Order for Experience: Reinterpreting Classical Principles Through Human-Centred Design

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By Jared Rucastle - Supervised by Nick Sargent

Abstract

This thesis investigates how classical architectural principles can be reinterpreted and operationalised through a human-centred design framework to enhance sensory and emotional experience in contemporary architecture. Rather than treating classicism as a stylistic language to be revived or rejected, the research positions classical order as a set of durable organisational tools concerned with legibility, hierarchy, proportion, and experiential clarity, and tests whether these can operate ethically within present-day constraints.

Methodologically, the project adopts an interpretivist, design-based research approach in which iterative design propositions and reflective critique function as the primary evidence base. A deliberately reductive framework of "soft rules" is developed by synthesising key classical canons with selected human-centred criteria related to wellbeing, perception, agency, and sensory comfort, then applied as both a generative and evaluative device across staged design testing.

Early scope-testing through site research and massing studies for a new-build theatre in Albany demonstrated that formal order and geometric clarity can generate coherent diagrams but are insufficient to produce architectural meaning when detached from context, prompting a methodological refinement toward a more constraint-rich setting. The framework is subsequently tested through a restoration and extension proposal for Auckland's heritage-listed St James Theatre, where heritage protection, limited daylight, tight urban conditions, and competing programme demands force classical principles to operate as negotiative tools rather than idealised rules.

The findings suggest that classical ordering systems retain contemporary value when treated as an open grammar: they support cognitive legibility, wayfinding, and civic presence, while human-centred criteria sharpen accountability to lived experience. However, the work also reveals trade-offs, particularly in resolving interior multisensory and biophilic outcomes under severe environmental and programmatic constraints. The thesis contributes a provisional, design-tested framework that clarifies how classical principles can be translated into contemporary, ethically grounded design judgement without collapsing into representational historicism.

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Declaration 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, 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.

I acknowledge the use of artificial intelligence–based tools for limited editorial purposes, including the improvement of grammar, punctuation, formal academic expression, and clarity of written communication. All critical analysis, theoretical interpretation, design decisions, and intellectual contributions contained within this thesis are my own. The use of such tools did not influence the conceptual development, argumentative structure, or research conclusions of this work.

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Positionality

My interest in architecture was first fuelled by studying classical architecture in high school, particularly the Parthenon. I was enthralled by the precision of its design and wanted to produce work with the same care for seemingly minute details that nonetheless have major visual impact. At university, I began to feel jaded by the contemporary built environment around me, especially the residential and commercial architecture of newer developments on the North Shore and around Auckland CBD. Between monochromatic suburban housing and the repetitive glass-box office typologies in the city, much of it felt visually flat and experientially draining to inhabit. However, once I started working for Auckland Live, Auckland Council's performing arts and entertainment organisation that operates major venues and programmes across the city, I noticed a consistent pattern: the two venues that prompted patrons to comment most often on the quality of the spaces were also two of the oldest in the Auckland CBD, Auckland Town Hall and The Civic.

Introduction

1.0

1.1 Introduction

Architecture must now justify what it produces and whom it serves, balancing environmental impact, social plurality, and buildings that are both efficient and intelligible to human experience (Bjørkskov, n.d.; Khan & Lucas, 2025). This ethical urgency is practical: design decisions shape carbon outcomes, health and comfort, access and inclusion, and the cultural legibility of shared places. Yet within this climate, classical architecture, associated with order, proportion, and legibility, is often dismissed as regressive or reduced to nostalgic imitation. This thesis argues that this binary is false. It proposes that classical principles, reinterpreted through a human-centred design lens, can operate as a flexible, accountable grammar for enhancing sensory and emotional experience. Through a design-led restoration proposal for the St James Theatre, the research tests how classical order can function as a contemporary framework responsive to environmental constraint, social use, and heritage context.

1.2 Critical Issue

Architecture is increasingly judged in use, yet practice often defends buildings through disciplinary codes or narrow metrics while neglecting sensory and emotional consequences (Till, 2009; Pula & Perna, 2023). Under environmental, social, and regulatory pressures, this widens the gap between intent and lived experience, producing spaces that are technically adequate but experientially weak, especially in civic and cultural settings where public legibility, orientation, and social encounter are critical (Till, 2009; Bianco, 2023). Classical accounts frame this obligation as integral to architecture's public duty, binding usefulness and stability to experiential value (Vitruvius, 1955).

Classical architecture is therefore contested, dismissed as nostalgia or revived as imitation, with both positions avoiding the real methodological question: can classical organisational principles be reframed as accountable tools for pluralistic, constrained conditions shaped by circumstance rather than pure formal will (Gabriel, 2004; Till, 2009; Jordan, 1969). This thesis tests that proposition by treating classical order as an open, human-oriented grammar and applying it through a design-led framework centred on wellbeing, perceptual clarity, and public experience (Ruskin, 1960; Bianco, 2023).

1.3 Research Questions

The research questions turn the thesis aim into testable enquiries. The primary question asks how classical principles, reframed through human-centred design, can enhance sensory and emotional experience in contemporary architecture. The supplementary questions address how the principles are operationalised into a usable framework, what effects it has on legibility, experience, and urban engagement, and what tensions arise when tested in heritage and adaptive reuse contexts.

Primary Research Question:

- How can classical architectural principles be reinterpreted through a human-centred design framework to produce sensory, emotionally resonant architecture in a contemporary context?

Supplementary Research Questions:

- How can such principles be reduced into an operative frame work without collapsing into stylistic prescription?

- How does the application of this framework influence spatial legibility, sensory experience, and urban engagement?

- What are the limitations and tensions that emerge when the framework is tested within a heritage and adaptive reuse context?

1.4 Research Scope

This thesis is scoped as a design-led investigation into how classical architectural principles can be reinterpreted as an operative framework, and how that framework can be applied to improve sensory and emotional experience within contemporary architectural constraints. The work focuses on order as a practical, human-facing instrument (legibility, hierarchy, proportion, sequence, and civic presence) rather than as a stylistic revival, and tests these ideas through iterative design development and critical reflection.

Included within scope

- **Framework development:** a concise set of "soft rules" synthesising classical compositional principles with selected human-centred criteria (wellbeing, perceptual clarity, agency, and comfort) to function as both a generative tool and an evaluative rubric.
- **Design testing:** staged design application through (1) early scope-testing in a new-build theatre scenario and (2) a constraint-rich adaptive reuse context focused on the St James Theatre site, where heritage conditions and urban limitations force the framework to operate as a negotiative method rather than an idealised template.
- **Evidence base:** drawings, iterative design iterations, precedent-informed analysis, and reflective critique as the primary research outputs, with conclusions drawn from comparative evaluation across stages.

1.4.1 Explicit exclusions and limits

- **No post-occupancy validation:** the thesis does not include user surveys, clinical wellbeing measurement, or in-use performance monitoring.
- **Limited operational systems design:** building services and smart adaptive systems are referenced conceptually but not engineered or resolved to technical design level.
- **Indicative sustainability assessment:** embodied carbon and environmental responsibility are treated as decision drivers at strategy/material level rather than as a full life-cycle assessment or compliance-calibre modelling exercise.
- **Interior sensory performance is partial:** acoustics, lighting, and biophilic effects are addressed through architectural strategies and spatial logic, not through specialist simulation or specifications.

1.4.2 What this scope optimises for

It prioritises transferable design judgement over comprehensive technical resolution. The opportunity cost is reduced empirical certainty, but the payoff is a clearer account of how a classical-human-centred framework can actually steer decisions when the project is messy, constrained, and ethically loaded.

1.5 Aims

- Reposition classical architectural principles as an operative, non-stylistic resource for contemporary design.
- Develop a human-centred framework that translates classical order into criteria tied to sensory and emotional experience.
- Test whether this framework can produce buildings that are more legible, coherent, and experientially engaging under real constraints.
- Explore how classical ordering strategies can be reconciled with contemporary ethical imperatives, particularly wellbeing and environmental responsibility.
- Demonstrate a design-led method for evaluating architectural experience beyond formal aesthetics or narrow performance metrics.

1.6 Objectives

- Synthesize relevant literature into a focused set of classical principles (legibility, hierarchy, proportion, sequence) and human-centred criteria (comfort, agency, wellbeing, sensory quality).
- Formalise these into a concise set of "soft rules" that can both generate design moves and evaluate outcomes.
- Apply the framework through iterative design testing across staged project development, using drawings and reflective critique as primary evidence.
- Evaluate the framework's performance in constraint-rich contexts, identifying how it handles heritage conditions, urban limitations, and competing programme requirements.
- Extract transferable insights, including trade-offs and limitations, to guide future application and refinement of the framework.

1.7 Definition of the Ten Classical Canons

This thesis heavily draws on Gabriel's (2004) Ten Timeless Canons of Classical Architecture, often referred to as "Classical Principles" or "Classical Canons" for short. To avoid repeating the list, each cannon is listed below with a brief description

1. **Bilateral Symmetry:**
This is the most evident and often the most effective form of visual order in classical compositions. This principle refers to the design approach where the left side of a building is a mirror image of the right. It conveys permanence and immutability, tapping into our innate understanding of human body symmetry. An invisible axis of symmetry acts as the design's backbone.

2. **Anthropomorphism:**
Classical buildings are often designed with a front, back, and sides, similar to the human body. The front is distinguished by more windows (referred to as "wind-eyes") or other sensors, akin to the human face. This guides the understanding of a building's primary orientation, even if the main entrance is on another side.

3. **Clear and Simple Geometry:**
The use of easily identifiable and regular forms such as squares, circles, and triangles is fundamental. Openings often follow a 1:2 width-to-height ratio, such as the "double square."(Gabriel, 2004, p. 18)

4. **Defined Space:**
Classical architecture is characterised by the use of well-defined portions of space, whether indoors or outdoors. These spaces can also be referred to as rooms. These spaces have clear boundaries and a limited number of moderate-sized openings to maintain a strong sense of enclosure and clarity. Spaces are often figural, meaning they have a distinct, recognisable shape.

5. **Juxtaposition of Discrete Forms:**
Every component and space in classical architecture is sharply defined and complete in itself, intentionally avoiding ambiguity and overlap. This approach ensures that individuals always know precisely where they are within a building or composition, contributing to a sense of self-awareness and order.

6. **Emphasis on Centre, Corners, and Sides:**
This canon dictates how space is celebrated and organised. The centre of a room or composition is typically kept open, while corners are rendered solid to provide stability and density. This ordering principle contributes to spatial unity and balance.

7. **Limited Inventory of Parts:**
Classical architecture employs a specific, distinct, and easily recognisable vocabulary of elements, such as columns (with their bases and capitals), entablatures, and balustrades. Each part has a defined role, and while the inventory is limited, these elements are highly flexible and versatile in their application, forming the basis of any classical style.

8. **Inherent Formal Hierarchies:**
Parts of a design are ordered according to their importance. Significant rooms and functions are typically placed centrally or towards the front of a building, often raised (e.g., the piano nobile) and given regular geometric forms. Similarly, architectural elements like columns follow a hierarchy, with sturdier orders placed below more slender ones.

9. **Tripartite Organisation: The Rule of Three:**
This principle states that a composition should have a distinct beginning, middle, and end. It applies to individual elements (e.g., a column's base, shaft, and capital) as well as larger compositions like facades, which often feature a dominant centre flanked by two sides (A-B-A structure).

10. **Regularity:**
Reassuring, visually ordered environments are often produced through regular patterns. Regularity can be achieved by limiting the number of element types and organising them on a simple grid, then reinforcing that order through rhythmic repetition, as in arcades or colonnades. Where a functional door or window is not required, the rhythm can be maintained by using dummy bays (blind or 'false' openings) so the pattern reads consistently while accommodating internal programme differences.

Methodology

2.0

This thesis adopts a design-based research methodology in which explorative design is treated as the primary mode of knowledge production, supported by complementary methods including critical reading, precedent and proposal critique, site analysis, and iterative modelling. In design-based architectural research, creative outputs such as drawings, iterative propositions, and frameworks are not merely illustrative. They function as knowledge carriers that generate, test, and communicate architectural claims (Zboińska, 2021). This methodological position is used to develop and apply a custom framework that reinterprets classical principles for contemporary practice.

2.1 Research Stance and Epistemological Position

The research is interpretivist, meaning the research "assume(s) that access to reality (given or socially constructed) is only through social constructions such as language, consciousness, shared meanings, and instruments" (Myers, 2008). It assumes architecture is not a fixed universal truth, but a contextual practice shaped by cultural, historical, environmental, and social conditions. Classical principles are therefore approached as conceptual tools rather than immutable rules to be copied. The framework developed through this research is intentionally articulated as a set of "soft rules" capable of being reinterpreted to align with contemporary realities.

This interpretivist stance is reflected in the thesis outputs. The final framework is not a prescriptive style guide, but an operational and adaptable scaffold designed to support rigorous judgement about order, legibility, proportion, material expression, and sensory experience.

2.2 Hybrid, Design-Led Methodological Composition

The methodology is framed as a hybrid design-based approach, In recognition of design-led research often falling outside the qualitative vs quantitative dichotomy (Zboińska, 2021). Rather than using "hybrid" as a loose label, the thesis employs hybridity in a controlled way: design inquiry remains dominant, while supporting methods are selected to increase traceability, critique, and systematic comparison.

Zboińska (2021) emphasised that the strength of hybrid design-based research lies in combining diverse methodological orientations while remaining open to discovery across different stages of inquiry, but that this flexibility also requires careful navigation of methodological complexity to ensure meaningful knowledge production. In this thesis, that control is maintained through explicit sequencing, documented design iterations, and structured reflection against the framework criteria (Zboińska, 2021).

The design-led approach employed in this study consisted of the following steps:

1. Literature review
2. Design Phase 1: Theoretical framework development
3. Design Phase 2: Site research and massing studies (scope-testing)
4. Design Phase 3: Application through the St James Theatre restoration
5. Final Reflection

Across these stages, the project produced design artefacts and analytical records (reading notes, matrices, diagrams, drawings, massing studies, critique tables, and reflection logs). These artefacts are treated as the thesis' evidence base, consistent with design-based research traditions that recognise architectural artefacts as legitimate research outputs when they are documented (Zboińska, 2021). in the following, a detailed account of each stage is provided, including a discussion of their purpose and how they were implemented.

2.3 Literature Review

The first stage was the literature review. Here, the intellectual ground for the enquiry was established and frames the problem-space in which the framework is developed and tested. It examined:

- the historical foundations and contemporary relevance of classical architectural principles;
- critiques of modern architectural autonomy and its limitations;
- emerging research in human-centred and sustainable design, including sensory and emotional experience, biophilia, ethics, and ecological responsibility.

The information presented in the literature survey lays the conceptual groundwork(see Chapter 3).

2.4 Design Phase 1: Theoretical Framework Development

In Design Phase 1, the thesis's theoretical and conceptual framework was constructed by consolidating the project's interdisciplinary positioning and translating it into an operational set of design principles. Thomsen and Honour (2024) argued that in design-led research the conceptual framework is not merely contextual scene-setting, but a consolidation of historical, theoretical, and technological positions that establishes a platform from which new architectural propositions can be generated. In this thesis, the framework is treated as an active research device that both structures the enquiry and enables the design testing undertaken in later phases (Thomsen & Honour, 2024).

Phase 1 combined three linked activities:

1. Literature synthesis and positioning
Findings from the literature review were synthesised to clarify what the project treats as architectural "performance" in relation to order, legibility, hierarchy, sensory experience, and ethical responsibility. This positioned classical principles alongside contemporary human-centred and sustainable concerns without collapsing them into a single stylistic agenda.

2. Principle extraction through structured reading and note-making
Close reading and systematic note-making were undertaken across key classical and contemporary sources to extract and clarify classical can-

ons and their application across scale. This extraction process identified relevant principles which were then refined into operational "soft rules" suitable for contemporary restoration and adaptive intervention. This aligns with the design-led research claim that design enquiry involves reciprocal shaping of problem framing and solution development rather than treating them as separable stages (Thomsen & Honour, 2024).

3. Operationalisation into a working framework
Extracted principles were translated into a working framework with explicit criteria that could function in two ways:

- as an evaluative lens, to diagnose misalignments in proposals and precedents;
- as a generative tool, to produce alternative architectural propositions and test the implications of different priorities.

This treatment of the framework as a knowledge-producing artefact aligns with design-based architectural research where creative outcomes are central to generating and communicating architectural knowledge (Zboińska, 2021).

2.4.1 Outputs of Design Phase 1

Design Phase 1 produced the thesis' core research apparatus, translating interdisciplinary theory into a working set of operational criteria that could both generate and evaluate design decisions.

- a consolidated theoretical positioning that integrates classical principles with selected human-centred and sustainable considerations;
- a structured design framework expressed as operational principles and "soft rules";
- an initial evaluation structure to guide critique and iteration in later phases;
- a curated archive of reading notes and principle mappings retained as traceable evidence of the extraction process (Thomsen & Honour, 2024; Zboińska, 2021).

2.5 Design Phase 2: Site Research and Massing Studies (Scope-Testing)

Design Phase 2 involved site research, including massing studies for an initial site, undertaken with the intention of designing a new theatre building. During this work, it became evident that addressing the site conditions to successfully deliver a viable new-build theatre would require a level of urban development beyond the feasible scope of the thesis. Rather than treating this as discarded work, the phase is positioned as a necessary step in methodological boundary-setting within a hybrid design-based process.

This phase served three functions:

1. Stress-testing the framework's usability
Early massing iterations revealed which principles could be translated into actionable spatial strategies for a new theatre and which remained

too abstract to reliably guide design decisions.

2. Clarifying feasibility constraints

Site demands and the operational complexity of a new-build theatre demonstrated that proceeding with the design would shift the enquiry into a different problem as a broader technical resolution and coordination than intended would be required.

3. Refining the research scale

The work indicated that the thesis' contribution would be strongest when anchored in a restoration context, where classical order and contemporary priorities could be tested within a defined heritage envelope without scope expansion.

This stage reflects a characteristic of hybrid design-based research: methodological emphasis can shift as the enquiry clarifies its object of study, provided transitions are documented and defensible (Zboińska, 2021).

2.5.1 Outputs of Design Phase 2

Design Phase 2 produced evidence for methodological boundary-setting, using documented site analysis and massing iterations to test the framework's usability and to justify the shift from new-build scope to restoration-based application.

- documented site analysis and massing iterations used to refine the framework and establish scope limits;
- a recorded rationale for changing the project focus, treated as a methodological decision (Zboińska, 2021).

2.6 Design Phase 3: Application Through the St James Theatre Restoration

Design Phase 3 featured the application of the refined design framework to a restoration proposal for the St James Theatre, grounding the framework in a real heritage context and testing its usefulness through iterative design, critique, and reflection. In this phase, the St James site was treated as a complex architectural problem shaped by heritage significance, adjacent development pressures, contemporary programme demands, and constrained environmental conditions. Consistent with design-based research, the design work of Design Phase 3 operates as the primary mode of enquiry, with drawings, models, and comparative iterations functioning as research evidence (Zboińska, 2021).

This phase began with targeted analysis to establish the following constraints and design problems the framework needed to address:

- Historical and contextual research to understand the theatre's layered development, its architectural character, and its significance within Auckland's entertainment precinct.

- Review and critique of approved proposals for the wider site, using the framework as an evaluative lens to identify misalignments relating to heritage responsiveness, compositional order, public interface, and experiential legibility.

- Site research including contextual mapping, pedestrian movement

patterns, view-shaft testing, and sunlight constraints, to understand how the building is encountered from Queen Street and how environmental limits shape feasible design responses.

This analytical work did not function as a separate pre-design stage. It provided diagnostic findings that directly informed subsequent concept generation and refinement, reflecting the reciprocal relationship between framing and solution-making typical of design-led enquiry (Thomsen & Honour, 2024).

2.6.1 Concept Generation and Comparative Testing

Three concept schemes were developed to test alternative architectural strategies in response to the diagnostic findings. Each concept was generated through a consistent internal logic, enabling deliberate comparison rather than stylistic variation for its own sake.

The framework functioned as a corrective lens throughout: concepts were judged by how effectively they addressed identified issues, such as weak dialogue between old and new, insufficient regularity and hierarchy, limited sunlight access, and limited capacity for sociability at the street interface.

By holding core generative parameters constant and varying priorities within the framework, the concepts operated as a structured design experiment. This reflects design-led research practice in which the framework is not merely descriptive but actively shapes the development and assessment of design propositions (Thomsen & Honour, 2024; Zboińska, 2021).

2.6.2 Refinement Through Modelling and Constraint

Following concept exploration, design development focused first on the Queen Street façade as the principal point of architectural resolution and public interface. Sketch-based exploration was translated into three-dimensional modelling to introduce dimensional accuracy, constructive constraint, and clearer testing against heritage limits. The move into modelling functioned as a methodological checkpoint: it revealed where certain formal devices exceeded the available envelope or conflicted with heritage conditions, prompting removal or recalibration.

The refined proposal developed a more coherent architectural language through repetition, proportional consistency, hierarchical articulation, and reinterpretation of classical compositional devices without literal replication. Across iterations, the framework was repeatedly used to test whether decisions were producing legible order, credible heritage engagement, and meaningful experiential performance. This approach aligns with Zboińska's (2021) account of hybrid design-based research, where design iterations and their documentation provide the mechanism for producing and validating architectural knowledge claims.

2.6.3 Extending Façade Decisions Into Interior Organisation

Once a stable façade approach was established, interior development was undertaken to test whether the external ordering logic generated viable internal consequences. Interior planning therefore operated as a verification step rather than a separate design agenda: it examined circulation, programme adjacency, and social sequencing under fixed constraints including the heritage theatre fabric, the apartment tower core, and structural requirements. Where interior implications revealed tensions or contradictions, façade and organisational decisions were revisited, reinforcing an iterative loop between proposition and evaluation typical of design-based inquiry (Zboińska, 2021).

2.6.4 Reflection as Evaluation

Reflection was used as an explicit evaluative mechanism across the phase. Each significant iteration was reviewed against the framework criteria to identify misalignments, trade-offs, and opportunities for refinement in both the proposal and the framework itself. This reflective control supports methodological rigour within a hybrid design-led process by preventing iterative freedom from becoming drift and by making the basis of judgement explicit (Zboińska, 2021). This reflective synthesis also revisits the research questions to clarify what has been demonstrated, what remains provisional, and what directions future design-led research could take. This is consistent with design-led scholarship that treats the conceptual framework as a tool for knowledge formation rather than a fixed template (Thomsen & Honour, 2024).

2.6.5 Outputs of Design Phase 3

Design Phase 3 produced the principal research evidence, applying the refined framework to a real heritage problem through iterative design, comparative testing, and reflective evaluation to assess both the proposal and the framework's validity.

- A restoration proposal for the St James Theatre supported by drawings, models, and documented decision-making;

- A refined design framework articulated as adaptable soft rules rather than stylistic prescriptions;

- A reflective assessment identifying strengths, limits, and conditions of applicability (Thomsen & Honour, 2024; Zboińska, 2021).

2.7 Final Reflection

The methodology concludes with a final reflective synthesis that consolidates findings from the literature review and the three design phases, testing the framework's claims against the evidence generated through design iteration. In design-based research, reflection is not treated as commentary added after the work is complete, but as a mechanism for making design judgement explicit, tracing how decisions were formed, and identifying where the framework enabled clarity and where it failed

or produced trade-offs (Zboińska, 2021).

Accordingly, the final reflection evaluates the framework's performance across contexts, drawing out what was learned from the Albany massing studies and the St James restoration application, and articulating the framework's limitations, tensions, and conditions of use.

This methodology treats design as the thesis' primary research instrument, using drawings, models, frameworks, and documented iterations as evidence for generating and testing architectural claims (Zboińska, 2021). An interpretivist stance frames classical principles as adaptable tools, while a controlled hybrid sequence moves from literature synthesis to scope-testing and full application. Across the three phases, the framework is extracted, operationalised, and refined through critique, iterative modelling, and reflection, keeping judgement traceable and tied to the research questions (Thomsen & Honour, 2024; Zboińska, 2021).

Literature Review

3.0

3.1 Introduction

Bjørkskov (n.d.) argued that contemporary architectural discourse sits at a moment of ethical urgency: faced with ecological crisis, social fragmentation, and the exhaustion of purely aesthetic agendas, architecture must move beyond optics alone to remain relevant. Khan and Lucas (2025) then suggest this reorientation is not merely aspirational but already underway, noting a growing emphasis in recent practice on holistic models that centre human wellbeing, sensory experience, and environmental responsibility. Read together, these positions insist that architecture must become both humane and accountable. On the surface, the principles of classical architecture do not seem to align with this move towards holistic and humanistic design, as classical principles have a reputation of being appearance focussed; However, as the current thesis argues, the principles of classical architecture have the potential to be compatible with this new direction towards holistic concepts.



Figure 1: Image of Villa Savoye by Le Corbusier, an example of Modernist Architecture. Image by Valueyou (2003), from *File:VillaSavoye.jpg* (Wikipedia), licensed CC BY-SA. Retrieved February 24, 2026, from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:VillaSavoye.jpg



Figure 2: Image of Trevi Fountain, an example of Classical Architecture. From Loth, C. (2011, August 1), *The triumphal arch as a design resource*, Institute of Classical Architecture & Art. https://www.classicist.org/articles/classical-comments-the-triumphal-arch-as-a-design-resource/

This literature review examines the theoretical background of classical principles and explores how these apply to contemporary concerns. It begins by outlining the enduring legacy of classical architectural principles and their persistent relevance to questions of order, meaning, and the human experience. It then turns to critiques of modernism and postmodernism, foregrounding arguments about autonomy, professional detachment, and the loss of social and sensory depth. Finally, it addresses recent work on human-centred, sustainable and ethically contingent practice. Across these sections, the review identifies the need for a design position that can hold together spatial legibility, sensory richness, social responsibility, and environmental care. This directly informs the classically inspired human-centred design framework developed in this thesis.

