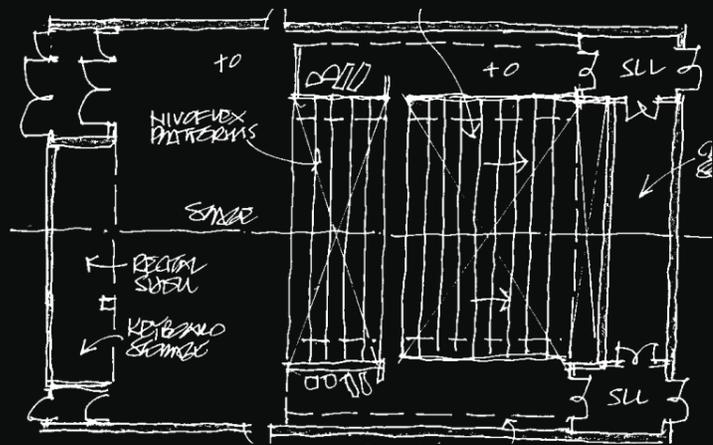
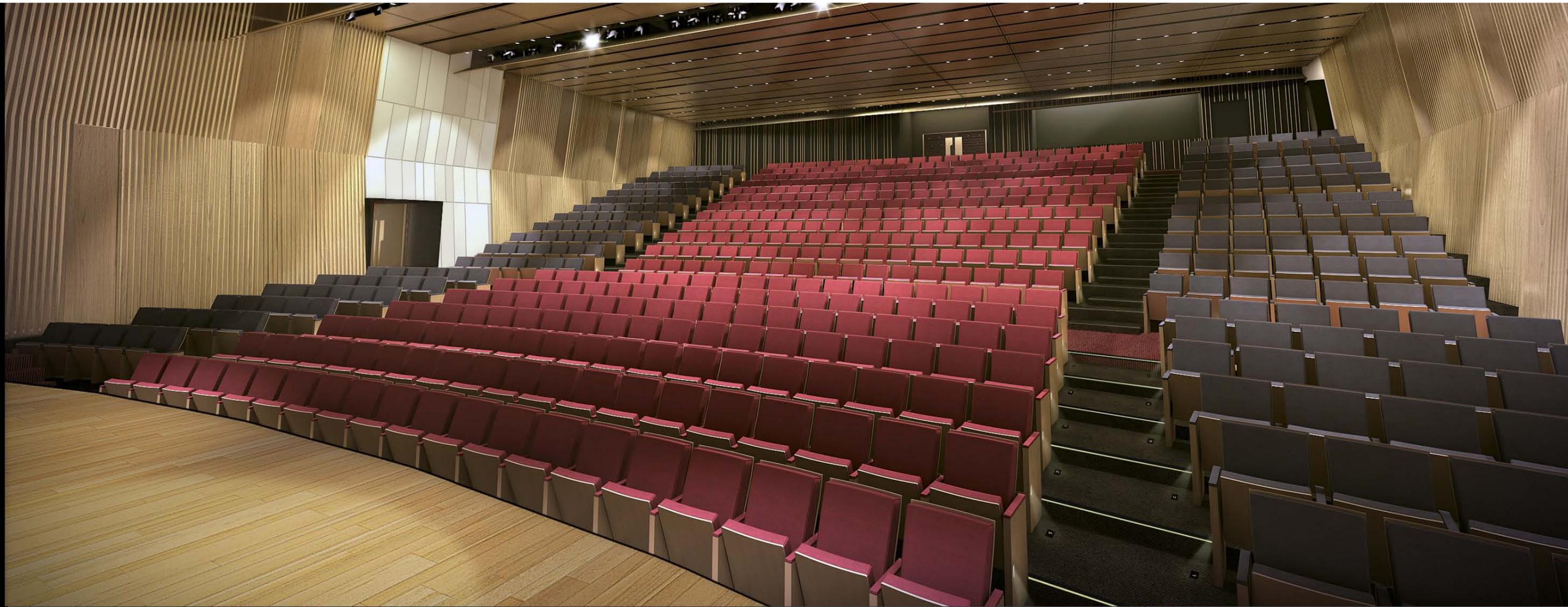




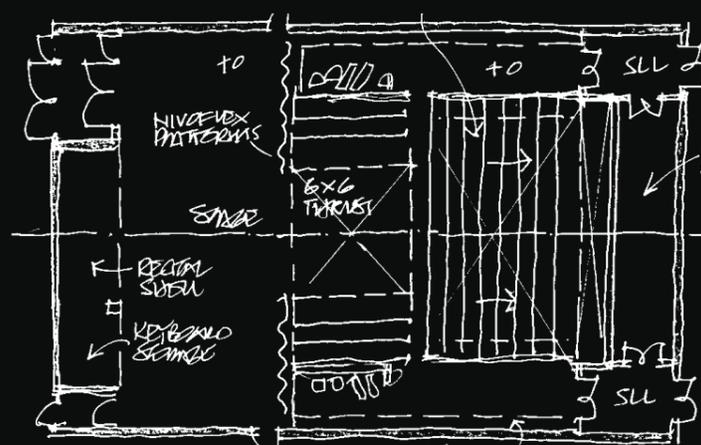
Lyric



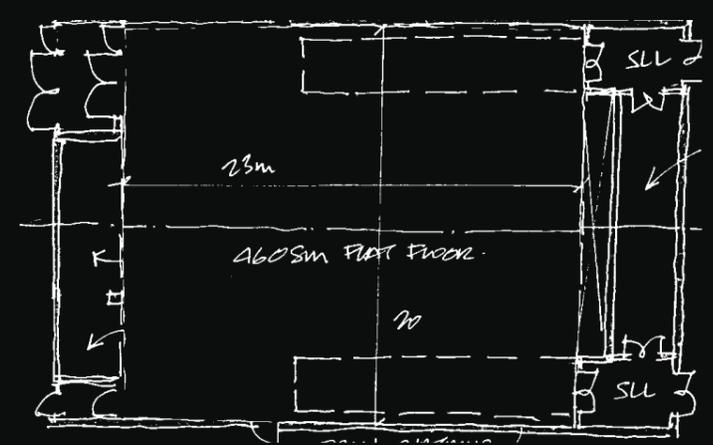
Orchestra



Raking



Thrust



Flat floor

## 3.5 THE MUSEUM AND WHITE'S SHED

This section illustrates notional plans for the Museum and the adjoining White's Shed, together with their relationships with the central plaza and the Cityport precinct.

### 3.51 Cairns Regional Museum (working title)

**The Museum** concept design responds to the report 'The Cairns Regional Museum – Operating Models – Queensland Museum Report, to inform planning works, and its themes indentified in its Appendix C.

The report is based upon the premise that the museum would comprise 1500-1700m<sup>2</sup> of dedicated museum space, however the concept design provides for approximately 4,400m<sup>2</sup> of total museum building, including administration. While some of this area comprises retail, loading dock, stores and courtyard spaces, it has been evaluated that the building will require 3 levels.

#### Ground Level

The Concept Design locates a Children's Activity Centre and an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Centre at Ground Level where they can have access to outdoor spaces.

Also at Ground Level are entrance facilities, loading dock and retail outlets. During the Phase 2: Development Application Phase, it is intended to refine the loading dock arrangement to ensure that the Museum's interface with Wharf Street is minimally impacted by it. The retail spaces are shown on the plan as connecting the Museum to White's Shed, however this configuration will need to be reviewed following community comments, and depending upon impacts of possible staging as well as heritage considerations regarding White's Shed.

#### Level One Plan

The Level One Plan approximately coincides with the Upper Plaza Level of the Performing Arts Centre. This level would be the main exhibition level, and the layout diagrammatically includes a Science Centre, Travelling Galleries, Permanent Exhibition area, Social Memories Gallery, Environmental Science Centre and Queensland Centre for Cultural Diversity. Notional areas for these facilities have been configured at Level One, however it is possible during design development that part of Level Two may be used for exhibition space. Thus the museum design is subject to future detailed planning.

#### Level Two Plan

This plan is not illustrated however it would primarily comprise Administration and Support functions for the Museum. It may be that voids and atrium spaces are inserted into the planning to visually and / or physically connect the levels.

