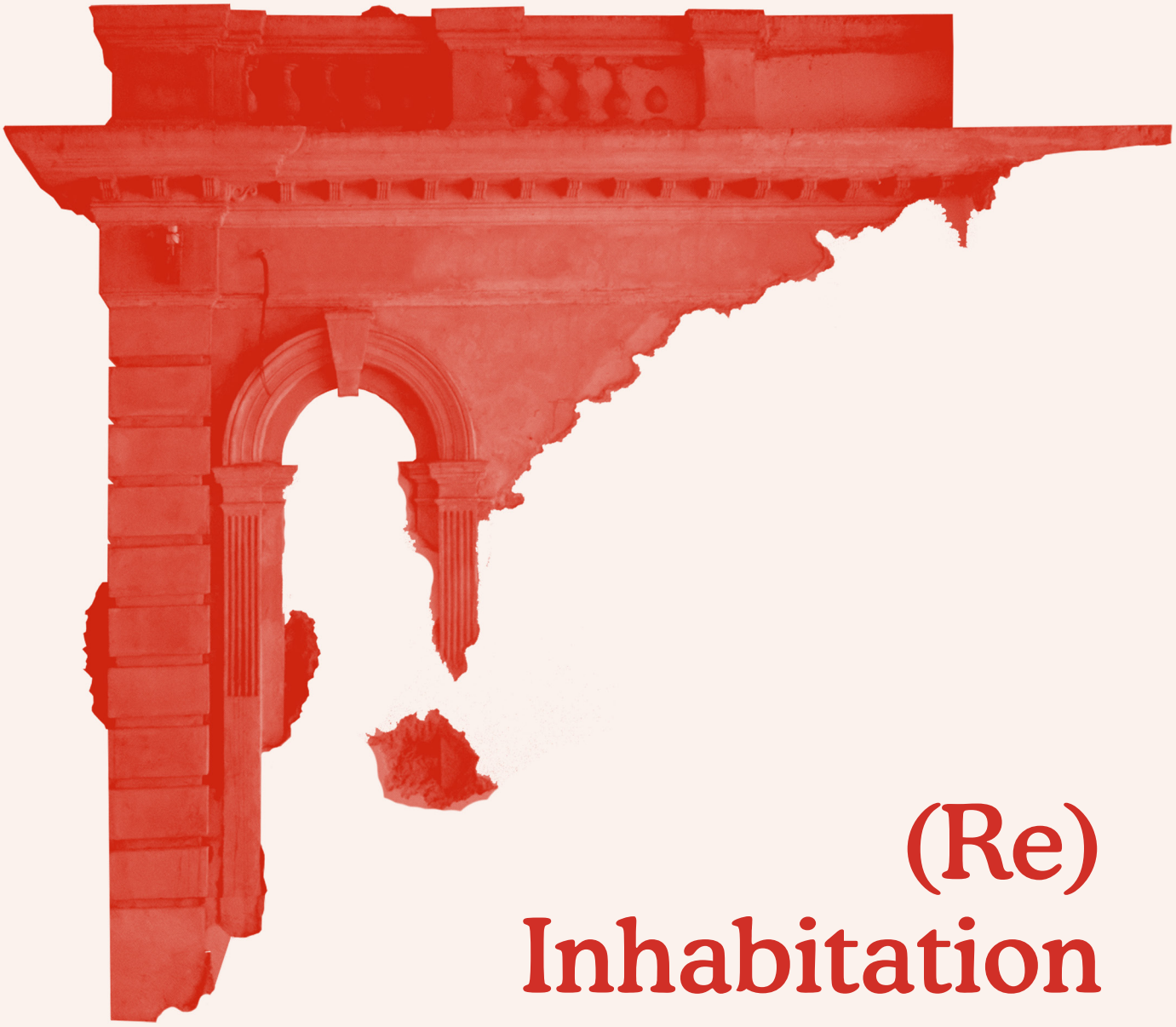

(Re) Inhabitation

Pursuing the Continued Use of Auckland CBD's Disused Heritage Through an Approach of Minimum Intervention

A thesis submitted to Auckland University of Technology in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Architecture (Professional)

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Abstract

Throughout a building's lifespan, cycles of use and disuse are an inevitability. Some spaces however, experience prolonged periods of disuse, creating voids in a once thriving urban fabric. Globally, the issue of disuse is attributable to wider problems: urbanisation, economic decline, climate change effects, violent conflicts, changes in legislation, natural disasters, and demographic shifts.

New Zealand is all too familiar with the effects of natural disasters, and like the rest of the world is feeling the effects of a pandemic and its resulting economic downturn. New Zealand's tectonic setting has not been kind to the European architectural styles of our historical architecture. Today, strict earthquake strengthening regulation has left property owners in a stalemate with local authorities, leading to decay and abandonment. The Auckland Central Business District (CBD) has recently been subject to recurring periods of downturn, notably the development of the Central Rail Link (CRL) Network, and the Covid-19 pandemic. These periods of downturn have repeatedly diminished hopes of regeneration and resulted in an increasing number of spaces becoming vacant or abandoned.

Rooted in the conservation principle of Minimum Intervention, this thesis explores a process of temporary adaptation to support the continued use of abandoned heritage sites, aiming to maintain cultural significance and provide opportunity for wider urban regeneration. While literature exists regarding adaptive reuse of heritage spaces, this thesis focuses specifically on how temporary adaptation can be applied to disused sites in the Auckland Central Business District area. This thesis features an exploration of current and historical methods of adaptive reuse, conservation practice, and temporary architecture, as well as the practical application of these methodologies in key precedents. This exploration identifies conceptual alignment between conservation principles of minimum intervention and the restrained and reversible nature of temporary architecture. Additionally, this analysis identifies how temporary architecture is particularly suited to the reinhabitation of disused sites through its simple construction, accessibility, and atmospheric appeal. This study engages the question: How can temporary adaptive reuse strategies support the reinhabitation of disused cultural heritage sites in Auckland CBD?

This thesis focuses on developing an approach of minimal adaptation to aid the reinhabitation of three disused sites in Auckland CBD: the former Arthur Yates Seed Co. buildings on Albert Street, the former Smith & Caughey flagship store fronting Queen, Wellesley, and Elliott Streets, and the St James Theatre site located between Queen and Lorne Streets. Differences in site context, building typology, and existing communities provide a diversity of challenges to test a design intervention that follows this minimal approach.

This design is guided by a framework that builds upon key methodologies from notable theorists and conservation organisations. The principles of *Minimum Intervention*, *Continued Use*, *Programmatic Flexibility*, and *Sustainable Lifecycles* have been carefully selected to reflect these theories, thus grounding the proposed design outcomes in an applicable discourse and offering a conceptual framework for further studies.

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Attestation of Authorship

"I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor used artificial intelligence tools or generative artificial intelligence tools (unless it is clearly stated, and referenced, along with the purpose of use), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning."

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Glossary

Adaptive Reuse: The process of repurposing often obsolete or abandoned structures for new purposes. Often used as a conservation strategy when restoration is not feasible or appropriate.

Building Abandonment: Refers to the complete desertion of a building, normally over a longer period of time. Unlike Building Disuse, abandonment implies no care, oversight, or maintenance.

Building Disuse: Refers specifically to buildings experiencing a period of non-use.

Building Obsolescence: A leading cause of building disuse, building obsolescence refers to the process of a building becoming outdated, rendering it unable to serve a current useful purpose.

Conservation practice: The practice of identifying, documenting, managing, and caring for places of cultural heritage value (ICOMOS New Zealand, 2010).

Disused sites: A broad term referring to buildings or empty sites experiencing a period of non-use.

Earthquake Prone: Buildings that have been assessed as below 34% of the New Building Standard in accordance with the Earthquake Prone Buildings Register. (Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, n.d.).

Minimum Intervention: This term refers to the conservation practice by which action is taken as much as needed but as little as possible. This term also refers to the physical implementation of structures that intervene as much as needed but as little as possible for the purposes of conservation. (ICOMOS New Zealand, 2010)

Programmatically fixed: A leading cause of obsolescence, this term refers to spaces designed for specialised purposes and are characterised by their inability to adapt to change.

Programmatically flexible: This term refers to spaces designed to adapt to changing programmes throughout a building's lifetime. These spaces adapt easily to change.

Temporary Adaptation: Adaptive reuse over a limited period of time, often intermittently between permanent uses.

Positionality Statement

The Auckland Central Business District has experienced reoccurring periods of hardship over the last decade, resulting in abandoned projects and barren sites. As a university student and frequent CBD-commuter, this decline is something I have witnessed firsthand. Having grown up in Auckland, I feel disappointed that our once thriving city is in such a dire state. As a fifth generation New Zealander, I feel personally connected to sites of cultural heritage value for what they represent as a link to my past. Seeing these sites struggle makes me concerned for the future of our heritage, and state of our cities. My interest in building disuse in Auckland CBD was sparked watching the development of the Arthur Yates buildings and demolition of the ex-Food Alley buildings on Albert Street. My particular interest in temporary and bare-bones architecture started a conversation into how this approach might be applicable to support the reinhabitation of these disused sites, safeguarding them from decay and abandonment.

Figure 2. Modified Image of partically demolished Yates Wharehouse on Moore Street, by Author.

Chapter One

Introduction

An idiosyncrasy in the field of architecture is that in comparison to other industries, our work often lasts far beyond our own lifetimes. We live in buildings fabricated by generations past, and design for generations of the future. This theme of intergenerational space has been repeated across time. Historical theorist John Ruskin describes a sense of guardianship that "we feel in walls that have long been washed by the passing waves of humanity" (1889). Author Stewart Brand describes the "accumulated human investment that an old building shows" (1994), and the 1964 Venice Charter describes old buildings as "Imbued with a message from the past" and "as living witnesses of their age-old traditions." It is this intergenerational use that builds and maintains cultural significance. In a 2020 interview, New Zealand architect Anthony Hoete states, "The significance of these buildings lies not in their material 'bricks and mortar' but in their use, in the past, present and future." (University of Auckland).

Despite the evident respect for these spaces, in New Zealand much of our historical architecture is at risk or has already been lost. Auckland's Historical Background (1971) describes an assumption "that we have little historical architecture because our history is short and does not extend beyond Victorian times" and "that this general sympathy for old buildings and their preservation will increase as our history grows older." Ruskin (1889) describes this attitude as "the benevolent regards and purposes of men in masses seldom can be supposed to extend beyond their own generation." Treating these spaces as assets to pass on rather than resources to use up is key to preserving the broad diversity of cultural heritage that characterises New Zealand buildings, sites, and landscapes. Ultimately, these spaces become a connection to our past and who we are; the value of an old building goes beyond its appearance. Ruskin (1889) describes the consideration of future generations as "planting forests that our decendants may live under their shade."

Post-Pandemic Public Perceptions of Auckland CBD

Like many countries, New Zealand has been feeling the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, and its resulting economic downturn. Regionally, Auckland has suffered the most. In particular, the Auckland Central Business District has seen a major decline in foot traffic, resulting in cancelled projects and store closures. In a 2022 article, Todd Niall writes that there are concerns Auckland is "becoming a crime-ridden ghost town." Three years later, an August 2025 Radio New Zealand article claims that Auckland's shop vacancy rate to be "Highest in the country" with 1 in 8 retail stores in central Auckland empty. The same story is paralleled in CBD office vacancies. GBRE's Q3 2025 report shows CBD office vacancies have continued to rise, sitting at 18.8% in June. Lara-Hernández writes in The Conversation (2024), that changes in working methods fostered by the pandemic have "changed the way we think about office space, and central business districts in general." Chris Beasleigh, Bayleys Real Estate's national director for retail sales and leasing, points out that "If you look at Auckland, it's gone 12 rounds with Mike Tyson. It had [City Rail Link], Covid-19, work from home, and interest rate increases that have dented consumer confidence," (RNZ, 2025).

In August of 2025, Property Editor for The New Zealand Herald Anne Gibson published an article outlining 12 disused sites, ranging from empty office buildings to abandoned heritage. Gibson points out that while the quietness of the city is a hot topic now, some sites have been vacant for nearly four decades. "Big plans for development and many new buildings in Auckland Central remain on hold, have been abandoned or deferred indefinitely, indicating tough times."(Anne Gibson, 2025). Lara-Hernández, (2024), cites building specificity as a cause for vacancy rates in New Zealand. Lara-Hernández claims that despite dropping occupancy rates, "there is demand for high-quality, modern spaces that fit new work and collaboration models." "Throughout history, cities and buildings have been designed with specific functions in mind. As environmental and social needs change, however, these designs struggle to meet contemporary demands.". Lara-Hernández suggests that adaptive reuse will be a key tool moving forward, reasoning that adaptive reuse reduces waste, carbon emissions, and operational energy.

Relevant Legislative Frameworks

As there are many overlapping factors between seismic risk, heritage buildings, and disuse, it is important to investigate the relevant legislative frameworks. In New Zealand, certain organizations and their legislation have influence over how buildings can be used, altered, and demolished. Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga is an autonomous crown entity backed by the New Zealand government. This organisation is responsible for "identifying, protecting and promoting this country's unique cultural heritage." (Heritage New Zealand, 2025). Heritage New Zealand maintains an inventory of buildings they deem worthy of protection and recognition. Advantages to having Heritage New Zealand recognition include: support from the Heritage New Zealand staff in matters relating to council consent processes, and guidance for achieving repair and alterations. Listed status also helps a case for funding, some local boards have funds allocated for owners of heritage places. However, Heritage New Zealand recognition does not provide any protection from demolition or alteration unless also recognised in a relevant

district plan (Heritage New Zealand, 2025). In the Auckland region, this is the Auckland Unitary Plan - Schedule 14.1 Schedule of Historic Heritage. Schedule 14.1 identifies the areas that contribute to a given site's cultural heritage value: Historical, Social, Mana Whenua, Knowledge, Technology, Physical Attributes, Aesthetic, and Context. Schedule 14.1 also gives sites a letter grade to determine their level of protection. Category A gives a place protection from total or substantial demolition, and closely controls modification. Category B provides partial protection from demolition or alteration. Exemptions from protection are listed on the schedule and typically notes the interior(s) of selected buildings exempt from protection.

The Earthquake-Prone Buildings Register is a publicly available list of buildings that have been assessed as 'earthquake prone' (Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, n.d.). To be deemed 'earthquake prone', an existing building is compared with a modern equivalent building, this is referred to as the New Building Standard (NBS). Buildings considered 'earthquake prone' have been rated less than 34% of the New Building Standard. NBS scores are also dictated by region. A building in a 'higher risk' zone i.e. Wellington would score lower than the same building in a lower risk zone i.e. Auckland. Buildings above 67% NBS are considered acceptable seismic risk, buildings between 34% and 67% NBS are considered earthquake risk buildings, and buildings below the 34% NBS threshold are considered 'earthquake prone' (Moutos, 2022). Buildings that have been identified as 'earthquake prone' can still be inhabited, so long as they are not imminently dangerous (Moutos, 2022). Buildings with 'earthquake prone' status are given a statutory Earthquake-Prone Building notice which must be displayed on the building (Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, n.d.). In low seismic risk areas such as Auckland, owners have 35 years from the date the notice is issued to strengthen the building so it is no longer 'earthquake prone' (Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, n.d.).

As of 29th September, 2025, the government has announced future changes to seismic regulation in New Zealand (MBIE, 2025). The changes are aimed to make the earthquake prone buildings system "more risk-based and proportionate, by focusing on higher seismic risk areas and high-risk buildings." (MBIE, 2025). According to MBIE (2025), the proposed changes include:

- Removing low risk buildings and buildings in low seismic zones (Auckland, Northland and the Chatham Islands) from the EPB system.
- Introducing tiered risk mitigation requirements, making use of new engineering methodologies, based on location and building type.
- Allowing building owners to apply for deadline extensions, provided they can meet key criteria.
- Reducing barriers to seismic strengthening by removing the requirement for concurrent fire and accessibility upgrades.

According to MBIE (2025), the integration of the proposed changes would result in:

- around 55% of EPBs (around 2,900 buildings) will be removed from the EPB system
- around 1,440 EPBs will have more affordable remediation requirements
- 840 EPBs will have no mandatory requirement for remedial work, and
- only around 80 buildings will require a full retrofit due to the risk they pose.

For buildings experiencing disuse because of 'earthquake prone' status, this will make restoration, adaptation and ultimately re-inhabitation a far easier process.

Research Question

Temporary adaptive reuse strategies present a potential alternative to the disuse and abandonment of cultural heritage sites. This thesis explores how these strategies can be applied to disused cultural heritage sites across the Auckland Central Business District area, with the aim of maintaining cultural heritage value through continued use.

This exploration is guided by the question:

How can temporary adaptive reuse strategies support the reinhabitation of disused cultural heritage sites in Auckland CBD?

Aims & Objectives

This thesis focuses on developing a principles-led design outcome suitable to support the reinhabitation of identified disused cultural heritage sites in Auckland CBD, and test this design outcome specifically across selected sites with varying design challenges.

This research aims to identify key methodologies and conservation organisations relevant in the discourse around building disuse globally and locally. Guided by principles from these key theorists and conservation organisations, this design aims to showcase the concept of temporary adaptation in the pursuit of continued use of cultural heritage sites in Auckland CBD. Continued use of these spaces ensures that cultural heritage significance is maintained, and buildings do not continue to suffer the physical and cultural degradation experienced in their current state of disuse.

Guided by exploration of common disuse themes, this research aims to identify the extent of disused heritage across the Auckland CBD area and identify specific sites that can be used to test design interventions. The former Arthur Yates Seed Co. buildings, the former Smith & Caughey flagship store, and the St James Theatre site, have been selected for their high cultural heritage value, and their differences in architectural use typology, heritage recognition, and extent of disuse. This aims to provide planned interventions with a variety of challenges to overcome, testing it to the fullest. This specific implementation is guided by a designed approach, which aims to identify the challenges associated with each site prior to activation. This designed approach aims to establish site conditions, appropriate programme selection in accordance with existing communities and conservation principles, the assembly and disassembly of structures, and the running of facilities.

Scope

This thesis outlines the extent of heritage building disuse in Auckland Central Business District, and explores the reinhabitation of these disused sites through an approach guided by temporary adaptive reuse strategies outlined by key theorists, conservation organisations, and precedents.

While this thesis addresses in detail disused cultural heritage sites in the Auckland CBD area, it does not detail wider CBD building disuse.

This research uncovers key theories from theorists and conservation organisations within wider and local contexts of building disuse. Specifically, this research focusses on causes of disuse locally and globally, historical and modern treatment of decay, and the sustainable motivations driving adaptive reuse.

This thesis outlines the design of a minimally intervening construction system, a framework for its implementation, and its deployment on selected test sites. However this thesis does not address the legislative and governmental boundaries preventing such intervention in detail.

Limitations

A challenge faced in the investigation of disused sites across Auckland CBD was the availability of information. Ultimately, this thesis pivots towards a focus on disused cultural heritage sites where information availability was less of a problem, however this would be a limiting factor for broadening this research.

A challenge faced throughout the research process, was the rapidly changing built environment this thesis is situated within. Due to the constantly evolving nature of cities, there is a limit to the validity of information regarding the specific current state of selected sites.

While investigation of disused sites in Auckland CBD provides insight into the state of the city, limited sample size puts limitations of how this information can be used to draw wider conclusions from. This challenge is also a limiting factor in broadening the scope of this research.

Chapter Structure

Chapter Two – Literature Review

This chapter establishes the foundational ideas and temporary adaptive reuse strategies that later develop a design framework. This chapter also addresses the issues leading to disuse locally and generally, key modern and historical conservation discourse, treatment of decay, the importance of continued use, approaches to building adaptation, and the sustainable motivations driving adaptive reuse's increase in popularity. These key ideas build the foundation for a design framework that guides the thesis.

Chapter Three – Case Studies

This chapter analyses 5 precedents of local, global, and conceptual approaches to selected design framework principles. The Imperial Buildings demonstrate successful adaptive reuse of a culturally significant space in downtown Auckland, though have fallen short in the availability of access. Cedric Price's The Fun Palace offers a unique approach to programme that directly challenges the stagnant, change resistant approach to construction that has shaped our cities and greatly contributed to obsolescence. The Baroque Museum of Catalonia underscores the delicate balance of minimum intervention concerning the adaptation of culturally significant space. The Pop-up Globe highlights the validity of temporary event space in the locally situated context of Auckland CBD. The Transitional Cathedral demonstrates the successful conservation of non-tangible cultural heritage values through the successful deployment of a temporary structure.

Chapter Four - Research Methodologies

This chapter outlines the applied methodologies to uncover the extent of disused heritage in the Auckland Central Business District area. Literature review has been used as a key methodology to outline common themes within the wider discourse around building disuse, and identify the recurring trends that contribute to the issue generally, and in local contexts. Specifically, 'earthquake prone' and heritage status were identified as leading contributors in a New Zealand context. The investigation of these building typologies combined with cross referencing from site-viewings, real estate listings, newspaper articles, and Google Earth imagery has been documented through mapping and tabling exercises. These exercises reveal 30 disused sites across Auckland CBD, varying in construction, programme, and heritage/'earthquake prone' status. This initial investigation reveals a high concentration of disused sites in the Albert Street area. Driven by this discovery, this chapter also features an investigation into the extent of heritage buildings in the Albert Street area to establish the extent of heritage and protection status placed upon these sites. These investigations inform the site selection process detailed in the following chapter: *Selected Sites*.

Chapter Five – Selected Sites

Using key principles and temporary adaptive reuse strategies outlined in *Design Framework* (*Chapter 2: Literature Review*), and key findings outlined in *Chapter 4 Research Methodologies*, three sites are strategically selected to cover a range of architectural use typology, heritage recognition, and extent of disuse. This diversity in contexts across multiple sites allows design interventions to be tested to their fullest.

The former Arthur Yates Seed Co. site has historically been used for commercial purposes. A demolition in 2021/22 left much of the site empty. The site features the former Arthur Yates Seed Co. office and retail building, listed Category B as per the Auckland Unitary Plan Schedule 14.1 Schedule of Historic Heritage (Auckland Council, n.d.). This site provides opportunity for reinhabitation featuring interior and exterior space. The Smith and Caughey's flagship store recently closed in 2025, and features entirely interior ex-retail space. The site consists of four buildings, including one Category A and one Category B listed building as per the Auckland Unitary Plan Schedule 14.1 Schedule of Historic Heritage (Auckland Council, n.d.). The St James Theatre and ex-Theatre Centre site is situated in a historically established performing arts precinct. The theatre itself, (a category A Listed building as per the Auckland Unitary Plan Schedule 14.1 Schedule of Historic Heritage) (Auckland Council, n.d.) is in a process of restoration, however the external site created following the 2015/16 demolition of the Theatre Centre presents an opportunity for exterior intervention.

Chapter Six – Design

This chapter features the design and integration of a modular intervention that directly responds to the key principles and temporary adaptive reuse strategies outlined *Design Framework* in *Chapter 2: Literature Review*. This chapter covers the integration of this system in selected test sites featured in *Chapter Five: Selected Sites*. This process is led by a guide to implementation, which outlines 6 phases: Establishing Site Conditions, Programme Development, Spatial Strategy, Assembly, Activation, and Disassembly and Storage. Using this guide, each site outlines programme and site conditions before addressing them with a spatial strategy. Together, this process reveals the areas in which this particular approach to adaptation excels, and the areas in which it falls short.