3.2 The Enduring Legacy of Classical Principles

Bianco (2023) established the enduring legacy of classical principles, situating them in Vitruvius' formulation of *firmitas* (firmness), *utilitas* (utility), and *venustas* (delight), which are presented not as optional attributes but as interdependent obligations of architectural practice. Bianco (2023) further described *De Architectura Libri Decem* as a work that moves fluidly between theory and practice: In his work Vitruvius discussed town planning, materials science, structural systems, and what we would now call environmental performance, articulating architecture as a discipline requiring broad education, ethical responsibility, and technical competence. In this reading, classical architecture is not simply a style but a mode of integrated thinking that binds together structural necessity, usefulness for inhabitants, and qualitative experience.

If classical architecture is understood as an integrated system that binds together firmness, utility, and delight, then the question becomes how such integration is rendered coherent and legible in practice. One answer to this question is offered by Till (2009), who emphasised that Vitruvian thinking is fundamentally about order; drawing on McEwen (2003, as cited in Till, 2009), he(Till) described *ordinatio* as "a setting in order" (p.28): an attempt to impose coherence on unruly conditions and to construct knowledge on firm ground. Classical architecture is therefore positioned not merely as a stylistic tradition, but as a project oriented toward legibility, stability, and the intelligibility of the built environment. Gromort and Reed (2001) similarly described classical architecture in terms of "immutable principles" (p. 14), where the architectural order is not just a decorative canon but a synthesis of tectonics, proportion, hierarchy and visual intelligibility. Gabriel (2004) developed this further by arguing that the so-called language of classical architecture does not prevent invention; rather, once the designer internalises this language, it remains capable of producing new and relevant forms. For Gabriel, repetition of known solutions is not necessarily regressive. If a form continues to resolve spatial, cultural, or human needs, then its familiarity is a strength, not a weakness. He even went so far as to describe classical architecture as the "first international style" (p. 8), noting its global dissemination across centuries as evidence of its adaptability to multiple places, climates, and societies. From this perspective, classical principles are less about fixed historical imagery and more about durable strategies for clarity, hierarchy, and resonance.



Figure 3: Image of Woburn Abbey, an example of Classical Architecture in England. Photograph by Viki Male (2004), *Woburn Abbey.jpg* (Wikimedia Commons), public domain (PD-user release on file page). Retrieved February 24, 2026, from https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Woburn_Abbey.jpg

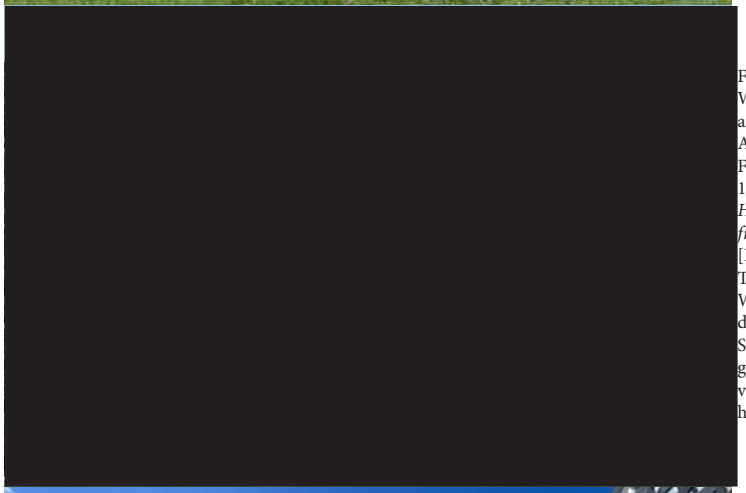


Figure 4: Image of the White House north facade, an example of Classical Architecture in USA. From NPS. (2025, August 18). *View of The White House and North Portico from Lafayette Park* [Photograph]. In Viewing The White House, The White House and President's Park, National Park Service. https://www.nps.gov/whho/planyourvisit/viewing-the-white-house.htm

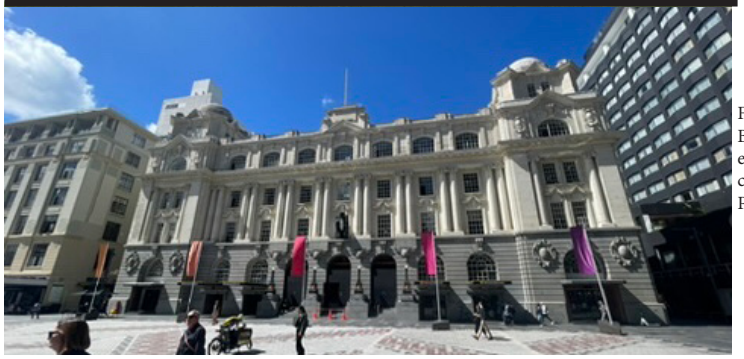


Figure 5: Image of the Britomart train station, an example of Classical Architecture in New Zealand. Photograph by Author

Ruskin (1960), although deeply suspicious of certain forms of classicism, also defended the idea that architecture must be morally and symbolically meaningful. He argued for attention to craft, material truth, cultural legibility, and beauty that can be apprehended and emotionally felt. Jordan (1984) situated classical and neoclassical traditions as persistent reference points across Western architectural history, even in the face of radical formal shifts. Together, these sources treat classical thought not as an aesthetic package associated with columns and ornament, but as an ethic of legibility, coherence, durability, and embodied delight.

However, in a contemporary pluralistic context, the establishment of a single shared order is increasingly problematic. If classical architecture historically sought coherence through a stable formal language and agreed systems of hierarchy, late modern and postmodern conditions are defined by fractured cultures, contested meanings, and heterogeneous publics. The ambition to impose one ordering system risks excluding other forms of knowledge and experience. This tension leads directly into critiques of modernism, which promised a new universal order but often reproduced the same autonomy and detachment in different clothes.

3.3 The Modernist Paradigm and Its Discontents

A sustained critique of modern architecture identifies alienation as emerging from a belief in architectural autonomy: the assumption that architecture can be governed by internally coherent, universal ordering systems detached from social, political, and human contingency. Till (2009) characterised this condition as a form of "deluded detachment" (p. 7), in which the discipline claims special knowledge that legitimises operating above or outside social interference. Although architecture is, in practice, "peculiarly exposed" (p. 45) to external forces at every stage of production, the profession has historically invested in autonomy as a source of authority and certainty. For Till (2009), this exposure produces anxiety, prompting architects to cling to grand narratives, fixed doctrines, or supposedly universal rules as a means of estabilising an inherently unstable practice. However, such strategies, he argued, are not only unrealistic but ethically evasive.

Martin (2003) situated this condition of modern architectural alienation, produced when design is framed as an autonomous system of organisation rather than a lived social practice, within broader twentieth-century systems thinking, including cybernetics, biology, information control, and theories of "organic integration" (p. 18), situates the slogan within a broader organisational and systems imaginary; extending this line of reasoning, modernism appears less as neutral rationalism than as a technical framework in which buildings operate as machinic or communicative systems oriented toward efficiency and control. Within this framework, bodies, behaviours, and even social relations can be treated as variables to be processed. What appears as humane rationality thus risks masking an abstract ordering logic that privileges performance and regulation over lived experience.

The experiential consequences of such machinic ordering are foregrounded by Bjørkskov (n.d.), who argued that modernist and late-mod-

ernist structures frequently cast "sterile shadows across our urban landscapes" (para. 3), reducing buildings to "soulless, utilitarian husks" (para. 4) in the pursuit of functional clarity. This critique is fundamentally affective, insisting that architecture which prioritises programme and performance while neglecting pleasure, symbolism, memory, and belonging fails to meet basic human needs.

Several theorists interpret modernism as an attempt to banish time from architecture in that it seeks to purify the discipline by scrubbing out dirt, decay, contingency, and social mess in favour of a perpetually frozen present. Harries (1982, as cited in Till, 2009) and Le Corbusier (1947, as cited in Till, 2009) frame the modernist project in precisely these terms as they position temporal continuity and material imperfection as problems to be overcome rather than conditions to be worked with. Ruskin (1960) anticipated this critique a century earlier, accusing certain "perfected" (p. 234) styles of being morally hollow and instead praising Gothic and Byzantine traditions for their expressive imperfection, material richness, and ethical honesty. Till (2009) suggested that postmodernism reacted to modernist austerity through what he described as "formal gymnastics" (p. 51), the reintroduction of reintroducing signs, symbols, and complexity, which in many cases merely adding visual noise rather than resolving architecture's deeper commitment to social and disciplinary autonomy (Till, 2009).



Figure 6: Image of the Groninger Museum, an example of visual noise in postmodernist architecture. Photograph by Michielverbeek (2012), *Groningen, Groninger museum foto5 2012-0901 09.27.jpg* [Photograph], Wikimedia Commons, licensed CC BY-SA 3.0. Retrieved February 24, 2026, from https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Groningen,_Groninger_museum_foto5_2012-0901_09.27.jpg

Till (2009) extends his broader critique of architectural autonomy into architectural education, arguing that the discipline's commitment to autonomy is not only theoretical but institutionally reproduced. He characterised architectural pedagogy as still haunted by an outdated Beaux-Arts ethos, defined by the "cult of genius" (p. 12), hierarchical authority, and ritualised forms of judgement such as the design jury, or "crit" (p. 8).

Drawing on Freire (1996), Till (2009) described this model as a "banking system" (p. 14) in which students are treated as passive containers, expected to absorb and reproduce established architectural languages within a closed world detached from messy social reality). Within this context, what is often framed as radical formal experimentation, particularly flashy or technologically spectacular work, is not necessarily radical at all. Instead, it can disguise an "ethical void" (p. 15) and a form of "fresh conservatism" (p. 15), in which surface novelty conceals the deeper repe-

tition of existing power structures and disciplinary assumptions. Although classical and modernist paradigms appear opposed, with classicism being associated with historical continuity, symbolism, and ornament, while modernism is associated with abstraction, technology, and rationalisation, they share a crucial trait. Both are fundamentally autonomous in the sense that they claim access to a singular, authoritative ordering system. Classical architecture has historically asserted a canon of proportion and hierarchy, whereas modernism asserted functional performance and technological rationality as universal truth. Both risk treating architecture as self-justifying. The critique emerging from Till (2009), Martin (2003), and others is that such autonomy, whether classical or modernist in tone, becomes untenable in a world defined by plurality, contingency, and social obligation.

3.4 Reclaiming the Human Dimension: Sensory and Emotional Experiences

Khan and Lucas (2025) present human-centred design as a corrective to design paradigms that have tended to privilege formal autonomy and performance criteria at the expense of lived user experience and well-being. They argued that contemporary architecture must deliberately prioritise the needs, perceptions, and behaviours of its occupants; these concerns should not be an afterthought but a primary design driver. For them, wellbeing is not ornamental rhetoric; it is an operational criterion against which design decisions are measured. They identified domains such as engagement, thermal comfort, visual comfort, acoustic comfort, and well-being emphasising that these are not luxuries but conditions that determine whether a space supports or diminishes human capability. Crucially, the ethos of human-centred design is not to optimise for an abstract 'average user', but to recognise that occupants have divergent capacities, sensitivities, cultural expectations, and access needs, and that comfort therefore requires flexibility rather than uniformity.

In practice, this shifts design from prescribing a single "correct" environment to providing adjustable, legible options, allowing people to calibrate light, temperature, privacy, and stimulation in ways that support dignity, agency, and inclusion. They noted, for example, that natural lighting strategies are central to mental and physical wellbeing, yet practice often struggles to translate this into consistently user-responsive outcomes across contexts. They also argued for adaptive systems that allow spaces to respond dynamically to the changing requirements of their occupants, improving both comfort and energy performance.

Ayuso Sanchez et al. (2018) narrow the human-centred agenda to a specific and increasingly influential pathway: biophilic design as a structured means of improving wellbeing through patterned contact with nature. Their work suggests that certain environmental qualities, such as daylight, greenery, material tactility, organic form, and visual complexity associated with natural systems, measurably increase both productivity and subjective wellbeing. They also argued that while the positive effects of biophilia are increasingly accepted, there is still a need to define, test, and quantify which specific features matter most in different contexts, such as workplaces or the home environment.



Figure 7: Image of the Singapore Connecter Park, an example of biophilic architecture. From Olsen, M. (2022, March 16), *Building a biophilic movement: Three examples of biophilic urban spaces, Drawdown Georgia*. https://blog.drawdownga.org/building-a-biophilic-movement-three-examples-of-biophilic-urban-spaces

A further implication of human-centred design literature is that the spaces with the highest stakes for wellbeing are often the least consistently shaped by human-centred principles in practice. Khan and Lucas(2025) highlighted that those building types that arguably most need humane design, like hospitals and schools, are still lagging behind in human-centred approaches, which indicates an ongoing misalignment between rhetoric and practice. They further suggested that comfort should be understood not only physiologically but socially and psychologically, as part of belonging, dignity, and agency. In this sense, sensory quality and social quality are inseparable.

This contemporary emphasis on wellbeing can also be framed as a continuation, rather than a rejection, of classical architectural ethics, particularly the Vitruvian obligation toward *venustas* (delight). Vitruvius' notion of *venustas* is not shallow pleasure; it names an obligation to create spaces that are experientially rich, proportionate, and humane (Bianco, 2023; Till, 2009). The current turn towards biophilia, natural lighting, material honesty, clarity of organisation, and sociability can be read as a contemporary extension of that same obligation. The difference is that delight is now understood in explicitly human-centred terms: not only visual harmony, but multisensory wellbeing, cognitive ease, and emotional connection. This expands the Vitruvian triad forward rather than discarding it.

3.5 Towards a Holistic and Ethical Practice: Sustainability and Responsibility

If human-centred design extends Vitruvian delight by attending to individual wellbeing, considerations of sustainability extends the concept even further, situating architectural responsibility within collective, environmental, and temporal scales. Bjørkskov (n.d) framed sustainability not as an optional upgrade to architecture but as a condition of professional survival. They described an escalated ecological emergency and argued that architecture must "forsake its historical allegiance to carbon" (para. 13) and act in the interest of "the welfare of all life on Earth" (para. 25). In response to the slogan 'Form follows function' Bjørkskov proposed the use of "form follows facts" (para. 17) as a reorientation of practice: rather than treating carbon as an externality, architects should prioritise radical reductions in emissions, adaptive retrofit and reuse of existing buildings, and a cultural shift from efficiency to sufficiency. Sufficiency, in Bjørkskov's work, is about restraint, repair, and making do; it is an ethical stance as much as a technical strategy.

Where Bjørkskov frames sustainability as existential necessity, Till reframes it as a problem of architectural ethics under conditions of contingency. Till (2009) pushed this argument into the ethical realm. He rejected the assumption that beautiful form naturally produces a just society and instead called for an "imperfect ethics" of architecture (pp. 171). For Till, ethics in architecture does not mean adhering to a fixed code of conduct; it means accepting responsibility for others in contingent, unpredictable conditions. He critiqued professional institutions for privileging client interests and disciplinary autonomy over obligations to wider publics and argued that Architects must acknowledge the 'thickness of time' (p. 99), meaning that architecture is produced and experienced within an extended present where past traces, present routines, and future adaptations overlap, so design should anticipate change, use, wear, and reinterpretation rather than trying to hold buildings outside time. (Till, 2009). In this sense, contingency is not a threat to architecture's purity but the very ground of its ethical relevance.

This section can therefore be summarised as a reframing of architectural responsibility as continuous with, rather than opposed to, classical ethical traditions: contemporary sustainability and human-centred agendas extend the Vitruvian demand for humane delight into ecological and social accountability. Bianco (2023) noted that Vitruvius demanded of the architect a broad, interdisciplinary education that crosses arts, sciences, and ethics, insisting that designers "recognise the same stamp on all the arts and an intercourse between all studies" (p. 512). This historical expectation frames architecture as socially and intellectually accountable, not isolated. Ruskin (1960) similarly linked architecture to moral responsibility, insisting that material choices and formal languages communicate cultural values, and that dishonesty in form or material is also an ethical failure. Read alongside contemporary sustainability discourse, these sources suggest that responsibility in architecture is not new; it is a return to an older conception of duty that modernism, at least rhetorically, attempted to supersede.

3.6 Developing a Classically Inspired Framework

Modernism's pursuit of universality and functional clarity frequently produced unintended social and sensory deficits or, as Bjørkskov (n.d.) put it, "soulless, utilitarian husks" (para. 4). With Till's (2009) critique of disciplinary autonomy and certainty and Martin's (2003) analysis of the organisational logics embedded in ostensibly flexible corporate space, the issue is not merely formal austerity but architecture's habit of asserting an ordering system that overrides lived contingency. This tendency is not exclusive to modernism. At times, both classical and modernist traditions have claimed access to a single, universal order, whether expressed as canonical proportion and "immutable principles" or as functional optimisation and systems logics, and in both cases that claim can drift away from users, culture, and time (Till, 2009; Jordan, 1984).

To move beyond the alienating effects of autonomous, system-driven design, this section proposes a practical synthesis that reconnects classical order with human-centred and sustainable responsibility. A constructive response is to re-centre design on people; not just on individuals but on people as a collective. Human-centred design reframes performance

around wellbeing, perception, and agency: comfort becomes multisensory (thermal, visual, acoustic), legibility becomes civic, and adaptability becomes a lived capacity rather than a slogan (Khan & Lucas, 2025). Biophilic strategies provide evidence-based means to restore attention, reduce stress, and support affiliation through daylight, views, tactility, and natural patterns (Ayuso Sanchez et al., 2018). In this light, the Vitruvian triad reads as an obligation that is simultaneously experiential and ethical: utilitas for occupants, firmitas as durable, repairable construction, and venustas as embodied delight, not surface effect (Bianco, 2023; Vitruvius, I.iii). Classical order, treated as an open grammar rather than a closed canon, already features a language of legibility (symmetry, hierarchy, tripartition) and compositional clarity (proportion, rhythm) that people intuitively read (Gromort & Reed, 2001; Gabriel, 2004). In this sense, the classical canon offers a framework for responding to contemporary architectural crises, provided its tenets are reinterpreted through the ethos and methods of human-centred and environmentally responsible practice.

3.7 Conclusion

This review has established that a humane, accountable architecture is neither nostalgic nor merely technical, but integrative: it must bind spatial legibility, multisensory delight, social responsibility, and environmental care. Classical thought, read through Vitruvius' triad, persists as an ethic of coherence and duty rather than a fixed stylistic kit (Bianco, 2023; Vitruvius, 1955). It was argued that, within this lineage, order is understood as a tool for intelligibility (symmetry, hierarchy, and clear geometry as features of a shared language people can read) capable of contemporary invention when treated as an open grammar (Gabriel, 2004; Gromort & Reed, 2001; Till, 2009). At the same time, critiques of modernism and its corporate descendants caution against disciplinary autonomy and technocratic abstractions that eclipse lived contingency and sensory life (Martin, 2003; Till, 2009). It was shown that, from Ruskin's (1960) insistence on material truth and moral legibility to Khan and Lucas' (2025) human-centred metrics, the literature converges on the obligation to design for embodied wellbeing, dignity, and agency.

Two further strands were identified as relevant for the thesis. First, contemporary human-centred and biophilic research offers actionable domains (acoustic, thermal, and visual comfort; daylight; natural patterning) that directly affect cognitive ease yet remain unevenly operationalised in practice (Ayuso Sanchez et al., 2018; Khan & Lucas, 2025). Second, sustainability discourse reframes form as accountable to facts (carbon, reuse, sufficiency), which asserts architecture's ethical horizon and its exposure to time, change and repair (Bjørkskov, n.d.; Till, 2009). It was highlighted that, read together, these sources could be taken to support a classically inspired human-centred framework that weds legibility to care where venustas refers to multisensory delight, utilitas as social capability, and firmitas as durable, low-carbon construction (Bianco, 2023; Vitruvius, 1955).

Taken together, the strands surveyed in this review reveal a methodological gap. While scholarship either (a) treats classical order historically/aesthetically, (b) critiques modern autonomy, or (c) advances generic

wellbeing and sustainability agendas, there is limited design-led research that explores how classical principles might be operationalised as working design logics within contemporary architectural practice. In particular, the review noted a lack of frameworks that allow compositional order, spatial hierarchy, and legibility to be systematically tested alongside human-centred concerns such as experiential clarity, adaptability, and environmental responsibility through the act of design itself (Gabriel, 2004; Martin, 2003; Till, 2009; Bjørkskov, n.d.). This absence suggests the need for an investigative design framework that does not seek to resolve these tensions theoretically, but instead exposes, tests, and evaluates them through architectural decision-making.

Design Phase 1: Developing a Framework

4.0

4.1 Design Phase 1: Development of The framework

The design framework was developed as both a design tool and an investigative device through which the relationship between Classical Architecture and Human-Centred Design could be explored, tested, and critically assessed. While the framework is structured as a concise set of guiding ideas or soft rules, its primary purpose within the thesis is not to function as a universally applicable professional methodology but to support deeper understanding of how these two traditions interact when applied to a specific architectural problem. As such, the process of developing and applying the framework is itself a central component of the research, allowing its assumptions, limitations, and internal tensions to be revealed through design.

Although Classical Architecture and Human-Centred Design are grounded in distinct historical, philosophical, and methodological traditions, both are underpinned by a shared fundamental aspiration to enhance human experience. This project adopts an integrated mode of thinking, previously outlined in the literature review, in which the visual and spatial order associated with classical principles is combined with the adaptive and empathetic ethos of Human-Centred Design. Rather than proposing a new architectural style or advocating for formal autonomy, the framework uses Human-Centred Design as an ethical lens, prioritising flexibility and responsiveness to diverse needs, constraints, and contexts.

Within the framework, classical principles are primarily employed to guide aspects of façade composition, spatial hierarchy, and internal organisation, all of which are areas where order, proportion, and legibility play a significant role in shaping perception and experience. Human-centred design is framed it as a shift in architectural priorities towards wellbeing, perception, and agency. In this thesis, it is therefore applied as an evaluative and generative lens for spatial qualities that shape lived experience, including sensory comfort, daylight access, legibility of organisation, intuitive wayfinding, and opportunities for sociability. These criteria allow human-centred concerns to be operationalised through architectural form, layout, and material decisions.

The development of the framework followed an intentionally reductive process. Rather than reproducing the full complexity of either Classical Architecture or Human-Centred Design, the aim was to distil each into a limited number of operative principles that could function as soft rules within the design process. These principles are not intended as rigid prescriptions, but as lenses through which design decisions can be tested, challenged, and refined. This approach allows the framework to balance compositional rigour with empathetic responsiveness, while remaining open to revision as it is applied and evaluated through the design project.

The initial development of the framework began with the selection of ten principles of Human-Centred Design distilled from contemporary sources, alongside the "Ten Timeless Canons" (Gabriel, 2004) taken from *Classical Architecture for the Twenty-First Century*. These lists were then critically reduced based on their relevance to the scope of the thesis and their applicability to contemporary architectural practice. The resulting initial framework (Figure 8), this diagram, represents a provisional synthesis that is then to be tested, interrogated, and reconsidered through subsequent the stages of design in this thesis.