The Museum is pivotally located between Cairns Cityport and the Performing Arts Centre, and thus will play a prominent civic role in the precinct. Almost adjacent to Cairns Cruise Liner Terminal, it may be the first or last place that cruise passengers visit in the city. If it is the first place, it is likely to act as an information and interpretive centre for Cairns and the wider Far North Queensland region.

The Museum's pivotal siting also generates its potential to be a hub of cultural and public life in Cairns, associated with the adjoining public spaces, and with White's Shed. This potential is reflected in the plan and section of the Museum shown on the following pages.

### 3.52 Whites Shed

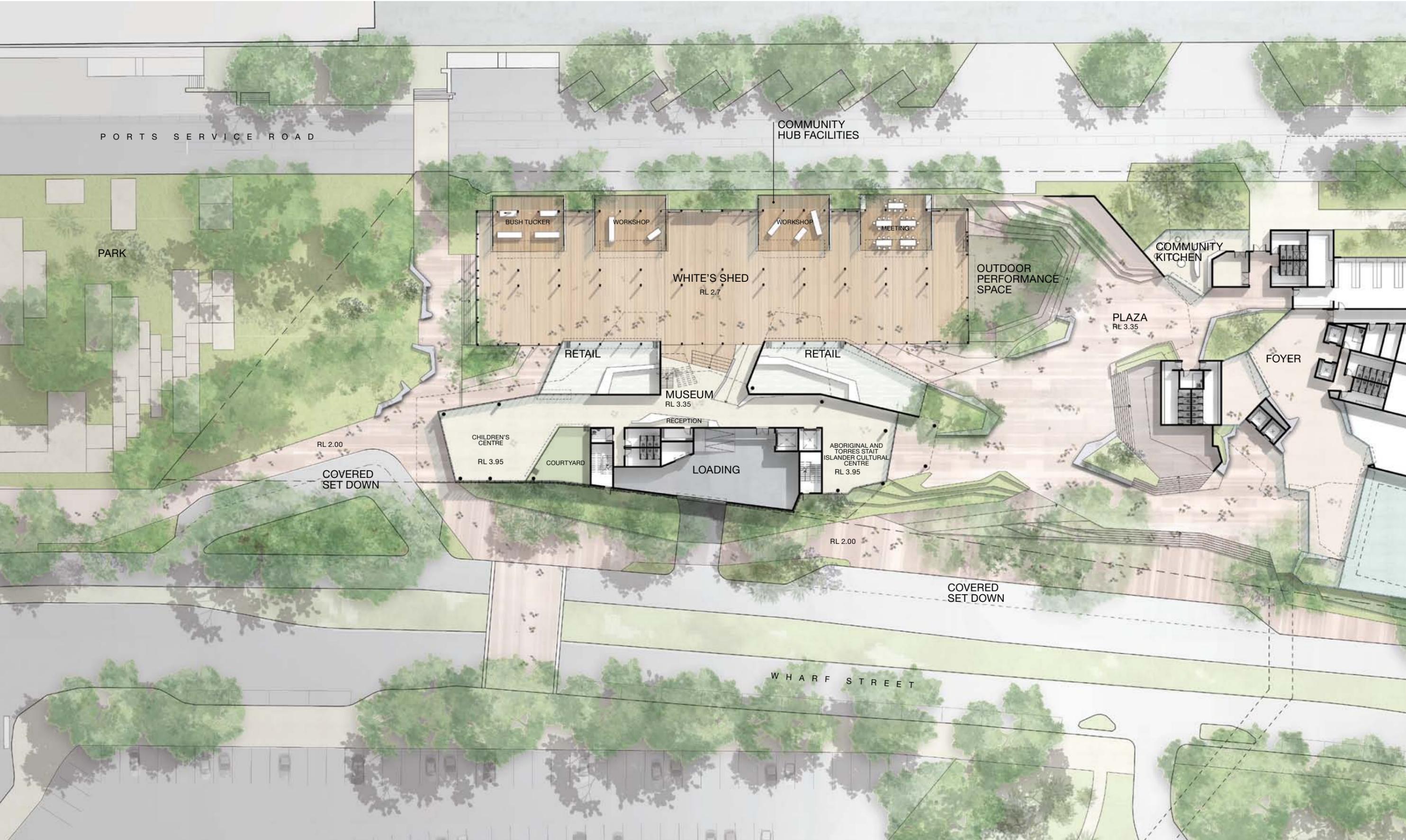
White's Shed has been consistently requested by the community to be a major community facility. During the Master Plan phase, two alternative approaches for its role and configuration were considered:

- Alternative 1 was for it to act as the major public arrival space into the precinct from Cairns Cityport; along the arrival 'corridor' would be a series of community 'rooms' such as for arts and crafts workshops, community meeting venues, rehearsal spaces, and possibly retail space.
- Alternative 2 was for a venue of less dependence as a movement spine, which could comprise the abovementioned facilities but also be separable as an exhibition / functions venue such as might be utilised by the Cairns Convention Centre.

The current Concept Design planning is capable of accommodating either alternative, however there will be many issues to be considered in the next design phase, including:

- The physical condition of the structure, and whether or not it needs to be fully enclosed
- The level of demand for different community uses
- Security issues, such as at night if the space is used as a public thoroughfare
- Heritage considerations, and the precise techniques to be employed for restoration and conservation

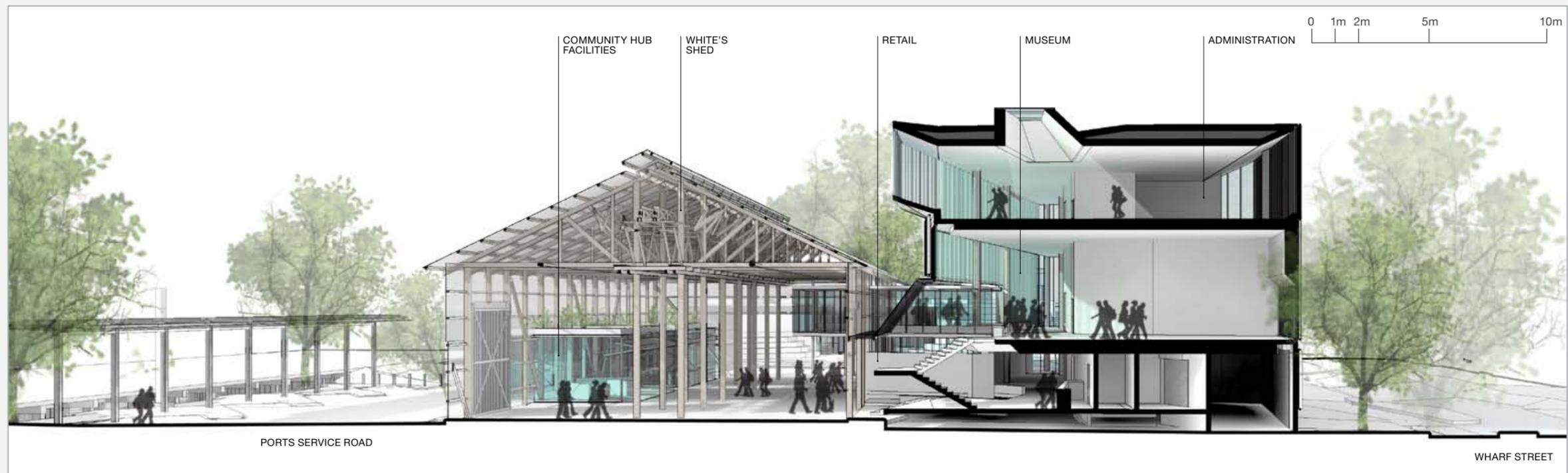
These issues will need to be carefully considered and resolved in conjunction with the project heritage advisor. The current scheme illustrated involves largely glazing the shed's north and south ends to gain longitudinal visibility, and to enable the shed to interact with the proposed Outdoor Performance Space. Level One penetration by the Museum building is illustrated as a method for stabilising the shed's timber structure while creating visual interaction between the Museum and this significant structure in Cairns' historical development.