Figure 3. Modified Image Blackett's Building on Queen Street, by Author.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

This literature review situates adaptive reuse within the wider discourse around building obsolescence, applicable conservation principles, sustainability and carbon reduction, and building disuse in New Zealand. The scope of this review draws on modern and historical conservation theory, literature discussing adaptive reuse, literature discussing building obsolescence, and research addressing building disuse in New Zealand. Together, selected texts are arranged around seven key sections: *The Risk of Anticipating Function, Historical Conservation Attitudes to Decay, Patina and Signs of Aging, Sustainable Drivers for Building Adaptation, Balancing Sustainable Intentions with Conservation Ideologies, Obsolescence and Adaptation in New Zealand* and *Applicable Conservation Principles.* These key sections establish a framework to deepen understandings of how temporary architecture methodologies can be designed to support the reinhabitation of disused sites in Auckland CBD. This established framework grounds the later design-led exploration of these methodologies on selected test

The Risk of Anticipating Function

Designing programmatically fixed spaces has led to obsolescence and low potential for adaptation in our built environments. Cisem Soylu suggests there needs to be a transformation in architecture away from permanent construction ideals and towards "Short-Termism". Soylu suggests that this move is better suited to the recent decrease in building lifespans and natural resources, a particularly relevant concern amidst the current climate crisis. A temporal approach would allow buildings to be disassembled, relocated, and reused. In *How Buildings Learn* (1994), Stewart Brand explains that architectural practice has been misled into predicting function, stating that "Sullivan's form-follows-function misled a century of architects into believing that they could really anticipate function". Designing programmatically fixed spaces may suit primary uses but comes at the cost of reusability and adaptation potential. Brand further suggests that no buildings adapt well, that they are not designed, financed, regulated, constructed, or taxed to, but despite it all they adapt anyway (1994). If Brand's claim is true, then designing programmatically fixed spaces only increases the waste of energy, time, and money between each cycle of use. The frustration with programmatically fixed buildings and their resulting obsolescence is shared by 20th century architect Cedric Price. In his proposal for a flexible university, Cedric Price (1964) describes the operations of the city as working "in a constipated way". Price believes that obsolete buildings and the limitations they place on use prevents total enjoyment. At a city-wide level, programmatically fixed spaces greatly increase the waste produced between uses. Price proposes that at a human scale it even impacts the enjoyment we feel in these spaces. The suggestion of a move towards programmatically flexible spaces is mirrored in the 2017 text *Ephemeral Urbanism: Looking at Extreme Temporalities*. Rahul Mehrotra and Filipe Vera introduce the modern city as 'kinetic' and always in a constant state of change as if it were alive. This perception of a city allows us to see the changing roles of people and spaces within urban society and start to comprehend the waste that occurs with each cycle of change. Mehrotra and Vera suggest a move towards temporary and versatile construction (2017).

Historical Conservation Attitudes to Decay

While the causes of building disuse and its resulting decay can be measured without doubt, the treatment of abandoned and decayed buildings (particularly heritage buildings) can be subjective and has sparked much debate throughout history. In the late 19th century, theorist John Ruskin believed that restoration "means the most total destruction which a building can suffer, a destruction out of which no remnants can be gathered: a destruction accompanied with false description of the thing destroyed." (1889). Over the same period, the Gothic Revival movement in France conversely valued a liberal approach in the restorative process of many of France's historic monuments. Bressani (2014) explains they were not concerned by methods of construction that align correctly with conservation ideals in the effort to restore France's old ecclesiastical monuments. Viollet-Le-Duc, a key figure involved in the Gothic Revival movement, is accredited with these views. Shabnam Mehr (2019) explains the works carried out by Viollet-le-Duc for restorative purposes were extensive and often included new additions. Mehr gives a name to this liberal approach: Stylistic Restoration. Mehr argues that Ruskin disapproved of this approach to restoration because of its sterile nature and believed that the reproduction of original styles was an insult to the original creators. Ruskin (1889) notes that "The building cannot be resurrected no more than the dead workmen who crafted it", suggesting that the original building is lost alongside the original workmen. It is this belief reflected in the first ICOMOS Charter (Venice Charter, 1964), stating that "All reconstruction work should

however be ruled out "a priori"". Today, this approach to conservation is evident across the ICOMOS New Zealand Charter (2010). Principles such as Minimum intervention, Respect for surviving evidence and knowledge, and Use, all advocate for an approach that protects and respects authentic evidence of use, utilising strategies such as reversibility to achieve this.

Patina and Signs of Aging

Similarly to Ruskin, other theories advocate for the preservation of signs of age, recognising them as authentic evidence of use. The appreciation of signs of age is reflected in the Japanese philosophy of Wabi-Sabi. Andrew Juniper (2003) describes the key idea of Wabi-Sabi as recognising natural material degradation as an aesthetic improvement, rather than deterioration. In *Buildings Must Die* (2014), Jacobs and Cairns write that 19th century theorist Alois Riegl embraced signs of age, believing that they expressed a historical building's true significance without the need for prior knowledge. Jacobs and Cairns (2014) further describe the conflicting opinions of theorists Reigl and French architect Le Corbusier. While Wabi-Sabi and Reigl recognize changes in surface as "Patina", Le Corbusier on the other hand, "bluntly disdained Patina as a careless accumulation of dirt" (Jacobs and Cairns, 2014). Alois Reigl believed that giving in to aging aligns with boundaries set by nature. (Jacobs and Cairns, 2014). Juniper (2003) believes that Wabi-Sabi directly opposes these western values of permanence and perfection, claiming that perfection is unattainable, and therefore unnatural. Juniper further argues that Wabi-Sabi is a naturally occurring concept, and more logical than fulfilling the impossible task of perfection. Juniper criticises modern design principles reflected in Le Corbusier's view of patina, claiming it is unnatural to "defy the natural aging effects of time" (Juniper, 2003). This approach is reflected in the ICOMOS New Zealand Charter (2010) principal Respect for surviving evidence and knowledge, advocating to retain all authentic evidence of use.

Sustainable Drivers for Building Adaptation

Ureche-Trifu, (2013), argues that in order to maintain cultural significance, continued use of significant spaces is paramount. James Douglas, (2002), writes that conservation is typically stimulated by this need to ensure continued use. Douglas adds that the concept of adaptive reuse is therefore about ensuring the long-term future of buildings threatened by disuse. Savoie et al (2025), suggests that adaptive reuse is a promising and appropriate solution to disuse, as it balances conservation aims with contemporary needs and commercial feasibility. Recent decades have seen an increase in adaptive reuse, largely due to carbon awareness being pushed by climate goals. Griffiths et al., (2022), point out that "Buildings are reported to account for 36% of global final energy use and 39% of energy and process-related CO2 emissions." As adaptation of dilapidated buildings has become more common to reduce embodied carbon, retrofitting current building stock to reduce operational carbon has also become a priority. Lanz & Pendlebury, (2022), and Griffiths et al, (2022) both acknowledge that carbon is being increasingly recognised as a priority for the construction industry. Besen and Boarin (2023), state that researchers and organizations in the heritage space are now acknowledging the need to retrofit buildings to reduce their environmental impact and adapt to the current state of our climate, thus ensuring that our historical sites are maintained for years to come. Guidetti & Ferrara (2023), acknowledge that as the world moves toward a more circular economy, increased importance is being put on the embodied energy of buildings.

Guidetti & Ferrara suggest that embodied energy has the potential to become an asset that can drive further reuse and preservation, as long as it can be accurately studied (2023). When considering demolition over reuse, Guidetti & Ferrara suggest first considering the embodied energy in the existing structures and looking at it as an investment from the past. Griffiths et al, (2022), acknowledge the praise of adaptive reuse regarding extending a building's lifespan, and reducing waste through lower material consumption. While adaptive reuse is being raised as a priority, Besen and Boarin (2023) add that there is a gap in knowledge regarding the integration of energy and seismic upgrading in New Zealand and internationally.

Balancing Sustainable Intentions with Conservation Ideologies

As discussed, it is widely agreed that energy retrofit for older buildings (heritage or otherwise), is a step in the right direction for ensuring future use and sustainable lifecycles within our built environments, however concerns are raised regarding the effects these systems will have on the authenticity of heritage spaces. Ureche-Trifu (2013), argues that sustainability seems to often be prioritised over conservation, that heritage is being destroyed in the name of constructing more efficient buildings. Douglas (2002) shares this belief, claiming it is a regular occurrence that adaptation works do irreversible damage to historically significant buildings. With modern conservation principles advocating for minimum intervention, there is conflict between carbon reduction and conservation principles.

Ureche-Trifu argues that minimum intervention is a difficult balance, but ultimately suggests that a decision against adaptation or retrofit could have a more detrimental impact than intervention in the long run (2013). The ICOMOS New Zealand Charter (2010) defines Minimum Intervention as doing the "minimum necessary to ensure the retention of tangible and intangible values and the continuation of uses integral to those values." So, while it is essential to do the minimum necessary, the charter acknowledges that continued use of a space is the goal. If the shared goal of sustainability and conservation is to ensure continued use, and not sit as forgotten relics of the past, then retrofit and adaptation to meet efficiency goals is surely a shared belief, even if at the cost of maintaining complete authenticity. Douglas (2002) argues that where possible, applying a reversible approach would ensure authenticity is maintained while still providing opportunity for retrofit and adaptation.

In *Temporary Use of Abandoned Buildings,* Marie Joja (2021) suggests an interim solution to building abandonment through temporary use. Joja recognises that empty buildings are a valuable resource for urban development, and suggests many disused sites could provide an interim function while a building's permanent future is being decided. This approach particularly suits disused heritage for three specific reasons. For one, an interim use ensures continued use, thus maintaining cultural heritage. Secondly, temporary structures intervene minimally by nature, thus respecting culturally significant fabric, and allowing future restoration. Lastly, temporary use ends the stalemate of decay between property owners and legislative boundaries, as they respect the original fabric of the building while providing a more economically viable alternative to full restoration or permanent adaptive reuse. Joja (2021), argues that the goal of temporary intervention is to spark an "impulse for urban renewal" and become a catalyst for permanent change.

Obsolescence and Adaptation in New Zealand

Early colonial buildings in New Zealand were certainly built with permanence in mind, but not necessarily longevity. Much like the Brutalist movement post World-War II, early colonial buildings display strong and bold features designed to anchor communities in uncertain times. A lack of knowledge regarding seismic risk and supporting technologies have contributed to low levels of seismic resilience among buildings of this era. Eiby (1975) explains that seismic risks in New Zealand were not widely known until the Marlborough earthquakes of 1848, and not taken seriously until the following century, largely due to the greater-feared risk of fire.

In more recent times, these attitudes towards construction have led to much of our heritage being lost. The Christchurch 2011 earthquake revealed the devastating effects on unprepared structures in major seismic events. The Building (Earthquake-prone Buildings) Amendment Act 2016 established a national Earthquake Prone Buildings system aiming to better recognise 'earthquake prone' buildings across the country, and prevent repetition of the effects experienced by Christchurch in 2011 (Office of the Minister for Building and Construction, 2025). While this introduced legislation has undoubtedly increased New Zealand's seismic resilience as a whole, the reality of major seismic upgrading, particularly for heritage buildings has proven to be uneconomical for many. This has left affected buildings in a stalemate with legislative boundaries, ultimately leading to decay and abandonment.

In *Why are older inner-city buildings vacant? Implications for town centre regeneration,* Yakubu et al. (2017), recognise that increasing vacancy rates of older buildings is adversely affecting the socio-economic growth in many New Zealand provincial towns, and claim that the prevalence of vacant buildings in these areas represents an obvious result of urban decay Yakubu et al. (2017), describe how neighbourhoods are tainted with the detrimental impacts of older building vacancy, including increased crime, potential risk to children, a reduction of neighbouring property prices, and greater fire risk. The paper identifies building conditions, social factors, economic factors, and building regulations to be the main contributors to older-building vacancies. While economic and social factors tend to be universal and independent of place, governmental regulations can vary greatly. In seismically active regions such as New Zealand, seismic regulation plays a key role in keeping structures safe, however the economic viability of seismic upgrades for older buildings has left many abandoned (Yakubu et al., 2017). Furthermore, buyers are hard to find for these sites as seismic status makes property loans and insurance hard to secure, and major tenants (i.e. government offices) often require double the minimum %NBS rating to begin tenancy (Yakubu et al., 2017).

In *Identifying parameters for a performance-based framework: Towards prioritising underutilised historical buildings for adaptive reuse in New Zealand* (2020), Aigwi et al. explain that adaptive reuse strategies are a promising alternative to building abandonment in New Zealand, and cite economic reasons for increasing interest in adaptive reuse strategy. Furthermore, this process suits heritage spaces as many are obsolete in their current form, but incapable of demolition or serious change due to listed status (Aigwi et al., 2020). Aigwi et al. further suggest that adaptive reuse is a feasible approach to promote seismic resilience, as adaptive reuse would trigger seismic retrofit requirements (2020). Griffiths et al., (2022), suggest that from a carbon-cost point of view, adaptive reuse may not be as viable in seismically active zones like New Zealand due to the high embodied carbon of seismically strengthening steel, claiming that it is not as simple as just replacing a building's exterior. Also mentioned, is that while embodied carbon may be less, operational carbon will likely be higher than a comparative new build. Griffiths et

al. (2022), suggest an approach that integrates both operational and embodied carbon is needed to ensure sustainability goals are met.

Applicable Conservation Principles

The ICOMOS NZ (International Council on Monuments and Sites New Zealand) Charter (2010) suggests appropriate means of intervention for the conservation of places of cultural heritage value. The charter outlines various principles designed to guide conservation processes with widely agreed upon approaches to conservation. When considering a temporary approach to the adaptation of disused heritage in Auckland CBD, 3 key principles stand out as most applicable, namely Minimum intervention, Use, and Respect for surviving evidence and knowledge (ICOMOS New Zealand, 2010). **Respect for surviving evidence and knowledge** emphasises the need to maintain and reveal the authenticity and integrity of place. This includes recognition of tangible and intangible values, all surviving evidence and knowledge regardless of the period, and without unwarranted emphasis of any one value over another. In the case of evidence removal, assessment must show its loss does not adversely affect the cultural value of place. Functions and intangible values are respected. **Use** advocates that conservation is supported by active or ongoing use of place. Therefore, uses integral to place should be retained. While change of use is acceptable, new uses should not adversely affect the cultural value of place. **Minimum Intervention** states that any level of conservation should intervene to the least possible degree in accordance with other charter principles. The overall goal of intervention should be to support all heritage values and the ongoing use of place.

The Burra Charter is the ICOMOS Australia Charter for Places of Cultural Significance (2013). While the overall messages between the New Zealand Charter and the Burra charter are shared, the Burra charter makes some key distinctions when discussing the previously mentioned themes. In particular, the charter describes a “Cautious approach”, stressing the importance to do “as much as necessary but as little as possible” (2013).

Historic England (2015) has a guide to temporary structures in historically significant spaces. With a primary focus on events, this Guide aims to mitigate negative effects of temporary structures and the associated servicing of them. They recognise that events play a crucial role in the economic viability of operating historic spaces. Temporary structures can bring in a wider range of visitors, encourage repeat visits, enable a wider range of activities, increase site capacity, remove the need for more permanent forms of structure and accommodate events that may not be appropriate inside historically significant sites themselves. In most cases, effects of temporary structures for events will be net-positive, however careless approaches can lead to the disfiguration and damage of sites and landscapes of importance. In addition to the structures themselves, damage can be caused by the servicing of them. Namely carparking, footfall, deliveries, security, signage, and connection to utilities all carry potential risk. Also noted is that ticket-only events could exclude the public from accessing otherwise public areas. Historic England stress the potential adverse “Visual impact” of temporary structures. While they fail to define what exactly this means, they do suggest it relates to the positioning of temporary structures so as to not impede on the existing historical place. For larger structures this means preserving important views of the existing historical site, for facilities this means strategies such as screening to hide bins, generators, and toilets.

Design Framework

Summarising Key Principles to Inform a Design Framework

Drawing from key principles in the ICOMOS NZ Charter, The Burra Charter, Historic England's guide to temporary structures, and key themes featured in Chapter 2: Literature Review, this theoretical framework guides the thesis, which aims to explore an approach of minimum intervention in the adaptation of disused sites in Auckland Central Business District.

Within the ICOMOS NZ Charter, 3 key principles are highly pertinent to the research question. These principles are: Minimum Intervention, Respect for Surviving Evidence and Knowledge, and Use. Within *Chapter Two: Literature Review*, key themes are drawn out, namely Minimum Intervention, Continued Use, Programmatic Flexibility, and Sustainable Lifecycles.

Key Theorists from Literature review:

In section 1: *The Risk of Anticipating function*, Price (1964), Soylu (2019), Brand (1994), and Mehrota & Vera (2017) express frustration with programmatically fixed spaces and the legacy of obsolescence they leave behind. They suggest a shift towards programmatic flexibility in our built environments to reduce waste between use-cycles.

In section 2: *Historical Conservation Attitudes to Decay*, Ruskin (1889), Bressani (2014), and the Venice Charter (1964), introduce foundational conservation methodologies, and express their disapproval of stylised restorative practice.

In section 3: *Patina and Signs of Aging*, Juniper (2003), and Jacobs & Cairns (2014) advocate for the celebration of patina, recognising its value as a representation of authentic use.

In section 4: *Sustainable Drivers for Building Adaptation*, Lanz & Pendlebury (2022), Griffiths et al. (2022), and Besen and Boarin (2023) and Guidetti & Ferrara (2023), acknowledge the changing world attitudes towards sustainable building practice, and suggest adaptive reuse as a strategy to reduce the waste footprint of the construction industry.

In section 5: *Balancing Sustainable Intentions with Conservation Ideologies*, Uriche-Trifu (2013), and Douglas (2002) express the need to ensure continued use of culturally significant spaces to maintain their cultural significance. Also acknowledged is the delicate balance of conservation work, particularly in today's era with sustainable motivations pushing heritage retrofit. Joja (2021) suggests a promising solution in the form of temporary adaptive reuse to end the stalemate between property owners and legislative boundaries.

In section 6: *Obsolescence and Adaptation in New Zealand*, Yakubu et al. (2017), and Aigwi et al. (2020), recognise the problem of disuse among heritage in New Zealand and suggest adaptive reuse as a more economically viable strategy to restoration, and to provide opportunity for seismic strengthening.

In section 7: *Applicable Conservation Principles*, key guidelines relevant to the adaptation of disused sites are drawn out from The ICOMOS New Zealand Charter (2010), The Burra Charter (2013), and Historic England (2015).

Key Ideas from Literature review:

Minimum Intervention stresses the importance of doing "as much as necessary but as little as possible". Intervening minimally ensures surviving evidence and knowledge is preserved, allowing the showcase of a buildings authentic evidence of use.

Continued Use of cultural heritage spaces is integral to the maintenance of cultural heritage significance. Any interventions should aim to support ease of continued use.

Programmatic Flexibility ensures that interventions do not suffer from obsolescence: the condition that likely contributed to the host building's initial abandonment. This flexibility should naturally occur when aiming for minimum intervention.

Sustainable Lifecycles. A key driving factor of adaptive reuse is the opportunity to utilise the embodied carbon in existing buildings. The consideration of carbon and waste reduction will be of high importance when creating an argument for adaptation in Auckland CBD.

	Description	Key Theorists
Minimum Intervention	Minimum intervention stresses the importance of doing “as much as necessary but as little as possible”. Intervening minimally ensures surviving evidence and knowledge is preserved, allowing the showcase of a building’s authentic evidence of use.	Ruskin (1889), Juniper (2003), and Jacobs & Cairns (2014)
Continued Use	Continued use of cultural heritage spaces is integral to the maintenance of cultural heritage significance. Any interventions should aim to support ease of continued use.	Uriche-Trifu (2013), Douglas (2002), and The ICOMOS New Zealand Charter (2010)
Programmatic Fexiblity	Programmatic flexibility ensures that interventions do not suffer from obsolescence: the condition that likely contributed to the host building’s initial abandonment. This flexibility should naturally occur when aiming for minimal intervention.	Joja (2021), , Price (1964), Soylu (2019), Brand (1994), and Mehrota & Vera (2017)
Sustainable Lifecycles	A key driving factor of modern adaptive reuse is the opportunity to utilise the embodied carbon in existing buildings. The consideration of carbon and waste reduction will be of high importance when creating an argument for adaptation in Auckland CBD.	Lanz & Pendlebury (2022), Griffiths et al. (2022), Besen and Boarin (2023), Guidetti & Ferrara (2023), Yakubu et al. (2017), and Aigwi et al. (2020)

Figure 4. Key Design Framework principles and key theorists, by Author.

Figure 5. Modified Image of Imperial Hotel (Former) on Queen Street, by Author.

Chapter Three

Case Studies

The Imperial Buildings
Demonstrates Minimum Intervention, Continued Use.

The Fun Palace
Demonstrates Minimum Intervention, Programmatic Flexibility, Sustainable Lifecycles.

Baroque Museum of Catalonia
Demonstrates Minimum Intervention, Continued Use.

Pop up Globe
Demonstrates Programmatic Flexibility, Minimum Intervention.

Transitional Cathedral
Demonstrates Minimum intervention, Continued Use.

The Imperial Buildings

Demonstrates Minimum Intervention, Continued Use.

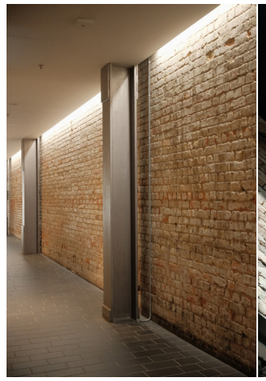

Figure 6. Image of Imperial Buildings Entry, by Author.

Figure 7. Image of Imperial Buildings Stairwell, by Author.

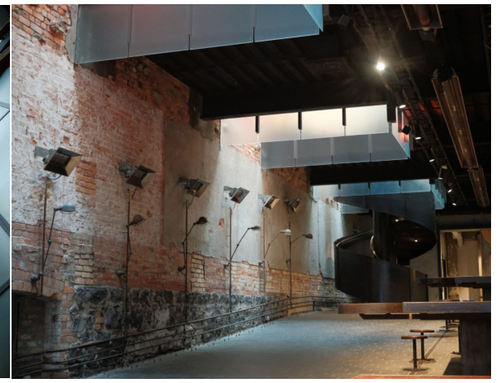

Figure 8. Image of Imperial Buildings Fort Lane side, by Author.

The Imperial Buildings, built between 1886 and 1911, are a cluster of heritage spaces on Auckland's lower Queen Street. In 2013 the project led by Fearon Hay architects was completed to unify the spaces (Fearon Hay Architects, n.d.). The project is a key example of modern adaptive reuse of historic heritage in Auckland, New Zealand.

While minor subtractions had to be made for the spaces to be inhabitable, it is evident that the architects followed an approach of minimum intervention regarding the additions to the spaces (Honey, 2012). Staircases, a café, and upper floor spaces sit lightly between exposed historic brick. A sleek material palette of dark steel and frosted glass complements the industrial character of the existing structure. In addition to these insertions, the complex also introduces a new link between Queen Street and Fort Lane. The addition of a throughfare might seem like an effective way to increase foot traffic, though its execution makes one question if this was the true intention. On the Fort Lane side, a steel gate ensures after-hours access is denied. On the Queen Street side, a narrow accessway and limited signage ensures the Lane feels private and exclusive. Imperial Lane shows the attractiveness of a sensitive approach to adaptive reuse in New Zealand. It also shows the reality of attracting people to a project once the initial excitement has settled. While the project's recent unpopularity can be accredited to a slow economy, there are undeniable factors that limit its full potential. Overall, this precedent demonstrates a relatively successful application of Minimum Intervention and Continued Use principles.

The Fun Palace

Demonstrates Minimum Intervention, Programmatic Flexibility, Sustainable Lifecycles.

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Figure 9. Drawing of Cedric Price's Fun Palace (Medium, n.d.)

Fed up with the boring, change resistant construction of the city, Cedric Price set out to design a structure that encompasses ephemerality and fun. Cedric Price's *The Fun Palace* was a conceptual building developed for a site in east London in 1965. As the name may suggest, the proposal was far from conventional. Planned to have just a 10-year lifespan, the Palace would have a constantly changing "non-programme" programme (Price, 1968). This proposed ephemerality would be made possible by a temporary steel grid system. This approach to construction was a major design element as it enabled approaches to design normally unavailable with traditional structures (Price, 1968). The proposal suggests all types of programmes, from an inflatable conference hall to a moving catwalk. Price claimed the Palace would be all about its informality, explaining that no single element is to last beyond a decade, some things not even 10 days, and there shall be no fixed programmatic elements waiting for time to make them obsolete (Price, 1968). This ephemeral attitude to structure and programme would have no doubt ensured excitement for first and multiple-time visitors alike. While the project never fully came to fruition, it is undeniably a testament to adaptability and excitement. This precedent demonstrates the possibilities of space creation when permanence is not a limiting factor.