Ten Timeless Canons	**HCD Principles**
1. Bilateral Symmetry	1. Primacy of User Needs
2. Anthropomorphism	2. Biophillic Design
3. Clear and Simple Geometry	3. Wellbeing as a Performance Criterion
4. Defined Space	4. Legibility and Cognitive Ease
5. Juxtaposition of Discrete Forms	5. Bodily Scale and Comfort
6. Emphasis on Centre, Corners, and Sides	6. Inclusive Access and Dignity
7. Limited Inventory of Parts	7. Iterative Testing and Feedback Loops
8. Inherent Formal Hierarchies	8. Adaptability Over Fixity
9. Tripartite Organisation: The Rule of Three	9. Contextual and Social Realism
10. Regularity	10. Accountability to Lived Use

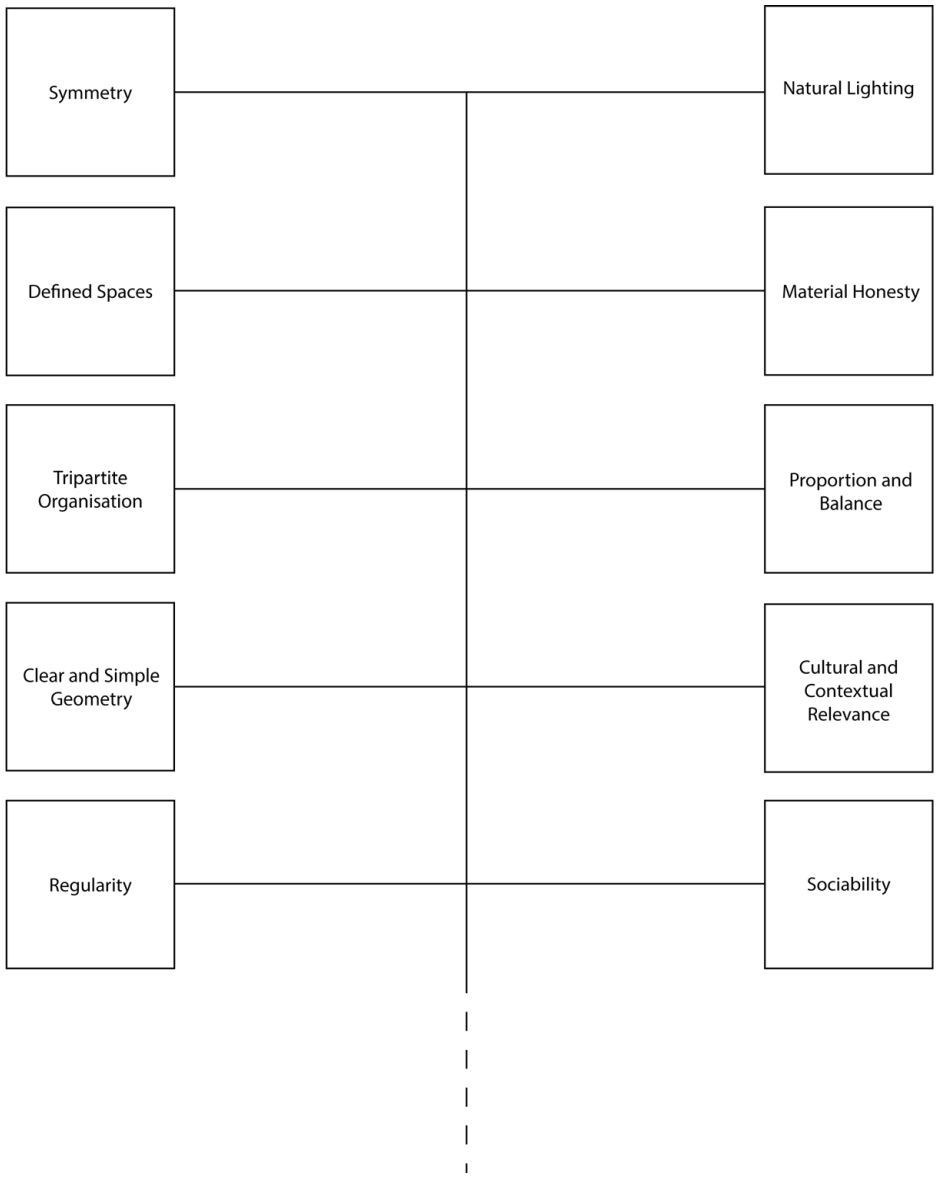


Figure 8: Diagram by author, Displaying the developed design framework

Design Phase 2: Framework in Action

5.0

Design Phase 2 focused on selecting a site and developing early concept designs for a new theatre building. These exploratory studies were used to test how the framework performs when applied to a novel programme and an unfamiliar set of constraints, allowing the principles to be translated from theory into spatial and massing decisions. The phase begins by defining the key site and programme characteristics required to implement the framework, considering the following factors:

- Distance to existing theatres
- Distance to commercial entities
- Major roadways and highway access
- Pedestrian access
- Distance to civic entities
- Topography
- Flood prone areas

These factors were selected because they directly shape whether a new theatre can operate as a civic, publicly accessible building rather than a destination isolated from everyday movement. Proximity to existing theatres and civic entities tests how the site fits within, or strategically expands, an established cultural network, while proximity to commercial activity supports street life and the pre- and post-performance economy that helps theatres remain active beyond showtimes. Major road and highway access addresses regional catchment and logistics, but pedestrian access was treated as equally critical, as theatres rely on legible, safe arrival routes and benefit from footfall that reinforces public presence. Topography was included because it influences visibility, procession, accessibility, and the feasibility of massing and back-of-house servicing. Finally, flood-prone conditions were assessed as a basic risk filter to avoid sites where resilience requirements would dominate the design scope and compromise the thesis focus on applying the framework to spatial order and experience.

5.1 Site Selection

In response to these criteria, the site selection process began with a broad urban analysis of Auckland's North Shore to identify a suitable location for intervention. Existing theatres were mapped against nearby civic destinations, commercial activity, main movement corridors, and public transport stops to understand how easily they can be reached and how they sit within the surrounding urban fabric. This mapping was used to compare each theatre's degree of public visibility and connectivity, and to identify whether its setting supports street-level activation and informal pre- and post-event gathering.

The circled area was identified as a strong candidate due to its concentration of civic and commercial activity, its proximity to a major bus station and motorway access, and its sufficient separation from other major theatres on the North Shore to support the introduction of a new theatre without direct competition. This combination of accessibility, programmatic adjacency, and spatial separation satisfied the key selection criteria and justified further, site-specific investigation.

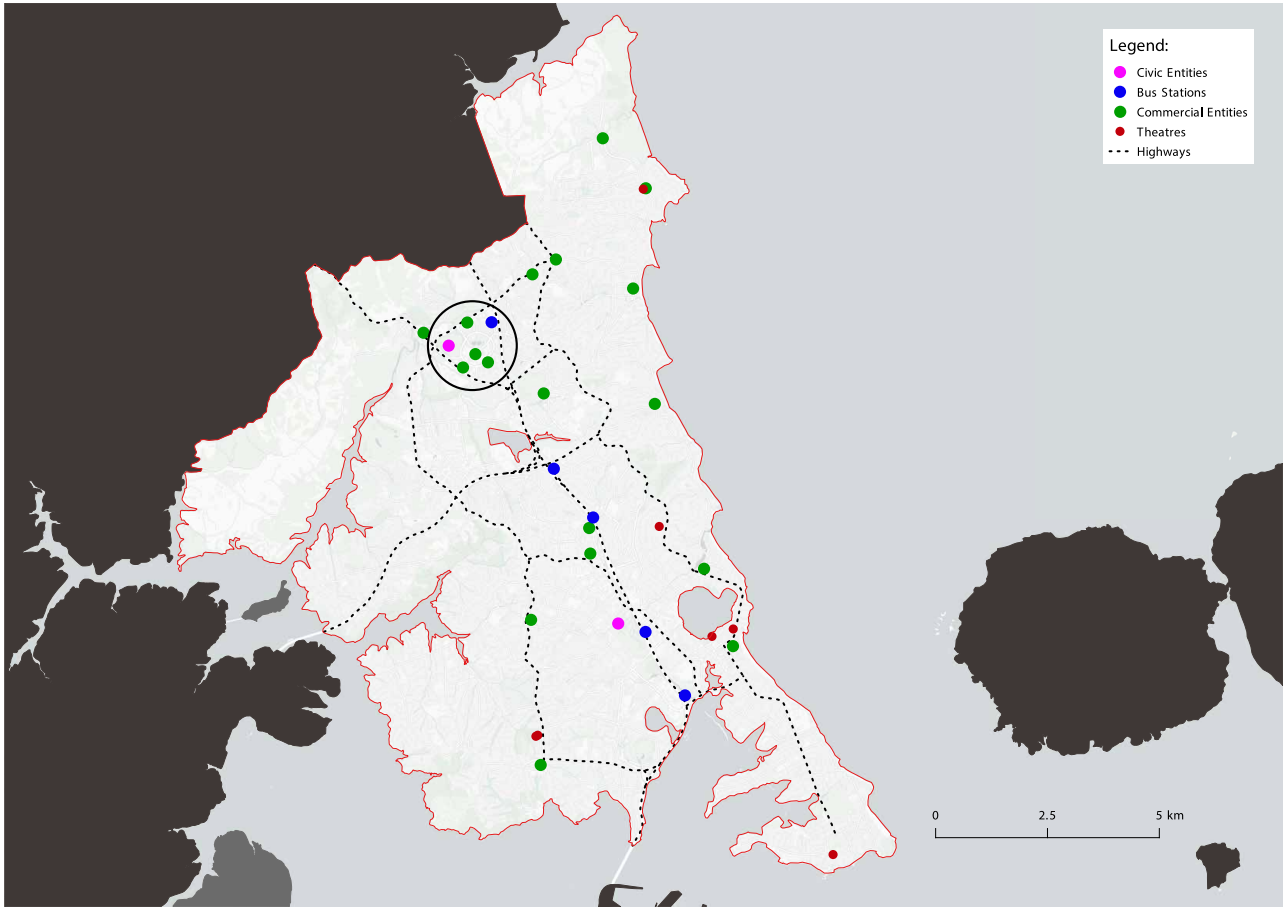


Figure 9: Map by author, 1:100,000 @ A3, Wider context mapping of the North Shore

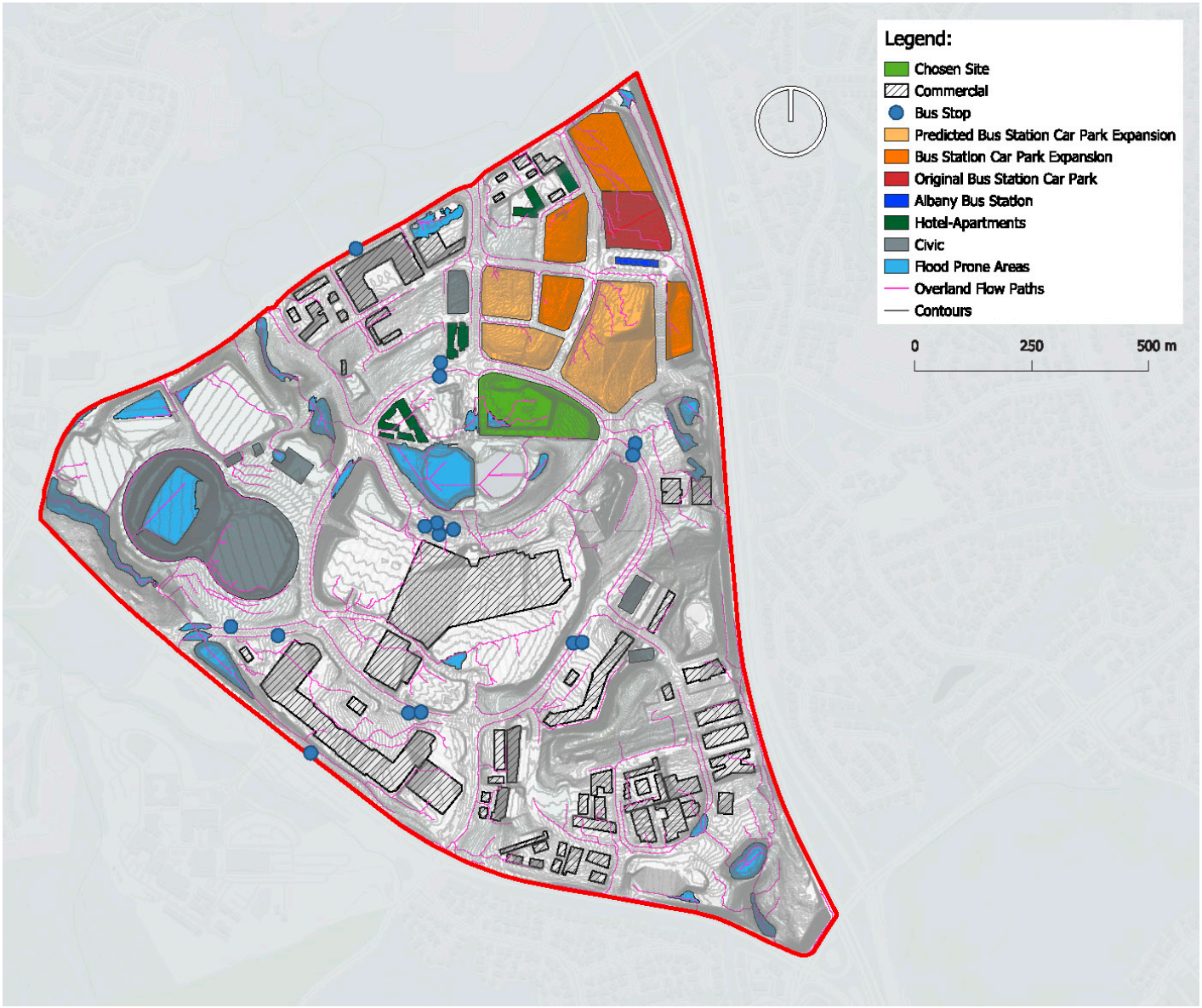


Figure 10: Map by author, 1:10,000 @ A3, Site research into albany

The selection of the site location within Albany was informed by detailed site analysis. Environmental factors, including contours, overland flow paths, and flood-prone areas, were mapped to identify natural constraints across the study area. While several large vacant parcels were identified, the majority were deemed unsuitable. Personal experience with the site has highlighted that existing parking provision for the Albany Bus Station is insufficient to accommodate weekday demand, resulting in the informal use of surrounding vacant lots for parking and indicating latent pressure for future expansion of parking infrastructure.

When considered alongside the site's adjacency to the Albany Civic Lakes and its established pedestrian connections to the Albany Mall, the selected site (highlighted in green) emerged as a strategically positioned location for intervention within the broader urban and civic network.



Figure 11: Map by author, 1:5,000 @ A3, Urban analysis of Albany

Figures 10-11 informed the orientation of the proposed intervention and provided key parameters for the design process. Urban analysis identified the site as being located within a predominantly car-oriented environment. Surrounding roads were categorised into three hierarchies to distinguish differing traffic volumes and patterns of movement, establishing the site's relationship to local, arterial, and motorway-adjacent circulation.

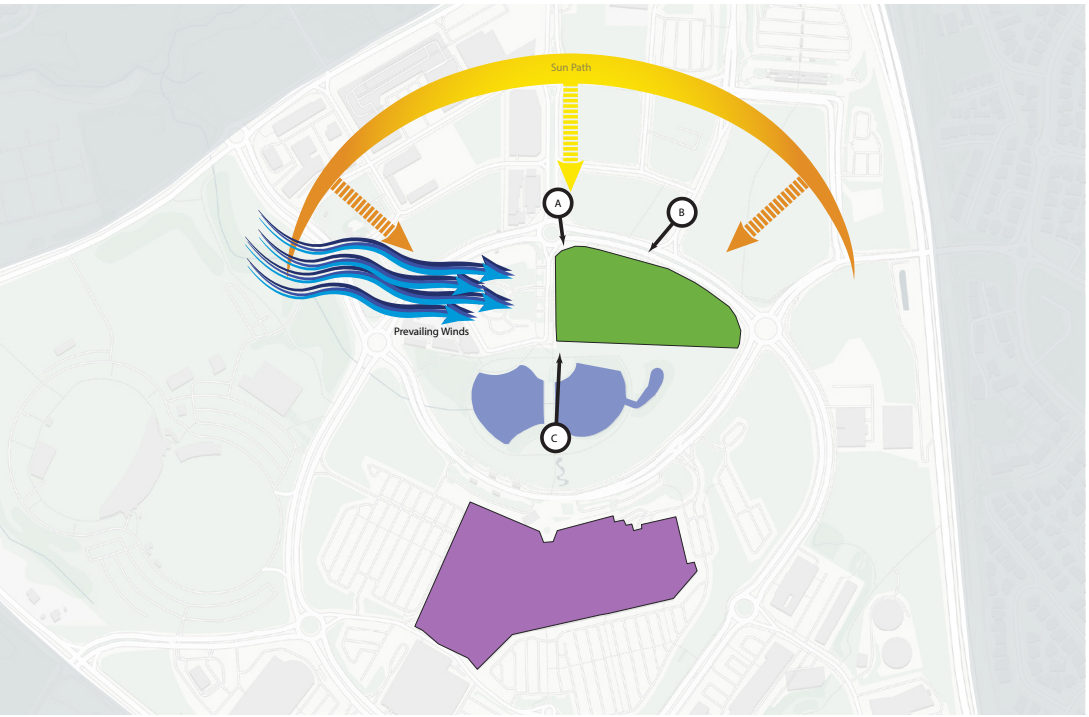
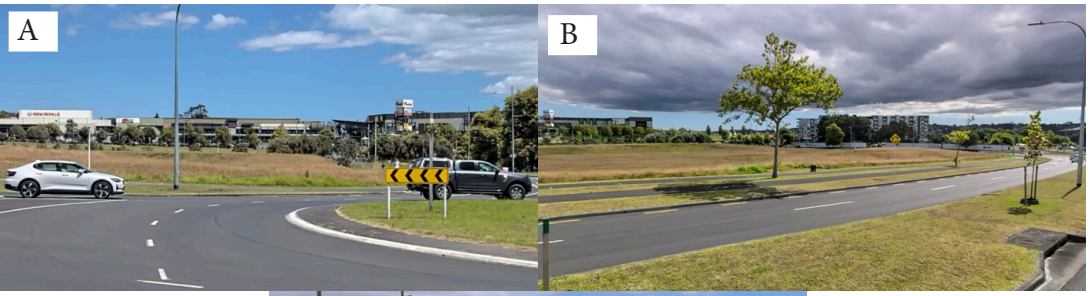
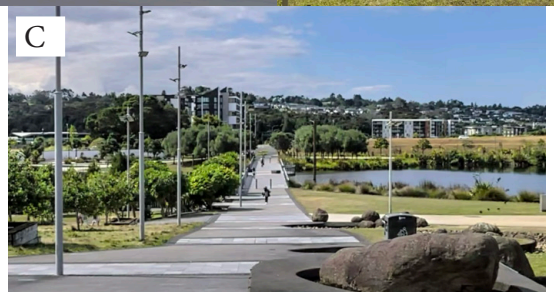


Figure 12: Map by author, 1:5,000 @ A3, View shaft and climate analysis of Albany





Figures 13-15: Images of identified view shafts. Screenshot from *Apple Maps* [Map], Apple Inc., captured 15 February 2026, from Apple Maps app, © Apple

A view shaft analysis identified three potential visual alignments from the site. Of these, View Shaft C (Figure 15) was assessed as the most spatially significant because it aligned with a broader pedestrian and landscape sequence rather than offering a static, isolated viewpoint. The sightline captured views toward the Albany Civic Lakes, providing a recognisable public landmark and a calmer visual horizon that could anchor arrival and orientation. It also sat along a likely pedestrian desire line between Albany Mall and the Albany bus station, meaning it corresponded with a consistent flow of people moving through the area rather than an occasional or incidental vantage point. For these reasons, addressing View Shaft C offered the greatest opportunity to strengthen legibility, wayfinding, and public presence. However, it is oriented away from the primary sun path. Designing the principal façade to address this view would therefore substantially limit access to natural daylight. While theatre auditoria are typically reliant on artificial lighting, this constraint presents a critical challenge for the adjacent foyer and public circulation spaces, where access to natural light is desirable. This tension between visual orientation and environmental performance became a key consideration in the subsequent design development.

5.2 Concept Ideation

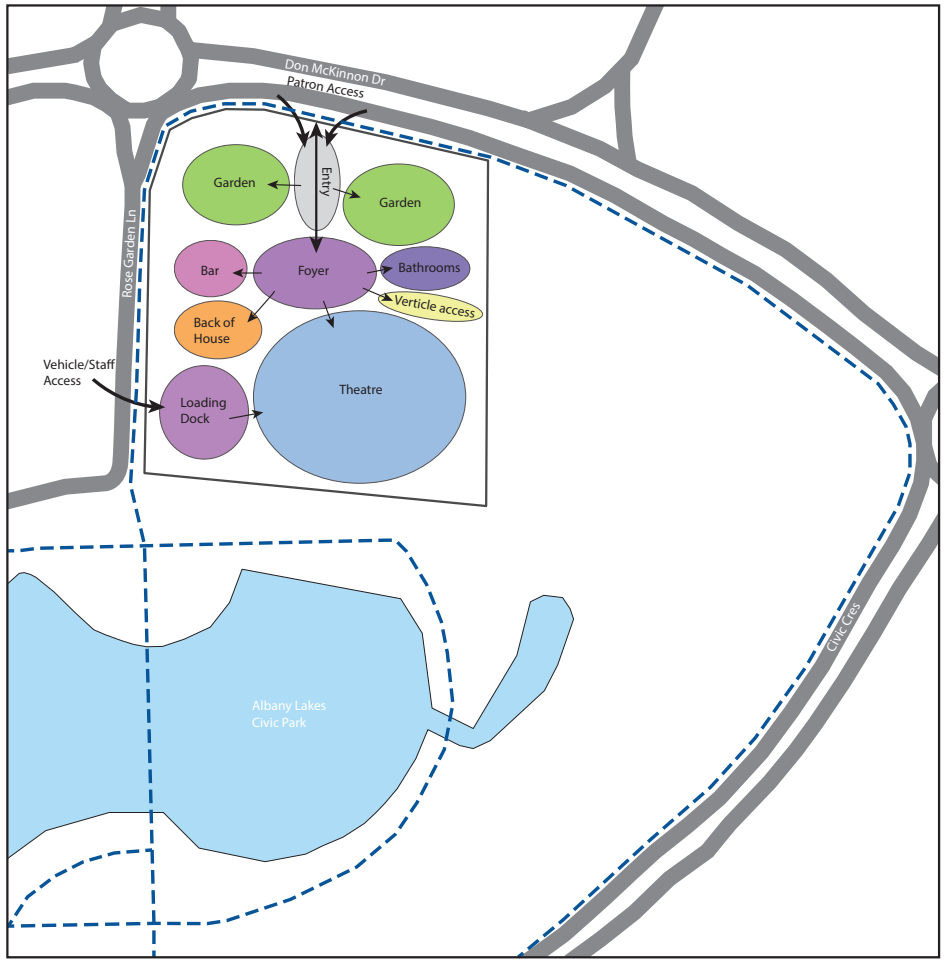


Figure 16: Map by author, NTS, bubble diagram and site access analysis



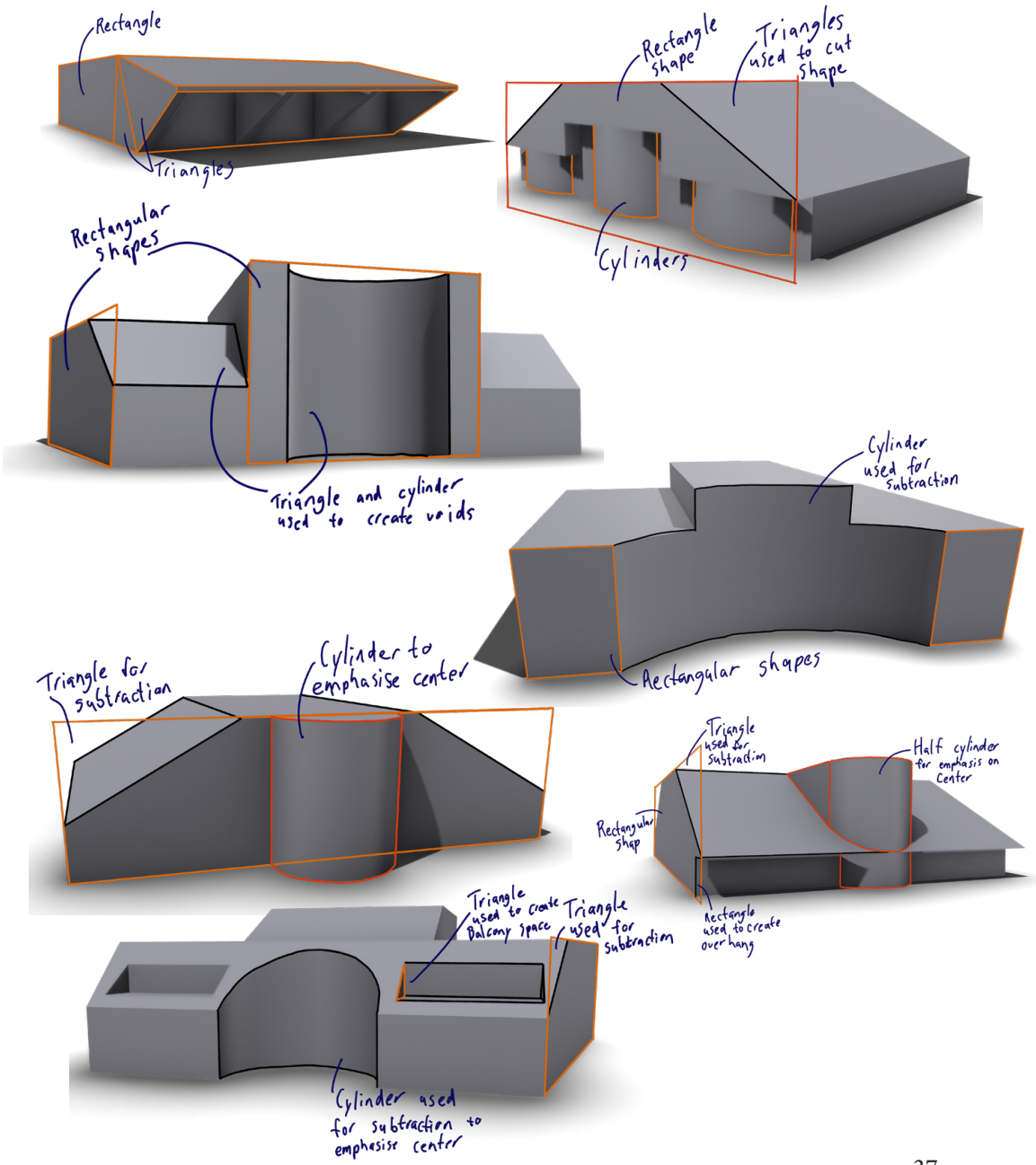
Figure 17: Illustration by author, NTS, Ground floor layout concept ideation

Concept ideation was undertaken in parallel with the site research, allowing programmatic decisions to respond directly to the constraints and opportunities identified through urban, environmental, and visual analysis. The following diagrams explore potential programmatic arrangements of the site prior to formal structural resolution. Early consideration was given to view shafts, orientation, and principles of classical organisation in order to establish a clear spatial logic to guide subsequent design development.

Figures 16 and 17 illustrate an iterative progression from a bubble diagram to an initial ground floor sketch. This iteration tests a tripartite organisational sequence, structuring the patron experience as a progression from a forecourt garden, to a public foyer, and finally to the auditorium. While the overall floor plan does not adopt a fully symmetrical composition, symmetry is deliberately applied to the garden space, establishing a formal axis that aligns with and reinforces the axis introduced in the primary façade.