Perspective of White's Shed interior from northern end



Cross section through White's Shed and Museum







# SECTION 4

## ARCHITECTURAL OPTIONS

- 4.1 Architectural Design Option 1:  
'Architectural Rainforest'
- 4.2 Architectural Design Option 2:  
'Layered Roofscape'

The following pages illustrate the two different Architectural designs entitled 'Architectural Rainforest' and 'Layered Roofscape'.

The concepts are illustrated in various ways, including:

- elevation from Trinity Inlet
- external perspective from Wharf Street and Grafton Street
- internal perspectives from within the central public space
- artist impression sketches

The concepts were presented in this form to the Community Consultation Workshop 4, from which a slightly stronger support was received for Option 1 (Architectural Rainforest).

#### 4.1 ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN OPTION 1: 'ARCHITECTURAL RAINFOREST'

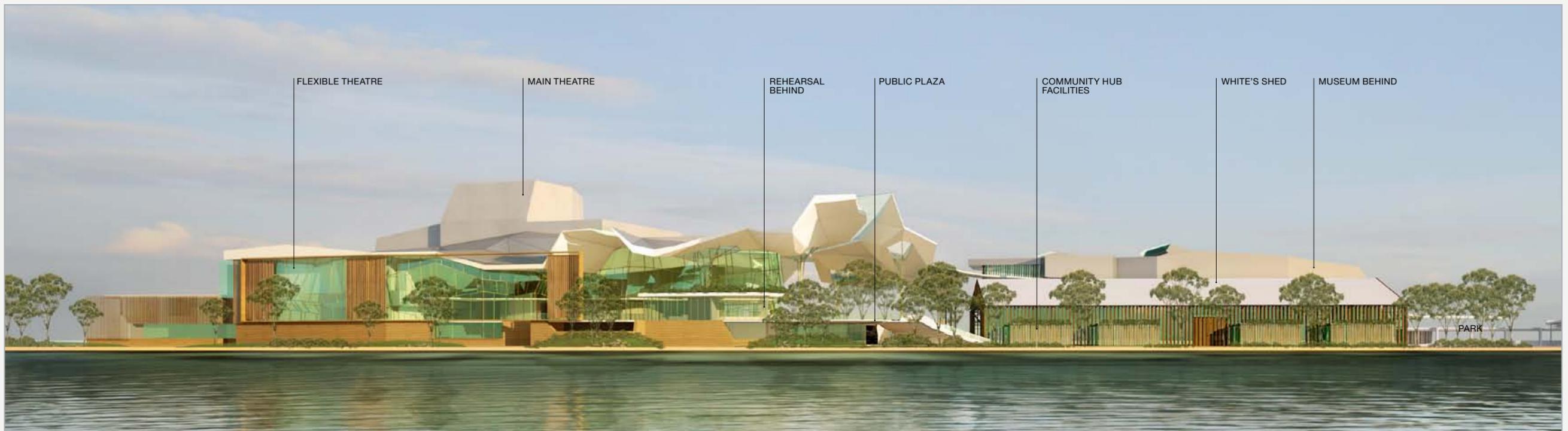
This concept is based upon the notion of creating a dramatic roof canopy that focuses architectural attention on the central public space rather than on the mass of the theatre complex. The canopy is considered integral to the architectural vision, however more importantly, the canopy is key to the success of the precinct in its response to the tropical climate of Cairns.

The architectural idea is to extend and culminate the proposed Grafton Street tropical boulevard in a space which conveys the impression of an organic environment; as such it is not intended that it actually mimics a rainforest but that it does generate a strong sense of tropical place-making.

The canopy form may also be likened to the art of 'crumplage', in which paper is crumpled to form irregular geometries. This connotation more accurately describes how the surfaces could be formed, seemingly randomly shaped to rise over the theatres and descend over the public spaces to the Museum and White's Shed. The roof geometry and structure will be developed in conjunction with specialist consultants and subjected to wind tunnel testing to meet a range of criteria including cyclone resistance and public amenity.

The concept is suggestive of a range of environmental elements which the canopy could incorporate including the visible draining of rainwater down through structural columns and the use of solar photovoltaic panels or film to, for example, power the external lighting.

The concept will produce an urban tropical identity for the precinct that is unique to Cairns, and which has exciting potential for design development in terms of structure, materials, acoustic performance and relationships to specific spaces for performances, recreation and community activities.



Elevation from Trinity Inlet

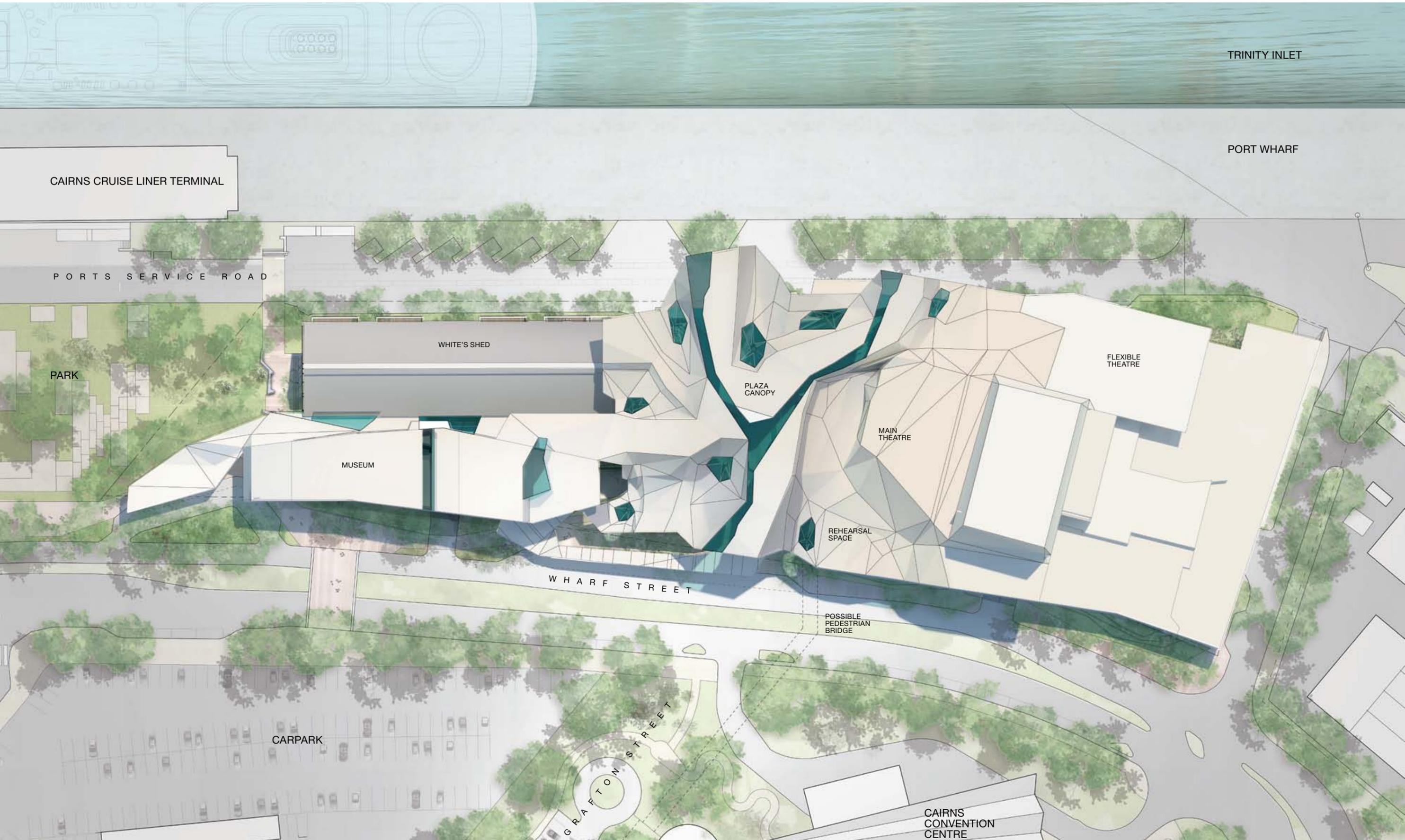
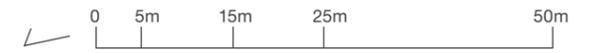
# ARCHITECTURAL OPTION 1: 'ARCHITECTURAL RAINFOREST'