Baroque Museum of Catalonia

Demonstrates Minimum Intervention, Continued Use.

Figure 10. Image of Baroque Museum of Catalonia interior accessway, (Closes, 2024).

Figure 11. Image of Baroque Museum of Catalonia Exterior, (Closes, 2024).

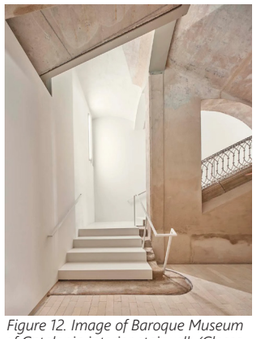

Figure 12. Image of Baroque Museum of Catalonia interior stairwell, (Closes, 2024).

Having completed a similar style restoration on a church just five years earlier, David Closes Architects were tasked with an old Saint Ignatius College, whose church has been demolished but parts of the old Jesuit college remained (David Closes, 2024). The resulting building houses the Baroque Museum of Catalonia and is designed to link together the existing historical buildings on site. Prior to intervention, it is evident the site was in a poor state, and deciding the site's future would have been no easy task. The decision to go with adaptation over other conservation strategies in this case allows the site to continue use without extensive restorative works that would have compromised the authenticity and integrity of place. Maintaining the authenticity of place has been done through various interventions that clearly differentiate from the original fabric in colour, material, and geometry. The outlines of the church structure can still be seen on the existing college walls, braced by an introduced aluminium frame (Schillaci, 2024). A similar approach has been taken with an existing dilapidated stairwell; it has been partially covered to ensure functionality while also showcasing the historic fabric underneath. A series of geometric, vivid, steel frames create access points for the museum, distinctly differentiating between new and old. While this differentiation has evidently been done with conservation principles in mind, it is clear that permanent, non-reversible work was done to achieve the desired look. This approach is therefore contradictory and makes one question the authenticity of the original spaces themselves. Overall, this precedent demonstrates successful and unsuccessful approaches to minimum intervention. This precedent does demonstrate successful Continued Use.

Pop-up Globe

Demonstrates Programmatic Flexibility, Minimum Intervention.

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Figure 13. Image of Pop-up Globe, (Central School of Speech and Drama, n.d.)

The Pop-up Globe is a full-scale mobile replica of the early 17th century 2nd Globe theatre. Appearing first in downtown Auckland in 2016, The Globe closed in New Zealand to tour other countries in 2020 (Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, n.d.). This precedent employs the use of an already well-established temporary construction method, scaffolding, to create a temporary entertainment space. The temporary nature of the intervention removes the limitations of a more permanent structure. It can more easily adapt to conditional changes, all while creating an excitement that comes with limited time events. The man credited with the direction of the Globe, Dr Miles Gregory exclaims how thrilling the temporary nature of the huge theatre is, and the excitement of being able to attend a space that is a popped-up element from our past (Awde, 2016). Overall, the project demonstrates the viability of a large-scale temporary entertainment space in the local context of Auckland, New Zealand.

The Transitional Cathedral

Demonstrates Minimum Intervention, Continued Use.

Figure 14. Image of Transitional Cathedral Exterior, by Author.

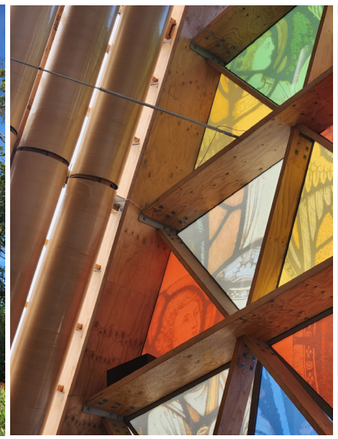


Figure 15. Image of Transitional Cathedral interior window, by Author.

Figure 16. Image of Transitional Cathedral structure, by Author.

In 2011, a magnitude 6.3 earthquake left much of Christchurch in disrepair. Two years later, Shigeru Ban architects produced The Transitional Cathedral as a temporary place of worship for those who had lost Christchurch Cathedral as their place of religious practice (Shigeru Ban, 2025). A large component of the original cathedral's cultural heritage value is in the community around it. This existing community is an example of "Intangible Values" as represented in *Respect for surviving evidence and knowledge* in the ICOMOS New Zealand Charter (2010). While the original cathedral and cathedral site could not continue to be used, The Transitional Cathedral enables continued use for the existing community, thus conserving the intangible cultural heritage value of the original cathedral. In a city known for its traditional architecture reminiscent of towns in the United Kingdom, The Transitional Cathedral has impact in the juxtaposition between the traditional & permanent, and the modern & temporary (Crook, 2025). While traditional cathedrals are built of solid, enduring materials, Ban opted for Lightweight and readily available alternatives. This not only ensures ease of assembly and disassembly but also gives the space personality. The building itself is a modern take on a traditional basilica. Ban's signature paper tubing creates an A-frame nave which is flanked by shipping container side aisles. Simple polycarbonate roofing floods the space with daylight, eliminating the need for extensive lighting. The Transitional Cathedral proves that architecture does not need to be extravagant and resource intensive to be impactful. This precedent demonstrates successful application of Minimum Intervention and Continued Use principles.

Figure 17. Modified Image of Cargen Hotel on Eden Crescent, by Author.

Chapter Four

Methodologies

This chapter outlines the applied methodologies in uncovering the extent of disused heritage in the Auckland Central Business District area. As advocated for in Architectural Research Methods (Groat & Wang, 2013), this thesis employs literature review as a key methodology to outline common themes within the wider discourse around building disuse and identifies the recurring trends that contribute to the issue generally, and in local contexts. Specifically, earthquake-prone and heritage status were identified as leading contributors in a New Zealand context.

This thesis also employs the use of Case Studies, to "focus on studying a setting or phenomenon embedded in its real-life context" (Groat & Wang, 2013). For this thesis, selected cases studies revealed both successful and unsuccessful applications of the conservation principles and temporary adaptive reuse strategies outlined in Design Framework: Minimum Intervention, Continued Use, Programmatic flexibility and Sustainable Lifecycles.

The investigation of these building typologies found through literature review combined with cross referencing from site-viewings, real estate listings, newspaper articles, and Google Earth imagery has been documented through mapping and tabling exercises. These exercises reveal 30 disused sites across Auckland CBD, varying in construction, programme, and heritage/'earthquake prone' status. This initial investigation reveals a high concentration of disuse sites in the Albert Street area. Driven by this discovery, this chapter also features an investigation into the extent of heritage buildings in the Albert Street area to establish the extent of heritage and protection status placed upon these sites. These investigations inform the site selection process detailed in the following chapter: *Selected Sites*.

Summary of Initial Site Investigation in Auckland CBD

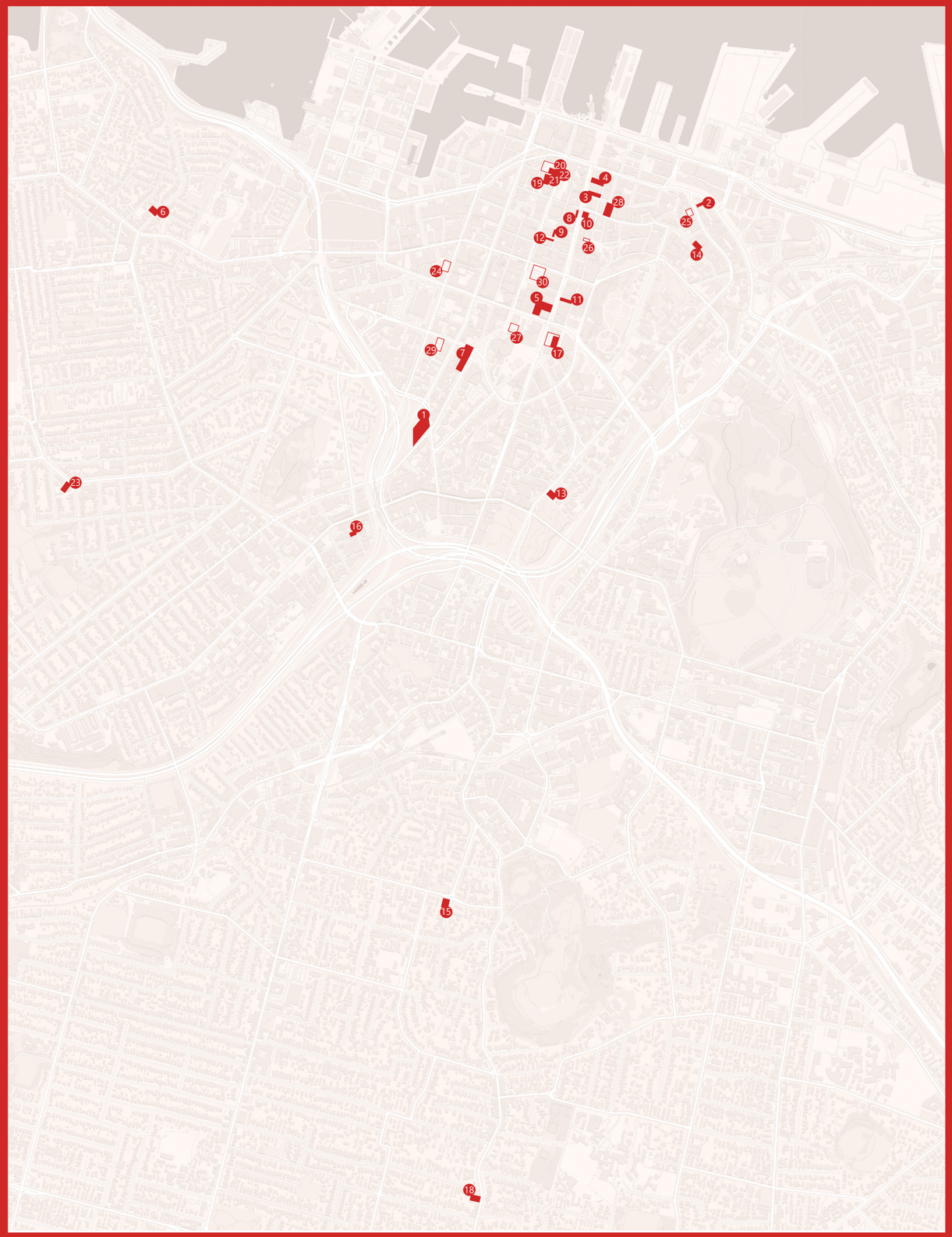
Extensive investigation found there to be no existing local registry for buildings in a state of disuse or long-term abandonment. Therefore, it became apparent that compiling data from multiple known sources to contribute to mapping exercises would be key to discovering the extent of the issue locally. These known sources have been previously established by key literature throughout the thesis.

Key Sources	Previously Established Notes
Earthquake Prone Buildings Register	A leading cause for building disuse in New Zealand is earthquake prone status
Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga	An underlying commonality among disused buildings is age
Auckland Unitary Plan Schedule 14.1 Schedule of Historic Heritage	An underlying commonality among disused buildings is age
New Zealand Herald article (Gibson, 2025)	Esablishes variety of sites, including but not limited to heritage
Google Earth, Real estate listings, Site viewings	Used as references to cross check reliability of disused site information

Table 1. Table showing key sources and previously established notes, by Author.

Initial investigation of disused sites focussed more broadly, though it quickly became apparent that a significant portion of these sites were of cultural heritage value. It is important to note that information regarding commercial (i.e. office) vacancies was hard to come by. This unavailability of information, combined with the social value and opportunity in heritage reuse prompted a change of focus towards heritage specifically. This change of focus means the following investigation is not necessarily indicative of wider CBD building disuse, however the evidence presented in Chapter 2: Literature Review does make a case that a large portion of vacant buildings are heritage, due to poor seismic resilience, high restoration costs, and built specificity creating difficulties for reuse.

The following mapping and tabling exercises document 30 disused sites across the Auckland CBD area presented in order of most to least recently used.



Disused Sites, Auckland Central

1 Ex-Beca House
2 Delta House
3 Imperial hotel
4 Imperial Buildings
5 Smith & Caughey's
6 Leys Institute Library
7 Former Police station Vincent St
8 Bank of New Zealand Building
9 Blackstone Chambers
10 Blackett's Building
11 Auckland Saving's Bank (Former)
12 Bluestone Store
13 First Church of Christ Scientist (former)
14 Cargen Hotel
15 St James Church
16 Māori Hall
17 St James Theatre & Ex Theatre Centre
18 Crystal Palace Theatre
19 6 Wolfe St
20 Yates Buildings & Ex Food Alley
21 Hopkins Building (Link House)
22 Henry Berry Building (Link House)
23 Costley Training Institute
24 Ex Commercial Building
25 Ex Waterfront Union House
26 Ex Retail Store
27 Proposed Symphony Centre
28 Ex Auckland Star site
29 Ex Commercial Building
30 Ex Royal International Hotel

Figure 18. Map of disused sites in Auckland central, by Author.

Disused Sites, Auckland Central

	NZ Herald	Heritage NZ	AUP 14.1	EPB	Cancelled/ Delayed	Construction Date	Estimated last Continuous Use	Programme(s)	Adress (Auckland)	Source(s)
1 Ex-Beca House	✓	-	-	-	-	1990	2025	Offices	21 Pitt Street	(Gibson, 2025)
2 Delta House	-	-	-	✓	-	<1931	2025	Commercial	3/12 Anzac Avenue	(Richardson, 1931)
3 Imperial hotel	-	1	B	-	-	1862-1873	2025	Hotel, Backpackers, Bar, Offices	66 Queen Street, 4 Fort Street and Fort Lane	(Heritage New Zealand, n.d.)
4 Imperial Buildings	-	2	B	-	-	1886-1911	2025	Commercial, Entertainment, offices	44-48 Queen Street; Fort Lane	(Fearon Hay Architects, n.d.)
5 Smith & Caughey's	✓	1	A, B	-	-	1880-1929	2025	Retail	Wellesley Street West and Elliot Street	(Salmond & Wild, 2015)
6 Leys Institute Library	-	1	A	✓	✓	1905	2024	Library, Community Centre	20 St Marys Road	(Auckland Council, n.d.)
7 Former Police station Vincent St	✓	-	-	-	-	1967	2024	Police Station	67 -101 Vincent Street	(Bayleys Real Estate Ltd, 2024)
8 Bank of New Zealand Building	-	1	B	-	-	1867	2023	Bank, offices	125-129 Queen Street	(Heritage New Zealand, n.d.)
9 Blackstone Chambers	-	-	B	-	-	1871	2023	Law Office	14 Wyndham Street	(Blackstone Chambers, n.d.)
10 Blackett's Building	-	1	B	✓	-	1879	2021	Retail, Offices	86-92 Queen Street	(Heritage New Zealand, n.d.)
11 Auckland Saving's Bank (Former)	-	1	B	✓	-	1884	2020	Bank, Fast Food Returant	256-260 Queen Street	(Heritage New Zealand, n.d.)
12 Bluestone Store	-	1	A	-	-	1861	2020s	Commercial, Event Space	9-11 Durham Lane	(Heritage New Zealand, n.d.)
13 First Church of Christ Scientist (former)	-	-	B	-	-	1933	2019	Church, Event Space	116 Symonds Street	(SharedSpace, n.d.)
14 Cargen Hotel	-	-	B	-	-	1913	2015	Hotel, Commercial	8-10 Eden Crescent	(Timespanner, 2014)
15 St James Church	-	-	B	✓	-	1900	2012	Church	31 Esplanade Road	(Hawkes, 2024)
16 Māori Hall	-	-	B	✓	-	1908	2010s	Forrester's Hall, young Māori refuge, Creche.	5 Edinburgh Street	(Kerr-Lazenby, 2021)
17 St James Theatre & Ex Theatre Centre	✓	1	A	✓	✓	1928	2007	Theatre	314 Queen Street	(Heritage New Zealand, n.d.)
18 Crystal Palace Theatre	-	2	B	✓	-	1920s	2005	Picture theatre, dance hall, Recording studio	537 Mount Eden Road	(Williams, 2025)
19 6 Wolfe St	-	-	-	✓	-	1912	1995	Commercial	6 Wolfe Street	(Bayleys Real Estate Ltd, 2018)
20 Yates Building	✓	-	B	-	✓	1911	1990s	Retail, Commercial, offices	9 Wolfe Street, 13 Albert Steet	(Matthews & Matthews Architects, 2011)
21 Hopkins Building (Link House)	✓	-	-	-	✓	1915	1990s	Commercial, offices	15 Albert Street	(Matthews & Matthews Architects, 2011)
22 Henry Berry Building (Link House)	✓	-	-	-	✓	1906	1990s	Commercial, offices	15 Albert Street	(Matthews & Matthews Architects, 2011)
23 Costley Training Institute	-	1	A	✓	-	1886	1990s	Children's Home, Army training school	84-90 Richmond Road	(Heritage New Zealand, n.d.).
24 Ex Commercial Building	-	-	-	-	-	Demolished (2021/22)	Parking 2025	Commercial	53 Nelson Street	(Google Earth, 2026)
25 Ex Waterfront Union House	-	-	-	-	-	Demolished (2018/19)	Parking 2025	Commercial	29-31 Anzac Ave	(Google Earth, 2026)
26 Ex Retail Store	-	-	-	-	-	Demolished (2012-2014)	Parking 2025	Retail	31 High Street	(Google Earth, 2026)
27 Proposed Symphony Centre	✓	-	-	-	✓	Proposal	Parking 2025	Parking	10A Mayoral Drive	(Gibson, 2025)
28 Ex Auckland Star site	✓	-	-	-	-	Demolished (1989)	Parking 2025	Commercial	28 Shortland Street	(Gibson, 2025)
29 Ex Commercial Building	-	-	-	-	-	Demolished (2016/17)	Parking 2025	Commercial	50-52 Cook Street	(Google Earth, 2026)
30 Ex Royal International Hotel	✓	-	-	-	✓	Demoished (1987)	Parking 2025	Hotel, Parking	5-13 Elliott St	(Gibson, 2025)
Total	33%	37%	57%	33%	23%					

Table 2. Table of disused sites in Auckland central, by Author.

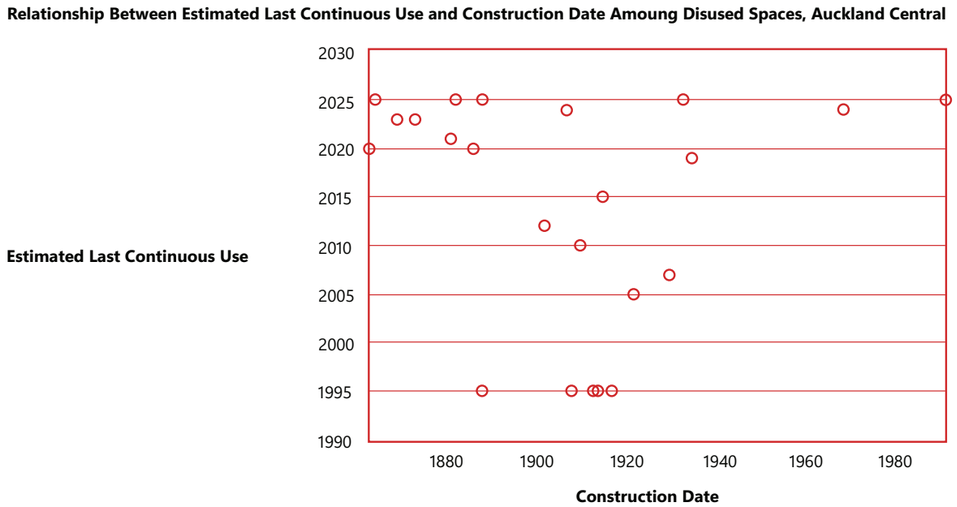


Figure 19. Graph showing relationship between estimated last continuos use and construction date of disused buildings in Auckland CBD, by Author.

23 of the 30 sites featured in the previous mapping contain existing buildings. The above scatter plot displays the relationship between their age and estimated last continuous use. Although not a large enough sample size to draw wider conclusions from, the graph does suggest a weak positive relationship between these two factors. A cluster of the oldest buildings have been left in a disused state in the last five years. While it is easy to dismiss this as simply the turnover period between use and finding a new tenant, the long-term continuous use of 2 sites included in this cluster would suggest otherwise. Blackstone Chambers operated as a law office from 1901 until its closure in 2023 (122 years), and Smith and Caughey's operated from 1880 until their recent closure in 2025 (145 years).

Again, this small sample size is not accurate enough to draw wider conclusions from regarding the relationship between these factors, however for the included sites, this graph does seem to illustrate the significant downturn the CBD has experienced in recent years, notably from the Central Rail Link development and Covid-19 pandemic.

Albert Street Investigation

Through initial CBD investigation, it became apparent that Albert Street hosts a high concentration of disused buildings, and in particular disused heritage. Informed by these initial observations, a deeper investigation was conducted with the goal of obtaining a greater understanding of the extent of heritage in the Albert Street area, and the extent of heritage recognition and protection on these buildings.

A closer investigation of selected sites was undertaken by comparing the building footprints of the Albert Street area in 2024 with the historic building footprints that are shown on the 1916 fire insurance plans found online in the Auckland Council Archives. Due to the extent of the heritage maps, calculations between time periods are measured by ground floor area.

Disclaimers: While initially drawn in 1916, it is evident that undated updates were made to the plans in at least the following decade. This is evident in Block 18, with Smith and Caughey's Lippincott Building (Constructed 1929). Additionally, Blocks 20A and 20 are missing from the Council archives and thus have not been included in the 1916 totals. Block 20 in particular is notable for containing St Patrick's Cathedral which would have been included in any such maps, having been completed in 1907. The missing blocks are detailed in the below image. It is also worth noting that the Albert Street area Ground Floor Area (GFA) has densified 32.1% between each mapping. It is for this reason that building footprint totals are shown as a percentage of the historic and existing ground floor area.