The proposed arrangement responds directly to View Shaft A, orienting the principal façade towards the north to maximise solar access and support the provision of naturally lit public foyer spaces, while allowing the auditorium to remain more inwardly focused. The inclusion of a classically influenced garden as a forecourt creates a transitional threshold between street and foyer. It buffers the public spaces from traffic noise and glare, provides shaded outdoor waiting and gathering, and brings daylight and planting to the entry sequence through courtyards and openings. Spatially, it also slows and organises arrival by establishing a clear path and hierarchy of spaces from street to garden to foyer, strengthening the sense of occasion as people enter the building.

5.3 First Stage of Massing Studies

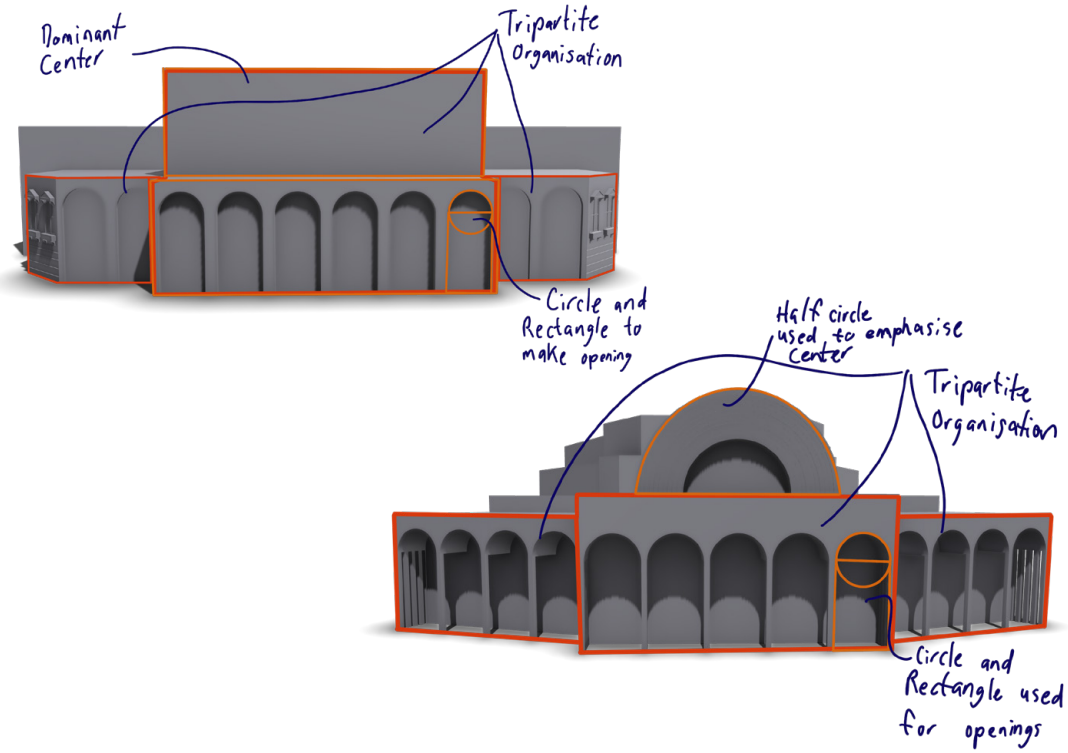


Figures 18-24: Diagrams by author, First stage of massing explorations

The first phase of massing studies explored the application of symmetry, simple geometric forms, and regularity as guiding compositional principles. These studies tested how the core ideas of the design framework could inform three-dimensional massing through the use of squares, triangles, and circles, without recourse to historical reference or applied ornament.

While this phase successfully demonstrated the formal viability of symmetry and geometric clarity at a conceptual level, the resulting masses lacked spatial coherence when considered as architectural propositions. The abstract application of these principles was insufficient to generate a clear hierarchy, rhythm, or sense of meaning within the composition. As a result, the massing exercises remained formally ordered but architecturally unresolved, indicating the limitations of geometry and symmetry when applied in isolation.

5.4 Second Phase of Massing Studies



Figures 25-26: Diagrams by author, Second stage of massing explorations

The second phase of massing studies developed in response to the limitations identified in the initial abstract exercises and introduced architectural precedents as an active design tool. A series of classical and contemporary theatre buildings, along with early twentieth-century civic architecture, were analysed to understand how principles of symmetry, proportion, and regularity are embodied through massing, façade articulation, and spatial hierarchy rather than through abstract form alone.

Informed by these precedents, the massing strategy shifted towards less abstract primary forms, using clear and simple geometry to generate

openings within the façade. Through the placement and repetition of these openings, regularity and order were established, allowing the overall composition to achieve greater spatial coherence and architectural legibility. Rather than relying solely on overall form to convey meaning, the studies demonstrated how complexity could emerge through articulation, resulting in massing proposals that functioned more convincingly as architectural propositions.

5.5 Design Phase 2 Reflection

Reflection on the site research and concept ideation phases revealed that, while the design framework demonstrated potential as a generator of architectural form through both diagrammatic and massing studies, its application at the Albany site was constrained by the broader urban conditions. The substantial gaps in Albany's urban fabric and the dominance of large-scale infrastructural and vehicular networks indicated that any meaningful architectural intervention would necessitate a more comprehensive urban design response.

This requirement exceeded the intended scope of the framework, which is primarily concerned with the articulation of architectural form, spatial hierarchy, and experiential quality rather than large-scale urban restructuring. As a result, the Albany site was deemed to be an unsuitable testing ground for the framework in isolation.

The subsequent shift in focus to the St James Theatre site represented a strategic realignment rather than a change in research direction. The St James context removes the need for extensive urban design intervention, allowing the project to concentrate more directly on the intersection between heritage fabric, contemporary architectural insertion, and a complex but legible urban setting. Importantly, the site also introduces a set of tangible real-world constraints, including heritage protection, tight site boundaries, and established urban relationships, enabling the framework to be tested under more realistic and rigorous conditions.

Design Phase 3: Resolution Under Constraint

6.0

This section documents the third design phase of the thesis, where the design framework is tested through a proposed restoration and contemporary addition to the St James Theatre site. It begins by establishing the site's historical development and current condition, then critiques the approved redevelopment proposal as a benchmark against the framework's principles. The section then outlines the site research informing the design response, followed by the generation and comparison of three concept schemes. Finally, it tracks the iterative refinement of the preferred scheme, moving from façade resolution to interior spatial organisation, and concludes with a reflection on how effectively the framework operated under real heritage, regulatory, and urban constraints.

The restoration of the St James Theatre begins with an examination of the site itself. The St James Theatre is a historically layered performance venue embedded within a contemporary urban context The St James Theatre is a historically layered, Category A heritage place with accumulated alterations and contested contemporary interfaces. Historical site research therefore forms the foundation of this phase, establishing a defensible account of the building's development, spatial sequence, and material character that is translated into criteria for testing the design framework.

6.1 Historical Site Research



Figure 27: Image of the St James Queen street façade 1930-1940. From Bartlett, W. H. (n.d.). *Opposite Civic Square: Showing People's Furnishing Warehouse, Tonson Garlick, St James Theatre* [Photograph] (PH-NEG-C21512), Auckland War Memorial Museum Tāmaki Paenga Hira; reproduced in St. James Theatre (Heritage et AL, 27 November 2014).

The St James Theatre was opened in July 1928 on upper Queen Street, initially designed for traveling vaudeville acts intending to continue the tradition of comic and musical entertainment provided by the Fuller Theatre that it replaced. The building underwent modifications 18 months later to add projection facilities to accommodate the arrival of talking pictures. St James' location in upper Queen Street contributed its rise in cultural significance with its close proximity to other popular entertainment venues such as the Civic Theatre and Auckland Town Hall (Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga, n.d., List No. 4404).



Figure 28: Image of a 1928 St James advertisement. From New Zealand Sporting and Dramatic Review (1928, July). Auckland's Greatest Theatre [Print image], Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Libraries (7-A11880); reproduced in St. James Theatre (Heritage et AL, 27 November 2014)

As illustrated in figures 27-30, the St James was designed for opulence, incorporating traditional theatre elements such as opera boxes and three steep tiers of seating in the main auditorium (Evans, 2014). It also featured a Spanish Mission or Spanish-Renaissance interior, including a grand marble staircase, statuettes, and elaborate lighting (Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga, n.d.; Evans, 2014). Combined, these design choices created a sense of luxury intended to transport patrons away from their everyday lives (Evans, 2014). The theatre's acoustic and sightline quality has also been noted as exceptional for a venue of its type (Harvey, 2024).



Figure 29: Image of the stalls foyer from the Queen Street entrance. From NZ Cinemas [Web page image: "Stalls Foyer looking from Queen Street end"], by Friends of Film (n.d.), https://friendsoffilm.co.nz/what-cinema-is-that

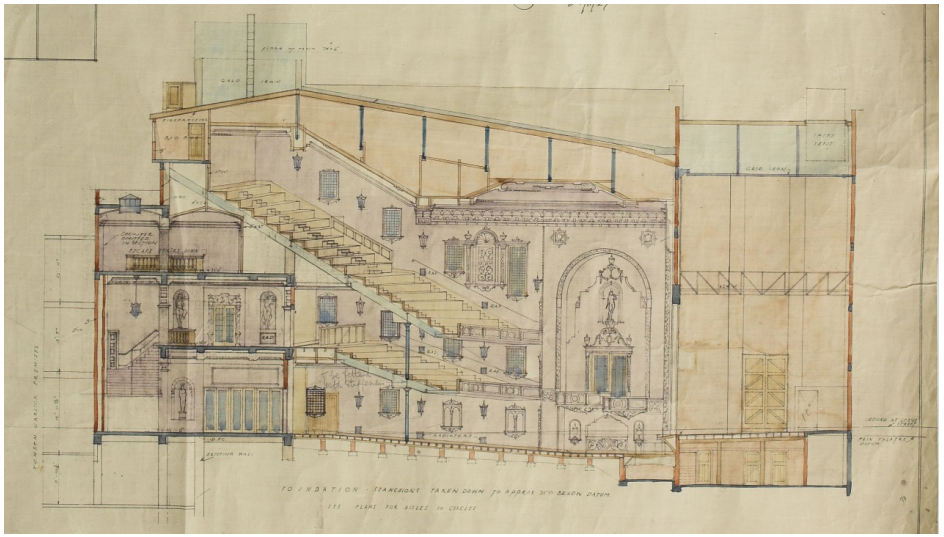


Figure 30: Archival image of a longitudinal section of St James. From Auckland Council Archives. (n.d.). *St James Theatre Auckland for John Fuller and Sons, longitudinal section* [Architectural drawing] (Designed by Henry E. White; Permit no. 4554, sheet 12 of 34; AKC 336, item 1159). Auckland Council Archives, Auckland, New Zealand.

Over time, the theatre experienced many modifications, including the addition of the Regent Theatre and the Westend Cinema (Figure 32) (Harvey, 2024). However, the most significant exterior change was made to the Queen Street façade and tower prior to Queen Elizabeth II's visit, when metal sheeting was added to modernise the building's appearance (Figure 33) (Evans, 2014; Harvey, 2024). The theatre later closed in 2007 following fire damage, and while the interior has sustained some deterioration during periods of closure, it remains notably well preserved (Evans, 2014; Harvey, 2024).

Due to the building's rich history and well preserved architecture, the St James Theatre is listed as a category A heritage building. Category A heritage buildings have "outstanding significance well beyond its immediate environs" (Auckland Council, n.d., p. 1).

02044	St James Theatre	304-328 Queen Street, Auckland Central	LOT 3 DP 20762; LOT 4 DP20762; LOT 2 DP 22134	A	Theatre	A,F,G	Refer to planning maps

Figure 31: St James heritage listing in the Auckland Unitary Plan. From *Schedule 14.1: Schedule of historic heritage (Auckland Unitary Plan Operative in part)* [PDF], by Auckland Council (n.d.), Auckland Unitary Plan. Retrieved February 18, 2026, from https://unitaryplan.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/images/Auckland%20Unitary%20Plan%20Operative/Chapter%20L%20Schedules/Schedule%2014.1%20Schedule%20of%20Historic%20Heritage.pdf



Figure 32: Image of St James Queen street façade, 2014. From *View of St James Theatre from Queen Street* (November 2014); reproduced in St. James Theatre (Heritage et AL, 27 November 2014).



Figure 33: Image of St James Queen street façade, 1953. From *Royal Film Visit, St James Theatre* [Photograph] (PH-NEG-C48014), Auckland War Memorial Museum Tāmaki Paenga Hira; reproduced in St. James Theatre (Heritage et AL, 27 November 2014).

6.2 Current Standing

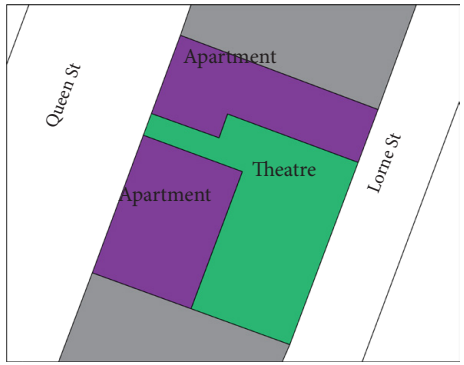


Figure 34: Map by authr, NTS, map showing the subdivision of the wider St James site.

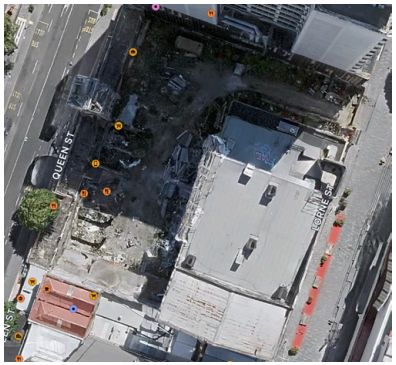


Figure 35: Aerial view of St James site, showing the demolition. Screenshot from Apple Maps [Map], Apple Inc., captured 15 February 2026, from Apple Maps app, © Apple



Figures 36: Image by author, St James Queen street façade, 2025

Following the buildings closure in 2007, the wider St James site was sold and demolished to be sub-divided into the theatre and an apartment building (Figure 34) (Harvey, 2024; Evans, 2014). This demolition included the hallway connecting the Queen Street entrance to the main foyer, and the wider St James site, with the tower now being held up by steel scaffolding until the restoration finishes in 2028 (Figures 35-36) (Radio New Zealand, 2026; Harvey, 2024; Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga, n.d.; Evans, 2014).

The restoration of the St James Theatre has been a prolonged and contested process (Harvey, 2024; Evans, 2014). Initial redevelopment proposals sought to address the wider St James site in conjunction with the theatre itself; however, this approach was later abandoned, and the site was subdivided into separate redevelopment strategies (Harvey, 2024; Evans, 2014). More recently, plans for the associated apartment development have received council approval, with construction beginning in 2025 (Radio New Zealand, 2026; Harvey, 2024). The following figures present the approved proposals for the wider St James site, including the apartment building, provided to me by Paul Brown & Associates (personal communication, 16 June 2025)



Figure 37: Longitudinal section and Queen Street façade section of St James redevelopment proposal. Reproduced from *073_council_230109_LUC60404038 BUN60409823 Approved Plans* [Unpublished document], by Paul Brown & Associates, 2025.

Figure 37 indicates that the Queen Street entrance is proposed to be reinstated to its pre–Queen's visit configuration. At ground level, the façade accommodates retail tenancies intended to activate the street, while the upper levels are allocated to parking associated with the adjacent apartment building.



Figure 38: Queen Street façade of St James redevelopment proposal. Reproduced from *073_council_230109_LUC60404038 BUN60409823 Approved Plans* [Unpublished document], by Paul Brown & Associates, 2025.

As illustrated in Figure 38, the Queen Street façade of the proposal adopts a contemporary architectural language that largely departs from the Spanish Mission style of the existing theatre. While this contrast establishes a clear distinction between old and new, it also raises questions regarding the extent to which the proposal complements the form, fabric, and setting that contribute to the heritage values of the St James Theatre. When assessed against the criteria outlined in Schedule 14.1 of the Auckland Unitary Plan, the façade appears to demonstrate limited integration with the heritage character of the place and introduces a level of visual discontinuity that risks diminishing the legibility of the theatre's cultural significance.

It is acknowledged that the resource consent drawings were approved by Auckland Council and apply to the broader St James site, which itself is not heritage listed (Figure 39). However, given that the St James Theatre is recognised as being of outstanding heritage significance extending beyond its immediate site, the visual and contextual impact of adjacent development remains a critical consideration (Auckland Council, n.d). From this perspective, the proposed Queen Street façade can be understood as insufficiently responsive to the heritage values of the theatre, reinforcing the need for an alternative approach that more carefully mediates between contemporary intervention and historic fabric.



Figure 39: Map by author, NTS, Map showing heritage listed and non-heritage listed lots of the wider St James site.

6.3 Approved Proposal Analysis

This critique of the proposal's relationship to the heritage context establishes the first point of contention. Moving beyond stylistic comparison, the following analysis examines the proposal against the design framework.

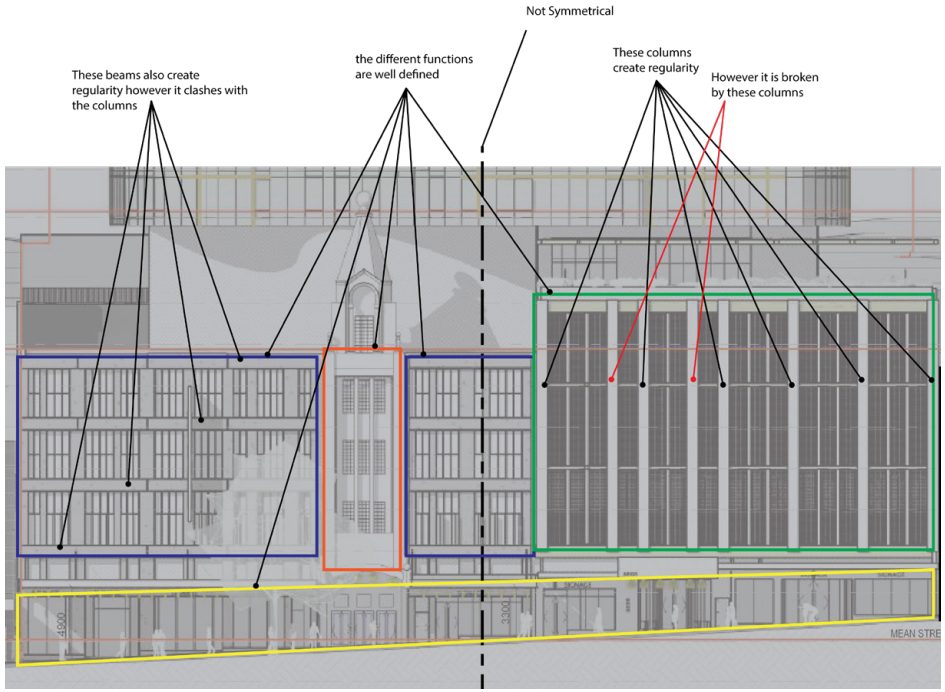


Figure 40: Analysis of Queen Street façade of St James redevelopment proposal. Adapted from *073_council_230109_LUC60404038 BUN60409823 Approved Plans* [Unpublished document], by Paul Brown & Associates, 2025.

As highlighted in Figure 40, the Queen Street façade exhibits an inconsistent application of symmetry and regularity. While the majority of columns are arranged with an apparent intention toward ordered spacing, irregular intervals undermine the establishment of a coherent rhythmic system, resulting in a weakened sense of compositional discipline. Despite this, the façade succeeds in clearly differentiating internal programmes, allowing pedestrians to readily interpret the building's functional organisation as they move along Queen Street.



Figure 41: Queen Street façade of St James redevelopment proposal. Reproduced from *073_council_230109_LUC60404038 BUN60409823 Approved Plans* [Unpublished document], by Paul Brown & Associates, 2025.

When considered in a broader urban context (Figure 41), the scale and massing of the apartment building above the façade significantly overwhelm the St James tower, diminishing its visual prominence and introducing a discordant architectural relationship. This effect is further compounded by the use of parking directly behind the Queen Street façade (Figure 42), which contributes little to street activation and limits opportunities for sociability and interaction between pedestrians and building users.



Figure 42: Longitudinal section of St James redevelopment proposal. Reproduced from *073_council_230109_LUC60404038 BUN60409823 Approved Plans* [Unpublished document], by Paul Brown & Associates, 2025.

6.4 Site Research

Following the analysis of the proposed plans and an examination of the site's historical context, the design process progressed into a phase of targeted site research. This stage focused primarily on urban conditions and view shaft analysis to better understand how the site is perceived and experienced within its broader context.

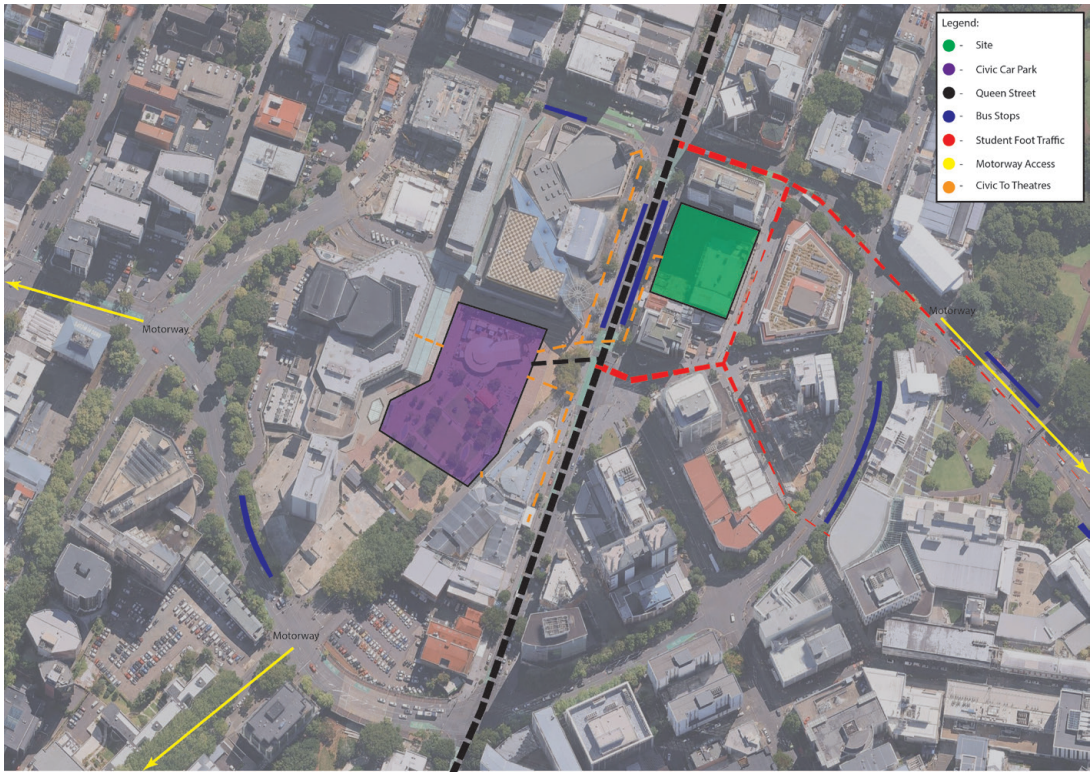


Figure 43: Map by author, NTS, Urban analysis of surrounding context to St James site.

Site observations were synthesised into a contextual map to establish the urban conditions shaping the project (Figure 43). The site's proximity to major civic and cultural venues, including the Aotea Centre, Auckland Town Hall, and the Civic Theatre, positions the St James Theatre within a dense performance and entertainment precinct. This concentration reinforces the importance of the building's cultural value and public presence. Pedestrian movement patterns further intensify this condition, with Queen Street accommodating the highest volumes of foot traffic, while Lorne Street functions primarily as a secondary pedestrian route, often used as a shortcut by students moving between Wellesley Street East and Rutland Street. These patterns place particular emphasis on the Queen Street façade as the primary interface between the building and the public realm. The presence of a major bus stop directly in front of the site together with nearby public parking at the Civic car park further consolidates the site's accessibility and reinforces its role as a key arrival point within the precinct.