Perspective from Wharf Street and Grafton Street intersection



# ARCHITECTURAL OPTION 1: 'ARCHITECTURAL RAINFOREST'

Roof Plan

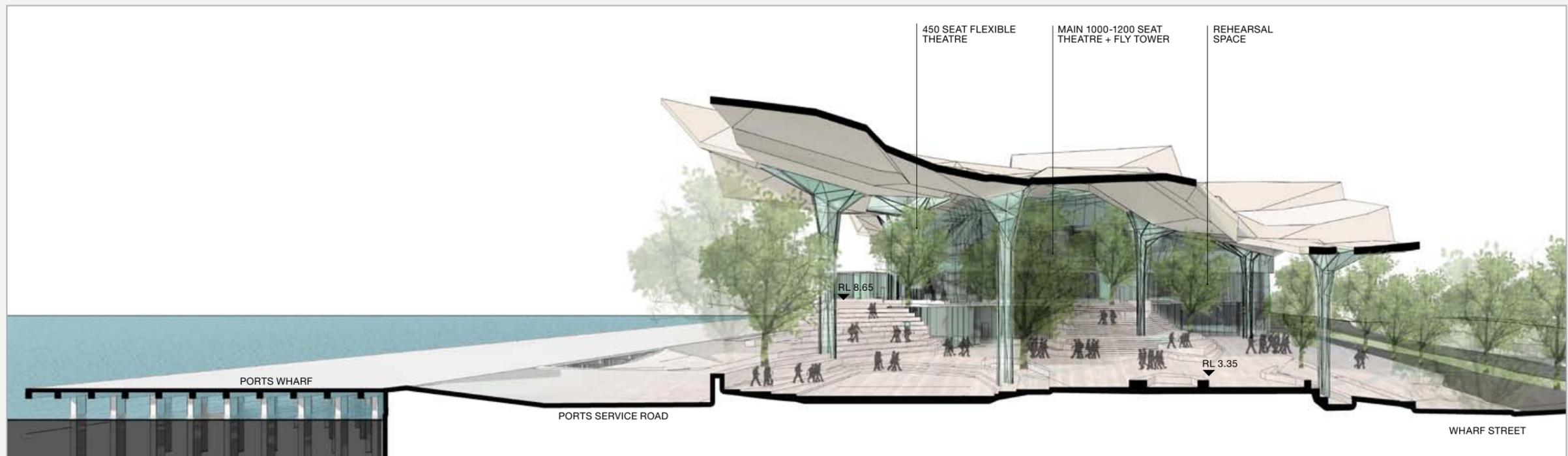


# ARCHITECTURAL OPTION 1: 'ARCHITECTURAL RAINFOREST'

## Sections



Long Section



Cross Section

# ARCHITECTURAL OPTION 1: 'ARCHITECTURAL RAINFOREST'

Public Plaza



# ARCHITECTURAL OPTION 1: 'ARCHITECTURAL RAINFOREST'

External Performance Space



## 4.2 ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN OPTION 2: 'LAYERED ROOFSCAPE'

The 'Layered Roofscape' concept responds to a repeatedly raised issue in the community consultation workshops: the scale and dominance of the flytower to the Main Theatre.

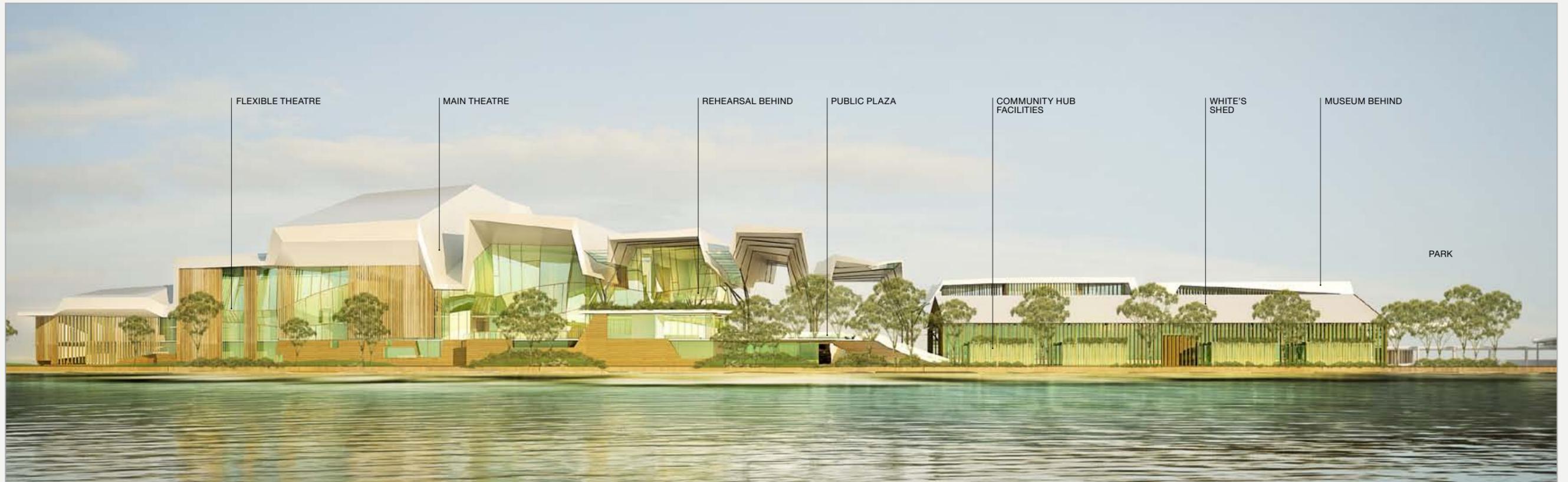
The architectural idea of this concept is to create a series of 'ribs' across the precinct which undulate through the length of the precinct to disguise the scale of the flytower.

Thus, unlike Option 1 which has a different roof architecture over the public spaces and foyers to that over the Performing Arts Centre and Museum, this option proposes a consistent roof geometry over the new buildings and spaces of the entire precinct.

The actual shapes of the layered roofscape are conceived to refer abstractly to containers stacked along the wharf, however the undulating overall form reflects the hills across Trinity Inlet and to the west of the city.

The large troughs could be utilised to efficiently collect rainwater for reuse in much the same way as the Cairns Convention Centre roof performs. The north-south orientation of the ribs is potentially ideal for incorporating a regular system of solar photovoltaics, such that the canopy performs environmentally in the tropics at least as effectively as in Option 1. As per Option 1, the roof geometry and structure will be developed in conjunction with specialist consultants.

The 'Layered Roofscape' does not generate as unique an architecture as Option 1, however in extending consistently over the whole precinct, it would create a highly distinctive and dramatic silhouette at the city's water edge.