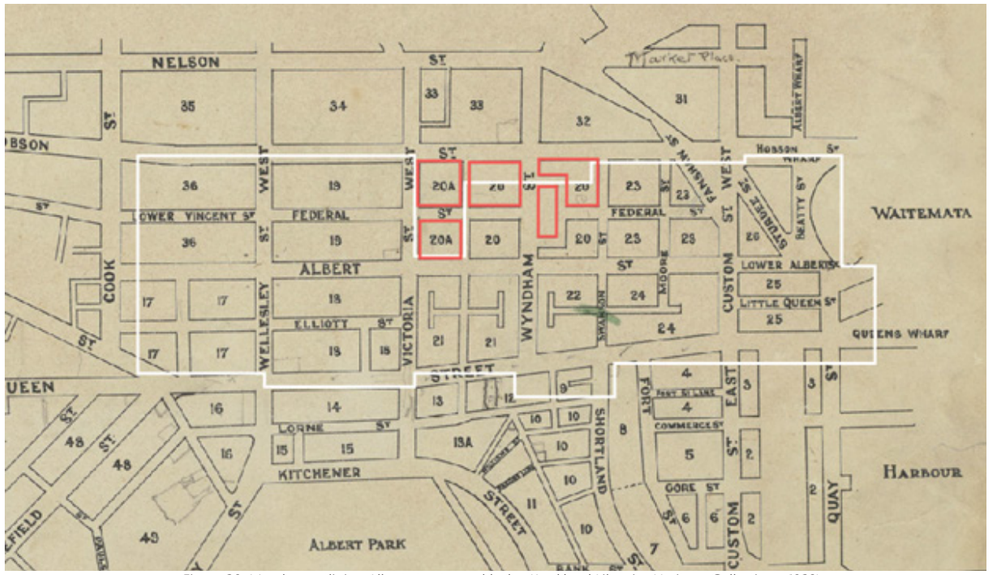


Figure 20. Map key outlining Albert street area blocks, (Auckland Libraries Heritage Collections, 1928)

Historic Buildings in Albert Street Area

1	Foster & Co Building	B	-
2	Henry Berry Building	-	-
3	Hopkins Building	-	-
4	Yates Building	B	Excludes Interior
5	Old Customs House (Fomer)	A	-
6	Smeetons Building	B	Excludes Interior
7	Gilfillan's Store (Former)	A	-
8	Colonial mutual life building	-	-
9	Blackstone Chambers	B	-
10	Observer Newspaper Office (Former)	-	-
11	Bluestone Store	A	-
12	Gas Company Building (Fomer)	B	-
13	Bank of New Zealand (Facade)	B	Excludes Interior
14	Dexter & Crozier (Facade)	B	Excludes Interior
15	Shakespeare Hotel	B	Excludes Interior
16	Unknown Garage	-	-
17	Unknown. Features in 1903 image	-	-
18	Unknown. Features in 1903 image	-	-
19	Gypren Hannah Building (former)	B	Excludes Interior
20	St Patrick's Cathedral	A	-
21	Collins Bros Building	B	Excludes Interior
22	J.H.Hannan Building	-	-
23	London Dairy Building	-	-
24	Civic Tavern (United Services Hotel)	-	-
25	Brett & Hodge Building 1908	-	-
26	Archibald Clark & Sons (T&G Insurance)	B	-
27	Civic Theatre	A	-
28	Civic House	B	Excludes Interior
29	Fergusson Building (Facade)	B	Excludes Interior
30	Public Trust Building	B	-
31	St Matthew-in-the-city	A	-
32	Prince of Wales hotel (Former)	B	Excludes Interior
33	Thomas Doo Building	B	"Buildings and structures that are not the primary feature"
34	Unknown - 6 Wolfe Street	-	-
35	Unknown	-	-
36	Unknown	-	-
37	Unknown	-	-
38	Unknown - 1903 and 1917.	-	-
39	Commercial Building	B	Excludes Interior
40	Dingwall Building	B	Excludes Interior
41	New Zealand Guardian Trust building	B	-
42	Auckland Electric Power Board Building	A	-
43	Milne & Choyce Department Store	B	Excludes Interior
44	Bledesloe House	B	Excludes Interior
45	Darby Building	B	Excludes Interior
46	Hampton Court flats	B	-
47	Strand Arcade	A	-
48	Smith and Caughey - Lippincott Building	A	-
49	Smith and Caughey - Mahoney Building	B	Excludes Interior
50	Smith & Caughey's original premises	-	-
51	McArthur's Warehouse (S&C since 1886)	-	-

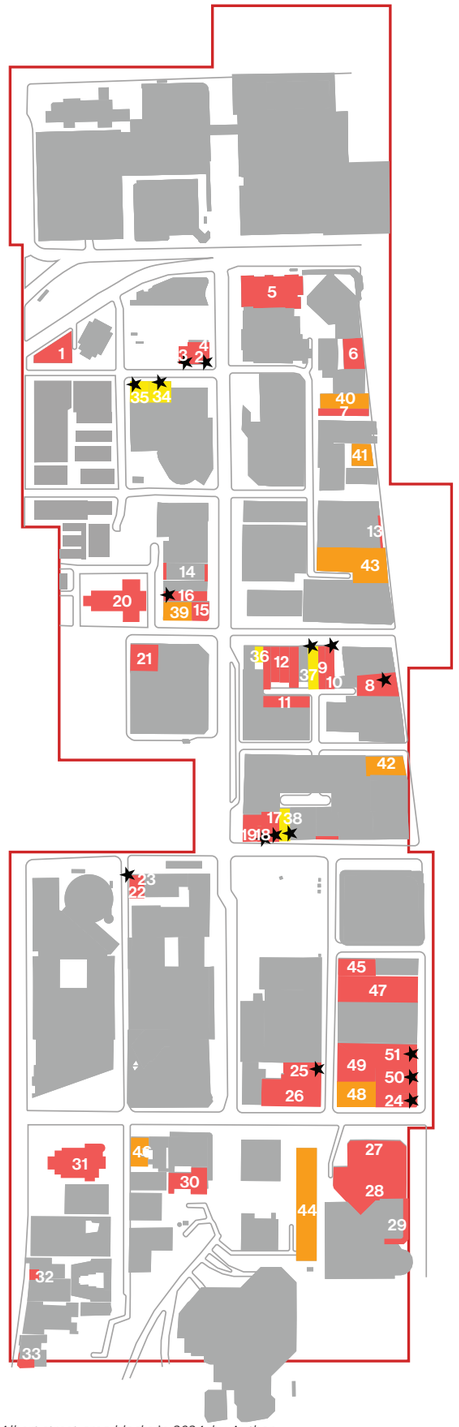


Figure 21. Map of Albert street area blocks in 2024, by Author.

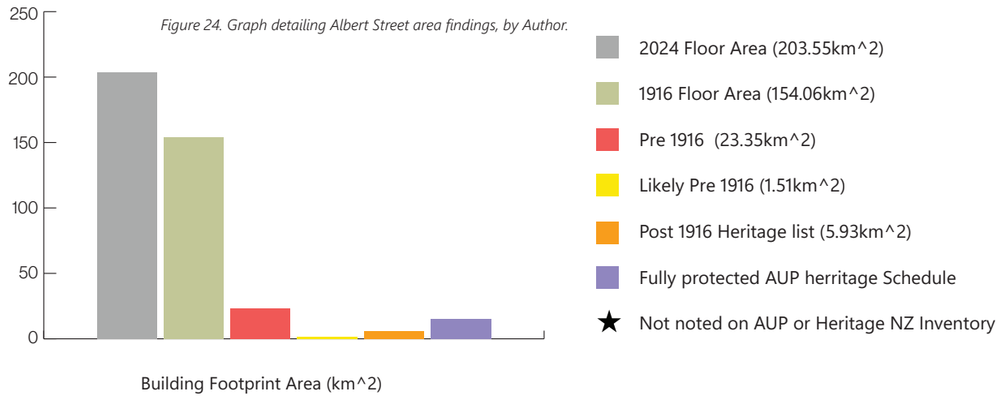
1916 Fire Insurance Plans

Figure 22. Map of original Albert Street area blocks merged by Author, (Auckland Libraries Heritage Collections Maps, 1916-1929)

2024 Building Footprints

Figure 23. Map of Albert Street area blocks in 2024, by Author.

Figure 24. Graph detailing Albert Street area findings, by Author.



*15.16% of 1916 buildings exist in 2024 by ground floor area

*11.47% of 2025 buildings are pre 1916 by ground floor area

*50% of Auckland Unitary Plan Schedule 14.1 Listed buildings are fully protecred by floor area

32/47 buildings identified as heritage protected as per AUP 14.1 Schedule

Key Findings

The above graph details the following information.

In total, 51 buildings were identified as either:
- Present in 1916 (38 Total)
- Post 1916 with heritage status as per AUP 14.1 (8 total)
- Likely present in 1916 without heritage status as per AUP 14.1 (5 total)

All 51 sites were identified by cross checking original plans with the Auckland Unitary Plan Schedule 14.1 Schedule of Historic Heritage, and photographs from Digital NZ and Auckland Library Archives. Of the 51 buildings, 18 were not noted on the AUP 14.1 schedule, and a further 5 buildings were noted as likely pre-1916, as cross checking with photographs was not possible.

The overall comparison between footprints shows that 11.47% of buildings in the Albert Street area as of 2024 are also present in the 1916 fire plans (by GFA). Due to urban densification, total ground floor area has increased 32.1%, thus a more accurate representation of remaining 1916 buildings is that 15.6% of 1916 buildings still exist (by GFA). Of the 33 buildings included in the AUP 14.1, only 50% have full heritage protection measured by GFA.

It is understandable that not all historic buildings can/should be included in the 14.1 Schedule of Historic Heritage. However, the list lacks basic information that makes one doubt the credibility of the list itself. While basic reasonings for listing are given in the form of letters that represent heritage values, factors unique to site are not stated. This disconnects historically significant buildings from the attributes that make them unique. Additionally, basic information such as date of construction and specific historical significance is excluded from the schedule. Heritage New Zealand does a great job filling in this missing information but ultimately falls short regarding the quantity of buildings included in its schedule.

The collected list of disused sites implies that the criteria to be Heritage New Zealand Category 1, is far less strict than the AUP 14.1 Category A (5 buildings listed by council as Category B are listed as Category 1 by heritage New Zealand). This would imply that the overall criteria for heritage recognition would be lower, which makes sense for the organisation being more about heritage support and advocacy, than legal protection status. This information implies that Heritage New Zealand has a lack of resources to schedule buildings, as one would expect their lists to be vaster, pressuring local government bodies to schedule more buildings. One could argue that in the pursuit for wider protection of heritage, advocacy for buildings without legal protection status is of higher importance than advocacy for those already protected, however in the Auckland CBD region this is evidently not the case.

Figure 25. Modified Image of Ex-Food Alley Site on Albert Steet, by Author.

Chapter Five

Selected Sites

Through the analysis of disused sites in Auckland CBD outlined in the previous chapter, three sites stood out as having high potential for reinhabitation. Selected sites have been chosen strategically to cover a range of architectural use typology, heritage recognition, and extent of disuse. Selected sites have also been chosen based on their cultural significance, and opportunity to spark wider urban regeneration.

Arthur Yates Seed Co. Site

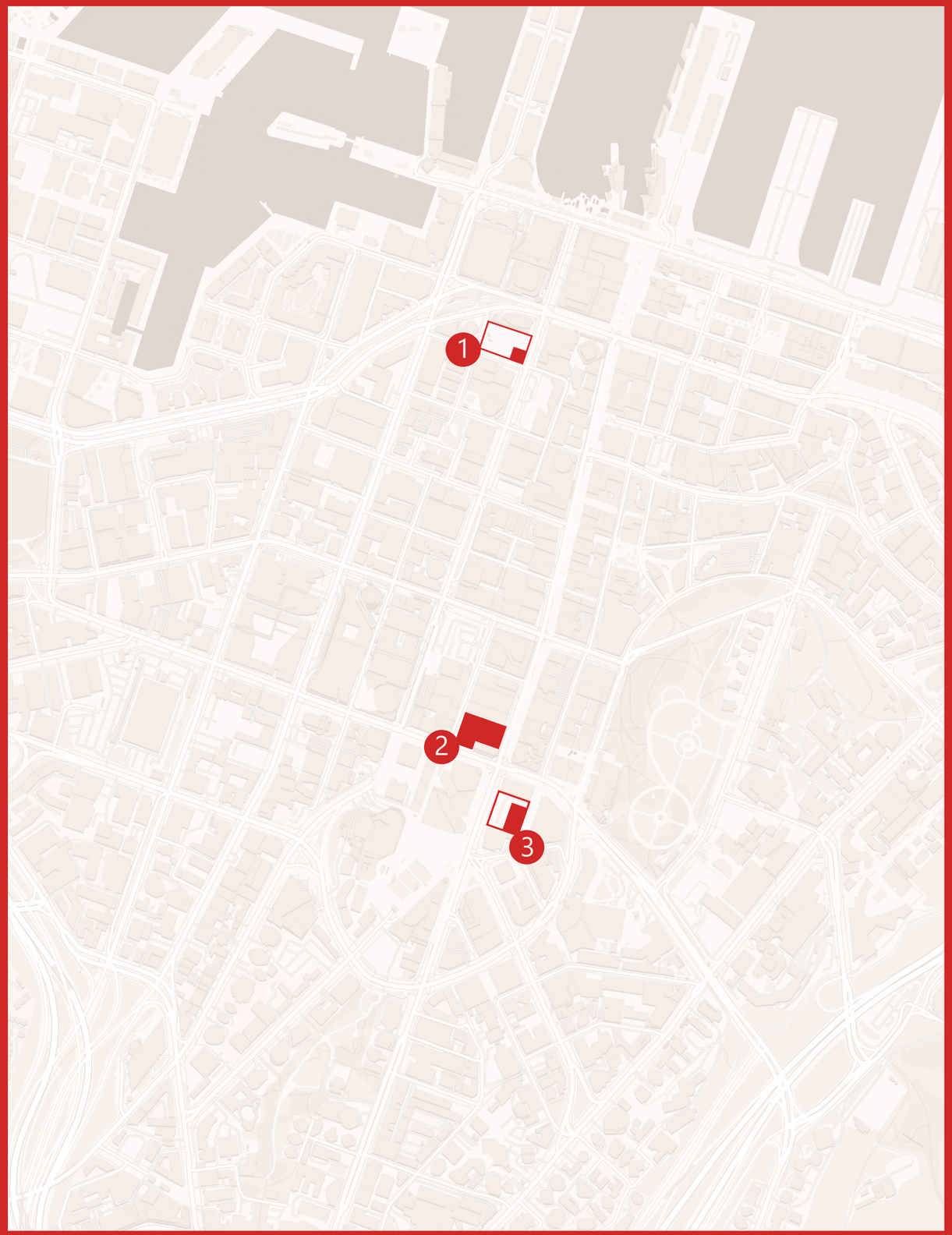
5-15 Albert Street
Commercial
Contains AUP 14.1 Category B building
Delayed Development
Buildings Constructed 1906-1915
Out of use mid 1990s

Smith & Caughey's Site

253-261 Queen Street
Retail
Contains AUP 14.1 Category A and B buildings
Heritage New Zealand Category 1
Buildings Constructed 1880-1929
Out of use 2025

St James Theatre Site

312-314 Queen Street
Entertainment
Contains AUP 14.1 Category A building
Heritage New Zealand Category 1
Cancelled Development
Building Constructed 1928
Out of use 2007



Selected Sites, Auckland Central

Figure 26. Map of selected sites, by Author.

1 Arthur Yates Co. Buildings, Former Yates Factory & ex-Food Alley site

2 Former Smith & Caughey's Department Store

3 St James Theatre & Ex Theatre Center Site

Arthur Yates Seed Co. Buildings

Figure 27. Image of Yates Buildings site, by Author.

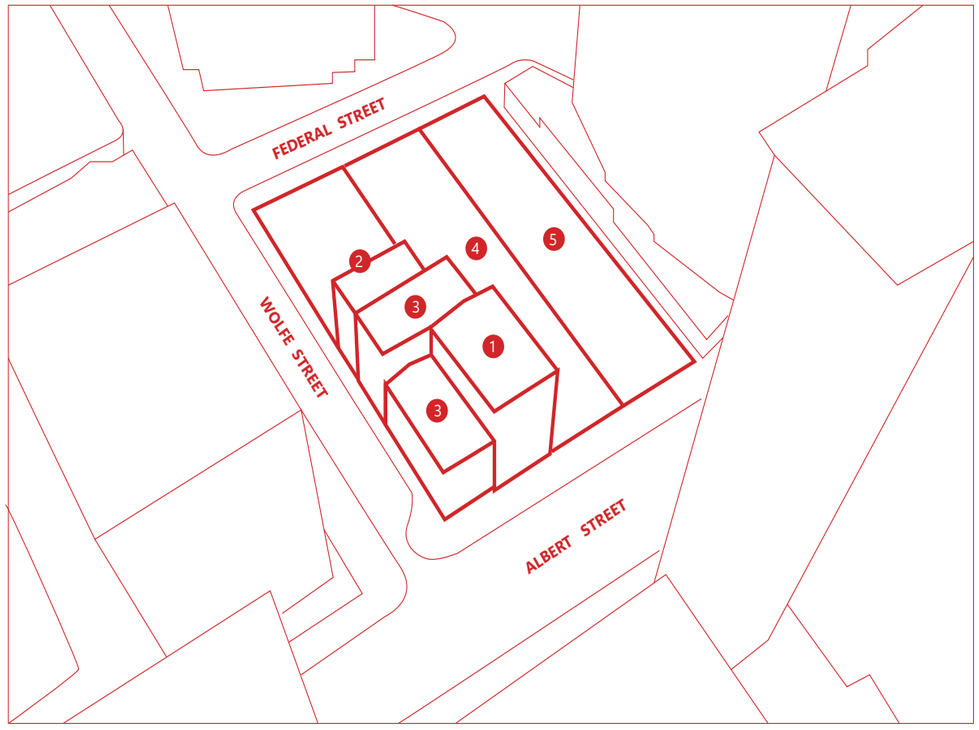
Positioned at the edge of Auckland's original shoreline, the site at 5-15 Albert Street was one of the earliest settled parts of the city, being part of the original 300 acres secured by the crown from Ngati-Whatua in 1841 (Matthews and Matthews Architects, 2011).

Notable occupants of the site were the Arthur Yates Seed Company, who used the site from 1911 until the early 1970s (Matthews and Matthews Architects, 2011). Some 20 years later the site was abandoned, and since this time has remained a hotspot for vandalism and anti-social activity. Decades of abandonment has earnt the site the affectionate nickname "The Pigeon Palace".

In September of 2012, an Environment Court ruling controversially awarded one of the two buildings formerly occupied by the Arthur Yates Co. category B status (Orsman, 2012). This was against the opinions of nearly all heritage witnesses who agreed that the buildings should be awarded category A status, due to their connection to a notable company still in operation (now known as Yates), and as one of the earliest examples of reinforced concrete construction in New Zealand.

At the time of the ruling, five buildings stood on the site. The Arthur Yates seed company retail store and office building (Category B listed) and the Yates Warehouse were constructed in 1911, Link house (Former Henry Berry and Hopkins Buildings) were constructed in 1915 and 1906, and lastly the ex-Food Alley and buildings at 5-7 Albert Street (Matthews and Matthews Architects, 2011).

Following the 2012 Environment Court ruling, the site was sold, and 2021/22 saw the demolition of the Food Alley, 5-7 Albert, and the former Yates Warehouse buildings. The new overseas owners have released plans to develop the site, featuring a 31-story office tower, though in the 4 years post demolition the site is yet to see any action. While the publicly released plans show Link House and the remaining Yates building, it is unclear what will be preserved beyond the façades, and the failure to obtain significant heritage protection in 2012 gives the developers no obligations beyond the façade of the Yates Building.



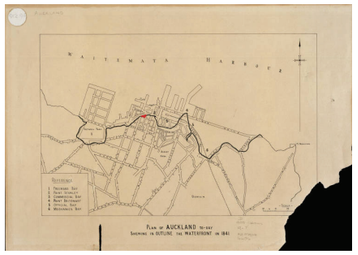
1 Yates Front of House 1911
2 Yates Factory site (Mostly demolished)
3 Link House 1906 & 1915
4 Ex Food Alley (demolished)
5 5-7 Albert Street

Figure 28. Map of Yates Buildings site, by Author.

Yates Buildings Timeline

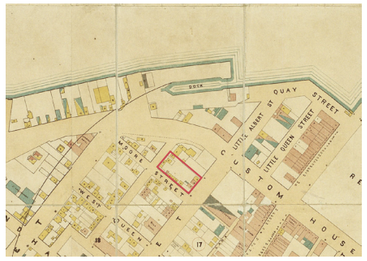
1841

Figure 29. Original Auckland shoreline in 1841 map, (Auckland Libraries Heritage Collections, n.d.).



1882

Figure 30. Map of Auckland, (Auckland Libraries Heritage Collections, 1882).



1908

Figure 31. Auckland waterfront image, (Auckland Libraries Heritage Collections, 1908).

1910-1912

Figure 32. Image of Arthur Yates Building in process of construction, (DigitalNZ, 1911)

Figure 33. Customhouse and buildings in central Auckland image, (DigitalNZ, 1912)

1916

Figure 34. Fire insurance map of Yates Buildings area, (Auckland Libraries Heritage Collections, 1916)

Figure 35. Page 6 advertisements, column 4, Taranaki Daily News 17 October 1916, (DigitalNZ, 1916).

1927

Figure 36. Image of Buildings on corner of Wolfe and Albert Streets, (DigitalNZ, 1927)

1952-1973

Figure 37. Image of Albert Yates Building Albert Street, (Air Force Museum of New Zealand, 1952).

Figure 38. Image of Yates Building on Albert Street 1960s, (Haydnrollett, n.d.).

1990s

By the mid 1990s the Yates property was empty and quickly began showing signs of neglect (Matthews & Matthews Architects, 2011).

2011

Council strikes deal with owner to paint over graffiti to avoid unwanted attention from overseas visitors for the 2011 Rugby World Cup.

Figure 39. Image of Yates wharehouse on Wolfe Street, (New Zealand Herald, 2011)

Figure 40. Image of Yates Buildings post paint-job, (New Zealand Herald, 2011).

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2012

Environment court rules in clients favor. Despite nearly all heritage witnesses agreeing the buildings would score category A together, the court ruled the main Yates building in Albert St should be scheduled category B and the remaining two buildings awarded no protection (NZ Herald, 2012).

2015

Figure 41. Image of Yates Buildings on corner of Albert and Wolfe Streets, (Auckland Libraries Heritage Collections, 2015).

2021/22

Figure 42. Demolition of Yates wharehouse and Food Alley buildings, (Ward Demolition, 2022)

2025

Figure 43. Image of Yates buildings Queen Street side 2025, by Author

Figure 44. Image of Yates buildings Federal Street side 2025, by Author

Figure 45. Timeline of Yates Buildings Site, by Author.

Yates Timeline Following Closure - NZ Herald

2005

Council acts to safeguard Auckland city's history - NZ Herald, June 19, 2005
NZ Herald: ""The council began on Friday the formal process to place category B heritage status on seven buildings ...The others include Auckland's earliest steel-reinforced structure, built for Yates seed merchants in Albert St" (June 19, 2005)

2010

Neighbours slam council over run-down buildings - NZ Herald, September 4, 2010
"A "disgraceful" eyesore of run-down buildings opposite one of the country's top international hotels has angered an Auckland official, heritage campaigner, hotelier and neighbouring apartment owners.
Mission to save the city - NZ Herald, November 6, 2010
"Matson's fight to save the Yates building and its neighbours on Albert St is in its sixth year. "It's a very unproductive way to define what is heritage for our city."" (NZ Herald, November 6, 2010)
Downtown eyesore to get a tidy up - NZ Herald, Dec 2, 2010
"Auckland Mayor Len Brown yesterday visited the rundown, graffiti-bombed building to announce that the council had struck a deal with the owner, Stuart Galloway of Harbour City, to secure the empty building, paint the outside and possibly install closed-circuit cameras."
Christmas delays clean-up for eyesore - NZ Herald, Dec 21, 2010
"A derelict building in downtown Auckland remains an eyesore two weeks after Auckland Mayor Len Brown promised that work to spruce it up would start immediately." (NZ Herald, Dec 21, 2010)

2011

Heritage building gets a clean start - NZ Herald, Jan 14
"Work has started on cleaning the graffiti-ridden Yates Building, which Auckland Mayor Len Brown has described as an eyesore."

2012

Graffiti magnet in heritage battle - NZ Herald, July 18
"A building that has been an Auckland graffiti magnet for years could be given heritage status - despite the owner wanting to knock it down."
"An outcry from residents and the Stamford Plaza Hotel just before the Rugby World Cup resulted in the graffiti-bombed buildings being cleaned and painted by the council."
"The council's lawyer, Bill Loutit, said yesterday nearly all heritage witnesses agreed the buildings would score category A together."
Investor in heritage battle expects $6.5m after-sale loss - July 20
"An Auckland property investor whose companies own buildings at the centre of an Environment Court heritage battle say he faces a $6.5 million loss - if he can quit his real estate. Stuart Galloway, who owns buildings in the block bounded by Albert, Federal, Wolfe and Fanshawe Sts, yesterday told the court headed by Justice Craig Thompson that even if he got $16 million for the Yates Building and Link House, he still stood to make a huge loss."
Historic buildings' fate in hands of court - July 25
"The outcome of the battle to save three historic Auckland buildings could be known in a few weeks. After three days last week, the Environment Court adjourned until August 16 when three engineers will give evidence, then a reserved decision is expected from the panel headed by Justice Craig Thompson."
Court ruling leaves Yates building on shaky ground - September 26
"The future of the 100-year-old Yates Building in central Auckland is looking grim after the failure of a bid to gain it the highest protected status.
The Environment Court has declined the application by heritage campaigner Allan Matson and the Auckland Council to give the highest heritage status to the building and two adjoining buildings in Albert St and Wolfe St. Instead of the category A status being sought by Mr Matson and the council, the court has ruled that the main Yates building in Albert St should be scheduled category B and there should be no protection for the other two buildings."