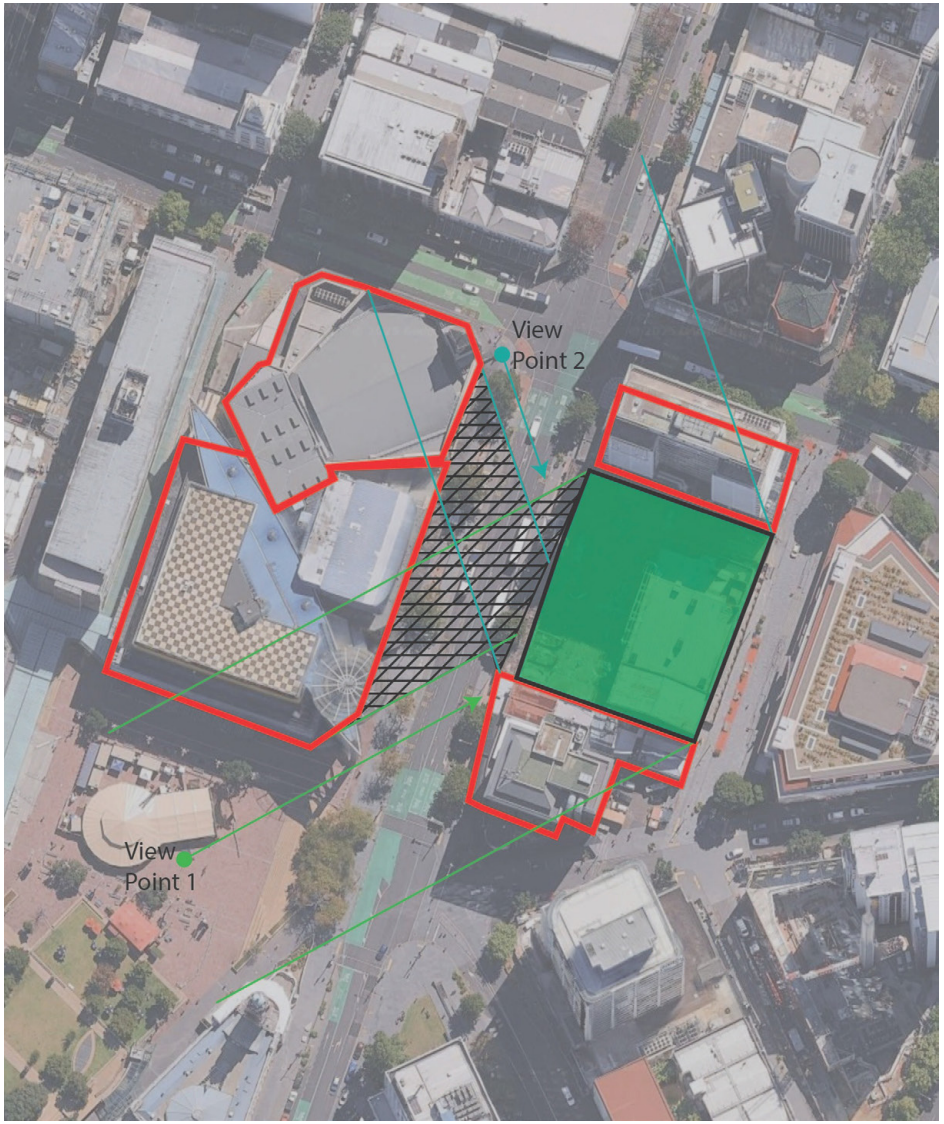


Figure 44: Map by author, NTS, Analysis of view shafts 1&2 for the Queen street facade

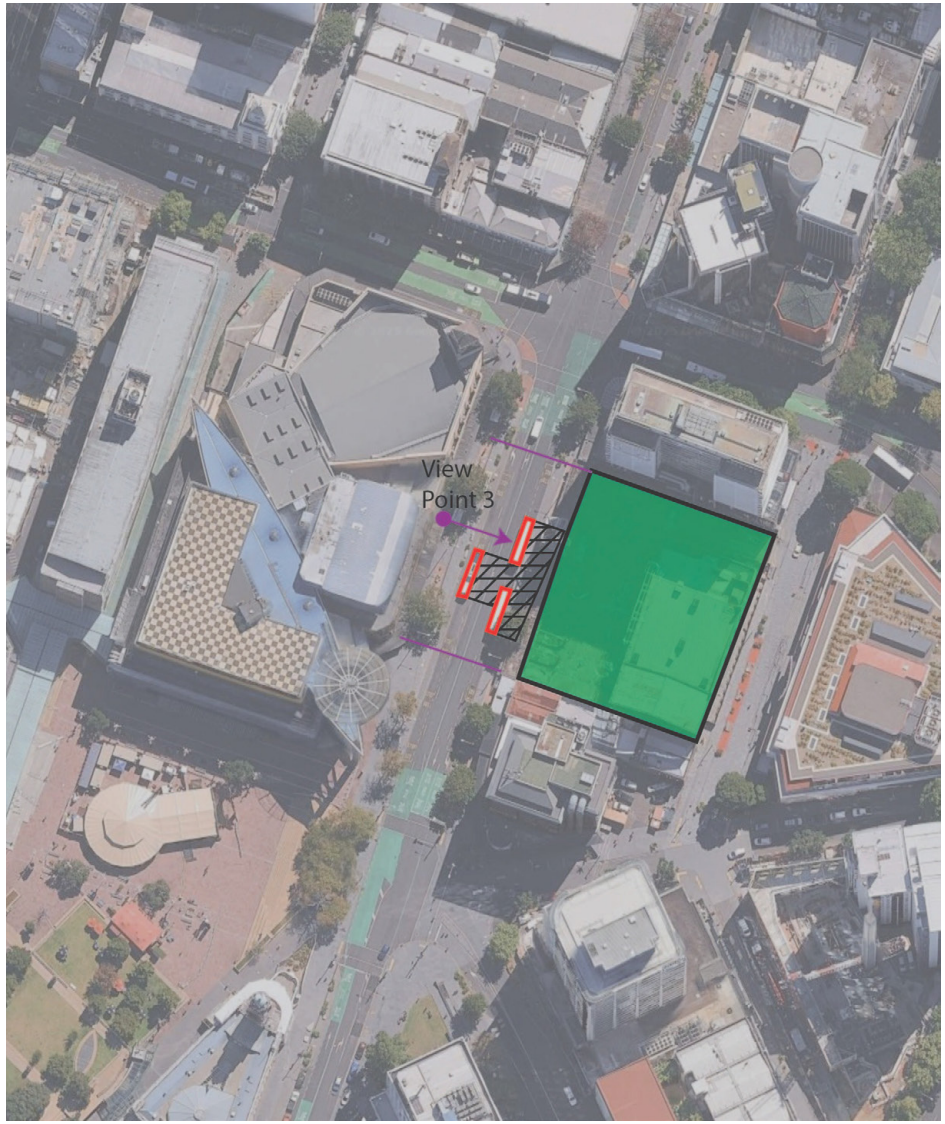


Figure 45: Map by author, NTS, Analysis of view shafts 3 for the Queen street facade

Analysis of potential viewpoints along Queen Street was undertaken to understand how the façade is perceived from the public realm (Figures 44-45). While viewpoints located further from the site offer more comfortable viewing distances, their effectiveness is significantly reduced by visual obstructions from adjacent buildings, including the Civic Theatre and neighbouring structures. As a result, these viewpoints provide limited opportunities for sustained engagement with the façade. In contrast, the third viewpoint offers a clearer and more continuous view shaft, allowing the façade to be read more fully despite occasional interruptions from passing buses (Figure 45). This condition suggests that the Queen Street façade is most often experienced from a relatively constrained and dynamic vantage point, reinforcing the need for clarity, hierarchy, and legibility in the façade's composition rather than reliance on distant monumental readings.

A sun path analysis was undertaken to assess daylight availability and inform façade orientation and material response (Figure 46). The results indicate that direct sunlight is significantly constrained by surrounding development, particularly the apartment building to the north and the proposed residential tower, which limit midday sun access in both summer and winter. The Queen Street façade receives direct sunlight during summer afternoons and evenings, but the sun is largely obstructed in winter by the Civic Theatre. In contrast, the Lorne Street façade benefits from more consistent sunlight exposure across both seasons; however, its potential for architectural intervention is limited due to the dominance of the auditorium volume along this edge. These conditions reinforced the decision to prioritise daylight modulation and façade articulation along Queen Street, where limited but time-specific sunlight could be meaningfully leveraged.

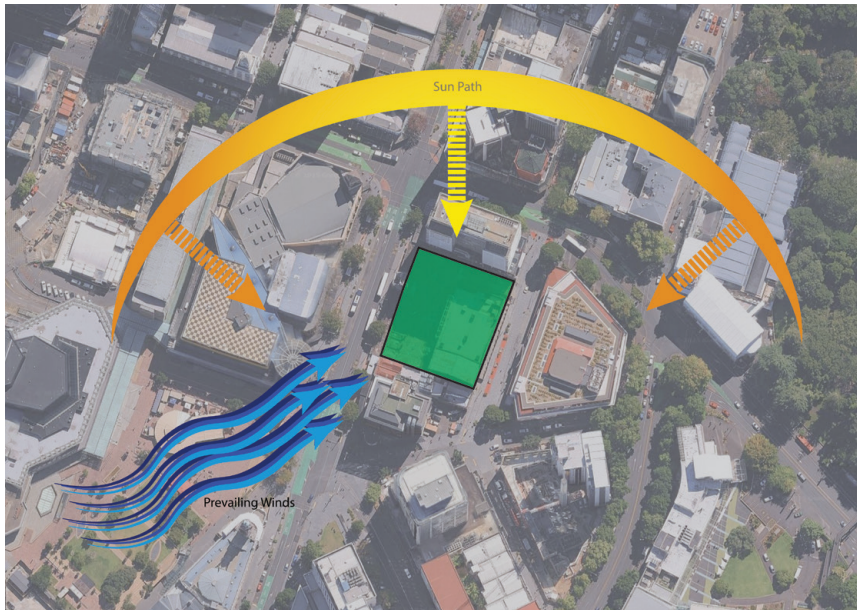


Figure 46: Map by author, NTS, Climate analysis of site

6.5 Concept Design

The analysis of the proposed development revealed a series of misalignments between the existing design approach and the principles established within the framework, particularly in relation to spatial hierarchy, engagement with heritage values, and experiential continuity. Rather than treating these shortcomings as isolated issues, they are understood as diagnostic findings that clarify the architectural challenges inherent to the site.

Three exploratory concept schemes were developed in response to these findings to test alternative architectural strategies that address the limitations identified in the analysis, using the framework as a corrective lens through which new spatial, formal, and experiential relationships are proposed.

Each concept scheme directly responds to the identified limitations listed below:

- Weak architectural dialogue between old and new
- Weak sense of regularity in spatial order
- Absence of a clearly articulated axial or symmetrical ordering system
- Limited sunlight availability
- Limited capacity to support sociability and interaction between users and pedestrians in the public realm

All three concept schemes emerged from the same four-phase generative process, ensuring a consistent response to site constraints, heritage conditions, and programmatic requirements.(Figure 47) This process establishes a shared architectural logic based on axial ordering, hierarchical organisation of public and private spaces, and calibrated engagement with the existing fabric. By holding these parameters constant, the subsequent variation between concepts is not arbitrary but the result of deliberate shifts in priority within the framework.

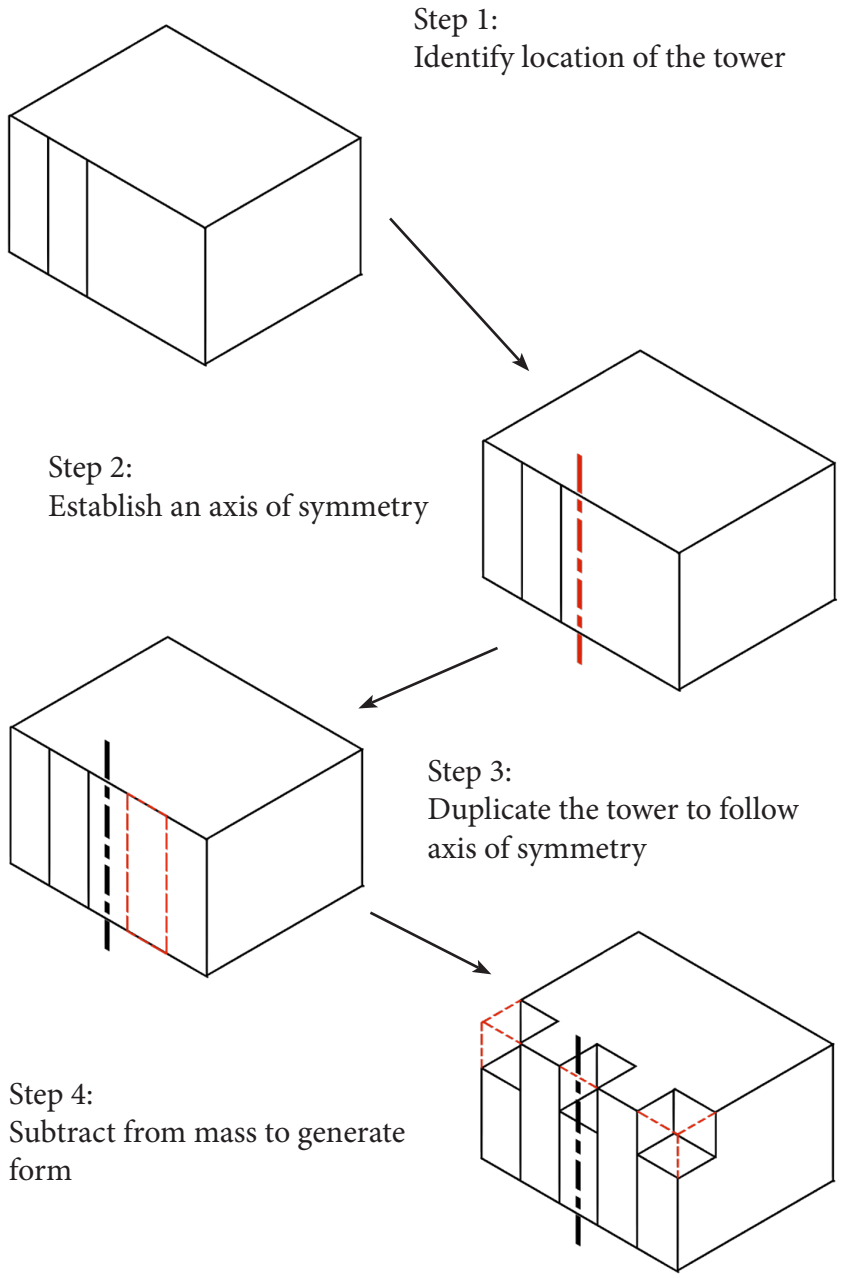
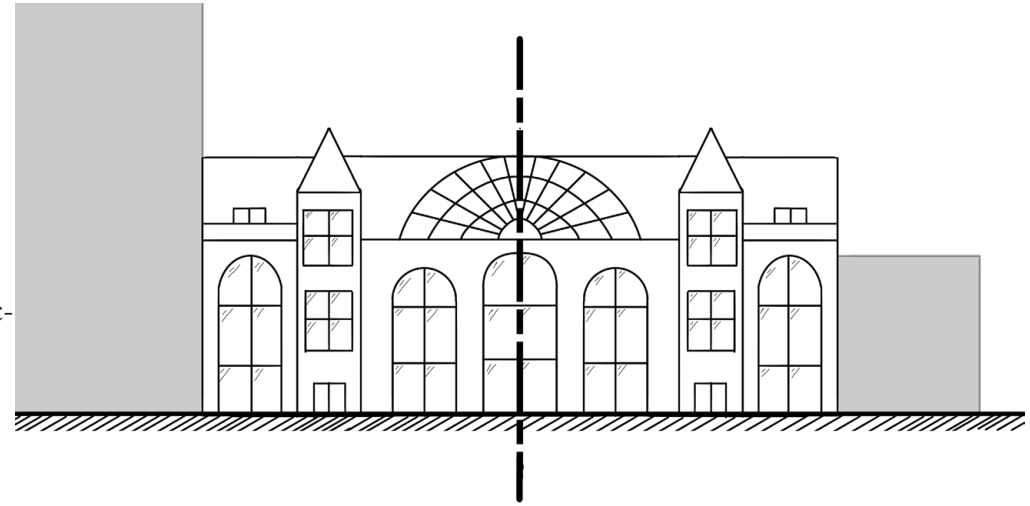
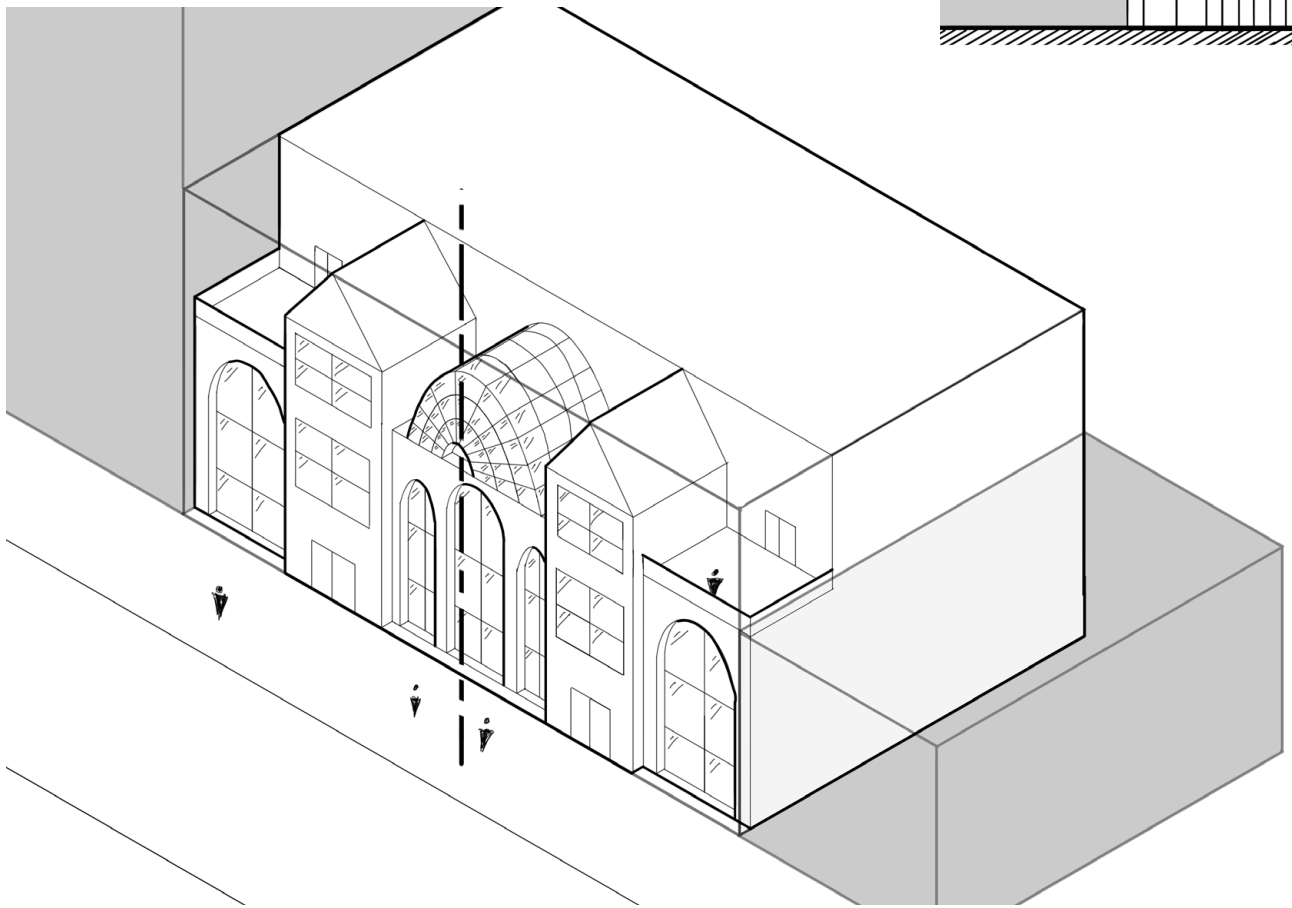


Figure 47: Diagram by author, showing the 4 step generative process for concept ideation.

6.5.1 Concept One

Concept One (Figures 48-49) establishes a clear dominant centre through a strongly articulated axial organisation, using large openings to maximise daylight penetration and reinforce formal hierarchy. While this approach supports spatial clarity and legibility, it necessarily limits the availability of peripheral balcony spaces capable of mediating interaction between internal users and passing pedestrians.





Figures 48-49: Illustrations by author, Orthographic and 2D view of concept one.

6.5.2 Concept Two

Concept Two (Figure 50) deprioritises a singular dominant centre in favour of a tripartite ordering strategy, using the rule of three to distribute mass and generate multiple balcony conditions that increase opportunities for sociability and engagement with the public realm. This redistribution of mass requires a fundamentally different approach to daylighting in which window placement is not predefined but emerges from the resulting form.

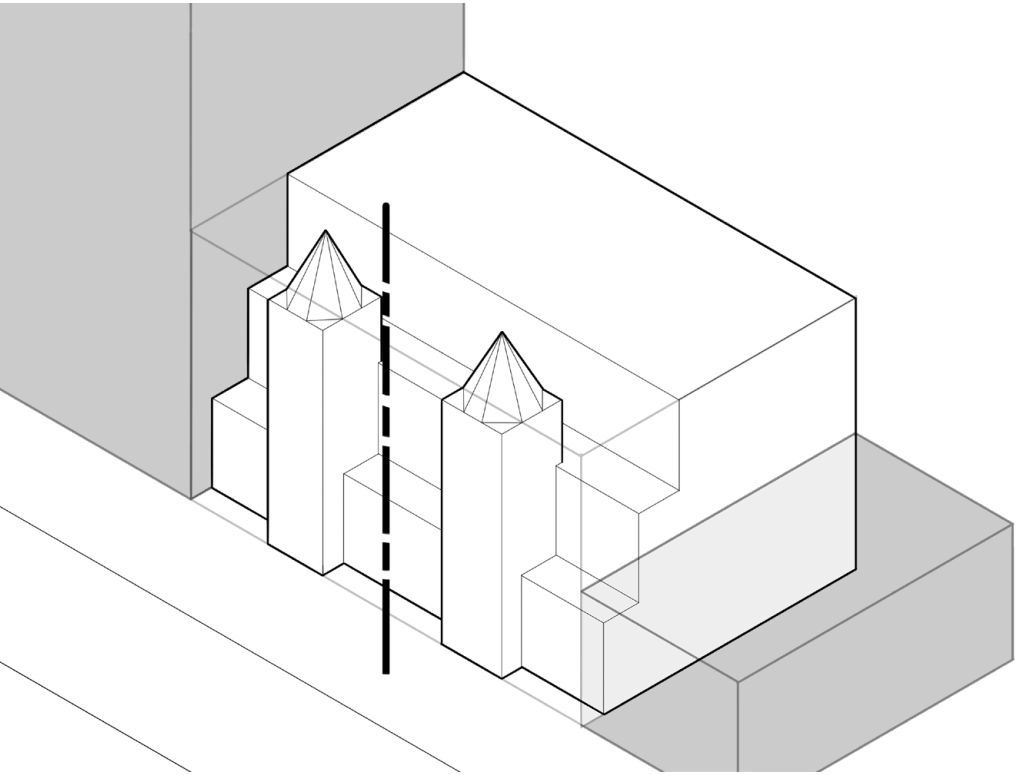


Figure 50: Illustration by author, Orthographic view of concept two.

6.5.3 Concept Three

Concept Three (Figure 51) returns to a massing logic closer to that of Concept One, yet reorients its priorities toward continuity with the existing heritage fabric. In doing so, it adopts a more restrained approach to window articulation and reduces reliance on balcony spaces, achieving integration through formal and material alignment rather than through a dominant centralised spatial focus.

The comparative characteristics of the three concept schemes illustrate how shared generative logic produces divergent architectural priorities.

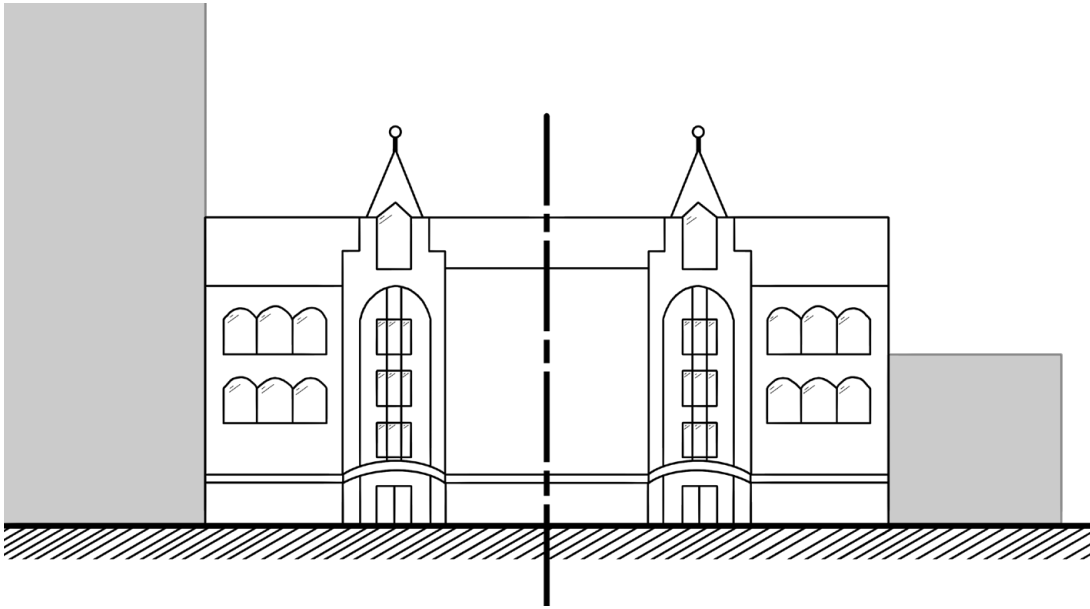


Figure 51: Illustration by author, 2D view of concept three.

6.6 Refined Design Development

The next stage of refinement focuses on the Queen Street façade as the first point of architectural resolution. Rather than resolving the building in plan and section simultaneously, this phase uses the façade as a controlled testing ground for formal order, proportion, and heritage integration. This approach allows the implications of the design framework to be examined at an architectural scale while deferring broader spatial resolution to subsequent stages of development.

The transition from sketch-based exploration to three-dimensional modelling marked a critical shift in the design process, introducing dimensional accuracy and constructive constraint. While the refined design draws predominantly from the spatial and organisational logic of Concept Two, the translation of Concept One's dominant centralising elements into a scaled three-dimensional model revealed that these features exceeded the available spatial envelope and conflicted with heritage constraints. As a result, they were removed from subsequent iterations.