Elevation from Trinity Inlet

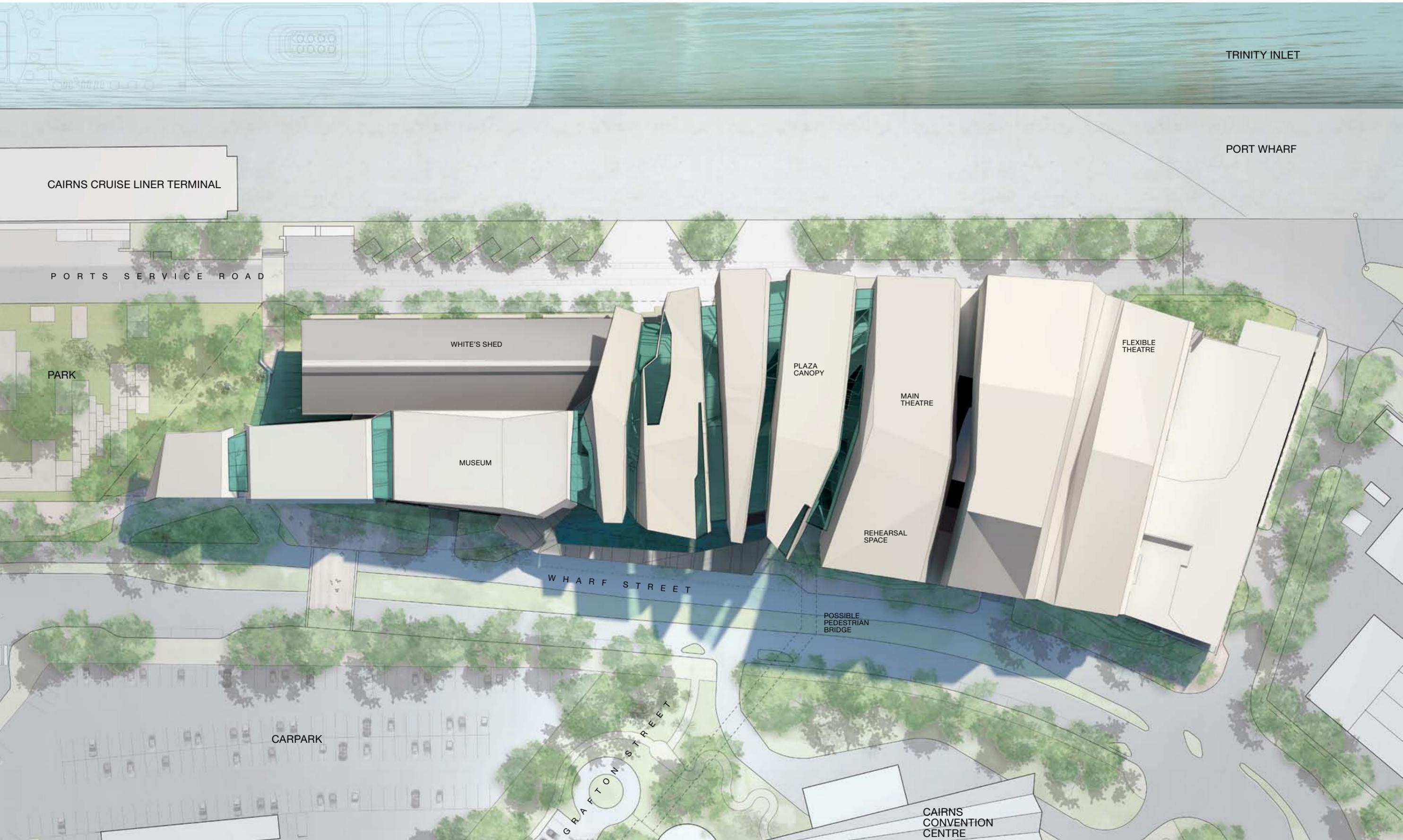
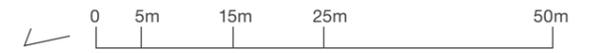
## ARCHITECTURAL OPTION 2: 'LAYERED ROOFSCAPE'

Perspective from Wharf Street and Grafton Street intersection



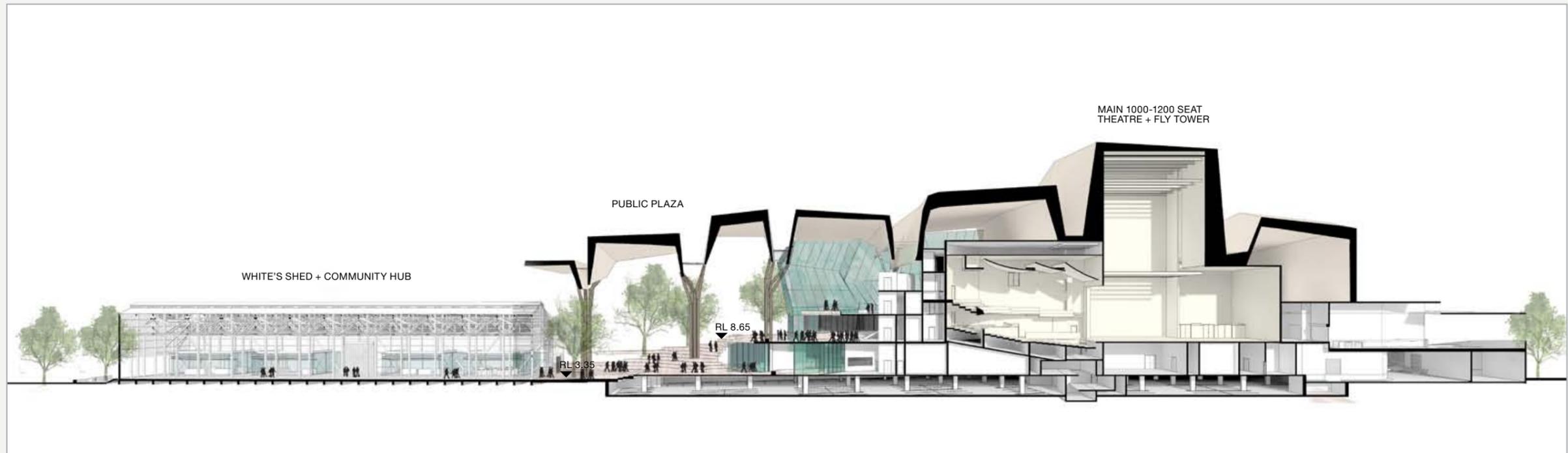
# ARCHITECTURAL OPTION 2: 'LAYERED ROOFSCAPE'

Roof Plan

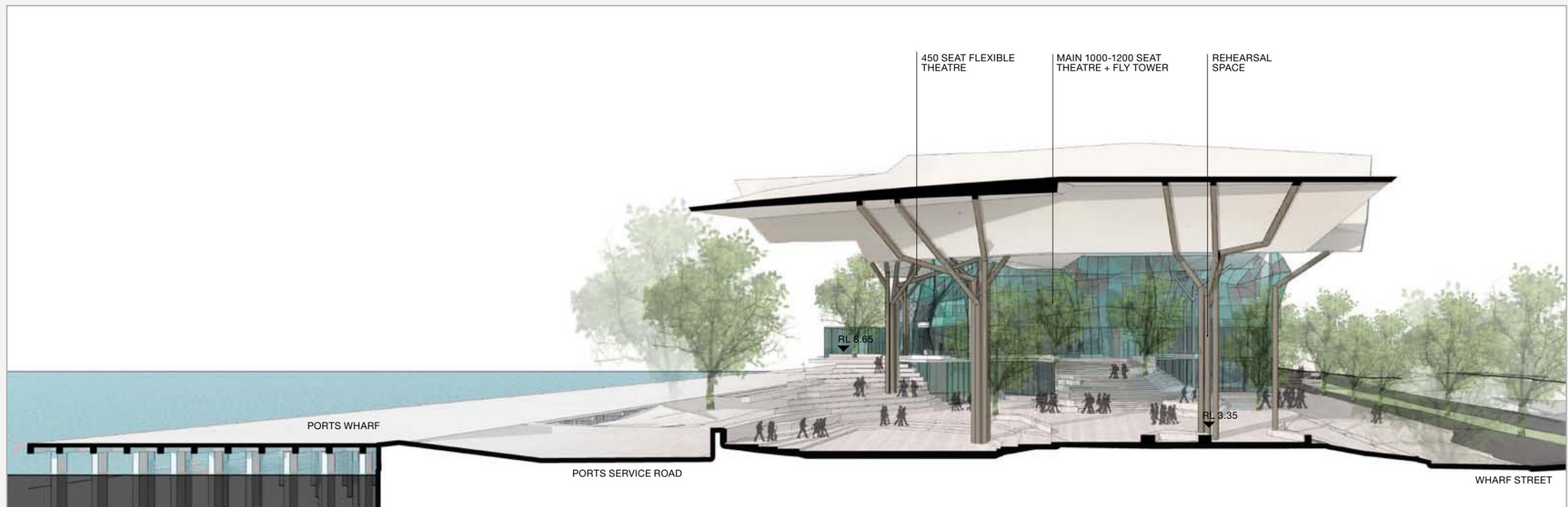


# ARCHITECTURAL OPTION 2: 'LAYERED ROOFSCAPE'

## Sections



Long Section



Cross Section

# ARCHITECTURAL OPTION 2: 'LAYERED ROOFSCAPE'

Public Plaza



## ARCHITECTURAL OPTION 2: 'LAYERED ROOFSCAPE'

External Performance Space





# SECTION 5

## SCHEDULE OF AREAS

5.1 Summary of Areas

5.2 Detailed Area Schedule

## 5.1 SUMMARY OF CONCEPT DESIGN AREAS

Summary of Elements	Areas (m <sup>2</sup> )
White's Shed	1192
Community Hub	1155
Museum	4385
Basement	
Carpark	7107
Performing Arts	
Basement	138
Lower Plan	5566
Upper Plan	6719
Mezzanine	1511
Sub total Performing Arts	13934
Public Plaza	
Lower Plaza	1437
Upper Plaza	1124
<b>Total Gross Area</b>	<b>30334</b>