2018

Auckland's Yates heritage building to be demolished and redeveloped - July 17
"Developers plan to demolish the 107-year-old Yates Building on Albert St in Auckland's central business district, sparking a historic building campaigner to call the plans "pathetic"."
""In spite of the council's expert assessing the building as almost entirely Category A, the court resulted in the office façade only being listed as Category B and this has led to the inevitable scourge of further façadism," Matson said."
Auckland's built heritage: campaigner slams 'facadism', council defends development - July 23
"Allan Matson said it was wrong that a new spate of "facadism" had emerged this month with plans to demolish all but the facade of the Arthur Yates Building at 13 Albert St and everything except the outside of the Macdonald Halligan Motors building at 51 Albert St."
Watch: A walk through 'construction central' in Auckland's Albert St - August 14
"Further up the street, a collection of old buildings includes the 107-year-old Yates, the former NZ headquarters of the seed business. Now, plans are to keep only its façade and perhaps build a hotel."

2024

Ex-Food Alley, Yates site on Albert St in Auckland CBD stays empty, fenced: Singaporeans ponder future - February 7
"Civic leaders are disappointed a central Auckland commercial building site linked to a wealthy Singapore family remains undeveloped more than a year after buildings were demolished. But Peter Wall, who works for the Kum family, said plans were being made and they are actively seeking an anchor tenant to turn the site into a vibrant commercial precinct. The old Food Alley and ex-Yates building site between Federal St, Wolfe St and Albert St in the centre of Auckland CBD stands empty, most of its buildings demolished, the block fenced with barbed wire on top to stop people getting into it."
"Admittedly, the post-Covid economic challenges and evolving business sentiments have presented challenges in moving forward. We're equally focused on ensuring that the development aligns with what Auckland needs as a city," Wall added.

2025

Dire state of Auckland CBD real estate: Big projects abandoned, deferred, delayed, unbuilt – Property Insider - August 5
"The ex-Food Alley and Yates sites on Albert St remain empty, fenced, while Singaporeans ponder the future."
"Last year, Deputy Mayor Desley Simpson said it was very sad the site had been left in that state for so long: "Auckland deserves better," she said of the 4371sq m block."

Figure 46. Timeline of Yates Buildings New Zealand Herald articles, by Author.

Smith and Caughey's Department Store

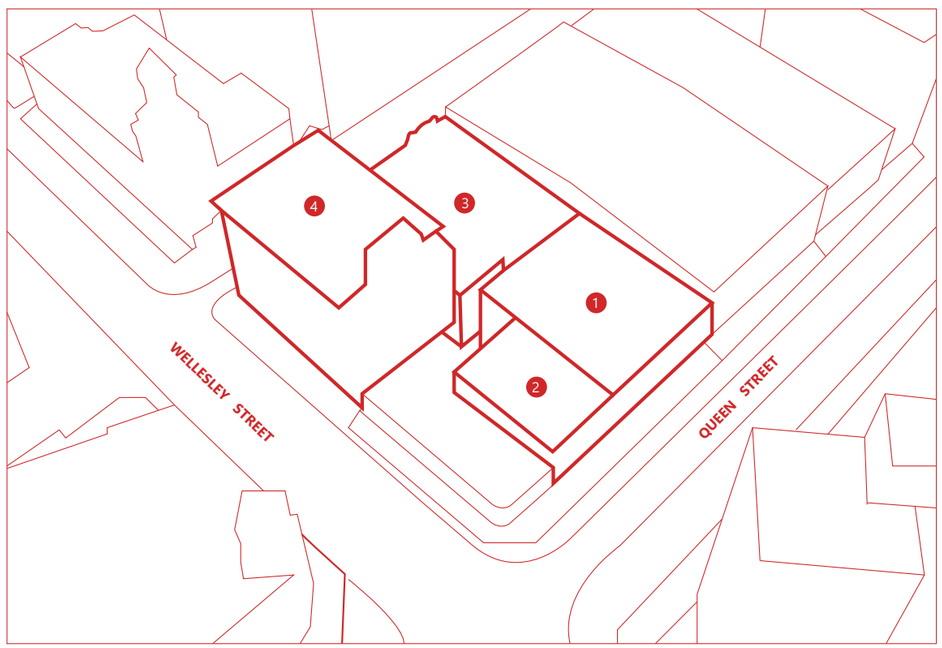
Figure 47. Image of Smith and Caughey's Queen Street facade, by Author.

The Smith and Caughey's flagship store at 253-261 Queen Street served continuously from 1880 until its recent closure in 2025. 145 years in business made Smith and Caughey's one of the longest operating businesses from the same premises in the country. In an article for The New Zealand Herald dating to May 2025, Smith & Caughey's Acting Chief Executive Matt Harray blamed low foot traffic numbers as the root cause for the stores closure (Currie, 2025). The adverse effects of the Covid-19 pandemic have been felt across Auckland's retail sector, but the downfall of this Queen Street icon has made the losses feel real.

Fronting Queen, Wellesley and Elliott Streets, Smith and Caughey's itself is made up of fourbuildings, constructed across different periods. The original 1880 Smith and Caughey's store (reconstructed 1921) and the McArthur Warehouse constructed 1876 makes up the Queen Street side. 1939 saw the two buildings united with the now iconic Art Deco façade. Fronting Elliott Street is the Mahoney Building, constructed in 1908. Lastly, the latest and largest is the Lippincott Building constructed in 1929, it fronts the corner of Wellesley and Elliott streets (Salmond et al., 2015).

The Lippincott Building is scheduled Category A in the Auckland Unitary plan 14.1 Schedule of Historic Heritage (Auckland Council, n.d.). The Mahoney Building is listed Category B in the Auckland Unitary Plan 14.1 Schedule of Historic Heritage, excluding interior spaces above the first floor (Auckland Council, n.d.). In 2015, The Civic Trust Auckland sought scheduling of the Queen Street Buildings and the neighbouring Civic Tavern. A Statement of evidence for the Queen Street Buildings and the neighbouring Civic Tavern was prepared by Jeremy Salmond

and Adam Wild on behalf of Smith and Caughey Limited in 2015. Neither building is listed as of 2025.



1 McArthur Warehouse ca.1876 2 Original Premises 1880 (Reconstructed 1921) 3 Mahoney Building 1908 4 Lippincott Building 1929

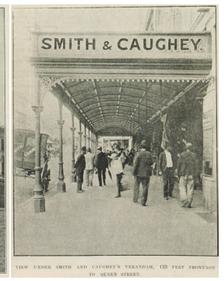
Figure 48. Map of Smith and Caughey's Buildings, by Author.

Smith & Caughey's Timeline

1899

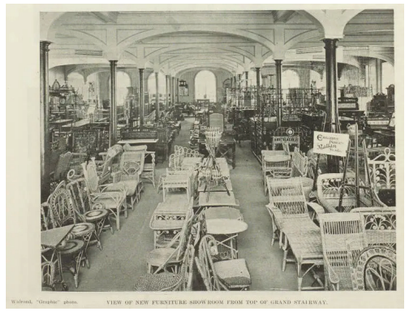
Figure 49. Image of Queen Street Front, (Auckland Libraries Heritage Collections, 1899).

Figure 50. Image of Queen Street Front, (Auckland Libraries Heritage Collections, 1899).



1900

Figure 51. Image of interior Smtih & Caughey's, (DigitalNZ, 1900).



1904

Figure 52. Image of Smith and Caughey Limited warehouse, (DigitalNZ, 1904).

1910s

Figure 53. Image of left side of Elliott Street frontage built, (Auckland Libraries Heritage Collections, 1908).

Figure 54. Image of Elliott Street frontage Auckland Weekly News, (Auckland Libraries Heritage Collections, 1910).

1924

Figure 55. Queen Street 1924 showing United Service Hotel (left) and Smith & Caughey's (right), (Auckland Libraries Heritage Collections, 1924).

1952

Figure 56. Image showing recently completed Queen Street Smith & Caughey's façade, (DigitalNZ, 1952).

1977

Figure 57. Image shows corner of Elloitt & Wellesley Streets. (Auckland Libraries Heritage Collections, 1977)

Figure 58. Image shows Elliott Street façade, (DigitalNZ, 1977).

1986

Figure 59. Image of Queen Street frontage, (DigitalNZ, 1986).

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2011

Figure 60. Image showing Queen Street showing former United Service Hotel and Smith & Caughey's, (DigitalNZ, 1912)

2025

Figure 61. Image of Smith and Caughey's Queen Street façade 2025, by Author.

Figure 62. Timeline of Smith and Caughey's Site, by Author.

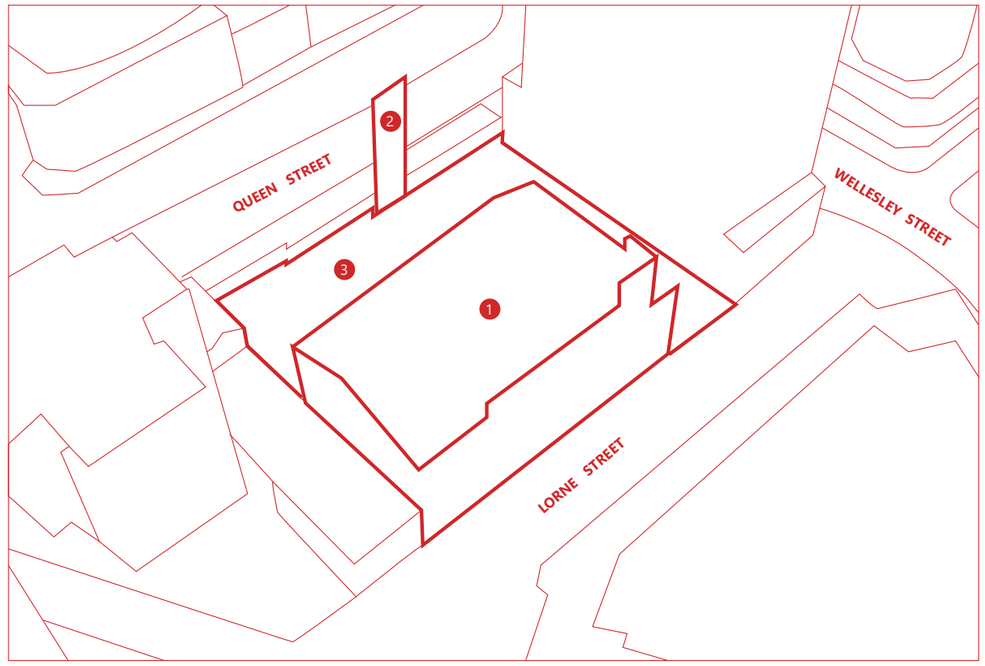
St James Theatre & Ex-Theatre Centre Site

Figure 63. Image of Queen Street side of St James Theatre site, by Author.

The St James Theatre is a significant and dearly missed part of New Zealand's performing arts history. A fire in 2007 forced the theatre's closure and major hurdles in the following decades have delayed its reopening. The site's popularity with the public is evident in the 67 articles the NZ Herald alone has published since the theatre's closure, documenting its struggles and speculating its return.

The period between 2015/16 saw the demolition of The Theatre Centre, a theatre complex the St James was a part of. Today, the site is made up of three major features. The first is the St James itself, constructed in 1928, it is one of few surviving theatres from a theatre district that includes The Civic theatre (1929), and the since demolished His Majesty's Theatre (1902-1987), and Regent Theatre (1926-1974) (Gibson, 2021). The Theatre is Category A listed as per the Auckland Unitary Plan Schedule 14.1 Schedule of Historic Heritage (Auckland Council, n.d.).

The second feature of the site is the façade of the St James Theatre tower. Uncovered during the demolition of the theatre centre over 2015/16, it once served as the theatre's Queen Street entrance. Today, it sits crucified to supporting steel in full view of the busiest street in the country. This element is particularly interesting from a conservation standpoint. The ICOMOS New Zealand Charter (2010) article 20, *Reconstruction*, states that "Reconstructed elements should not usually constitute the majority of a place or structure." These recommendations highlight a challenge for the existing site, as the surviving tower façade represents an integral part of the original theatre complex, being its only Queen Street facing element, and carrying significant character appeal. The site's last significant feature is the empty area left by the former Theatre Centre. Plans to develop this site fell through in 2016, and no action has been seen for almost a decade (Gibson, 2025).



1 St James Theare 1928 2 St James Theatre Tower Facade 3 Ex Theatre-Centre Site

Figure 64. Map of St James Theatre site, by Author.

St James Theatre Timeline

1923

Figure 65. Photo of view from St Matthews looking east, showcasing original site modified by Author, (Auckland Libraries Heritage Collections, 1923).

1927-29

Theatre built in 1928

Figure 66. St James Theatre section plan, (Auckland Council Archives, n.d.).

Figure 67. "Auckland's Greatest Theatre" Image, (DigitalNZ, 1920-1929).

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1930s

Figure 68. Image of original St James tower circa 1930s (Auckland War Memorial Museum, n.d.).

1940s

Figure 69. Image of Queen Street looking North, (Auckland Libraries Heritage Collections, 1940-1949)

1953

Figure 70. Image of St James Queen Street side, (Auckland War Memorial Museum, 1953)

Figure 71. Image of Queen Elizabeth II and the Duke of Edinburgh at the Royal Cinema Performance at St James Theatre, (Auckland War Memorial Museum, 1953)

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1960s

Figure 72. St James theatre pre-Theatre Centre integration, (Auckland Libraries Heritage Collections, 1966)

Figure 73. St James theatre post-Theatre Centre integration, (Auckland Libraries Heritage Collections 1967)

1970s

Figure 74. Aerial photo of Lorne Street side of St James. Auckland public library under construction in the foreground. (DigitalNZ, 1970-1979).

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1980s

Figure 75. Image of Aotea Square and Queen Street, (Auckland Libraries Heritage Collections 1982)

1990s

Figure 76. Image looking up Queen Street towards Theatre Centre (Auckland Libraries Heritage Collections 1990-1999)

2007

Theatre closes due to fire.

2015-16

Figure 77. Image looking up Queen Street towards Theatre Centre pre-demolition, (Auckland Libraries Heritage Collections, 2015)

Figure 78. Image looking up Queen Street towards Theatre Centre post-demolition, (Auckland Libraries Heritage Collections, 2016)

Figure 79. Image of fire crew called to St James after fire, (Radio New Zealand, 2015.)

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2025

Figure 80. Image of St James Theatre site 2025, by Author.

Figure 81. St James Theatre timeline, by Author.

St James Timeline Following Closure - NZ Herald

2007

St James theatre blaze treated as suspicious - 12 May
"A fire which engulfed much of an old theatre in Auckland's Queen St early this morning is being treated as suspicious. Up to 16 appliances and about 75 Fire Service staff attended the two-floor fire at the old Odeon Theatre, next to the St James, which was so intense that visors on firefighters' helmets began to melt."
Blaze ravages theatre - 13 May
"One of Auckland's iconic theatres has been ravaged by a fire that emergency services suspect was arson.The West Wing of the St James Theatre in Queen Street was badly damaged in the blaze which broke out at about 3am yesterday. The fire was so hot it melted the visors on firefighters' helmets. No one was in the building at the time with most of the staff heading off to a nearby bar at about 2.30am."
Venue charred and barred - 31 May
"The St James Theatre has been closed indefinitely by the Auckland City Council after dodgy wiring in the historic venue caused a fire. Theatre operator Peter McArthur, who has a long-term lease on the building, says the place has been shut down and he's not sure when it is going to reopen. The fire on May 12 happened because of an electrical fault in a switchboard in a backstage dressing room at the Westend Theatre, a small theatre within the complex."
Buildings that need a new lease on life (+ photos) - 31 Oct
"The theatre was closed by the Auckland City Council in May because of safety and compliancy issues following a fire in the neighbouring West End. Its Queen St facade looks battered and worn, its historic plaque in the pavement out front has also seen better days and in its present state the three stars on a poster it displays seems a generous"

2009

Ask Phoebe: Stately St James being left to rot - 15 Sep
"It's not good news. It seems this is another case of demolition by dereliction. The developer, Paul Doole, cannot be forced to preserve his treasure from decay and neglect, even though it has a category 1 Historic Places listing. Neither can he bulldoze it. So it seems that the building will be left to suffer further leaks and vandalism until it becomes unsalvageable. A fire in the adjacent West End cinema in 2007 didn't help things."

2010

Brian Rudman: St James first, then the fancy paving - 22 Jan
"Why would politicians and bureaucrats risk so much ratepayers' cash redeveloping a streetscape infrastructure that abuts the vast St James Theatre redevelopment site?To start the job before the future of the St James is settled is like laying the parquet entrance floor of a large apartment tower, then building 20 floors above it, hoping the wooden surface won't get scratched."
Famous names join fight to restore historic theatre - 21 Apr
"English theatre luminaries Sir Ian McKellen and Dame Judi Dench are on a heavyweight list of artists and historians calling for the reopening"
Theatre group offers lifeline for St James - 7 Aug
"After being shut for three years, one of Auckland's most precious historic buildings could get a lifeline. Queen St's ornate vintage St James Theatre is at the heart of bold plans by The Edge to win the right to build an international convention and exhibition centre for 5000 people."
Brian Rudman: St James Theatre restoration would be music to the ears of many - 9 Aug
"A couple of months ago, I argued in favour of The Edge/Aotea Centre as the best home for the new international convention centre."
Brian Rudman: Restore St James and make Auckland NZ's arts capital - 27 Sep
"My challenge to the mayoral candidates a couple of weeks back, to embrace Auckland's role as cultural capital of the country, had a predictable enough response. Total ignore from Auckland mayoral front-runners Len Brown and John Banks, and squawks of outrage from Wellington."
Historic theatre's future in the spotlight - 27 Sep
"The future of the St James Theatre - once one of Auckland's premier venues but now sliding into decay - will be highlighted today as the Government weighs up national convention centre bids."
Heritage lovers line up to save St James - 28 Sep
"Super City candidates and music-show promoters believe there's life in the old St James Theatre yet. The site has been languishing for three years after a fire left it closed to the public because of safety concerns."
Decades of cultural heritage - 29 Sept
"When the St James Theatre opened and played its first movie with sound the Herald reported that "seldom has an Auckland audience been roused to the appreciation of such a galaxy of colour, music and movement"."I should be really sad if it disappeared. Auckland really has needed that theatre. Her Majesty's Theatre has gone, The Mercury [theatre] is still there but has been closed for several years.""
MPs agree: St James is a jewel that needs saving - 29 Sep
"Auckland MPs are unanimous about the future of the St James Theatre - it's too special to lose. Auckland Central MP Nikki Kaye said the building was a jewel among the few remaining historic theatres. "The issue is how we deliver that restoration and the time frames for that restoration."
Bulldoze theatre over my dead body, says UK star - 30 Sep
"Top English actor Sir Donald Sinden has threatened to lie down in the path of demolishing bulldozers to save the historic St James Theatre. The 86-year-old, who last visited Auckland eight years ago, said all civilised people should gang together to prevent such desecration."
St James Theatre rocked like no other - 30 Sep
"I have seen them at the St James on the way up, on the way down and on the way out. And the St James seemed to bring out the best in all of them."
Boarded-up beauty in waiting game - 1 Oct
"The St James still sings but its songs are the lonely kind that echo around the 82-year-old theatre, now closed to the public. Not all the lights can be turned on because of electrical work, so the darkness inside the theatre is broken by Mr Doole's heavy-duty torch."
City 'desperately needs St James Theatre' - 7 Oct
"Auckland Arts Festival executives say the city desperately needs a mid-size theatre - and a restored St James will fit the bill. Victoria Carter, chairwoman of the Auckland Arts Festival board, said the theatre was part of the artistic hub of the city and was too versatile to lose."
St James Theatre. Curtain may rise on $64m upgrade for beloved theatre - 20 Oct
"What was once the bastion of Auckland's creative scene may be restored to its past grandeur if plans for a $64 million upgrade to the St James Theatre are approved. A recent report from the arts, culture and recreation committee endorsed the long-term aim of the council to secure the St James Theatre in public ownership."

Figure 82. St James New Zealand Herald article timeline page 1, by Author.

2011

Review gives new hope for decaying theatre - 11 Jan
"Mr Brown has commissioned an update of a 2008 study into the city's theatre needs. The study by consultants Horwath HTL, commissioned by the old Auckland City Council, concluded that there was "an urgent and high-priority need for a 250-350 seat flexiform theatre and a 500-600 seat drama theatre"."
Mayor takes another look at saving St James Theatre - 11 May
"Auckland Mayor Len Brown has ordered an urgent report assessing ways to save the iconic St James Theatre. The ornate Queen St theatre, which is listed as heritage category one by the Historic Places Trust, has been unused since it was hit by a fire in 2007."
Mayor urges action on rotting St James Theatre - 12 May
"Auckland Mayor Len Brown has called for an urgent report on restoration of the St James Theatre - once one of Auckland's premier venues but closed since a fire in 2007. Mr Brown said the theatre was one of the most iconic buildings in Australasia yet was an "open sore in the community ... sitting there rotting"."

2013

Scott Kara: Let's revive the St James - Jul 25
"The St James Theatre - a formerly glorious and magnificent venue on Queen St across the road from The Civic which turned 85 years old this month - has been out of commission for many years now."
Fate of an Auckland landmark: Saving the St James - 16 Aug
"Auckland's new civic leaders will come under intense pressure to rescue the St James Theatre - a historic venue that has been six years in mothballs - as the private owner of the old theatre complex builds a 39-storey apartment tower next door."
Editorial: Need growing acute for St James rebuild - 19 Aug
"Three years ago, Mayor Len Brown made a plea to the Auckland Council to explore options to save the magnificent St James Theatre. It was, he said, one of the most iconic buildings in Australasia yet it was "an open sore in the community ... sitting there rotting"."
Margot McRae: St James is our Albert Hall - all it needs is a WOF - 20 Aug
"The key to saving the St James Theatre is not to aim for a grand restoration but simply to make it safe and open its doors. There's a huge amount of backing in Auckland for this gorgeous theatre but the longer it lies empty and decaying the harder it will be to retain the support. The talk of a full heritage restoration with its $50 million price tag is the biggest deterrent to saving the St James."