Building on the organisational clarity of Concept Two, the refined design develops a more coherent architectural language through repetition, proportion, and hierarchical articulation. Elements of the existing heritage tower are abstracted and reintroduced across the new intervention, establishing visual continuity through duplication (Figure 53). Openings are organised using a tripartite ordering system, reinforcing vertical hierarchy and compositional regularity within the façade composition (Figure 52).

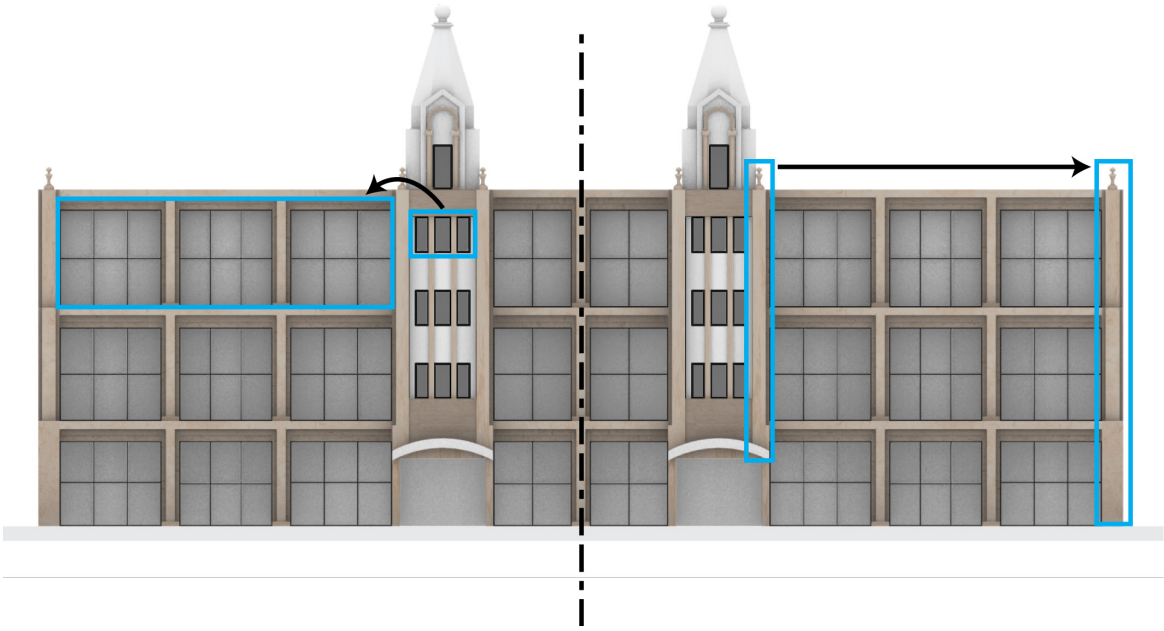


Figure 52: Illustration by author, Showing the abstraction and replication of elements from the heritage tower.



Figure 53: Illustration by author, Showing the tripartite organisation used for façade and openings layout.

6.6.1 Refined Design Reflection

Reflection on the refined Queen Street façade revealed a critical limitation in the current approach to establishing an axis of symmetry. While the duplication of the tower's form initially appeared to support visual coherence, the approach raised unresolved tensions between age and newness, similar to the approved proposal for the site. The original tower carries material weathering and patina accumulated over time, whereas its duplication would inevitably present as materially new. Potential responses, including the use of darker materials to approximate the existing palette or the artificial weathering of new elements, were considered but ultimately rejected. These strategies were found to address surface appearance rather than achieving meaningful architectural integration, resulting in a relationship with the heritage fabric that felt representational rather than substantive.

When assessed against the broader design framework, the façade was also found to inadequately engage with biophilic principles. The iteration prioritised formal resolution and compositional clarity, with limited consideration given to the integration of natural elements, environmental variation, and spatial conditions that support sensory engagement with nature. As a result, biophilia was not meaningfully engaged with in the façade strategy at this stage of development.

This reflection prompted a reassessment of both heritage engagement and experiential performance in the subsequent iteration. Notably, removal of the duplicated tower disrupted the symmetrical balance of the façade, requiring reconsideration in the organisational logic. However beyond these limitations, the proportional and hierarchical principles underpinning the façade remained aligned with the design framework and were retained in later development.

In response, the design framework was iterated (Figure 54) to more clearly distinguish between its classical and contemporary components, not as competing agendas but as complementary layers of judgement. Classical principles were retained as the compositional armature, guiding proportion, hierarchy, symmetry, and façade legibility, while contemporary principles were reframed as the ethical and experiential drivers. This clarification foregrounded a human-centred ethos of flexibility, allowing the framework to adapt to heritage constraints without defaulting to imitation, and strengthened the explicit weighting of biophilic integration, sustainable material selection, and material symbolism as primary design criteria rather than secondary embellishments.

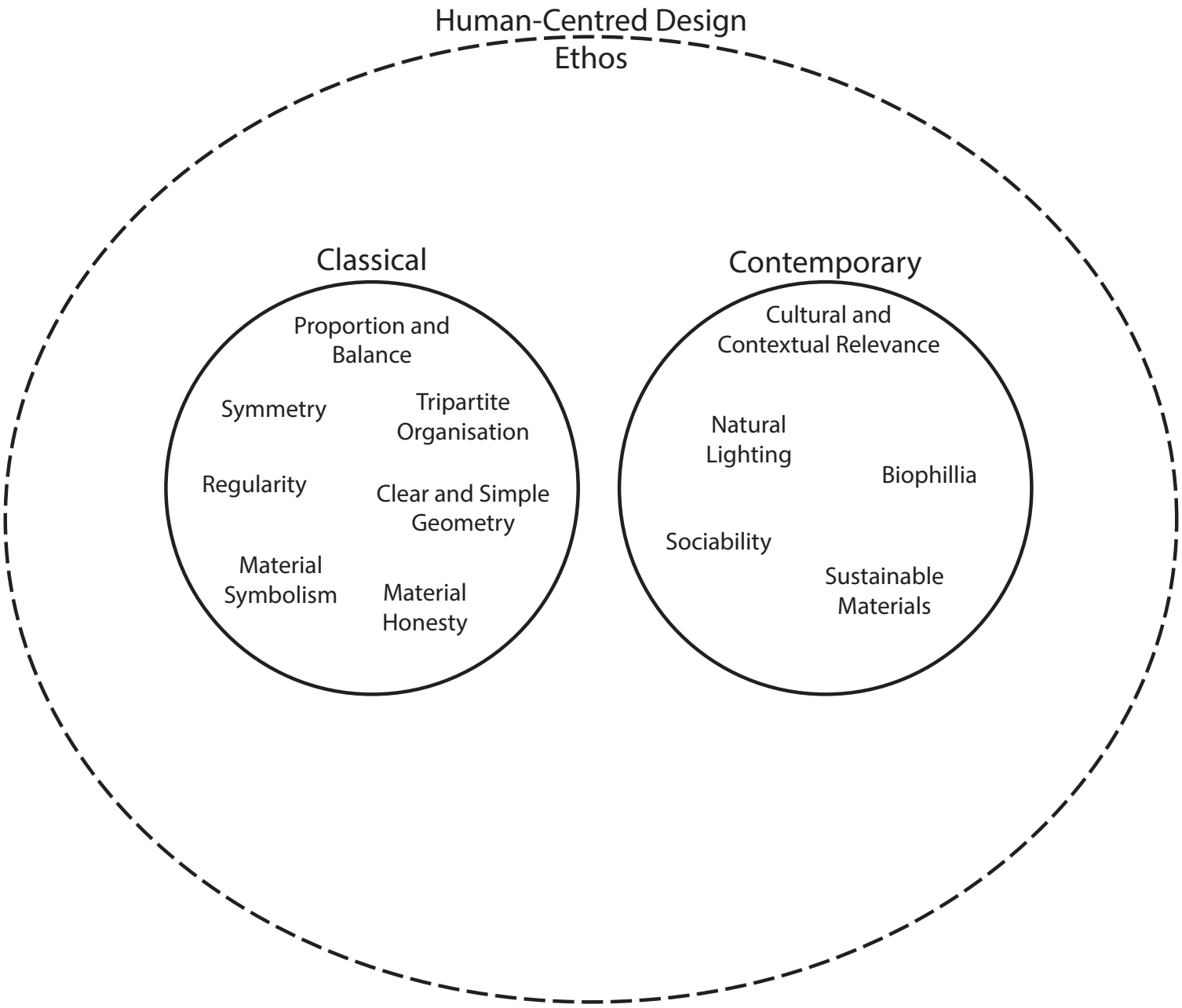


Figure 54: Diagram by author, Showing the second iteration of the design framework.

6.7 Developing the Design

The subsequent iteration responds directly to the limitations identified in the reflection on the refined Queen Street façade. Rather than attempting to reinstate symmetry through replication, this stage reconsiders the location and role of axial organisation within the façade composition. The primary axis of symmetry is relocated to align with the centre of the original St James tower, allowing the existing fabric to operate as the dominant formal anchor while accommodating greater differentiation across the façade (Figure 55).

As mentioned previously, the façade's organisational logic required reconsideration to accommodate the repositioned axis of symmetry. To address this imbalance in symmetry, the façade is split into two distinct façades, incorporating a secondary axis of symmetry for the secondary façade (Figure 56). The primary façade retains a stepped articulation that reinforces hierarchy and depth in proximity to the heritage fabric, while the secondary façade adopts a flatter formal language governed by a different ordering logic. Although visually differentiated, both conditions remain symmetrically ordered, allowing formal balance to be achieved without resorting to duplication. Within this reconfiguration, balcony depths are increased to support usable green spaces, strengthening the façade's capacity to engage with biophilic principles through inhabitable exterior thresholds (Figure 57).

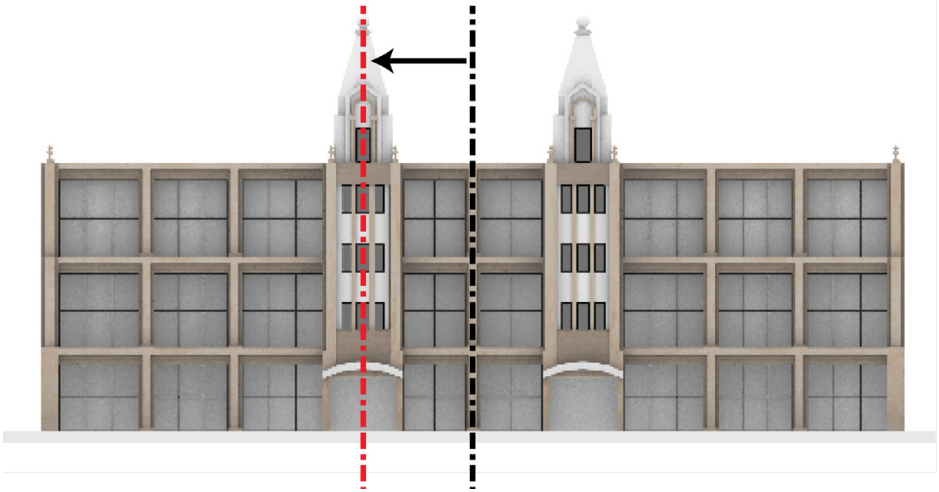


Figure 55: Illustration by author, Showing the moving of the axis of symmetry.

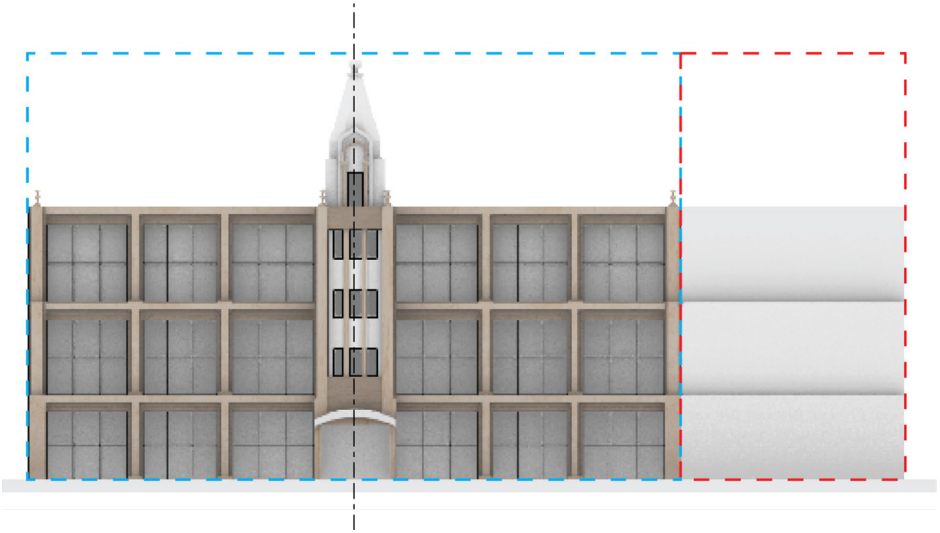


Figure 56: Illustration by author, Showing the separation of the Queen Street façade into two parts.



Figure 57: Illustration by author, Showing the balconies on the Queen Street façade incorporating biophilic properties

The articulation of openings and balcony elements in this iteration is informed by classical proportional systems. Door heights are derived by applying the golden ratio to a human height of 1800 mm, resulting in an opening proportioned at approximately 1.618:1. Door widths are subsequently determined through a square-based proportional logic, producing a 1:2 relationship in which openings are composed as two stacked squares in height to one square in width (Figure 58). These proportional rules establish dimensional consistency across the façade while allowing contemporary interpretation. Balustrade design similarly seeks to mediate between classical and contemporary expression, abstracting the traditional balustrade into a flattened, two-dimensional profile and infilling the resulting voids with glass panels. This approach retains the rhythmic and proportional qualities of the classical precedent while employing contemporary materiality and construction techniques (Figure 59).

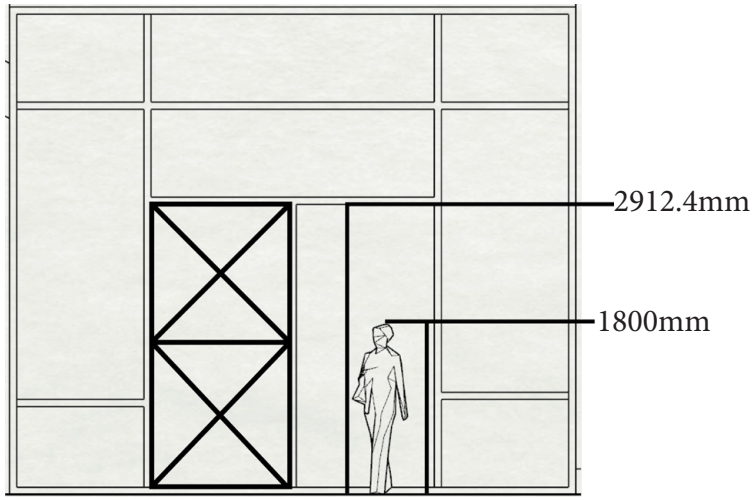


Figure 58: Illustration by author, Showing the application of the golden ratio to achieve door heights, and the application of the 'Two Square' system to achieve door widths.

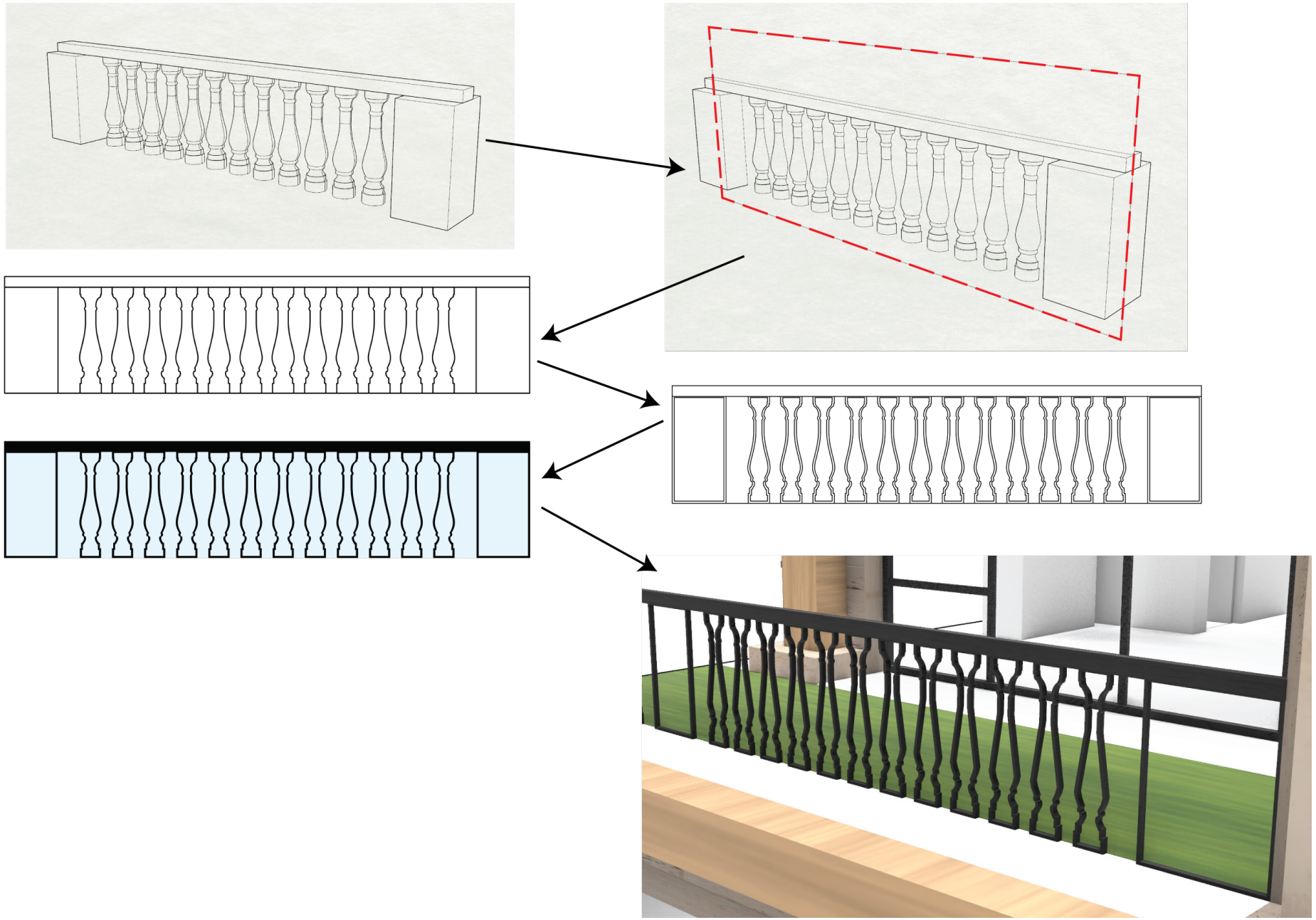


Figure 59: Diagram by author, Showing the adaptation of classical balustrades into a contemporary application.

6.8 Developed Design

The resolution of the façade establishes a stable formal and compositional framework through which the principles of symmetry, proportion, biophilia, and heritage integration are coherently addressed. However, with these external ordering strategies being clarified, the limitations of a façade-only approach also became apparent. While the façade articulates the principles in the design framework, its architectural intentions cannot be fully assessed without consideration for the interior spaces they imply. As a result, the design development extends the design inquiry inward, using the established façade logic as a generative framework for the development of the interior spatial organisation and experiential sequence.

Due to the complex nature of the site, which consists the heritage-listed St James and proposed apartment building, interior development begins with the identification of the fixed constraints to define the limits of potential programmatic intervention (Figure 60). Specifically, the St James heritage fabric (Purple dotted line), the apartment tower core (Red), and the associated structural columns (Red) are treated as non-negotiable elements. Together, they define the limits of intervention and provide the spatial armature within which programme is organised across multiple levels.

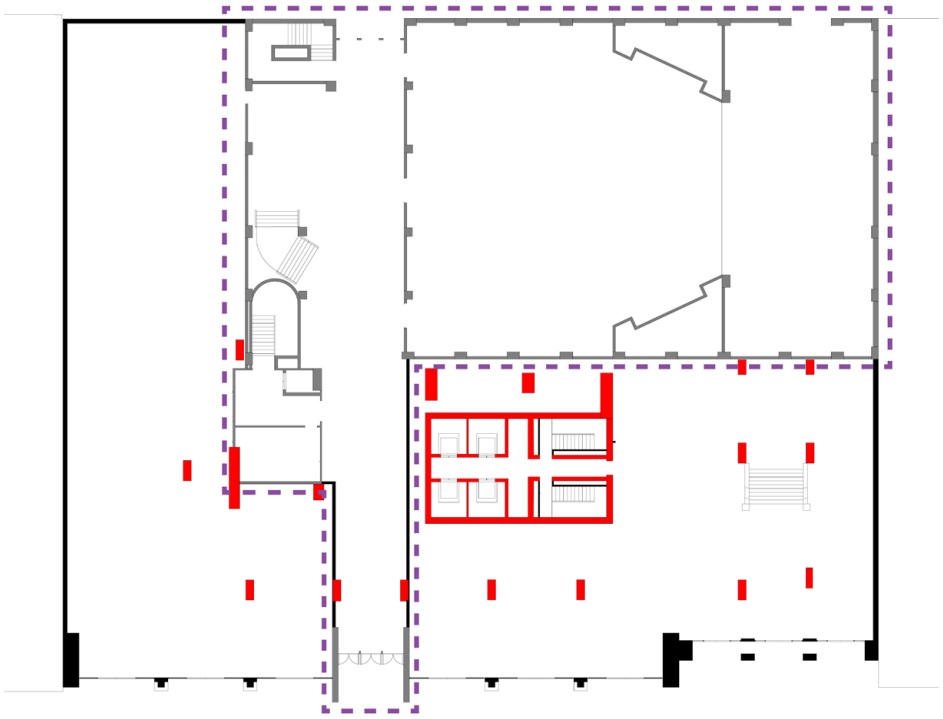


Figure 60: Illustration by author, Floor plan highlighting the constraints within the site.

6.8.1 Ground Floor

At ground level (Figure 61), the plan prioritises permeability and public access along the Queen Street frontage. Retail spaces are positioned directly against the façade to activate the street, while the secondary façade accommodates the shared entry for the public room and the apartment building, incorporating reception and mail facilities for residents. In this configuration, the ground level functions primarily as an entry foyer to the vertically connected public room, enabling overlap between residential users and commercial users. Back-of-house functions are consolidated at this level to enable efficient servicing via a loading dock, supporting theatre operations without disrupting public circulation.



Figure 61: Illustration by author, 1:200 @ A3, Ground floor plan.

6.8.2 Level One

The first level (Figure 62) accommodates programmes that benefit from proximity to both the street and the theatre while maintaining direct spatial connection to the public room. A restaurant occupies the Queen Street façade, reinforcing engagement with the public realm and programmatically supporting the theatre by enabling pre- and post-performance dining. This relationship reflects established precedents in Auckland, including the Civic Theatre and the Aotea Centre. The public room expands vertically at this level, operating as a shared social space that connects dining, performance, and circulation. A secondary auditorium is also located on this level, providing a flexible venue for conference-style events and smaller performances.

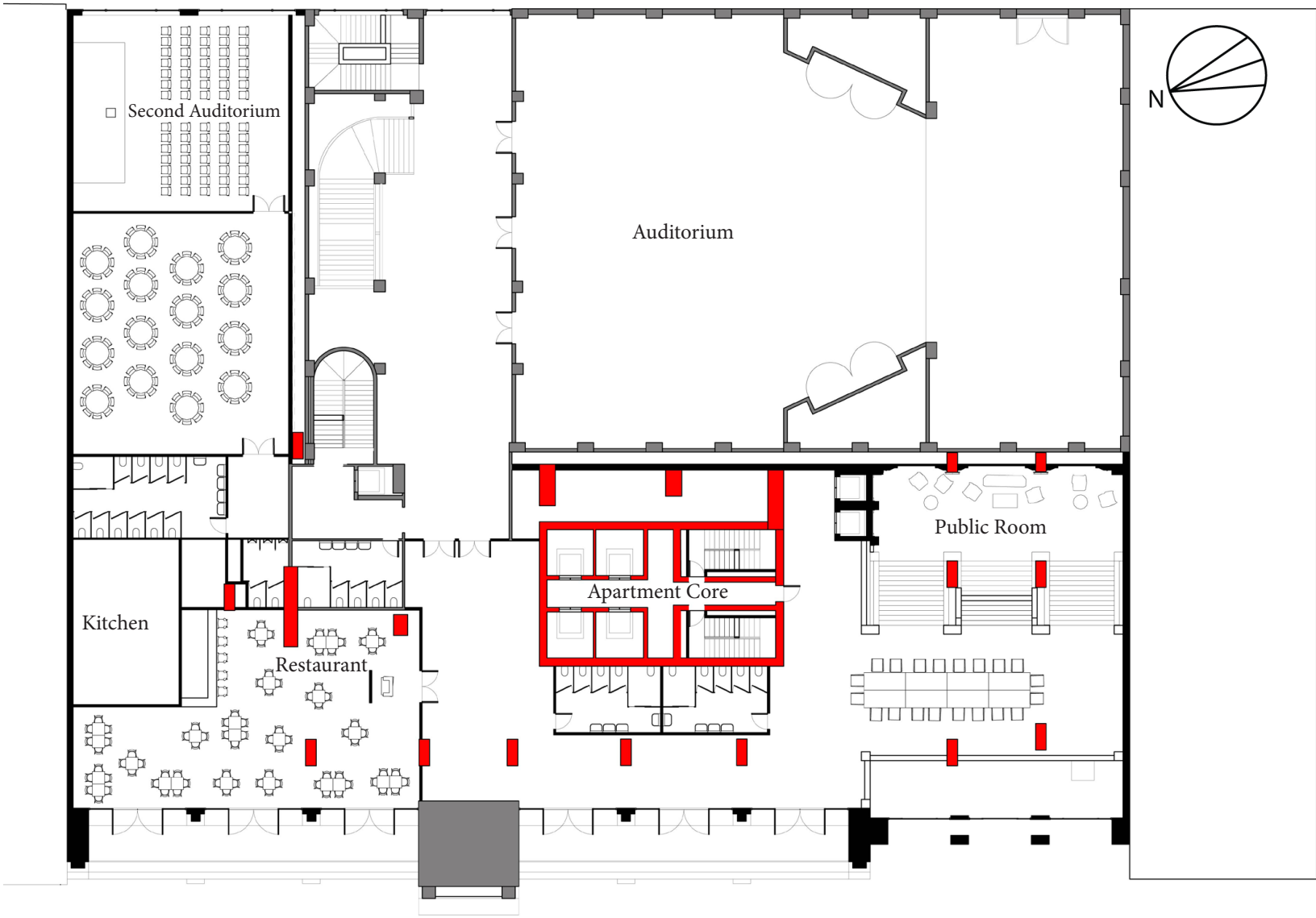


Figure 62: Illustration by author, 1:200 @ A3, Level 1 plan.