## 5.2 DETAILED AREA SCHEDULE

1.0 Performance Space	Areas (m <sup>2</sup> )
Auditorium and stage	1733
Orchestra pit	76
Orchestra pit undercroft	24
Seating wagon store	129
Pit assembly	77
Lighting and box booms	50
Lighting bridge / Technical balconies	72
Sub stage and trap room	397
Grid	460
Winch room	100
Flying gallery	40
Sound shell storage	39
Pit store	35
<b>Total Performance Space (Net)</b>	<b>3232</b>

2.0 Back of House (Technical)	Areas (m <sup>2</sup> )
Loading and dock	1236
Temporary holding store	25
Chair store	60
Instrument and piano store	44
Platform stage store	26
General store	60
Lighting and workshops	30
Rack rooms	49
Dimmer room	18
Sound and video workshops	30
Production offices	12
Technical offices	100
Technical change rooms	48
Wardrobe/costume repair	25
Laundry	40
Refuse Store	34
Office - stage manager	15
Store	8
Food and beverage refuse store	50
Kitchen	17
Photocopy	6
Plant	750
<b>Total Back of House - Technical (Net)</b>	<b>2683</b>

3.0 Back of House (Performers)	Areas (m <sup>2</sup> )
Star dressing	84
Practice rooms	83
Dressing rooms and change Rooms	352
Wet and dry change rooms	61
Wig and make up	20
First aid	18
Green room	116
Terrace	100
Stage door, office, store	60
Band room	93
Back of house toilets	101
Assembly area	103
End of trip facilities	110
<b>Total Back of House - Performers (Net)</b>	<b>1301</b>

4.0 Front of House (Technical Spaces)	Areas (m <sup>2</sup> )
Sound control and crying room	56
Lighting control room	29
Follow spot rooms	21
Projection room	15
<b>Total Front of House - Technical Spaces (Net)</b>	<b>121</b>

5.0 Front of House (Including Administration)	Areas (m <sup>2</sup> )
Foyers	1299
Box office, manager, cloakroom	30
Front of house toilets	363
General office	204
Manager's office	31
Friends of Theatre	15
Office store and tea area	23
Friends of Theatre store	20
Artwork store	25
Sick room	12
Bar	80
Bar store	20
Food and beverage store	25
<b>Total Front of House - Including administration (Net)</b>	<b>2147</b>

6.0 Performance Space 2	Areas (m <sup>2</sup> )
Performance Space 2	704
Technical balconies	240
Seating store	23
Offices	30
Wardrobe	20
Store	60
Rehearsal	325
Rehearsal toilets	16
<b>Total Performance Space 2 (Net)</b>	<b>1418</b>

Sub Total Performing Arts (Net)	10902
Circulation	3032
<b>Total Performing Arts Area (Gross)</b>	<b>13934</b>

7.0 Community Hub	Areas (m <sup>2</sup> )
Function room	94
Meeting and function	94
Recording studio	110
Multi media suite	56
Community/catering kitchen	91
Kitchen store	26
Restaurant and cafe	173
Workshop	94
Food 'Bush Tucker'	94
External performance	296
<b>Sub Total Community Hub (Net)</b>	<b>1128</b>
Circulation	27
<b>Total Community Hub (Gross)</b>	<b>1155</b>

8.0 Basement Carpark	Areas (m <sup>2</sup> )
Carparking	6280
Water storage	85
Plant	227
<b>Sub Total Basement Carpark (Net)</b>	<b>6592</b>
Circulation	515
<b>Total Basement Carpark (Gross)</b>	<b>7107</b>

White's Shed	Areas (m <sup>2</sup> )
White's Shed	1192
<b>Total White's Shed (Gross)</b>	<b>1192</b>

Plaza	Areas (m <sup>2</sup> )
Lower Plaza	1437
Upper Plaza	1124
<b>Total Plaza (Gross)</b>	<b>2561</b>

Museum	Areas (m <sup>2</sup> )
Children's Centre	206
Science Centre	200
Reception and foyer	203
Museum loading	212
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Centre	198
Travelling Gallery	118
Social Memories Gallery	200
Permanent Exhibition	300
Queensland Centre for Cultural Diversity	300
Store	103
Retail	741
Courtyard	59
Museum toilets	98
Museum administration	1067
<b>Sub Total Museum (Net)</b>	<b>4005</b>
Circulation	380
<b>Total Museum (Gross)</b>	<b>4385</b>

<b>TOTAL PRECINCT AREA (GROSS)</b>	<b>30334</b>
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# APPENDIX 1

## COMMUNITY CONSULTATION WORKSHOPS

## COMMUNITY CONSULTATION WORKSHOP 1

### Public Spaces and Facilities

- Versatility of public space is vital - strongest support indicated for: amphitheatre, outdoor covered cinema
- Different types of outdoor performance space: free events, indigenous performance, digital / virtual as well as music, dance, theatre
- Community gathering and children's activities
- Sufficient retail and food outlets to activate the precinct but not to compete with CBD / Esplanade

### Architecture and Design

- 'Tropic' was deemed more important than 'Iconic'
- The design should embody the cultural diversity of Cairns and the region
- Respond to surrounding landscape - views over Trinity Inlet to mountains
- Differing attitudes to CBD integration versus creating independent identity
- Integration of public / installation art

### White's Shed

- Express its structure inside and out
- Utilise for art and craft workshops including indigenous arts
- Rehearsal / occasional performances in dramatic space
- Could be conceived as a kind of enclosed public space or precinct 'foyer'
- Museum-related activities
- Exhibition / function hall eg. weddings, parties.

### Climate and Environment

- Response to tropical climate is key to the success of the project
- Shelter over outdoor spaces needed to facilitate year-round use
- Flexibility to change occupancy and form for different weather conditions - sun, wind, rain
- Water as a real and visual cooling device.
- Pathways to precinct and setdowns need shelter.
- South-east wind velocities need to be managed.

### Access and Accessibility

- Transport choice is greatly determined by the weather conditions
- As site is away from the city heart, private vehicle is likely to be the most frequent mode of access
- Nonetheless, public transport should be improved - 'Loop' bus, possible additional train station (south)
- Proposed multilevel carpark near to site and on-site carparking are important
- Pedestrian movement to and from the CBD is important, especially via Lake and Wharf Streets and the Esplanade

## COMMUNITY CONSULTATION WORKSHOP 2

### Planning Approach

- Consultation process valued and uptake of ideas is evident
- Support for consultation with stakeholder focus group leading to implementation over next 4 weeks.

### Public Spaces

- Public space providing shelter from climatic conditions deemed imperative, however a range of views emerged on the form which the public space should take.
- Potential for civic scaled plaza with large canopy to provide flexibility within public space.
- Potential for series of gardens and courtyards with individual canopies to provide intimate spaces and better preserve views.
- Key priorities included safety, cyclonic considerations, accessibility and free to use.