2014

Fate of St James and gift sculpture on agenda - 3 Apr
"Two cultural projects in downtown Auckland - the fate of the St James Theatre and a $1 million-plus sculpture on Queens Wharf - will be discussed by Auckland councillors today. The St James Theatre is the subject of a confidential report at the regional strategy and policy committee."
Brian Rudman: St James - another job for action man - 4 Apr
"What the university's bullying did highlight is that, in an emergency, Auckland Council can find the money.
So why the lack of action to save the historic St James Theatre? Closed since a fire in the adjacent Odeon/Westend cinema complex in 2007, the A-listed heritage building - on both council and Historic Places Trust records - remains shut."
St James Theatre set to rise again - 10 Oct
"Auckland's mothballed St James Theatre could be in for a rejuvenation, with the category 1-listed historic Queen St building believed to have been sold to a developer. The deal is believed to involve restrengthening work and would also allow the buyer to build a 39-level apartment tower and retail complex next door."
New hope for St James Theatre restoration - 21 Oct
"Changing ownership of the old St James Theatre on Queen St, Auckland, has raised hope for restoration of the historic venue, which has been seven years in mothballs. While looking dilapidated from the outside, the grand-style decoration and size of the theatre was apparent when the new owners allowed media in to take a look."
Encore: Restored theatre's opening night booked for 2018 - 22 Oct
"A family-owned company believed to have paid more than $30 million for the St James Theatre in Queen St intends to restore the historic performance venue and use adjacent land to build a 39-level apartment tower and shops.The sale of the theatre complex to Lijun Li and family was revealed yesterday, when media were allowed inside to see the grandiose decor and dimensions of a theatre that has been in mothballs for seven years."
Editorial: Future sunny for St James at long last - 28 Oct
"The first step towards saving what is arguably Auckland's most magnificent theatre, the St James, has taken far longer than it should have. The case for restoration has been manifest since its closure in 2007. Yet, for one reason or another, not least council dilly-dallying, it has been left to rot on its Queen St site. But last week, there was finally good news for the category-one listed building. Relianz Holdings, a vehicle of Auckland-based Lijun Li and his family, has bought the theatre and adjacent land. This creates the potential for the curtain to go up at a rejuvenated St James in 2018."
Margot McRae: Ongoing restoration may be best for St James - 6 Nov
"Finally there is progress on the St James Theatre and now all eyes will be on the developers to deliver.
There are always great expectations of the people who promise to reopen a dearly loved old theatre, together with doubts about whether they can pull it off."

2015

St James to welcome Aucklanders once again - 6 Mar
"The foyer of Auckland's long-abandoned historic St James Theatre will soon re-open as a cafe.
Major seismic strengthening of the whole building was also planned and sophisticated base isolation units being considered."
St James Theatre will re-open this May - 8 Apr
"It has been announced this morning that the St James Theatre in Auckland will re-open on May 2, eight years since it was shut down in 2007 after a small electrical fire raised concerns about safety."
Auckland's St James Theatre to reopen in weeks - 8 Apr
"Aucklanders are about to get their first glimpse inside the city's historic and much-loved St James Theatre.
The Queen St building, shut for years, will re-open in the next few weeks."
Local artists pick their favourite shows at the St James - 1 May
"In honour of the St James re-opening for a celebratory festival called Weird Night Out this weekend, we asked some of the participating musicians for their favourite memories of the iconic venue."
Auckland's St James theatre fire 'not suspicious' - 9 Jul
""Non-suspicious" faulty electrics was behind a blaze that last night damaged Auckland's historic St James theatre for the second time in a decade.
Emergency services were called to the scene at 10pm when fire was found in the basement of the Queen St theatre, which is a category one historic place."

Figure 83. St James New Zealand Herald article timeline page 2, by Author.

St James Theatre tower shops feature in new portfolio - 1 Aug
"Prime retail units in the ground and basement levels of a proposed tower block on the St James Theatre site in Auckland's Queen St are among the 33 properties featured for sale and lease in Barfoot & Thompson Commercial's latest Insite commercial property portfolio."
Fire at Auckland's St James theatre - 9 Aug
"Auckland's historic St James theatre was damaged by fire last night for the second time in a decade. Emergency services were called to the scene at 10pm. Fire was found in the basement of the Queen St theatre, which is a category one historic place. The complex was closed after a fire in 2007 and had re-opened in May."
Documentary premieres on Auckland's St James Theatre - 25 Sep
"Devonport film-maker and historian Margot McRae has produced a 50-minute film, St James - The Show Goes On, which will be screened inside the Queen St building, which dates from 1928 and has been off-limits to the public for the past few years."
Concert review: Odesza, St James - 27 Sep
"Auckland's St James Theatre faced its first true test since re-opening with a sold out show by electronic act Odesza. How did it fare? Chris Schulz was there."
St James restorers optimistic of raising $60m-plus to revive old theatre - 26 Sep
"Auckland's historic St James Theatre could cost $60 million to $70 million to restore.
Steve Bielby, principal trustee for the building's developer, the Auckland Notable Properties Trust, said those were the estimates for a full restoration. Funding was yet to be secured but he was optimistic it could be sourced."
Council's $15m for theatre - 30 Nov
"Auckland Council has agreed to pay $15 million towards the $60 million to $70 million cost of restoring the heritage St James Theatre in Queen St."
Music party to raise awareness for St James Theatre - 7 Dec
"A music party is being organised at the historic St James Theatre on Friday to raise awareness about restoring the Queen St landmark. The theatre is closing in March and local MPs Jacinda Ardern and Nikki Kaye are keen to ensure the doors stay open once a new apartment tower alongside the theatre is built."
Forward Thinking: We haven't saved the St James, yet - 13 Dec
"It's been open again since May, hosting a wide array of gigs and performances, but if you thought the St James Theatre was back for good, it turns out you were wrong. As Tina Plunkett, spokeperson for the Save The St James group explains, it's been open on a limited, preliminary basis, but it has by no means been fully restored."
St James finds unlikely saviour - Dec 28
"Luckily for the CBD theatre, the 29-year-old heir to Target Furniture has a soft spot for heritage buildings."

2016

St James Theatre reveals hidden treasures and secrets of Auckland's past - 4 Jul
"An array of artefacts have been found beneath the floorboards of the historic St James theatre as it undergoes a transformation, unearthing secrets of the city's past. Countless Aucklanders have sat in its storied auditorium during the last 80 years without realising hidden treasures, some of which date back to the 1880s, had been buried right under their seats."
Heritage visionary leads St James restoration - 29 Sep
"The St James Theatre doesn't give her secrets away lightly - or to just anybody, as Steve Bielby has discovered.
Like the old diva she is, the theatre has her own way of making things happen and isn't above throwing the odd curve ball."
Watch NZ Herald Focus: Inside historic St James Theatre - 5 Oct
"The $65 million restoration of Auckland's St James Theatre is continuing to unearth secrets of the city's past.
An array of artefacts has already been found beneath the historic theatre's floorboards and now a long-forgotten tower has also been discovered."
Funding issues hit St James apartments project in Auckland - 16 Nov
"Funding issues have hit yet another big Auckland apartment project, the inner-city's planned St James Suites beside the historic Queen St theatre."
Council yet to loan $15m to St James Theatre project - 18 Nov
"Auckland Council is yet to loan $15 million for the upgrade of the city's historic St James Theatre and no public money is at stake in the troubled project. Noel Reardon, council heritage manager, said no money had yet been loaned and nor would it be until certain conditions were met."

2017

St James work continues despite apartment tower cancellation - 17 Jul
"Work upgrading Auckland's historic St James Theatre is continuing, despite the cancellation of a $250 million associated apartment tower, a key figure in the project says. Steve Bielby, co-developer of the planned 39-level St James Suites abandoned last year, said today that the Queen St theatre restoration was on track."

2018

$67m restoration of St James Theatre stalled for nine months - 1 May
"Restoration of Auckland's historic St James Theatre has stalled for nine months and the site of the $67 million project left untouched since late last year.
A 'sad' walk through Saint James Theatre - with a hopefully happy end - 10 May
"It's a complicated story, but thanks to red tape surrounding its $68 million renovation nothing's been done for the past nine months. A handful of lights are on but the builders aren't home. Its current status is "to be continued"."

2019

'Indefinite mothballing' prospect for category 1 historic St James Theatre - 2 Jul
"One of New Zealand's historic theatres faces the prospect of an "indefinite mothballing," Auckland councillors have been told, due to work stalling on the project some years ago and nothing happening since."

2020

St James Theatre owner wants $300m state funds: restoration, 300-unit apartment block - 8 Jul
"The owner of Auckland's long-shut historic St James Theatre on Queen St wants $300 million Government funding to restore and reopen the venue and develop a previously-ditched new apartment block next door."

2021

Mothballed for four years: St James Theatre restoration wants $15m from Government - 28 Sep
"For four years, restoration of Auckland's historic St James Theatre on Queen St has been mothballed but a Government minister says a $15 million plea won't be enough for a project estimated to cost $100m to fix."

Figure 84. St James New Zealand Herald article timeline page 3, by Author.

2022

Auckland's St James Theatre vandalised, bronze statue stolen -20 Jul
"Aucklanders campaigning for the restoration of St James Theatre are incensed after the heritage site was looted."
$400m St James Apartments plans in Auckland's Queen St - urban design panel seeks changes - 28 Jul
"Auckland Council's Urban Design Panel wants changes to a proposed $400 million apartment tower beside the historic St James Theatre - a scheme two levels higher than previous plans for the site last decade."
Damage to Auckland's historic St James Theatre revealed - 14 Aug
"The foyer of the historic theatre was vandalised and some items stolen after police believe a group of youths forced their way into the building."
Chlöe Swarbrick: Save St. James Theatre - 14 Aug
"Green Party MP Chlöe Swarbrick takes a tour of St. James Theatre to show the extent of recent damage. Video / NZ Green Party
Auckland's St James Theatre restoration now 'do or die', Swarbrick says - 28 Nov
"The 1920s theatre has hosted some of the world's biggest acts including James Brown, Miles Davis and Joni Mitchell, but the venue just off Queen St has sat dormant for the past six years."

2023

Letters: Supermarket profits, St James Theatre and tough on crime messaging - 24 Jul
"At last! Hope for the restoration of Auckland's beautiful, iconic St James Theatre. The $15m from the Government hopefully will be matched by the Auckland Council for this valuable work to restore St James to its former glory as a vital entertainment and performing arts centre. This will revitalise Queen St after 16 years of neglect. Great news!"
Auckland's historic St James Theatre could be demolished if restoration work does not start soon, says mayor Wayne Brown - 26 Jul
"Auckland Mayor Wayne Brown says he will recommend demolishing the historic St James Theatre if restoration work is not under way by July next year.
St James Theatre restoration: $31.5m public funds pledged. Not a cent spent. Why? - 26 Jul
"In 2015, $15m was pledged by the council, then a Crown ministry offered $1.5m three years later and just on Saturday, a further $15m was hefted towards the crumbling, leaking Queen St wreck. Not a cent of that vast amount has yet been spent, though."

2025

Live at the St James, again: Auckland Council approves funding for iconic venue - 27 Feb
"Auckland Council voted today to commit $15 million in funding to the restoration of the theatre, to match a $15m commitment from the Government through the Ministry of Arts, Culture and Heritage."
St James to go live again, grungily: Simon Wilson - 1 Mar
"Auckland councillors sometimes have funny ideas about the performing arts. In the debate on Thursday about funding to allow the St James Theatre in Queen St to reopen, Maurice Williamson wanted to know why "the arts and culture and heritage community", which he said are "absolutely loaded with dough", wasn't paying for it. It's a pervasive idea, that one: culture is for rich people."
Dire state of Auckland CBD real estate: Big projects abandoned, deferred, delayed, unbuilt – Property Insider - 5 Aug
"Bare land, no apartments - The St James Suites beside the St James Theatre were planned to be developed last decade."
Auckland Mayor Wayne Brown urges Government to reconsider bed night levy to reboot city's struggling economy - 13 Aug
"Dann suggested the Government could allocate funding to revive three "dead" buildings in the midtown area – St James Theatre, the vacant Smith & Caughey's building, and the Sky World indoor entertainment complex. He argued restoring these sites would breathe life back into the city and keep skilled workers employed while the broader economy recovers."

Figure 85. St James New Zealand Herald article timeline page 3, by Author.

Figure 86. Modified Image of Auckland Savings Bank (Former) on Queen Street, by Author

Chapter Six

Design

Design Intervention

Key temporary adaptive reuse strategies have been applied in accordance with the Design Framework to create a physical intervention suited for the reinhabitation of disused cultural heritage sites in Auckland CBD. The purpose of this intervention is to continue use of these sites in the interim phase before a permanent decision is made about the space's future. Continued use during this phase ensures that cultural heritage value is maintained.

Minimum Intervention. The structure will need to intervene minimally, so as to respect the surviving evidence of place in accordance with the Design Framework, and the ICOMOS New Zealand Charter. What this means structurally is that any intervention will need to be independently supported. This means external fabric is not damaging original structure and ensures reversibility. In areas where contact with the site is required for functionality (i.e. foundations), non-intrusive alternatives will need to be found.

Continued Use. As previously established, the goal of any planned intervention should be to allow continued use of place. "The conservation of a place of cultural heritage value is usually facilitated by the place serving a useful purpose." (ICOMOS New Zealand Charter, 2010).

Programmatic Flexibility. This intervention will be used across different sites, programmes, and seasons. It is therefore paramount that the intervention puts adaptability first. Programmatically fixed design will only lead to obsolescence and destroy the project's useability across sites.

Sustainable lifecycles. While temporary structures are inherently sustainable due to their reusability, their materials may not be. Selecting materials that align with the sustainable goals of adaptation will ensure continuity across the design.

Specific strategies applied

Integrated handles have been designed into the brackets. This makes the structure's elements easier to relocate and reaffirms the idea that this structure is designed to be disassembled and reused.

Concrete-free foundations have been designed into the system. For areas with level and potentially sensitive floors, scaffolding foundations are used. In spaces where sensitivity of the ground area is less of an issue, Eco-Pile concrete-free pile foundations are integrated into the system. Both foundation types use scaffold-jack bases to allow adjustment to varied elevations. These foundation types have been selected to minimise damage to the inhabited sites and leave no trace behind.

Selecting timber as the main structural material has been chosen in accordance with the principle sustainable lifecycles. Timber has a positive carbon footprint, which will help to offset the carbon produced from other more energy intensive materials such as steel in the foundations and brackets.

	Description	Key Theorists
Minimum Intervention	Minimum intervention stresses the importance of doing "as much as necessary but as little as possible". Intervening minimally ensures surviving evidence and knowledge is preserved, allowing the showcase of a building's authentic evidence of use.	Ruskin (1889), Juniper (2003), and Jacobs & Cairns (2014)
Continued Use	Continued use of cultural heritage spaces is integral to the maintenance of cultural heritage significance. Any interventions should aim to support ease of continued use.	Uriche-Trifu (2013), Douglas (2002), and The ICOMOS New Zealand Charter (2010)
Programmatic Fexiblity	Programmatic flexibility ensures that interventions do not suffer from obsolescence: the condition that likely contributed to the host building's initial abandonment. This flexibility should naturally occur when aiming for minimal intervention.	Joja (2021), , Price (1964), Soylu (2019), Brand (1994), and Mehrota & Vera (2017)
Sustainable Lifecycles	A key driving factor of modern adaptive reuse is the opportunity to utilise the embodied carbon in existing buildings. The consideration of carbon and waste reduction will be of high importance when creating an argument for adaptation in Auckland CBD.	Lanz & Pendlebury (2022), Griffiths et al. (2022), Besen and Boarin (2023), Guidetti & Ferrara (2023), Yakubu et al. (2017), and Aigwi et al. (2020)

Figure 4. Table featuring Design Framework principles and key theorists, by Author.

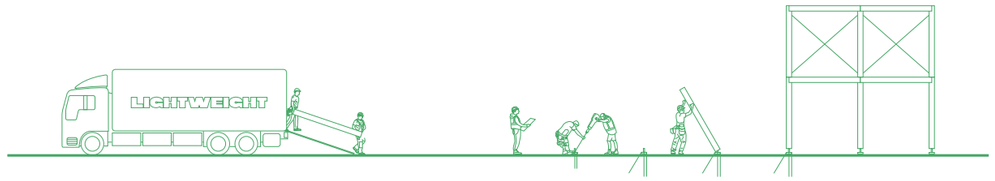
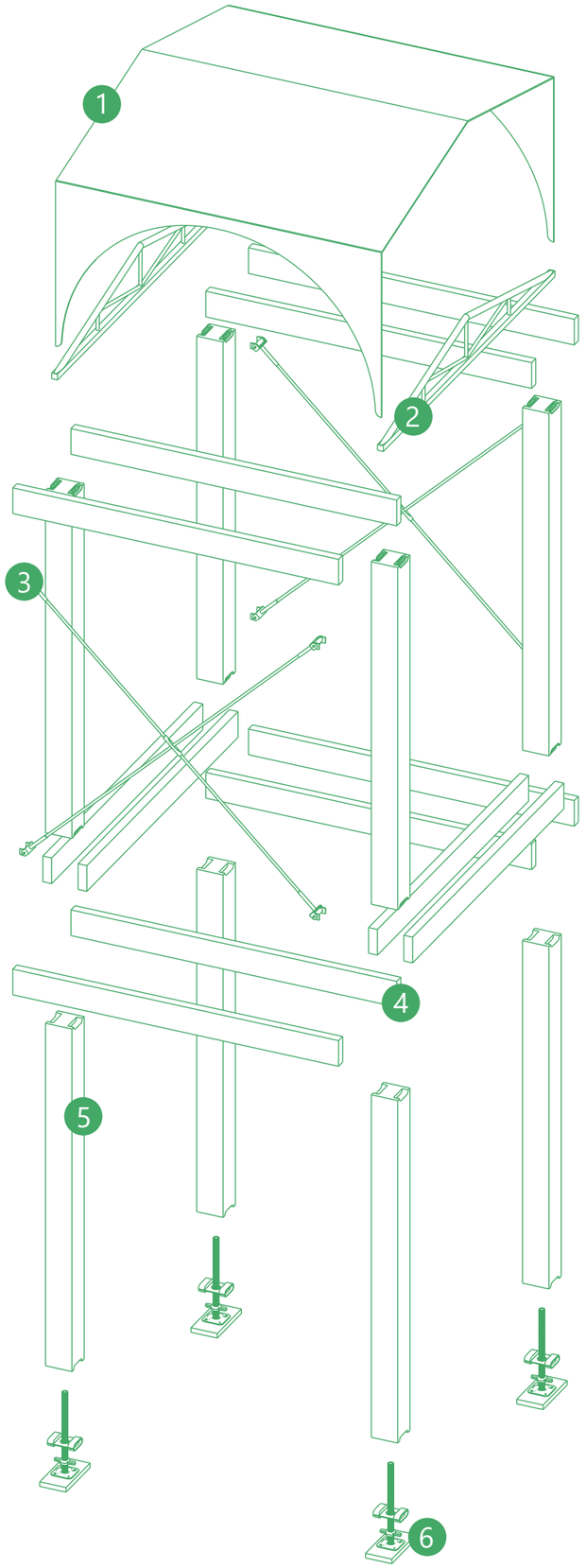


Figure 87. Assembly diagram, by Author.



1 Canvas roof

2 Aluminium truss

3 Steel cross-bracing

4 Timber beam

5 Timber post

6 Scaffold-jack foundation

7 Post to post detail

8 Bracing detail

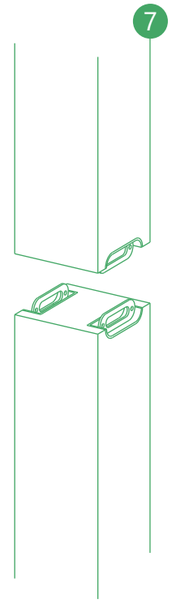
9 Scaffold jack plate foundation

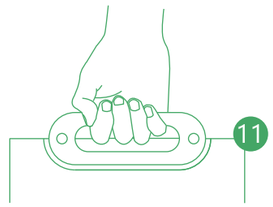
10 Scaffold jack Eco-Pile foundation

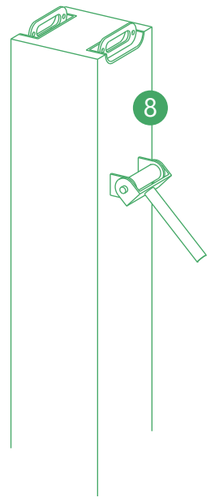
11 Handle shaped post to post brackets

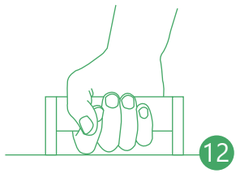
12 Handle shaped cross bracing brackets

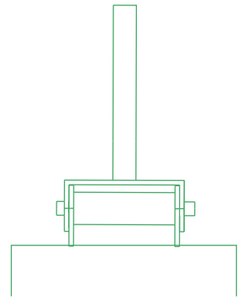
13 Stucture section

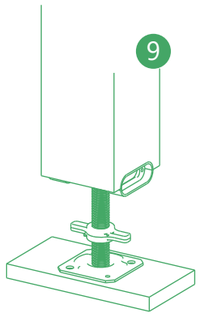


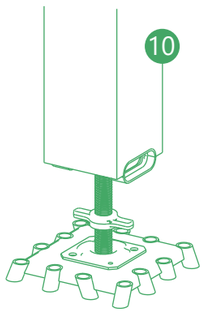












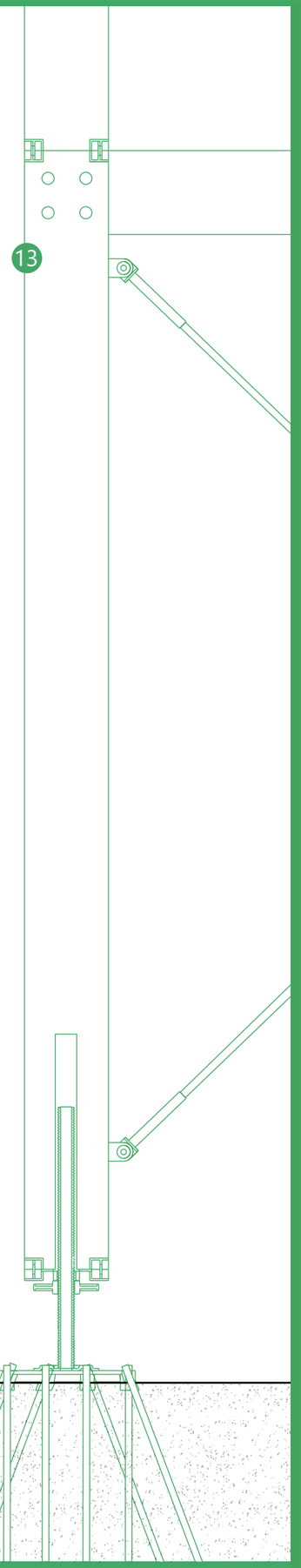
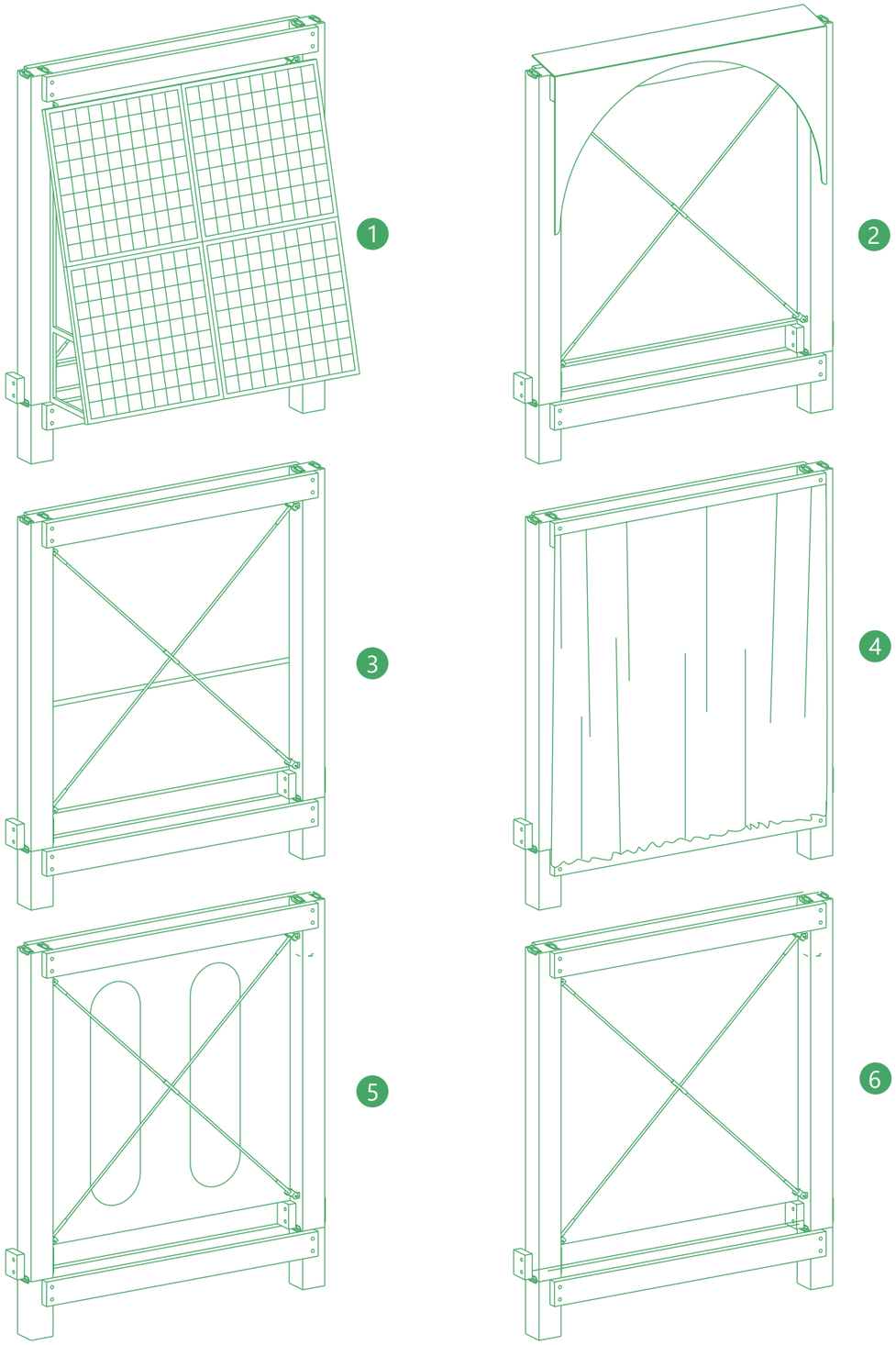


Figure 88. Tectonic diagrams and details, by Author.