6.8.3 Level Two

The second level (Figure 63) continues the vertical extension of the public room, reinforcing sectional continuity across the building. Spaces along the façade are designated as leasable areas, maintaining visual and spatial connection to the public room below, while essential support functions such as theatre bathrooms are incorporated where required. While these areas are not developed in detail, this is a deliberate limitation of scope rather than an unresolved design condition. As the thesis is focused on testing the design framework through public, heritage-adjacent, and socially oriented spaces, the detailed resolution of the building's programme is intentionally deferred.

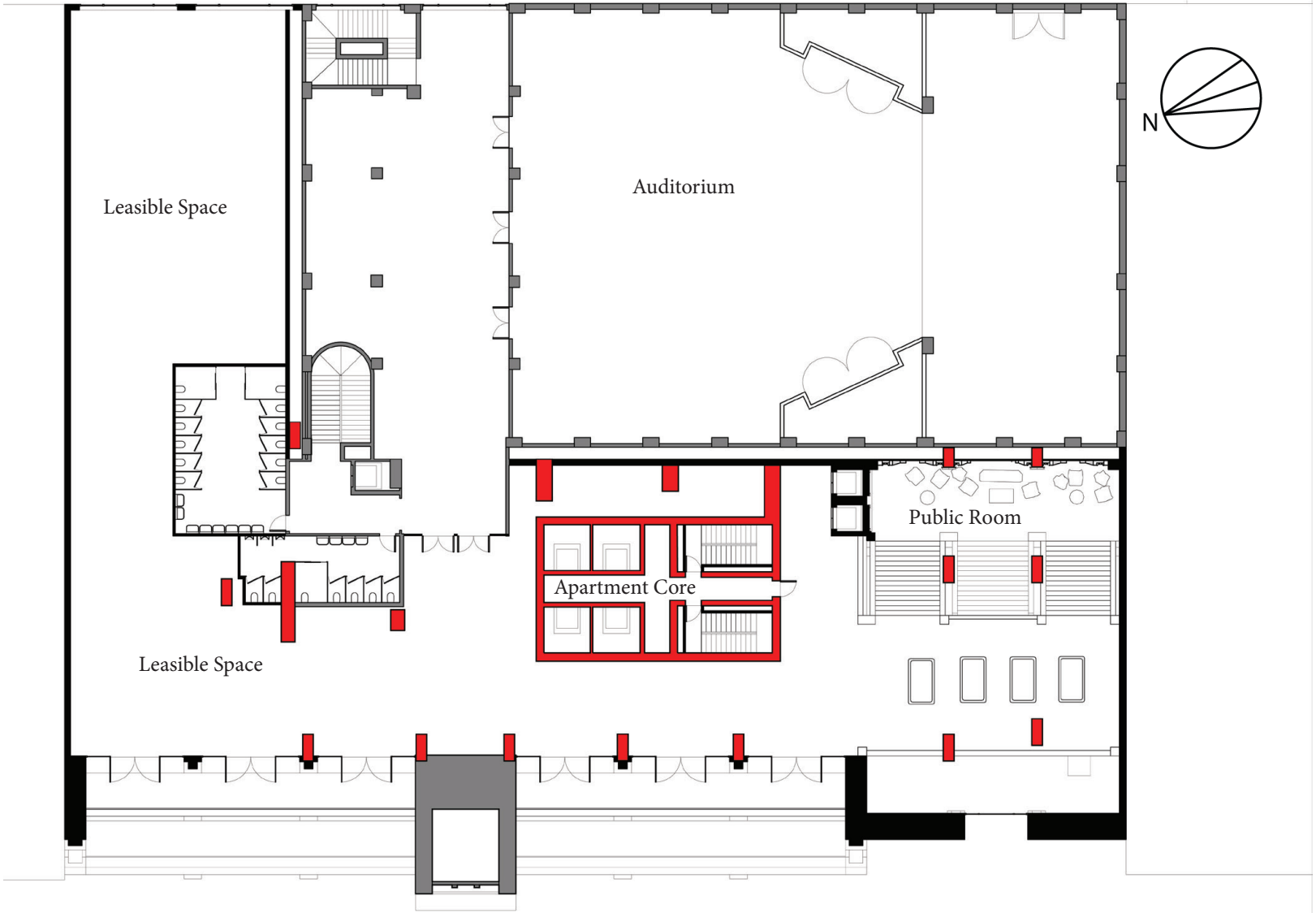


Figure 63: Illustration by author, 1:200 @ A3, Level 2 plan.

Design Phase 3: Design Framework in Action

7.0



Figure 64: Illustration by author, 1:200 @ A3, Ground floor plan highlighting areas of increased sociability.

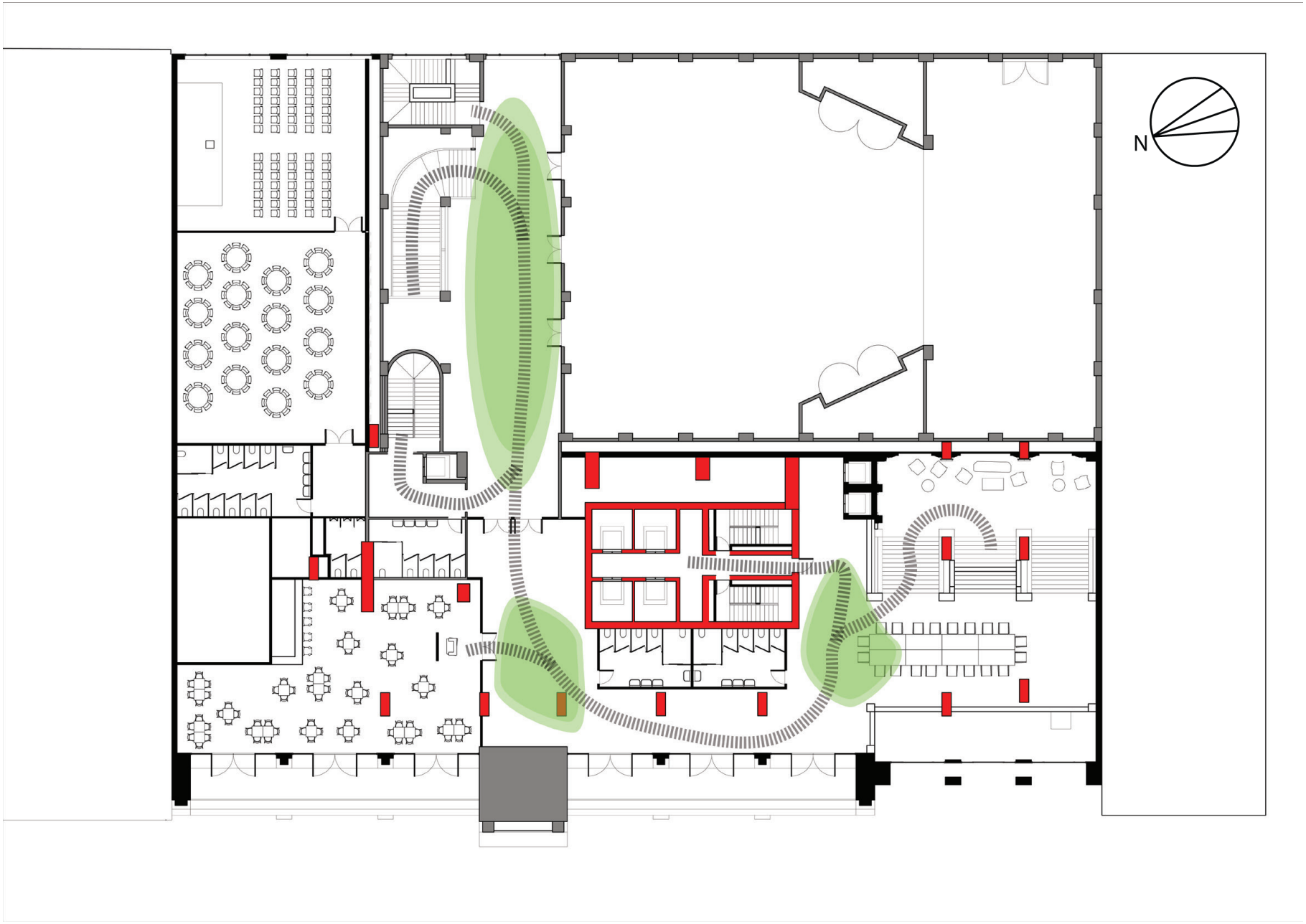


Figure 65: Illustration by author, 1:200 @ A3, Level 1 plan highlighting areas of increased sociability

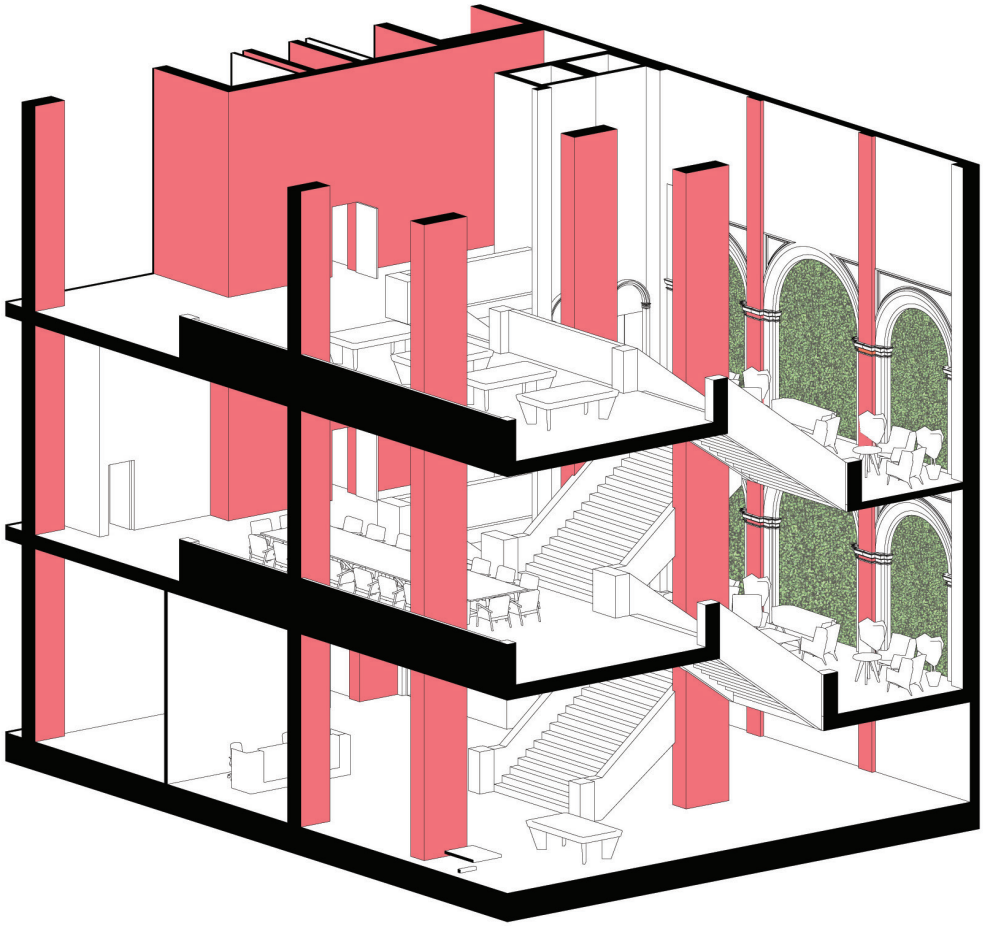


Figure 66: Illustration by author, 1:200 @ A3, Orthographic section of the public room, showing vertical connection and biophilic properties,

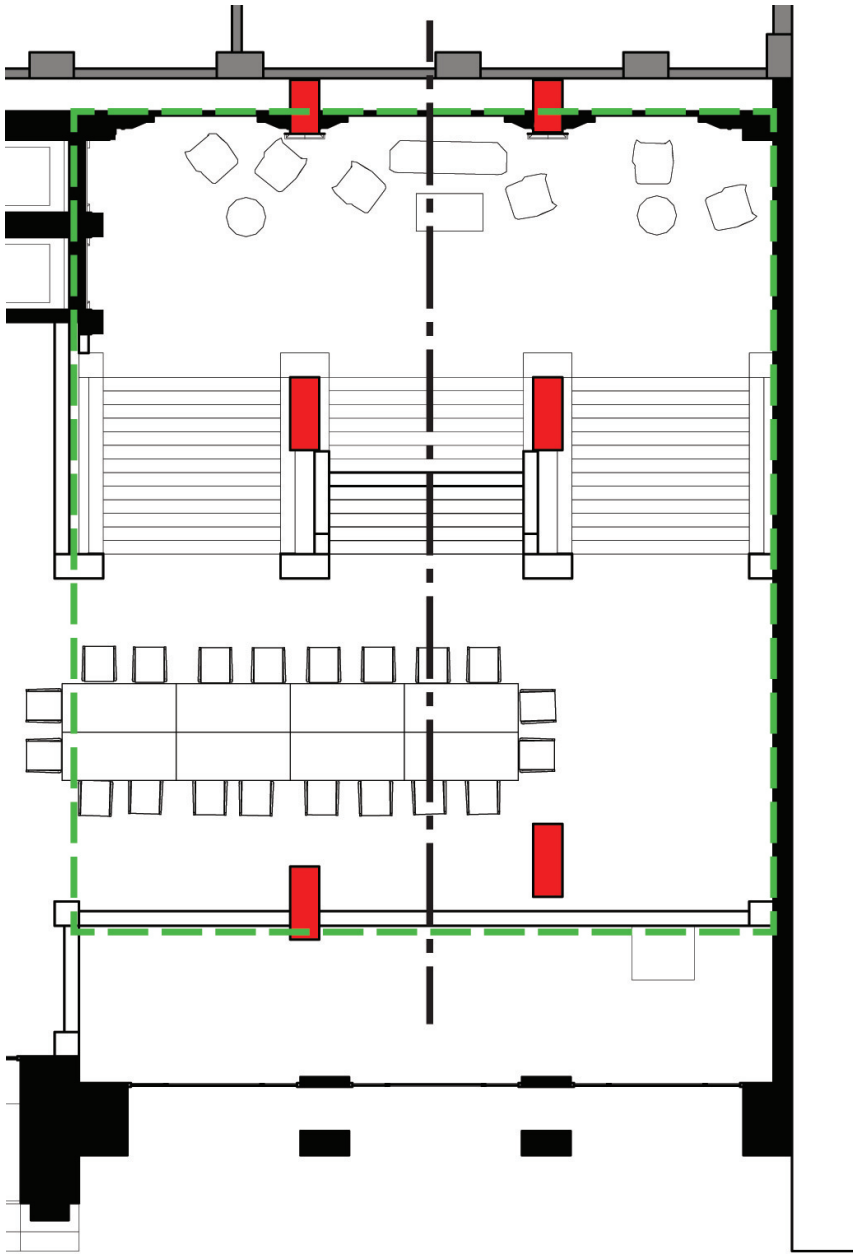


Figure 67: Illustration by author, 1:200 @ A3, Plan view of the public room, showing the symmetrical organisation.

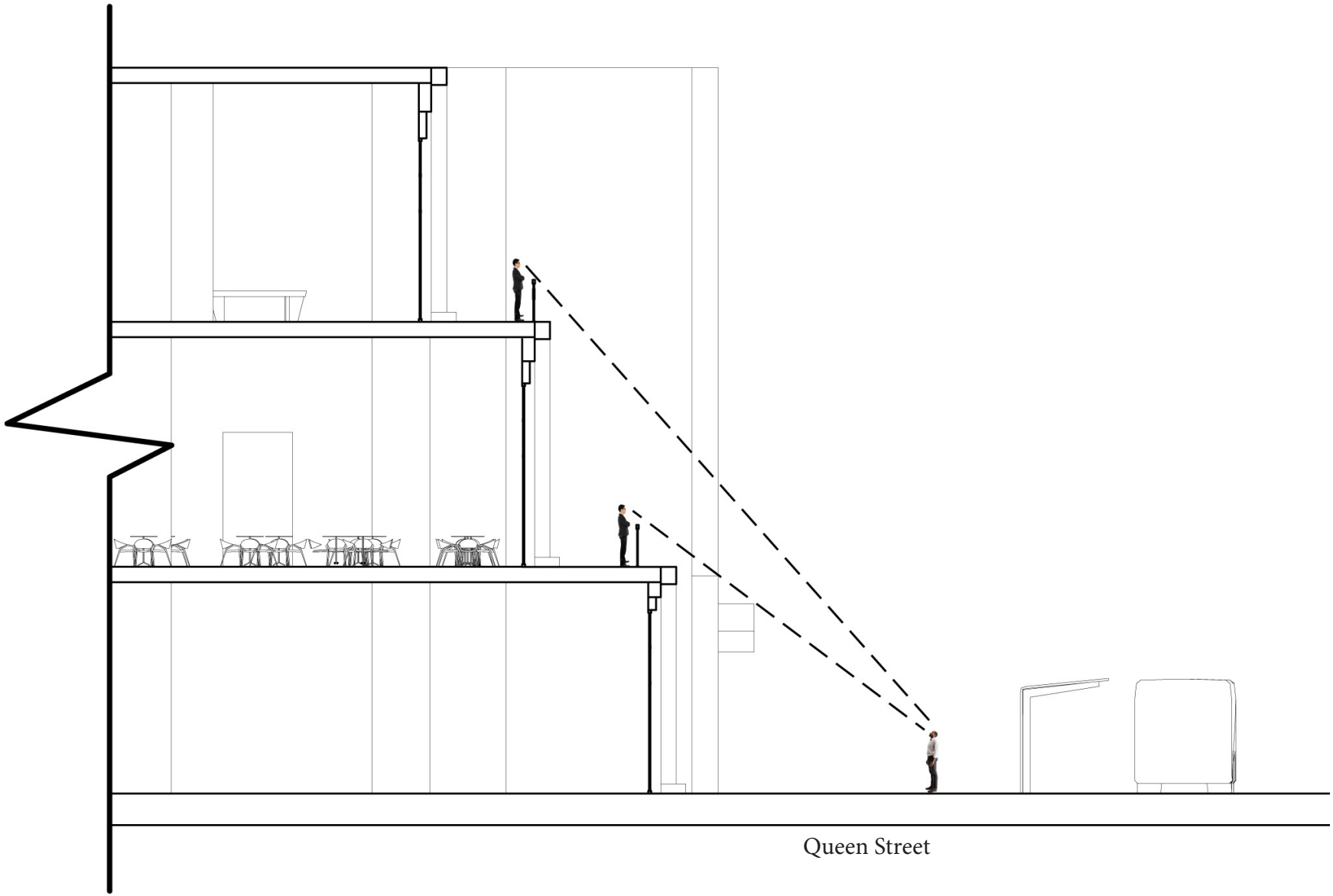


Figure 68: Illustration by author, 1:200 @ A3, Section of the Queen street facade, showing social connection between street level and balconies.

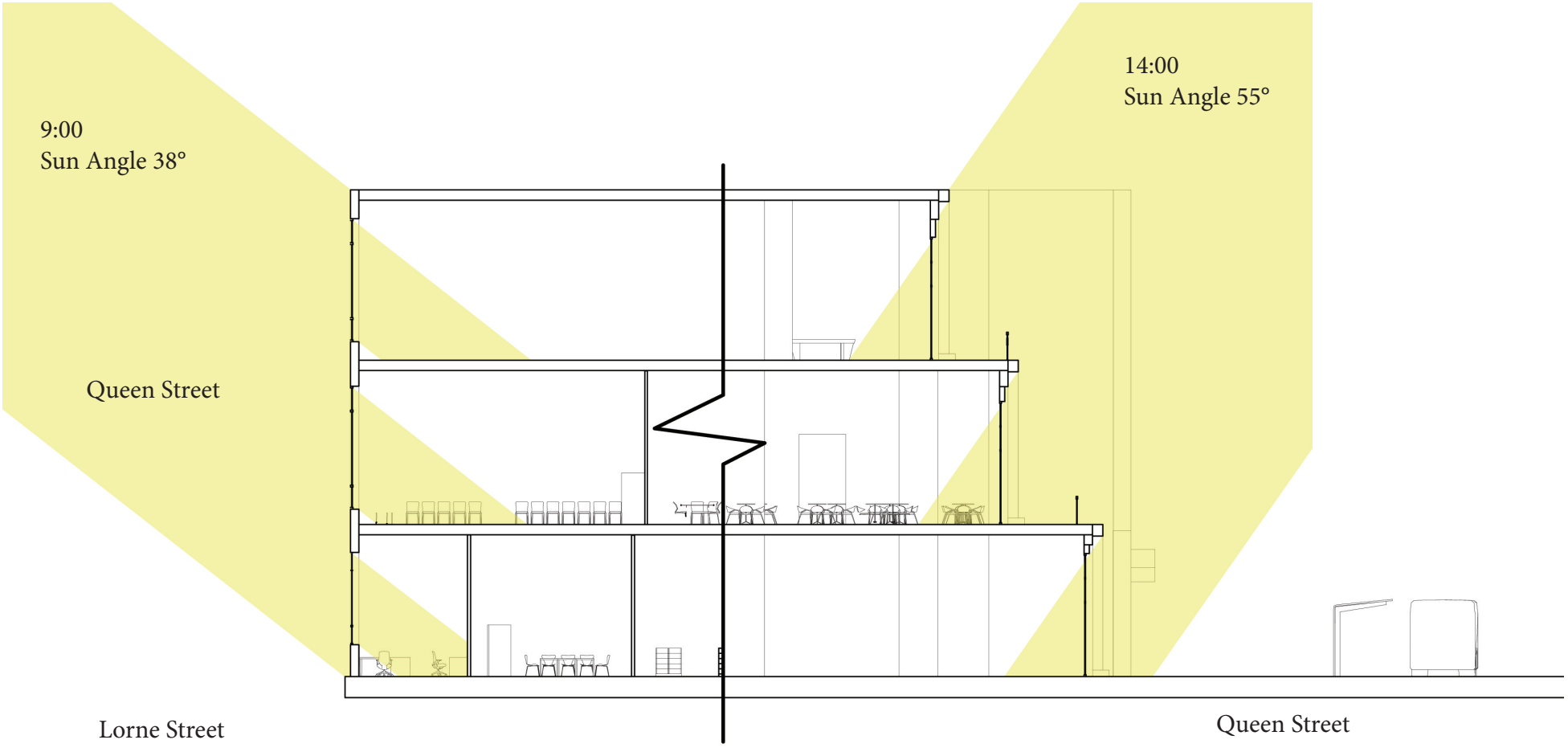


Figure 69: Illustration by author, 1:200 @ A3, Section of Queen street and Lorne street showing sunlight penetration at different times.

7.1 Material Analysis

Omaru Limestone Block Veneer

Selected to reference the civic gravitas of the Auckland Town Hall while aligning with contemporary carbon constraints. Using a veneer rather than full-depth stone preserves the material's symbolic and tactile value but substantially reduces embodied carbon and structural demand.