### White's Shed

- A range of views emerged regarding the future use of White's Shed, including;
  - Potential as arrival point space to precinct
  - Adjunct museum space
  - Bars / Cafes / Retail
  - Music venue / Performance space
  - Flexible event space
- Discussion regarding design approach included;
  - Potential for design to reflect and strengthen site history
  - Potential for design to provide element of transparency to maintain views to inlet

### Architecture

- Cairns Entertainment Precinct will be unique as one of, if not the only tropical theatre and entertainment precinct in the world. As such, examples of tropical architecture of a similar scale and brief were not provided. Architectural exemplars provided by CA Cox in consideration of layout, form and space generated vibrant discussion, with comments as follows;
  - Oslo Opera House interesting for dramatic external and internal aesthetic, relationship to water and public access to roof plaza.
  - Winspear Opera House interesting for public realm which provides canopied green space and use of water.
  - Federation Square generated interest for terraced public space and outdoor cinema possibilities.

### Options

- CA Cox presented Two Masterplan Options for community discussion;
  - Option 1 proposes a public plaza and foyer spaces at Wharf Street level
  - Option 2 proposes an elevated public plaza
- Option 2 gained almost unanimous support in each community consultation session for its;
  - Elevated views over Trinity Inlet
  - Potential to capture breezes
  - Potential to achieve flood immunity
  - Possible increased carparking

## COMMUNITY CONSULTATION WORKSHOP 3

### Masterplan Context Strategies

- Support in principle for master plan context strategies:
  - covered way to Grafton Street using bridge link from Cairns Convention Centre to precinct
  - Address at north end (Cityport) and along Wharf Street
  - Museum entrance primarily from plaza end Dual levels of plaza with community facilities and performance spaces at lower level, theatre plaza at upper (rehearsal space at lower level)
  - Some concern that Cairns Convention Centre views impeded
  - Need overlay plan for bus/coach, service vehicles and passenger setdown / carparking

### Theatres

- Differing views on whether 1000/1200 seat theatre is too small (+1500) or too large (idea of provision for later upper balcony seating)
- Rehearsal space multi-functional and at lower level supported. Possible use include:
  - Temporary blues / jazz venue, community classes
- Focus group desire for 450 seat theatre to have flytower

### Museum

- Some surprise that museum is not intended to be full regional museum type
- Generally happy to see museum interact with historic White's Shed as part of collective identity
- Some concern if museum is staged until later and not there at outset in terms of cultural vitality and public attraction

### White's Shed

- Preferred for community uses over other locations
- Needs to be prioritised regardless of staging / timing of museum due to its deteriorating physical condition
- Possible uses include:
  - Arts and crafts, weaving, pottery etc.
  - Music venue at night, jazz / blues club, piano bar
  - Indigenous arts and crafts, but also 'cultural hub'
  - Dance / art / music classes
- Small business incubation / meeting spaces
- After hours access / potentially independent of precinct
- Strong desire for low cost / low hire of community meeting space.

### Public Spaces / Community Spaces

- Strong support for part-covered amphitheatre at end of White's Shed
- Desire for end of White's Shed to interact with amphitheatre
- Support for large outdoor screen
- Preferences for shifting restaurant in order to maximise inlet views from public plaza, and desire to increase cantilevering out over Port Road
- General support for idea of community kitchen and eating spaces
  - Desire for ability to serve foyers for functions / pre- functions
- Wi-Fi, wireless and wired accessibility strongly desired
- Issues of wind-tunnelling and wind-uplift of roofs, especially cyclonic.
- Use of stairs and ramps required for accessibility to also create performance spaces
- Plaza(s) likely to be Cairn's best venue for city festivals (jazz/ comedy, charity) due to canopy

### Other Ideas

- Cabaret style theatre restaurant
- Priority parking access for elderly people / people with disabilities
- Arrival experience from carparks is often overlooked but is equal importance to other access modes

### Architecture

- All but one group supportive of 'Architectural Rainforest' concept, but not overwhelming preference
- General desire to see both 'Architectural Rainforest' and 'Layered Roofscape' option developed further, and maybe eventually amalgamated
- Strong desire for environmental sustainability to be incorporated and expressed;
  - recycled and recyclable materials
  - dense landscaping but not a jungle
  - water capture
  - alternative / renewable energies
  - Trinity Inlet as 'heat sink' – co/trigeneration
- Some belief that timber should be a major material for public spaces and canopies to differentiate from capital city civic plazas
- Big interest in celebration of the tropics through the use of structures, water, light and landscape

## COMMUNITY CONSULTATION WORKSHOP 4

### Overall Considerations – Concept Design Options

- Several attendees liked the 'Layered Roof' Concept Design because it:
  - camouflages the flytower
  - related to the Cairns Convention Centre
  - appears more structured for suspending lighting grids for outdoor performances
- Slightly greater numbers of attendees still prefer the 'Architectural Rainforest' Concept Design as it:
  - is unprecedented and more striking than the 'Layered Roof' geometry
  - captures more evocatively the spirit of the wet tropics
  - is seen as better relating to the surrounding hillscape of Cairns
- Various issues raised on both concepts:
  - cyclone and strong wind performance of canopy structure
  - need to control winds generally and from the south-east
  - technical requirements such as lighting and acoustic performance
  - strong desire for canopy to be environmentally iconic – solar, water, wind and materials

### Public Space(s)

- Strong desire for integrated public art to impart local and regional character and relevance e.g. story-telling.
- Expectation of substantial greenery using indigenous species.
- Amphitheatre / outdoor performance space is the most liked component – natural configuration and location at end of White's Shed is supported. Amphitheatre performing space requires full cover.
- Need to consider solar heat gain between canopy parts.
- Desire for the main space to be able to support a large (5,000) event such as Carols By Candlelight, as well as multiple small events at other times.
- Some attendees see potential for gardens to attract birdlife etc.
- Reaction against infilling the pedestrian spine between White's Shed and the Museum with retail – several people felt the precinct's connection to Cityport in the north is weak.
- Repeated desire for water to play a role visually, and to assist in cooling.
- Need for wind protection from Trinity Inlet.
- Overpass from Cairns Convention Centre to precinct is strongly desired for public access into public space.

### Theatres

- Preference for Box Office to address street.
- Continued requests for investigation of possibility of a flytower for 450 seat flexible theatre.
- Support for location and configuration of each of the 3 performance spaces.
- Size reduction from 1200 to 1000 seats questioned, should be dependent upon appropriate size to attract optimum range of shows (e.g. major ballet companies).
- Preference for theatres to have intimate rather than grand atmosphere.
- Demand for separability of use of the 3 performance spaces, especially Rehearsal Studio.

### Museum

- No particular comments only because it does not yet have a brief and is therefore still to be designed.
- General preference for Museum to be developed concurrent with Performing Arts Centre and White's Shed refurbishment.

### White's Shed

- Attendees mostly feel the conversion of White's Shed into a community facility and venue for functions and exhibitions, also arts and crafts workshops, needs to be undertaken simultaneously with the Performing Arts Centre.
- Support for idea of opening up White's Shed to Amphitheatre for flexible use.

### Retail and Small Venues

- Several attendees feel that there is no apparent retail outlet strategy yet:
- bars and restaurants themed or related to theatres
- not to compete with but complement the CBD
- Repeated desire for smaller venues than shown, for example:
  - comedy club
  - jazz bar
  - blues Venue
- Strong support for film / screen facility creating film festival culture.

### Community Facilities

- Community/Catering Kitchen is strongly supported / able to function commercially.
- Many people felt that other community facilities were not yet well defined and needed to be.

### Site and Access

- People concerned that link from PAC to Cityport has been badly weakened by retail intrusion – was better in previous design.
- Support for 'end of trip' facilities, but desire for clearer cycleways to precinct.
- Covered link along Grafton Street supported.
- Crossing from Grafton Street at Wharf Street to precinct looks unresolved.
- Traffic studies needed to verify access / egress arrangements for carparks and loading docks.
- Study called for to investigate bus loop to precinct.
- Different views on adequacy of 200 on-site car spaces.
- Idea raised of water transport access.

### Environmental

- Most tables raised the CEP's environmental performance as fundamental to its identity.
- Comments comprised:
  - energy efficiency of all components
  - minimised airconditioning reliance
  - solar cells as statement
  - water collection and grey water recycling
- Issue raised of how to provide comfortable climatic conditions in White's Shed.