1 Solar panel attachment
2 Canvas roof
3 Aluminium railing with polycarbonate lower
4 Curtain
5 Mixed polycarbonate wall & Window
6 Single polycarbonate wall

Figure 89. Diagrams of panel attatchments, by Author.

Guide to Implementation

The following guide outlines the measures required when considering a lightweight approach to adaptation.

Phase 1 - Establishing Site Conditions
Prior to any work beginning, thorough investigation into the existing site and its conditions is required. Whether a site is viable for reinhabitation depends on various factors. Earthquake safety is a relevant consideration given the high concentration of disused buildings falling into this category. For sites having experienced long periods of abandonment, weathertightness, effects of moisture, and biological hazards prevent spaces from being safely inhabited. If minimum site conditions cannot be met, and interior activation cannot proceed, partial activation of a given site may still be possible. This could look like a fully external activation.

Phase 2a - Programme Development
Finding a suitable programme for any given site is paramount to the scheme's success. Taking note of existing communities, as well as opportunities for urban regeneration will support the selection process. Invariant factors such as scale of site, available interior and exterior space, existing services, and availability of structural components also play a role in programme selection. In cases of cultural heritage buildings, programme is also dictated by uses deemed "compatible with the cultural heritage value of the place, and should have little or no adverse effect on the cultural heritage value." (ICOMOS NZ, 2010).

Phase 2b – Spatial Strategy
While general arrangement in accordance with programme is considered in *Phase 2a*, specific component selection will take place in this interim phase. Differences in site conditions may call for alternative components, for example a paved site would be most suitable for flat foundations, while an earth site would be most suitable for screw foundations. It is also in this phase that any connection points to original building fabric is planned to mitigate potential damage to sensitive building elements.

Phase 3 – Assembly
Once the programme and arrangement of components have been selected, components can be transported in their disassembled form from storage or a previous site, to the new one. Firstly, foundations can be installed in planned locations. Secondly, columns, beams, floors and stairs can be installed. Next, wall panels and railings can be installed completing the base structure. Lastly, programme specific elements such as lighting, stage equipment, seating, tables, and other facilities can be installed. It is in this part that connection to services, i.e. electricity and water are connected.

Phase 4 - Activation
The scale of Phase 4 (Activation) is heavily dependent on the scheme's selected programme. While programmes such an art or market space may only require participation by the general public, larger events may require a full roster of staff. It is in this phase that additional requirement for said activities take place, i.e. tickets for events and advertising.

Phase 5 - Disassembly and Storage
This phase involves the disassembly and relocation to either storage, or a new location. During this phase, a key activity is to assess the condition of the components and the inhabited building. This may involve the replacement or repair of any damaged elements. In this phase it is necessary to reflect on the success of the intervention, and use this information to guide further applications.

Arthur Yates Seed Co. Buildings

Site Conditions

The key features of this site are the five storey Yates retail and office store, as well as the partially demolished Yates warehouse. Between these two features is the historic Link House, though it is evident that structural timber elements have not fared well over three decades of abandonment, and the structure is therefore uninhabitable.

Three decades of abandonment have left the interior and exterior of the Yates buildings covered in graffiti. The layered paint over the years has left areas of the Yates with a unique patina. While not to everyone's taste, celebrating this patina as a feature rather than degradation is in line with the principle of minimum intervention outlined in the Design Framework. Furthermore, this decision can be backed by the ICOMOS New Zealand charter (2010), in Respect for Surviving Evidence and Knowledge, it states that "Respect for all forms of knowledge and existing evidence, of both tangible and intangible values, is essential to the authenticity and integrity of the place." The site's long period of abandonment has become a part of the site's history and is therefore authentic evidence of use.

Ward Demolition's recount of the Food Alley and Yates warehouse demolition describes very poor internal conditions, with high levels of guano and moisture (Ward Demolition Ltd., n.d.). While it is unclear what level of cleaning was done during the 2021/22 demolition, it would be safe to assume that a further 4 years sitting idle has led to further deterioration. As stated in *Guide to Implementation*, investigation into the onsite conditions and action where needed will be required prior to reinhabitation.

Programme Development

Studio and gallery space has been selected as the programme for this site for three significant reasons. The first is the site's longstanding history with graffiti and vandalism. While previous decades have seen attempts to cover up graffiti, it is evident that there is still an active community operating in and on the site. Catering to this community of creatives will ensure that the spaces are used to their fullest. This approach could be argued to conflict with certain principles outlined in the ICOMOS New Zealand charter. In *Use*, the charter states that "Where a change of use is proposed, the new use should be compatible with the cultural heritage value of the place, and should have little or no adverse effect on the cultural heritage value." (2010). However, the length of time the site has spent abandoned means that there is no change of use, it is simply continuing use. This approach cannot damage cultural heritage value because it has already become a significant aspect of the building's cultural heritage. The second reason is one of convenience. To follow an approach of minimum intervention as laid out in *Design Framework*, for this site intervention does not go beyond accessibility to ensure ease of continued use. Studio and gallery spaces are minimal in nature and therefore do not require anything but the space itself. Additionally, the space is not suited to other uses due to the poor condition of the interior. Lastly, this programme allows for the celebration of the layers of patinaed graffiti that have become a significant part of the building's history, and showcases authentic evidence of use.

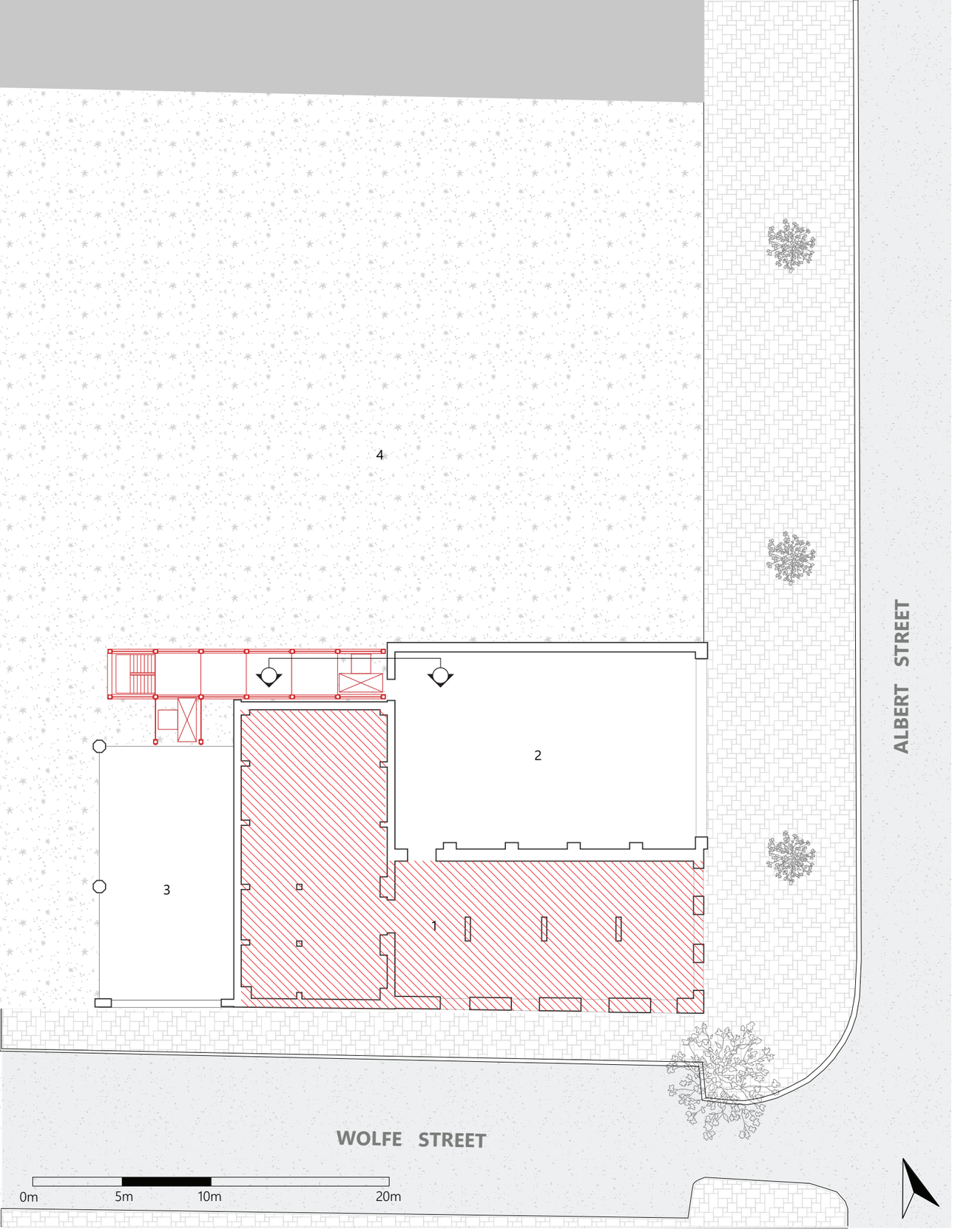
Spatial Strategy

A key design strategy for this site is the celebration of graffiti and patina. This directly references the principle of Minimum Intervention laid out in the Design Framework.

Only two structures remain in an inhabitable state after the 2021/22 demolition, though they are separated by the uninhabitable Link House. The main purpose of the planned intervention is to reunite these spaces and allow access between them. This directly connects to the principle of Continued Use laid out in the Design Framework.

This site features a unique challenge in aligning early 20th century raised ceilings with the three-meter floor/ceiling height of the intervention. This challenge employs the use of 2 temporary construction elevators to bridge the gap between the intervention and the original structure. This approach has been selected as a non-invasive alternative to direct connections to the existing structure.

The intervention itself is arranged to avoid the inherently repetitive nature of modularity by breaking up the spaces with alternative accessways. This is done to encourage exploration within the space and experience the building that it sits alongside.



1 Link House (Uninhabitable)
2 Former Yates Retail & Office Building
3 Former Yates Warehouse (Partially Demolished)
4 Former Food Alley site

Figure 90. Yates site plan, by Author

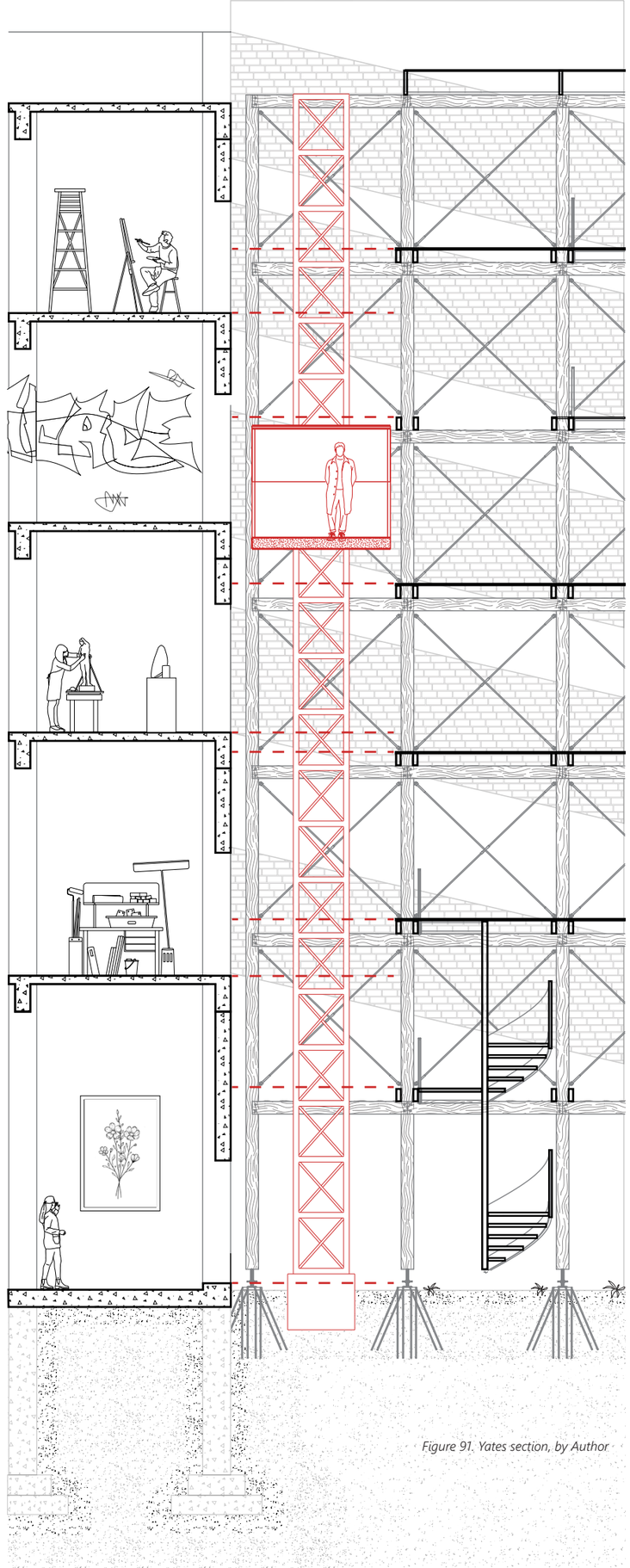


Figure 91. Yates section, by Author

Figure 92. Yates Intervention render from Federal Street, by Author

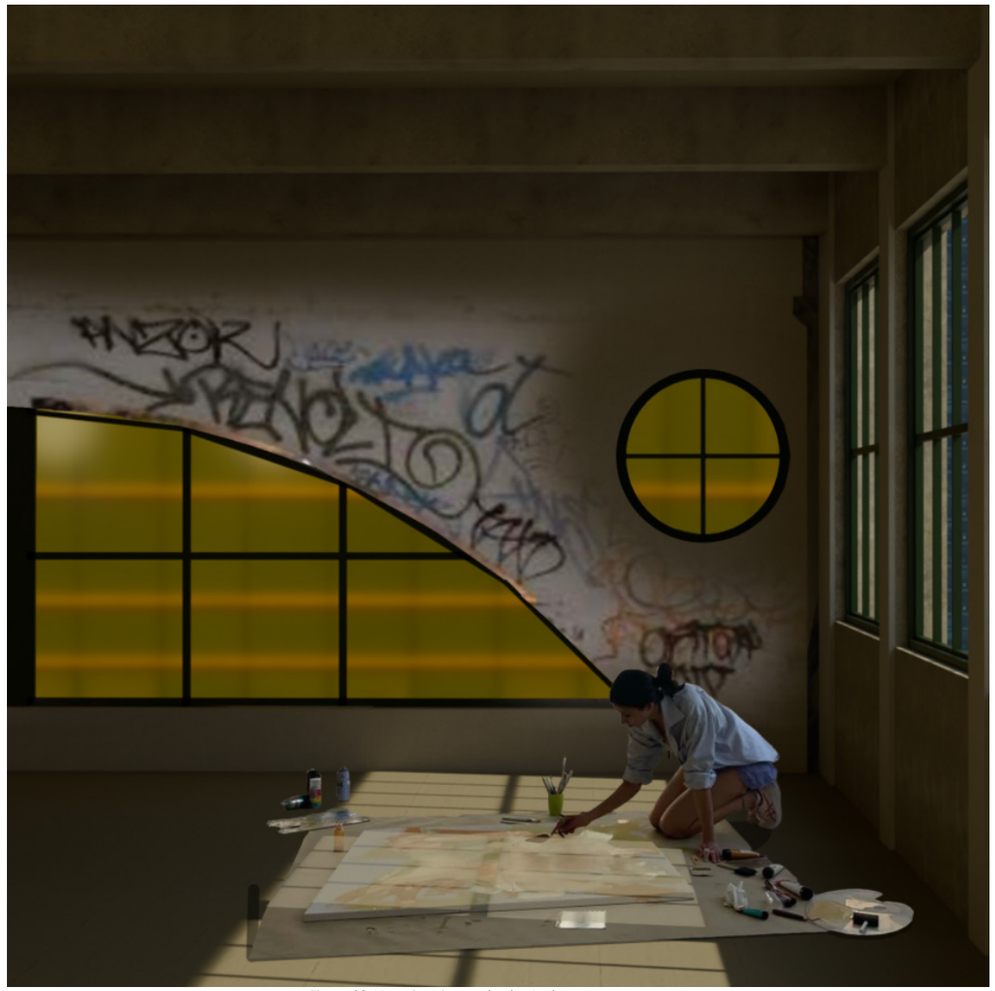


Figure 93. Yates interior render, by Author

Figure 94. Yates exterior render, by Author

Figure 95. Yates advertisement poster, by Author

Smith and Caughey's Department Store

Site Conditions

The key feature of this site is the vast three-storey interior space. The store's recent 2025 closure means the store is in top shape, a rarity for disused sites. The site is also notable for its central CBD location and ease of access, having entry points on Queen, Wellesley, and Elliott Streets. The interior spaces centre around an escalator void, going from ground floor to the roof skylight.

Programme Development

Community market space has been selected for this site, as it directly targets the challenges faced by Smith and Caughey's during the ongoing period of economic downturn. This approach to programme removes the luxury tag associated with the infamously high-end retail store, broadening the space's clientele. Additionally, the vast space available gives the programme opportunity to expand. Smith and Caughey's recent closure gives us valuable insight into how and why the space failed, so as to maximise Continued Use. Low foot traffic and economic decline have been cited for the stores closure. Given the site's size, it is unrealistic to expect that the whole space will be used. Community market space has potential to fill a significant portion of the space, but does so in a way that is reversible, thus staying in line with the principle of minimum intervention as outlined in *Design Framework*. Once again, the goal of the intervention is to provide access to make Continued Use as easy as possible, ensuring the New Zealand public can engage with this key part of Auckland's identity. This approach to programme aligns with the ICOMOS New Zealand principle of use, as the purpose of the space as a place for the exchange of goods has remained, only the type of goods has changed to increase accessibility.

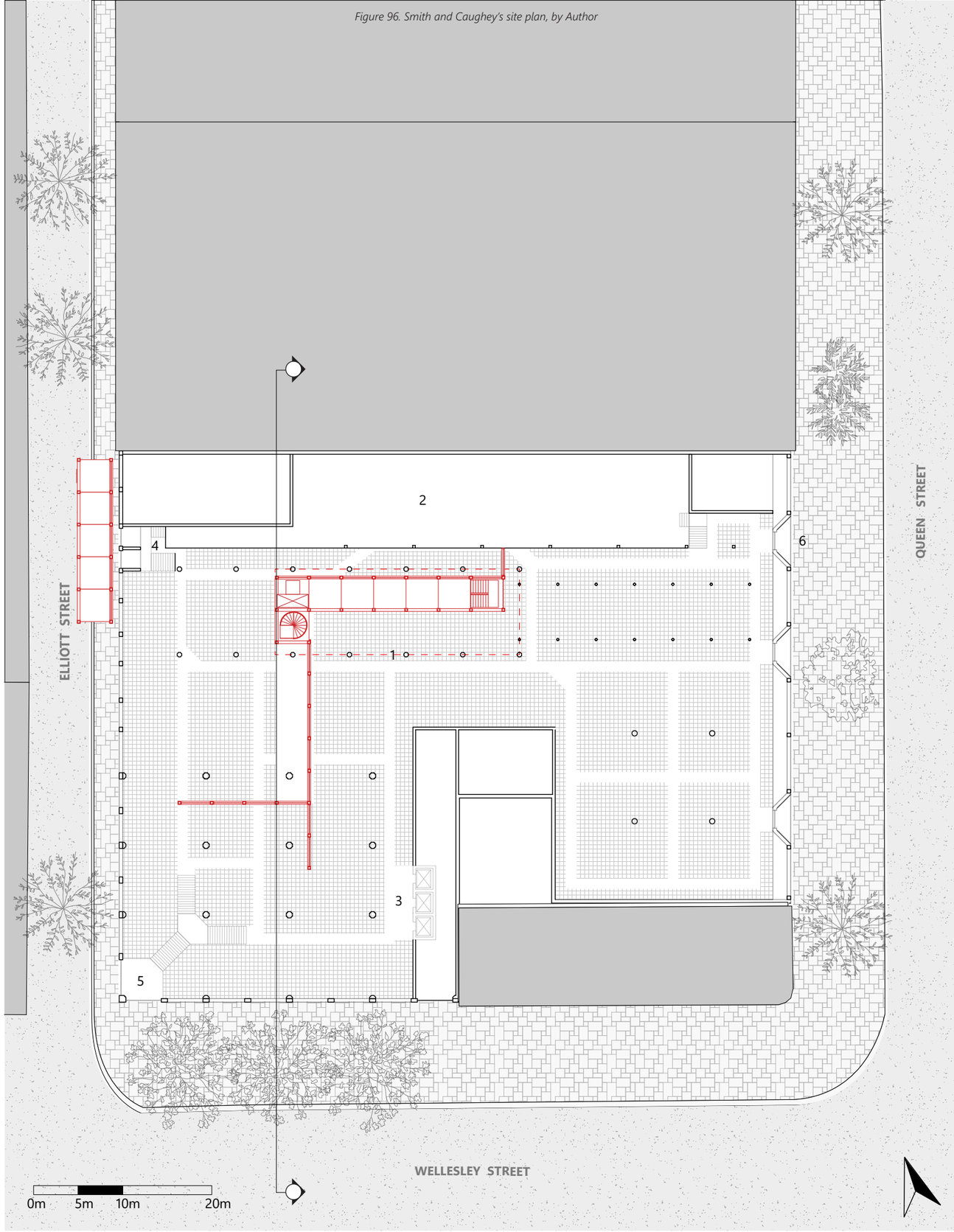
Spatial Strategy

While the space is vast, the three levels centre around an escalator void below the skylight of the 1908 Mahoney Building. Removal of the escalators leaves an empty void that can be filled with the planned intervention.

Like the Yates, there are differing heights between the intervention and original building, so a temporary elevator will again be implemented.

While the intervention is to be placed vertically in the void, Smith and Caughey's high ceiling also allows the intervention to be placed horizontally, acting as a divider to break up the vast space.