### Future Consultation

- Following a request for interest by attendees in participating in ongoing consultation as the design develops, the response was resoundingly affirmative.



## APPENDIX 2

LETTER RECEIVED FROM  
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR  
PETER SKINNER, AIA  
QUEENSLAND CHAPTER  
PRESIDENT

Linda Cardew  
Manager Cairns Cultural Precinct Project  
Executive & Support, Cairns Regional Council

9 June 2011

Dear Linda,

Thank you for inviting me to review the work of Cox Rayner and CA Architects on the Cairns Entertainment Precinct project at their Brisbane office yesterday.

The first thing that I must say is how thoroughly the team has investigated and responded to the large-scale master planning, functional organization and strategic design of the project.

It is apparent from the work presented that the team has thoroughly interrogated the design project and has made initial judgments that seem to have a certain inevitability in hindsight, but were by no means obvious at the beginning of the process. The level of resolution already achieved within the tight project time-scale is impressive.

#### STRATEGIC PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

I am particularly convinced that the following key strategic site planning moves are well resolved:

- stripping the walling from White's shed and its preservation as open, naturally ventilated space
- interpenetrating the shed volume with museum and community spaces to buttress the structure
- drawing a principal unfolding circulation route between the museum and shed  
(this has good potential to continue as a reinforcement of future museological narratives)
- positioning arrival as a series of podiums, desks, amphitheatres to the north of the main theatre
- celebrating the eastern view across the inlet from external and internal foyer spaces
- positioning the secondary theatre so shared foyers can enjoy eastern views
- illuminating the main western approach with views into foyers and minor rehearsal hall
- drawing all delivery docks and services to the southern boundary of the site.
- utilizing the vista down Grafton Street to highlight the principal entrance and arrival
- keeping the vista to the inlet and distant mountains open down Lake Street

The functional planning as presented at this stage appears very well considered, especially:

- the range of spatial & service conditions to the northern court space for flexible use
- theatre layouts appropriate for flexible functions with good sightlines & intimacy
- openable glazed foyer offering good flexible response to tropical climate
- generous logical arrangement of delivery dock and back of house to simply serve both theatres
- realignment of boundary road to create mutual benefit for project and adjacent site
- efficient siting of access to plant and services on southern & eastern sides

The resolution and synthesis of these functional and site considerations on a quite tightly constrained site is very well considered and compelling as an organizational plan.

I concur with the architects that there is limited scope to explore significant variations on this planning configuration on the present site. The space for functional activities is tight and unless the site area was significantly increased or the requirements of the Ports Authority were significantly relaxed I can see little room to move and little scope for major variation from the preferred plan configuration.

#### SECTIONAL STRATEGIES

As was clear from the presentation the major design decision to be made at this stage arises from two different sectional strategies that generate either a higher or lower datum for the principal foyer level podium.

Arguments in support of Option 1 (the lower podium level) include:

- closer connection between existing northern ground level of Whites Shed
- shorter and easier vertical rise of main entrance from Wharf Street
- reduced length of vehicular ramping for stage deliveries
- reduced elevation heights and reduced visual bulk of the building
- economic advantages of reduction in overall building volume
- construction time saving from fewer floor levels

Arguments in support of Option 2 (the higher podium height) include:

- improved outlooks across Trinity Inlet from foyers, podium and associated public functions
- reduced visual impact of Port Authority activities at dock and eastern street levels
- greater visual prominence of the building in context of convention centre and large liners
- greater resilience to flood and storm tides
- reduced cost of waterproof tanking and protection for service spaces and plant
- additional back of house space mezzanine level provides greater planning flexibility
- potential for retail income and street activation along western street frontage

In weighing up these two schemes, the arguments for the higher podium (Option 2) were compelling.

This is a very important building for the community, and in my professional opinion, building at a lower level would compromise the project in perpetuity. At the lower level, Port Authority activities, security structures and vehicle movements on the dock and the adjacent roadway would detrimentally impact on the unique and beautiful outlook across the inlet from the major public spaces. Reducing the height would also diminish significant views to the building, particularly the initial view from arriving ships. Building at the lower level could also diminish opportunities to activate the Wharf Street building frontage. Although we don't have detailed costing at this stage, there appear to be some construction

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savings and possible revenues that could offset the cost of the larger building volume. The actuarial risks of building to the lower level in this waterfront location are also unknown, but in light of recent cyclonic storm tide impacts in Far North Queensland, I would recommend that the more elevated building option would be prudent.

At this stage in the preliminary design, the full study of functional requirements for the performing arts is incomplete, and site area is so constrained it allows little adjustment of areas, circulation and organisation. Option 1 is already so locked in by site constraints that there appears little room to negotiate design adjustments for operational, constructional or budgetary reasons. In design Option 2, on the other hand, the back-of-house mezzanine level between carpark and podium levels offers greater opportunities for flexibility and refinement in design development. The relatively cheap mezzanine level can accommodate a considerable amount of secondary storage, service and utility functions below stage, giving greater flexibility to the planning of essential backstage functions requiring larger volumes or natural light at podium level. At this stage of the development of the project, Option 2 offers greater opportunity for future design refinement and flexibility. Option 1 risks locking design options down prematurely.

The most important deciding factor for me is achieving the best use of the site. The eastern water views are the greatest single asset of this site, and the beauty of watching the moonrise over the water could add a memorable dimension to an evening at the theatre. At the lower level, this outlook would compete with a foreground view of security fencing, and port vehicles. To build on this site without taking best advantage of the water views would waste a valuable and rare resource.

#### RECOMMENDATION

I strongly support the design Option 2 and recommend that the consultants be advised to further develop this architectural design in continuing consultation with the council, community and users.

#### FURTHER DISCUSSION

Some issues that I believe should be illustrated in the next phases of development of the design include the demonstration of linkages beyond the site in the context of the larger city master plan, including the pedestrian and landscape links from Grafton Street, from Lake Street and from Marina Point. Careful consideration should be given to key vistas from these three approaches, as well as the view from the sea and from Sheridan Street

The advantage of better prospect from the elevated podium does come at the expense of a higher vertical climb to the principal arrival level. This needs to be offset by design strategies that celebrate arrival at the podium level, including the creation of a gentle and comfortable pedestrian rise from the northern approach, the creation of an alluring and attractive major entry from Wharf Street incorporating a safe, comfortable and attractive arrival sequence for people with disabilities

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The consultants presented a possible key *parti* diagram showing a simple built form at the west, south and eastern edges of the site cracking open opposite Grafton Street to reveal a rich and complex 'architectural rainforest' at its core. This is a very appropriate metaphoric key to consider the building as an environment or ecology that will flexibly accommodate a wide variety of uses at different scales. Although quite preliminary, the architectural plans already showing an interestingly informal stepping terrain of decks, amphitheatres and lookouts within the central zone of the scheme, and very schematic indications of a possible oversailing canopy mediating with the volume of the stripped White's Shed.

A second possible *parti* idea discussed was that of a 'townscape' of roof volumes of differing heights and scales. This more fragmentary form would contrast with the bold singularity of the Convention Centre roof and the equally emphatic form of visiting liners. As presented, it would allow opportunities for natural lighting to key backstage spaces, and would provide an interesting roof-scape to be overlooked from possible future tall neighbours. Whether it is an organizational strategy that would be sufficiently compelling or legible from most close vantages is less certain.

As a touchstone for future development the 'architectural rainforest' idea is rich with possibilities for dealing with sun, wind and water as well as the more obvious interplay of architectonic and landscape materials. For the contrast, intrigue or surprise of the internal condition to have full effect, an equally compelling treatment is required for the predominantly blank surfaces to the back-of-house spaces. Although the scheme is designed with a clear and appropriate front and back, the back does have a significant bulk will be the most visible part of the complex from a southern approach. This will present an interesting challenge for the designers.

I have really enjoyed observing the progress of the project to date and have no criticisms, only praise, for the myriad of decisions that have been taken to arrive at the current proposal. I am certainly keen to follow the project's progress to the next phase when some of the key design potentials latent within the scheme are given architectural expression.

Sincerely,



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