Figure 96. Smith and Caughey's site plan, by Author



1 Escalator Void
2 Mezzanine
3 Existing Elevators
4 Elliot Street Entrance
5 Wellesley Street Entrance
6 Queen Street Entrance

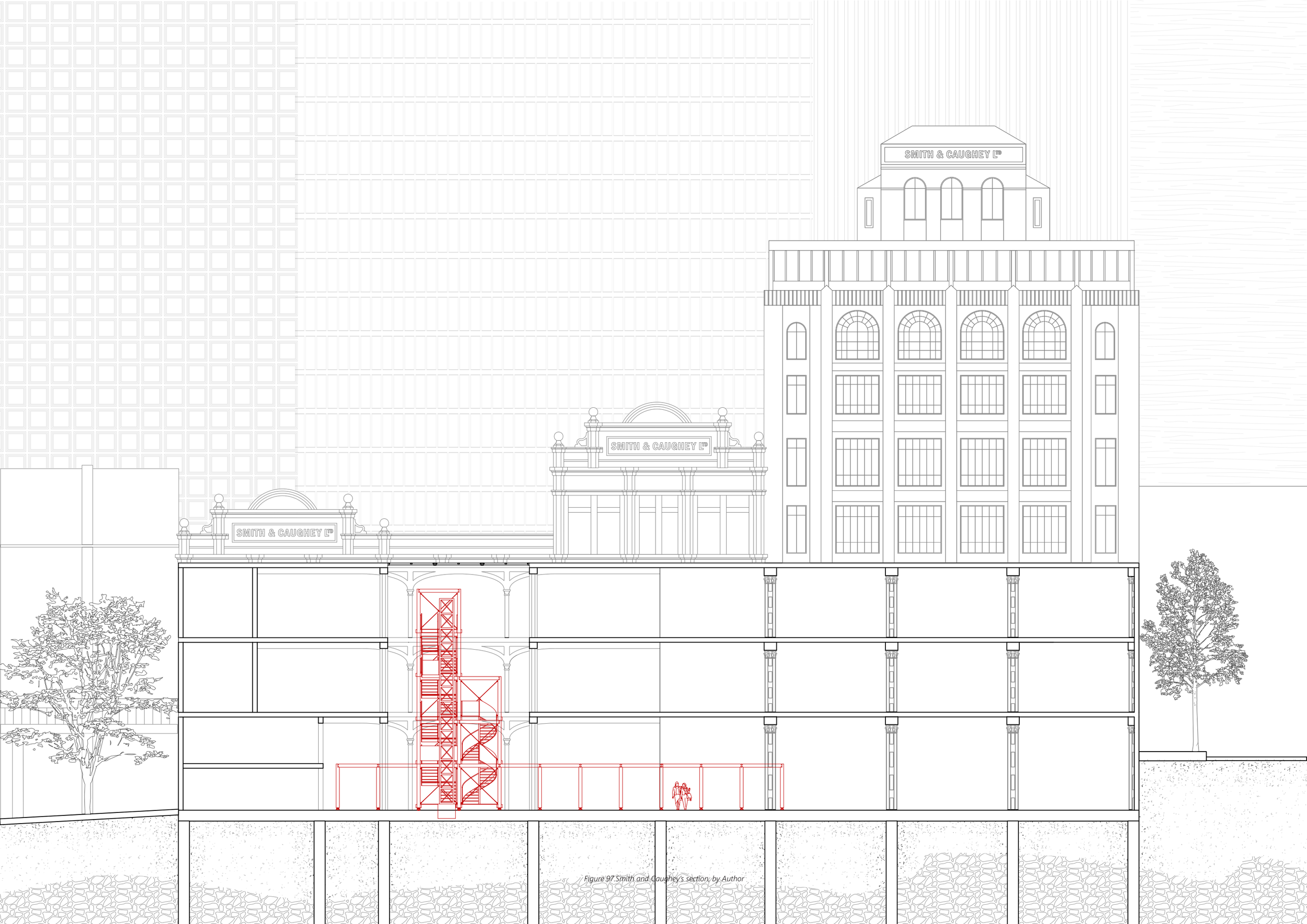


Figure 97 Smith and Caughey's section, by Author

Figure 98. Smith and Caughey's Elliott Street site render, by Author

Figure 99 Smith and Caughey's interior render showcasing intervention in escalator void, by Author

Figure 100. Smith and Caughey's interior render from Queen Street entrance, by Author

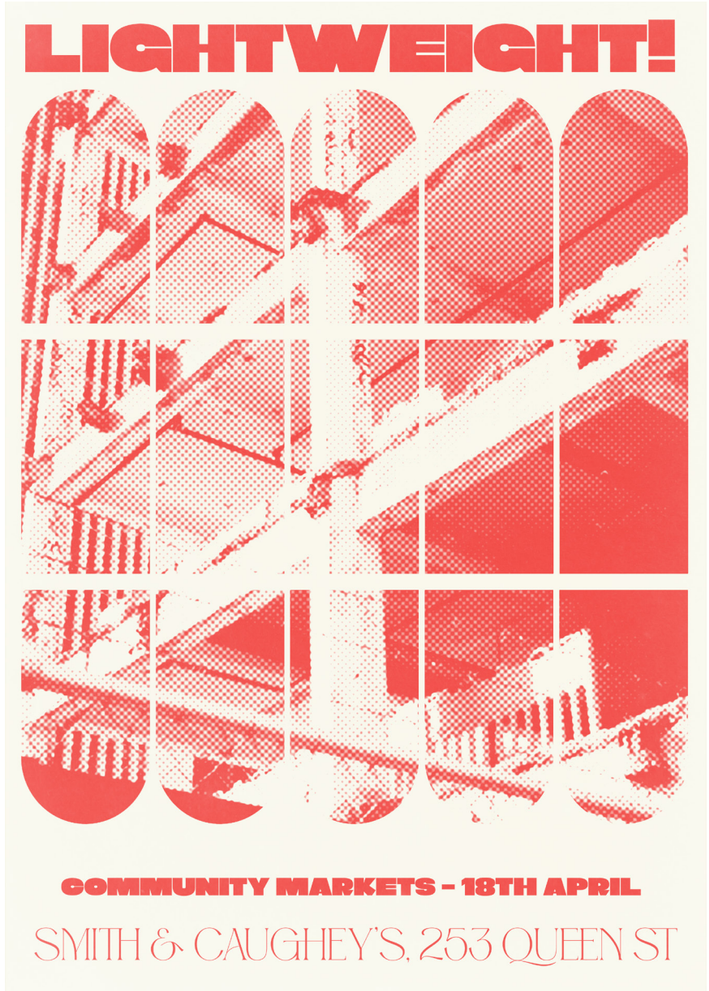


Figure 101. Smith and Caughey's advertisement poster, by Author

St James Theatre & Ex-Theatre Centre Site

Site Conditions

While the St James Theatre itself is going through an ongoing restoration, the surrounding site has not seen action since the 2015/16 demolition of the Theatre Centre. Plans to develop the site have fallen through and its future is uncertain. It is this remaining site that this exploration focusses on. Where this site differs from others is that it is purely external space. It is also unique in that there is an opportunity to support the ongoing restoration of the site's main feature: the St James theatre.

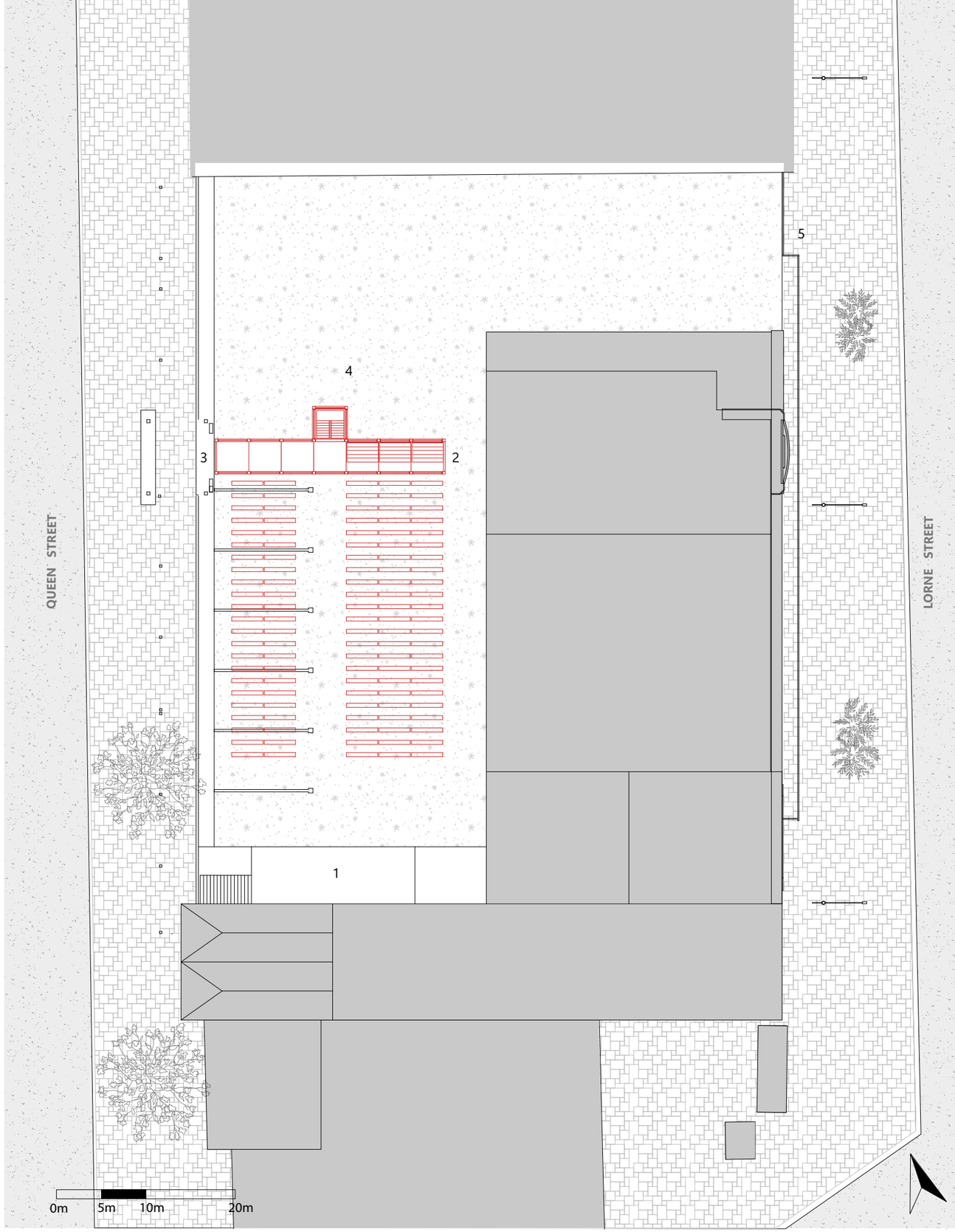
The remaining site sits one storey below Queen Street, with a gradual incline towards Lorne Street on the north of the site. The site has remained fenced off since the 2015/16 demolition. During which, the original façade of the St James Theatre tower (original Queen Street entrance) was uncovered. Additionally, the south side of the site contains significant remains from the previous building, including a foundation, and a two-storey ledge.

Programme Development

The site's longstanding history with performance makes it the obvious solution to its current state of disuse. In accordance with the ICOMOS New Zealand charter principle of use, this approach to programme is an inherently appropriate fit with the cultural heritage background of the site. Temporary performance space also makes use of the site's scale. The St James Theatre has not been fully open since 2007; this means that an entire generation of people have not had an opportunity to experience this key part of Auckland's performing arts history. Continued use of this site as a performing arts venue will ensure that cultural heritage is maintained.

Spatial Strategy

The key move for this site is to reinstate the original Queen Street St James Theatre tower façade entrance. Reinstating the original entrance celebrates the original façade, which in its current state sits crucified to supporting steel in full view of the busiest street in the country. This involves placing the planned intervention to reach the 1 storey height deficit to Queen Street. Attached to this entrance going west-east will be a five-storey grandstand to host audience members. This positioning allows seamless integration from Queen Street but still allows vehicle access from Lorne Street. This will ensure that instalment and disassembly is possible, while also providing opportunities for alternate activities such as food trucks to operate while the temporary theatre is active. The below site will house more seating. The partially demolished remains at the south of the site will act as a stage for performances.



1 Existing partially demolished structure
2 'Grandstand' Lightweight Intervention
3 Existing St James tower facade and original entry
4 Empty site
5 Lourne Street entry

Figure 103. Render of St James former tower facade repurposed, by Author.

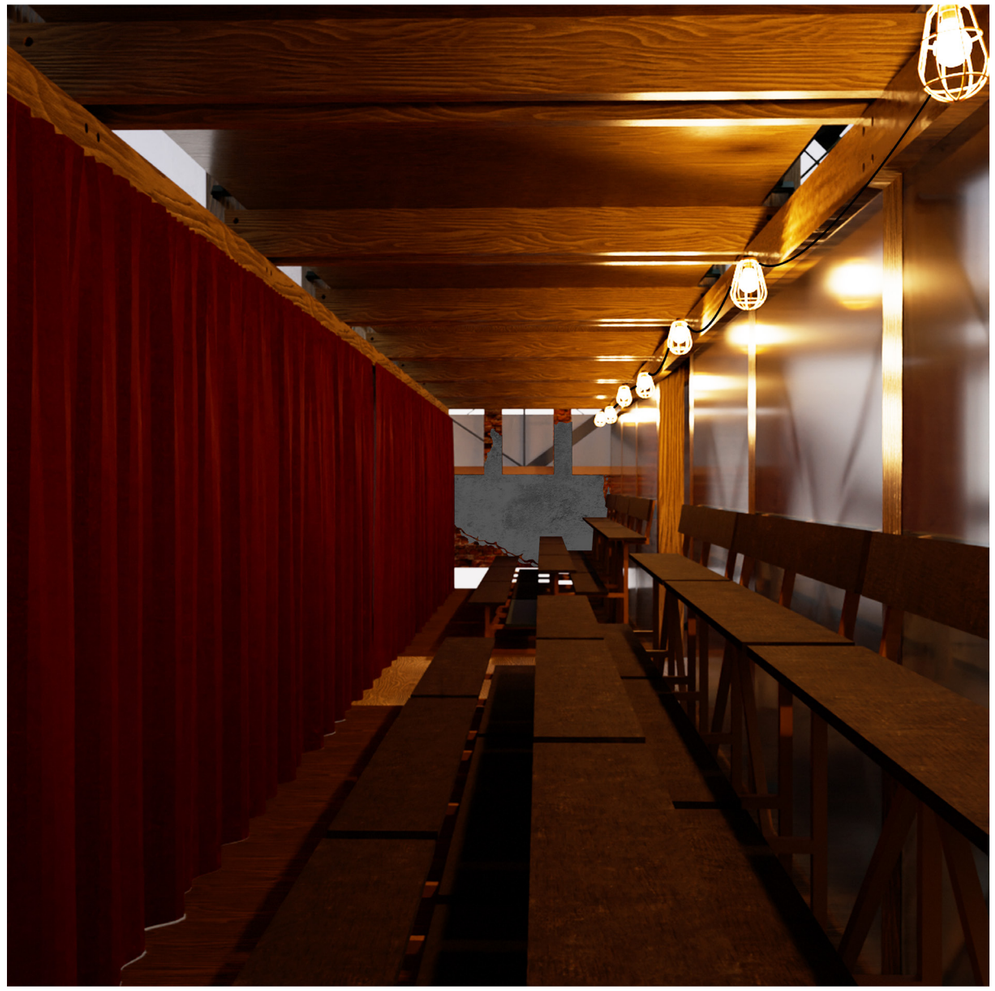


Figure 104. Render of intervention interior, by Author

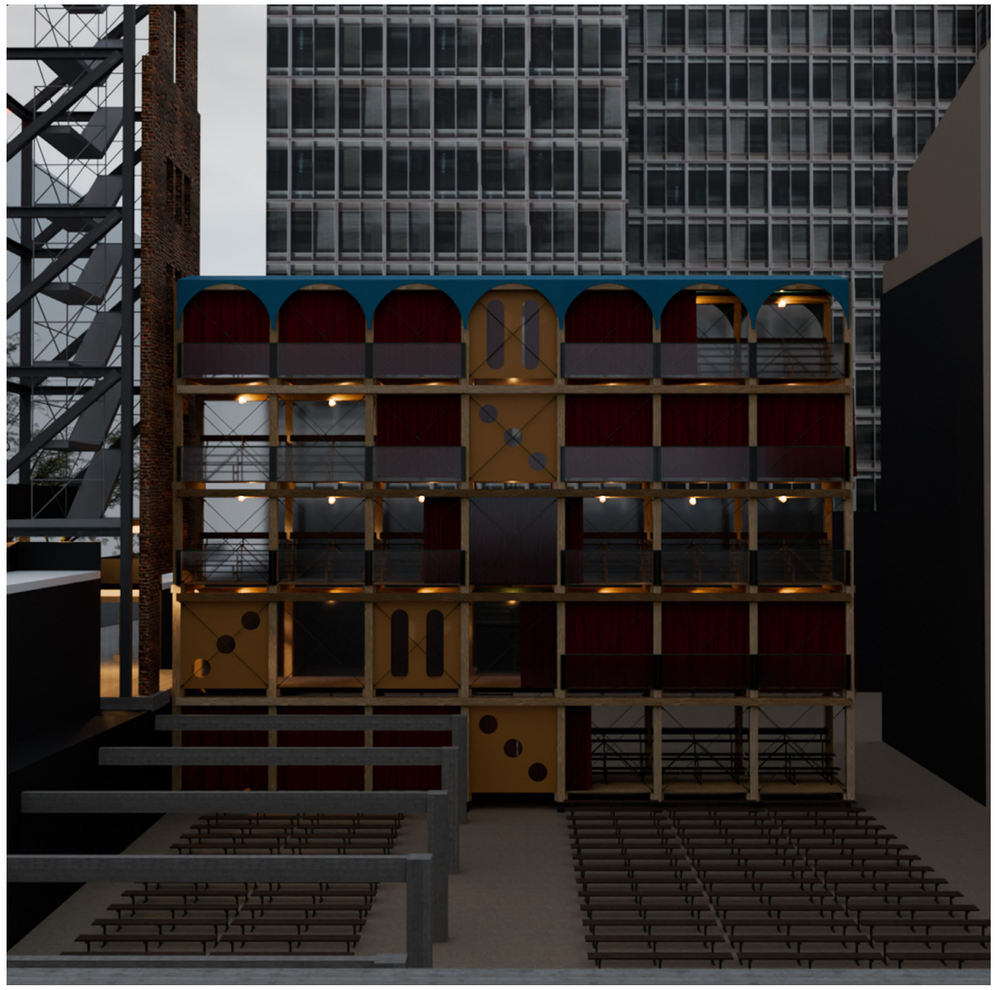


Figure 105. Render of intervention exterior facing north, by Author

Figure 106. St James advertisement poster, by Author

Figure 107. Modified Image of 6 Wolfe Street, by Author.

Chapter Seven

Conclusions

Key Findings

This thesis explores the research question: *How can temporary adaptive reuse strategies support the reinhabitation of disused cultural heritage sites in Auckland CBD?*

Exploration of literature identified key methodologies within the global and local contexts of building disuse, and common themes regarding the causes of building disuse. In particular, the principles of *Minimum Intervention, Continued Use, Programmatic Flexibility*, and *Sustainable Lifecycles* are identified. Exploration of these methodologies in key precedents revealed successful and unsuccessful application of key temporary adaptive reuse strategies in practice. Exploration of previously established causes of disuse within a local context revealed thirty disused sites across the Auckland Central Business District Area, ranging in architectural use typology, heritage recognition, extent of disuse, and cultural value. Deeper investigation of the Albert Street area provided insight into the extent of heritage as a valuable limited resource, and the reality of protection status placed upon them. Utilising these insights, and temporary adaptive reuse strategies outlined in key literature and tested in key precedents, the values-led design process produced a structural system suited specifically for the reinhabitation of these disused sites.

Reflection on the Successes and Challenges of Applied Strategies on Test Sites

Application of a designed intervention rooted in design framework principles showcases the concept of temporary adaptive reuse for the reinhabitation of disused cultural heritage sites. The intervention itself focusses specifically on the principle Programmatic Flexibility, with modular design to ensure straightforward assembly, disassembly, and applicable use across a range of sites. Experimentation of this system on selected test sites reveals the successes and struggles of this strategy for approaching the reinhabitation of disused cultural heritage sites.

The Yates Buildings site applied this strategy to create studio and gallery spaces. Specifically, designed intervention focussed on the exterior of the buildings, ensuring the structure minimally intervenes, thus preserving historically significant fabric and the unique patina that has built up from decades of graffiti. This programme selection was influenced by conservation principles relating to the appropriate selection of use typology within adaptation. While the selection of programme aligns with temporary adaptive reuse strategy and site contexts, the experimentation of strategies was challenged by the complex nature of the existing site. In particular, uneven floor heights presented a major challenge to successfully carry out continued use. While this challenge was designed around with the introduction of temporary construction elevators to bridge the gap between the intervention and original structure, the reality of servicing them would likely result in difficult ease of use. This would conflict with the Design Framework principle *Continued Use*.

The Smith and Caughey's department store site applied designed strategy to create community market space. In particular, this site prioritised minimum intervention to preserve the original fabric of the Category A and B listed spaces. Specific strategies such as the selection of scaffolding plate foundations were implemented. In accordance with key conservation principles, this programme was selected to reflect the changing community and recent economic downturn in the area. While this approach to use is logical, the specific implementation of interventions in this case may not be. While the recent closure of Smith and Caughey's means the

available space is in top condition for reuse, it also makes the argument for the implementation of temporary adaptive reuse strategies questionable. The challenge of implementing structure in an internal setting resulted in the design decision to remove the escalators and fill the remaining void. While creating interest in the short-term, intervention in this case may actually hinder continued use, particularly when the intervention is removed at the end of its life leaving no central access behind. To reflect on the Design Framework principle Continued Use, the space is already extremely accessible. While the intervention does provide some additional functionality, it is possible that this approach to programme could occur without any need for intervention. This outcome suggests that this approach to reinhabitation may struggle to increase opportunity for continued use in situations where host buildings are already in good condition.

The St James Theatre and ex-Theatre Centre site applied designed strategy to create a temporary event space. Opportunities created by the availability of space in this site made for an easy implementation process. The available space also allowed the celebration of unique site elements such as the original St James tower façade. The integration of this historically significant element helps to maintain the cultural heritage value of site. This aligns with the aim of the Design Framework principle Continued use. While the selected programme was chosen in accordance with key conservation principles, it also aligns closely with temporary adaptive reuse strategies. Event space tends to be minimal by nature, only the integration of seating was required to make this strategy a success.

Applied temporary adaptive reuse strategies present a potential alternative to building disuse and abandonment in the Auckland Central Business District area. With the goal of continued use, the reinhabitation of disused cultural heritage sites is paramount to maintaining their cultural significance and prevent the social and physical decay associated with abandonment. As earlier suggested through precedent analysis, applying adaptive reuse strategies in practice is a difficult balance. This is evident is the exploration of key adaptive reuse strategies on selected test sites, which showcase how factors such as site conditions and space availability heavily influence the success of intervention. The proposed temporary adaptive reuse framework and its applications in the Auckland CBD offer a conceptual framework to address building disuse and abandonment locally, and beyond.

Future Work

Further exploration of specific adaptive reuse strategies would increase the success of this approach across a wider variety of sites. A major challenge when investigating the current contexts of building disuse in Auckland CBD was the availability and accessibility of information. This challenge may not be present in other cities, towns, or countries. This would allow a deeper understanding of the contexts around building disuse in a particular area, enabling a deeper response to reinhabitation and ultimately ensuring successful continued use. Cultural heritage spaces play a vital role in shaping identity for local communities as a link to the past. Engagement with these communities and stakeholder groups in future work would ensure the opportunity to use these spaces is catered to the communities they belong to.

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