Ōamaru Lime Stone

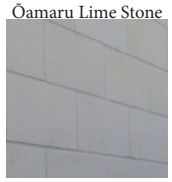


Figure 70: From Landscaping [Web page image], Ōamaru Stone (n.d.). Retrieved February 24, 2026, from https://oamarustone.co.nz/product-range/landscaping/

Clay Plaster Finish



Figure 71: From Smooth [Web page image], Clayworks (n.d.). Retrieved February 24, 2026, from https://clay-works.com/collections/interior-clay-plaster/smooth/

CLT



Figure 72: From Cross Laminated Timber (CLT) Design + Construction [Web page image], Think Wood (n.d.). Retrieved February 24, 2026, from https://www.thinkwood.com/mass-timber/cross-laminated-timber-clt

Rammed Earth Floor

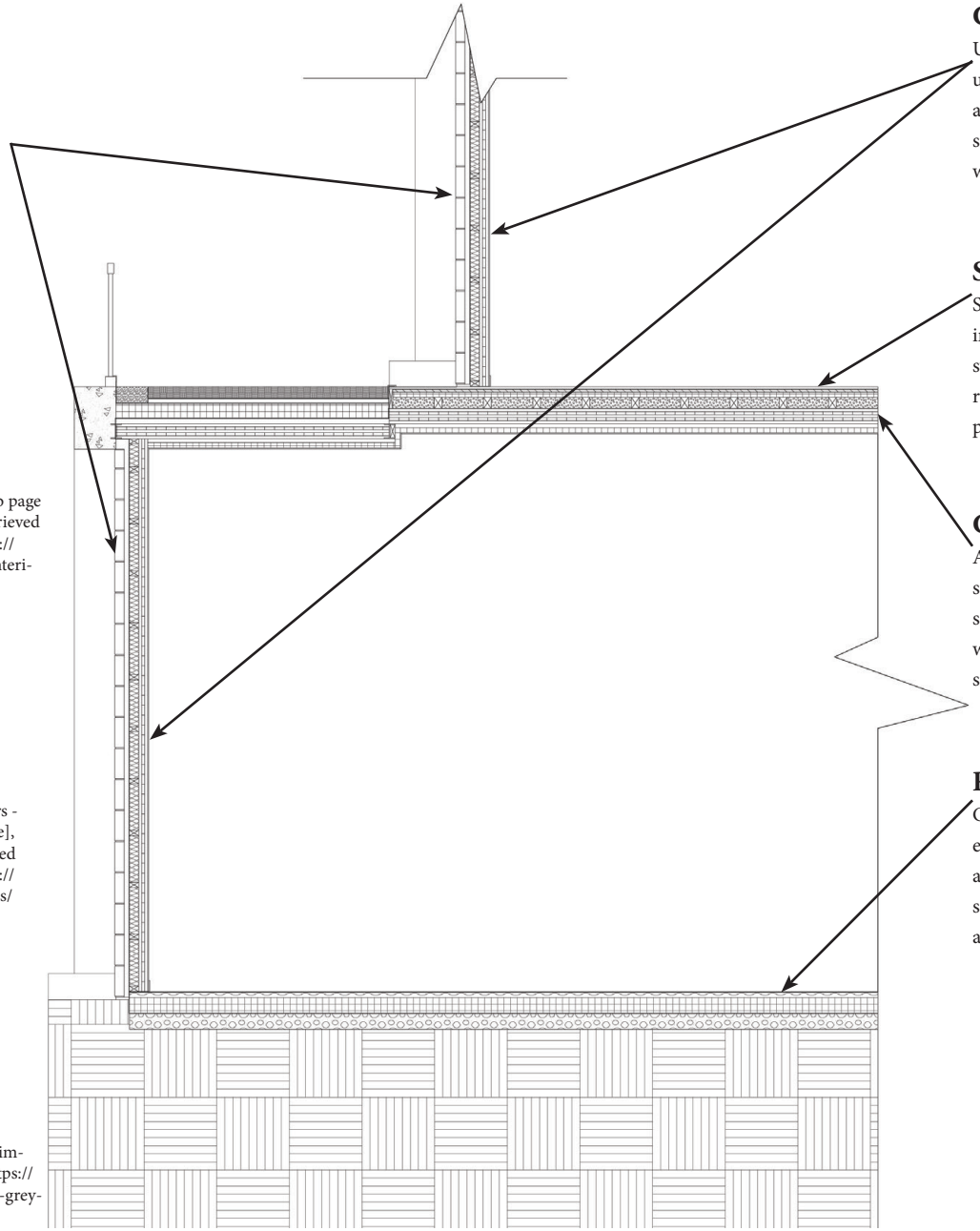


Figure 73: From Earthen floors - introduction [Web page image], Lowimpact.org (n.d.). Retrieved February 24, 2026, from https://www.lowimpact.org/categories/shelter/earthen-floors/

Marble Stone Tile



Figure 74: From Armani Dove Grey Matt 600x600 [Product page image], Tile Warehouse (n.d.). Retrieved February 24, 2026, from https://www.tilewarehouse.co.nz/shop/floor-and-wall/floor/armani-dove-grey-matt-600x600



Clay Plaster Finish

Used to reinforce biophilic character through natural texture and visual softness, while maintaining a comparatively low-carbon finish. It offers a restrained, humane interior atmosphere compatible with classical order.

Stone Tile Floors

Specified for durability and long-term wear in public circulation zones. Stone also carries symbolic weight and supports heritage continuity, referencing the marble and high-quality finishes present in the existing theatre fabric.

CLT Structural Framing

Adopted as a contemporary, buildable low-carbon structural system. CLT reduces embodied emissions relative to conventional concrete and steel while enabling efficient prefabrication and clear structural legibility.

Rammed Earth Floor

Chosen for its direct, grounding connection to earth and its low embodied carbon. It also signals a contemporary construction approach while supporting biophilic intent through mass, texture, and thermal stability.

Figure 75: Illustration by author, 1:200 @ A3, Construction detail of Queen street facade.

7.2 Final Reflection

This phase marks the conclusion of the design work undertaken for this thesis. Shifting the focus toward a real-world project allowed the design framework to be tested against realistic constraints, demonstrating its capacity to operate as both an evaluative and generative tool within a complex heritage context. Working within the physical, regulatory, and contextual limitations of the St James Theatre site revealed how architectural decision-making is often shaped as much by constraint as by intention.

The conditions of the site also highlighted that, within certain projects, some principles are inherently more difficult to engage with than others. In this case, opportunities for natural lighting were significantly restricted by surrounding development, including neighbouring structures and the apartment tower, limiting the effectiveness of conventional daylighting strategies. This condition underscored the importance of flexibility within the framework, acknowledging that not all principles can be equally prioritised in every architectural context and that design judgement is required to negotiate competing demands.

Collectively, this design phase confirms the framework's effectiveness in mediating between heritage constraints, contemporary programme, and architectural ambition. While the framework proved particularly robust as a tool for guiding façade design and urban engagement, this phase also exposed its current limitations. Further development would be required to more explicitly incorporate principles related to interior spatial design, allowing the framework to more fully address experiential qualities beyond the building envelope and strengthen its applicability across the full architectural section.

For the purposes of this thesis, the visual material is presented at a level sufficient to communicate the design intent, spatial strategy, and evaluative outcomes of the framework. More detailed renders of the final proposal, along with broader graphic refinement of selected drawings and illustrations, will be developed as part of the final exhibition presentation.

Conclusion

8.0

8.1 Critical Reflection

This thesis investigated how classical architectural principles can be reinterpreted and operationalised through a human-centred design framework to enhance sensory and emotional experience in contemporary architecture. Rather than treating classicism as a style to revive or reject, the research approached it as an organisational grammar of legibility, hierarchy, proportion, and experiential clarity (Gabriel, 2004), tested through a design-led process within real constraints and cultural contingency (Jordan, 1969).

The literature positioned classical architecture as an ethic of coherence grounded in the interdependence of firmitas, utilitas, and venustas (Vitruvius, 1960; Bianco, 2023), while critiques of professional autonomy and image-making exposed ethical and experiential shortcomings when architecture is detached from public consequence (Martin, 2003). Read together, the sources revealed a methodological gap: classical order and human-centred values are often discussed separately, with limited design-led research showing how classical principles can be translated into accountable, experiential strategies (Gabriel, 2004; Ruskin, 1960; Gromort, 2001).

In response, the thesis developed a deliberately reductive framework of "soft rules" to structure judgement rather than prescribe style (Gabriel, 2004; Gromort, 2001). Early testing on the Albany site showed the framework could generate ordered massing, but also demonstrated that formal order without contextual grounding produces legible yet thin architecture, prompting a methodological refinement rather than a change in direction.

Applying the framework to the St James Theatre proved more productive. Heritage constraints, limited daylight, and urban complexity forced the framework to operate as a negotiative tool. Classical principles were most effective at the façade and urban interface, strengthening hierarchy, public legibility, and civic presence when abstracted rather than replicated. Attempts at literal continuity, particularly tower duplication, exposed tensions between authenticity and imitation, reinforcing the need to align with heritage at the level of proportion, hierarchy, and spatial logic rather than visual mimicry (Ruskin, 1960).

From a human-centred perspective, the project also clarified uneven performance across scales. The framework supported public-facing clarity and sociability more readily than interior biophilic and multisensory ambitions, given constraints and scope. This limitation does not invalidate the framework, but confirms that design judgement involves trade-offs and contextual prioritisation.

Overall, the framework functioned as both generative and evaluative: it structured concepts, guided refinement, and made decision-making explicit and critiqueable. The thesis concludes that classical principles can be reinterpreted through a human-centred lens to produce resonant architecture without stylistic historicism, but only when grounded in context, ethical restraint, and contemporary wellbeing and environmental demands. The framework is offered as a provisional contribution,

with future work needed to deepen interior sensory performance, environmental metrics, and long-term adaptability.

8.2 Limitations

Research limitations include:

- **Single case-study application:**
The design framework was tested through a single primary case study, the St James Theatre. While this allowed for deep, context-specific exploration within a heritage and adaptive reuse setting, the findings cannot be assumed to be universally transferable across different building typologies or cultural contexts without further testing.

- **Design-led and interpretivist methodology:**
The research adopts an interpretivist, design-based research approach, prioritising qualitative judgement, reflection, and spatial reasoning. As a result, experiential outcomes such as sensory clarity and emotional resonance are assessed through architectural interpretation rather than empirical user testing or post-occupancy evaluation.

- **Absence of quantitative performance metrics:**
Environmental performance factors including acoustics, thermal comfort, daylight levels, and embodied carbon were considered conceptually but not quantified through simulation or measurement. This limits the ability to directly correlate classical ordering strategies with measurable performance outcomes.

- **Restricted exploration of biophilic strategies:**
While biophilic principles were acknowledged and partially engaged, opportunities for integrating greenery, natural systems, and environmental variation were limited by site constraints and project scope. As a result, biophilia was not explored to the same depth as spatial order and legibility.

- **Context-specific regulatory constraints:**
The heritage status and regulatory conditions of the St James Theatre site significantly shaped design decisions. While this strengthened the realism of the research, it also constrained the range of architectural responses that could be explored, particularly in relation to massing, material experimentation, and structural intervention.

- **Framework reduction and selectivity:**
The design framework deliberately reduced both classical and human-centred principles to a limited set of operative ideas. While this supported clarity and applicability within the design process, it necessarily excluded other potentially relevant principles and interpretations.

- **Time-bound design development:**
The research was conducted within a finite timeframe, which limited the number of design iterations and the depth of refinement possible, particularly at the detailed material and construction scale.

8.3 Insights

This thesis demonstrates that the intersection of classical architectural principles and human-centred design offers a productive framework for addressing contemporary concerns around sensory experience, legibility, and ethical responsibility in architecture. Through the synthesis of literature review and design-led investigation, several key insights emerge that extend beyond the specific case study and contribute to broader architectural understanding.

- **Order supports cognition and emotional comfort:**
Classical ordering systems such as symmetry, hierarchy, axiality, and proportion function as cognitive tools that assist users in reading and navigating space. When applied with restraint, these principles reduce perceptual ambiguity, support intuitive wayfinding, and contribute to a sense of calm and reassurance, particularly within complex urban and programmatic environments.

- **Sensory experience emerges from spatial systems, not isolated gestures:**
Sensory and emotional qualities in architecture are most effectively produced through coherent spatial organisation rather than standalone sensory features. Light, materiality, and environmental variation gain meaning and impact when structured by clear spatial hierarchies and proportional relationships, allowing sensory engagement to be experienced as continuous and integrated rather than episodic.

- **Classical principles operate most effectively as an open grammar:**
Treating classical architecture as a generative grammar rather than a stylistic template enables contemporary interpretation without historic imitation. Abstraction of proportion, rhythm, and hierarchy allows new interventions to engage meaningfully with historical contexts while maintaining material honesty and temporal distinction.

- **Frameworks guide judgement rather than prescribe form:**
A reduced design framework composed of soft rules supports iterative testing and reflective decision-making. Rather than producing fixed outcomes, such frameworks clarify priorities, expose tensions, and make architectural trade-offs explicit, particularly in contexts where competing demands such as heritage, daylight access, and public engagement must be negotiated.

- **Heritage constraints sharpen architectural clarity:**
Working within heritage-listed contexts reveals constraint as a productive design condition. Regulatory and historical limitations necessitate greater precision in proportion, material logic, and spatial hierarchy, discouraging excess and reinforcing architectural restraint. Meaningful continuity is achieved through alignment of underlying principles rather than visual replication.

- **Experiential priorities vary across architectural scales:**
The research demonstrates that certain principles are more readily engaged at specific scales. Thus, urban and façade-scale interventions offer greater opportunities for legibility, hierarchy, and civic engagement, while interior experiential qualities require deeper integration with programme and environmental systems. This reinforces the need for selective prioritisation rather than universal application of principles.

- **Adaptive reuse benefits from classical legibility:**
In adaptive reuse projects, classical ordering systems provide a stabilising framework that mediates between old and new. Clear hierarchies and proportional logic assist in integrating contemporary programmes within existing fabric, supporting continuity of use while maintaining architectural clarity.

Collectively, these insights support the thesis' argument that a classically inspired, human-centred framework offers a viable way forward for contemporary architecture. By reinterpreting classical principles as tools for experiential clarity and ethical responsibility, architects can design buildings that are not only efficient or novel, but meaningful, legible, and humane. The value of this research lies not in proposing a definitive solution, but in demonstrating how architectural thinking grounded in order, care, and reflection can respond productively to the complexities of contemporary practice.

8.4 Wider Implications

The wider implication of this research lies in its repositioning of classical architecture within contemporary practice. By reframing classical principles as an open, human-centred grammar rather than a stylistic inheritance, the thesis challenges the prevailing binary that situates classicism as inherently nostalgic and contemporary architecture as necessarily abstract or autonomous. The research demonstrates that order, hierarchy, and proportion can function as ethical and experiential tools, capable of supporting legibility, sensory clarity, and civic presence within complex and constrained contexts. This suggests a pathway for architectural practice that reconciles historical continuity with contemporary responsibility, particularly in adaptive reuse and heritage-adjacent projects.

More broadly, the thesis contributes to the ongoing discourse around architectural accountability and design judgement. In an era defined by ecological constraint, social plurality, and regulatory complexity (Bjørkskov, n.d.), the research affirms the value of frameworks that support reflective decision-making rather than prescriptive solutions. By foregrounding human experience and spatial legibility as central design concerns, this work encourages architects to move beyond both stylistic revivalism and technocratic optimisation toward a more integrative practice. The implications extend to architectural education and professional culture, where the careful reinterpretation of established principles may offer a means of cultivating ethical awareness, critical reflection, and durable architectural knowledge in the face of increasing uncertainty.

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9.0

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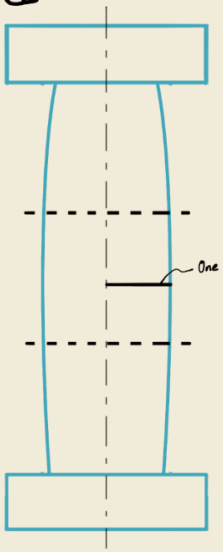
Appendix A: Classical Architecture Analytical Notes

This appendix contains selected notes and sketch drawings developed during the literature review process. These materials document the proportional and mathematical logic used to design classical elements, and support understanding of the application of classical principles in classical architecture.

10.0

The Language of Classical Architecture

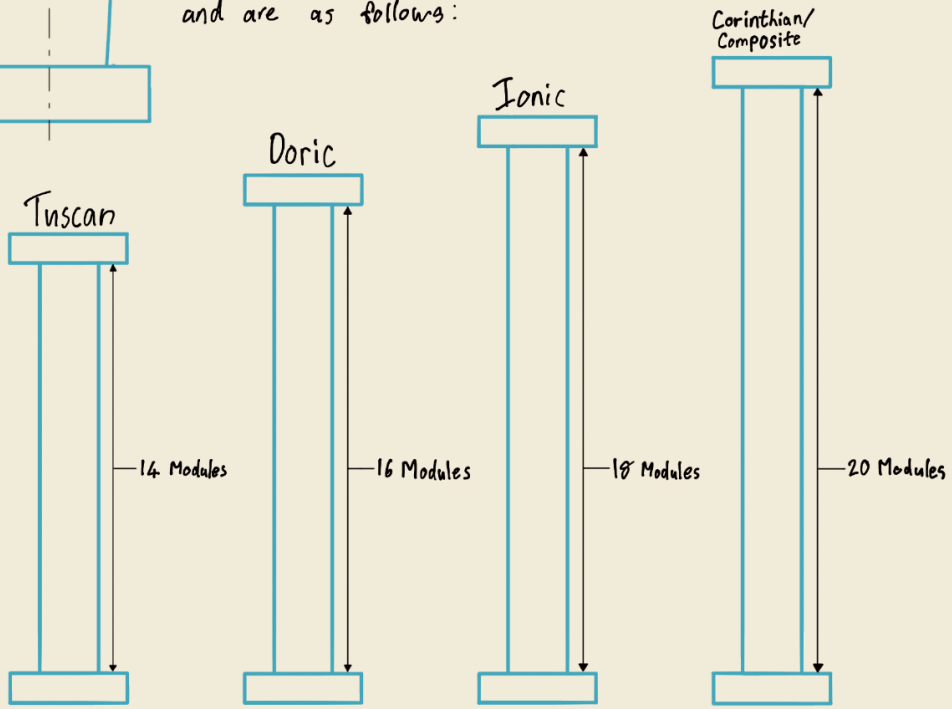
1. The Module



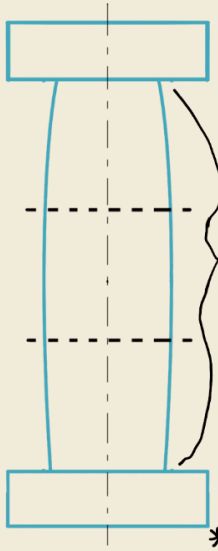
The module is a self referential unit of measurement devised for Classical columns and is always equal to the radius of where the column is widest

1 Module = Radius at widest

The heights of the columns differ between Orders and are as follows:



2. Entasis



The entasis is the subtle curve of the column.

Typically only the lower third of the column is a true cylinder

However, in Ionic, Composite, and Corinthian they taper in the lower third but this is more subtle than at the top

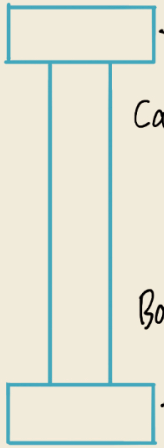
Regardless of the Order the bottom of the shaft is always wider than the top

While the entasis is important, it is equally important that it is very subtle

* It is better to have no entasis than it be noticable *

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3. Base and Capital

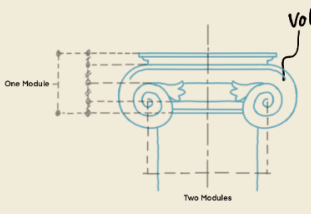


The base and capital allow for a smooth transition from the verticle shaft to the horizontal elements

Bases are wider than they are tall, and are always 1 module tall

Capitals are normally 1 module tall with the exception being in Corinthian and Composite Orders

The elongation in these Orders is often accompanied with verticle flutes on the shaft. This is typically done on Corinthian Columns but never done on Tuscan columns



Ionic Capital

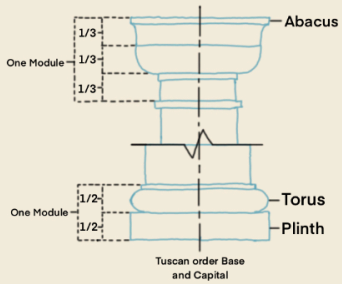
For Ionic capitals the ratio between the width of a volute and the distance between a pair is 3:5



Corinthian Capital

The main thrust of the Corinthian Capital is verticle which makes it appear taller than it is wide

The height of this capital is determined by drawing 45° lines from the top to the shaft.

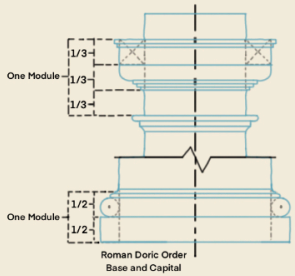


Tuscan order Base and Capital

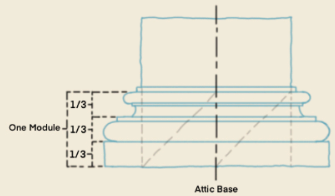
The Tuscan Order

is the Roman derivation of the original Greek Doric Order, which has no base

Plan views are normally based on a rectangular grid, to reconcile this with the circular cross-section of the shaft square elements are used at the top and bottom. The Abacus and The Plinth



Roman Doric Order Base and Capital



Attic Base

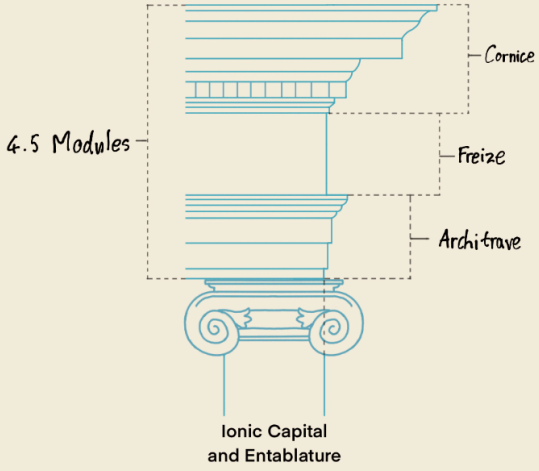
The Roman Doric and Attic bases are the two most essential designs and can be used with any Order, the latter is commonly substituted for custom base designs for Corinthian and Ionic columns

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4. Entablature

The entablature completes an Order, and it's height is always equal to a quarter of the column height

Like the column the entablature is split into 3 parts the Architrave, the freize, and the Cornice

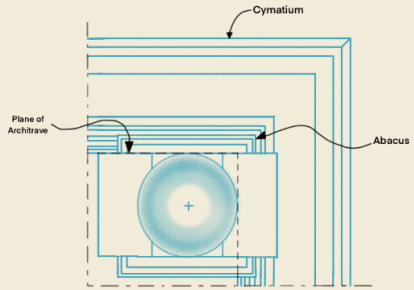


Ionic Capital and Entablature

The Cornice caps the Order and projects forward to protect it

The Freize is likely where transverse beams rested in early buildings, It can be omitted for a slimmer entablature or feature a bulge or rich ornamentation

The Architrave sits directly on the Capitals with it's structural property being expressed with horizontal striations

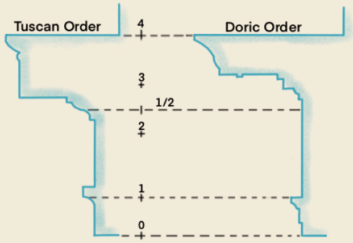


Cross-section through an Ionic Column looking up

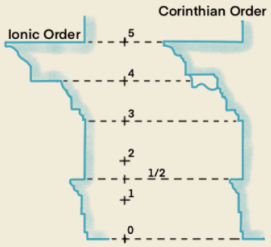
Columns are always rigorously aligned with the face of the Architrave and Freize

An entablature is always supported in the corners, It can never be cantilevered

Using the profiles we can see how the height of the Architrave increases as the height of the Cornice decreases



For the Tuscan and Doric Orders we divide the entablature into 4 sections with the Architrave taking up 1 section and the Cornice and Freize divide the rest into equal amounts



For the Ionic and Corinthian Order the Entablature is split into 5 sections, with the Cornice taking up 2 sections and the rest being divided up equally between the Architrave and the Freize

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4. Entablature

The Cornice

The Cornice is the part of the entablature that requires most attention as it sticks out from the vertical plane of the Architrave and Freize and thus is highly visible.

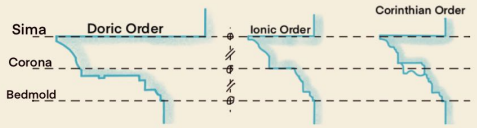
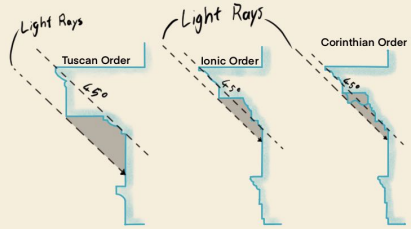


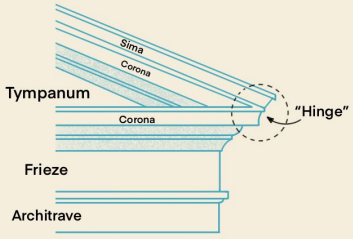
Diagram showing the 3 parts to the Cornice

The Cornice is divided into 3 parts the Corona is the bare vertical surface in the middle and is exposed to the sun, on top is the Sima and below is the bedmold, both of which are more or less in the shade.

In the Ionic the projecting edge divides the Cornice in half, the dividing line sits higher for the Corinthian and lower for the Doric, making the former more delicate and giving the latter a stronger, heavier aspect.



The projection of the Cornice is determined by a 45° angle from the top of the Freize, or 3/4 of a module.

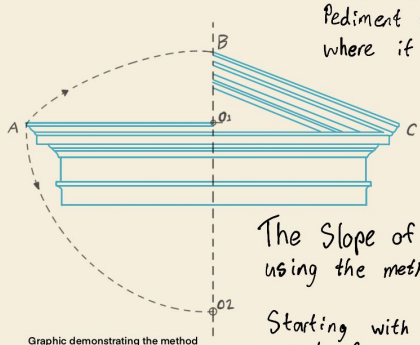


Cornice and Pediment articulated around a hinge point. The stippled area identifies the original bedmold and its clone.

The profile of the existing Cornice is not affected by the introduction of a pediment, however the Sima is now sloping to form the top member of the pediment. In the process the fillet underneath is duplicated so that it retains its horizontal position while its clone follows the Sima in its new sloping position. The meeting points of the two fillets is the hinge between the horizontal cornice and the new Cornice of the pediment.

5. The Pediment

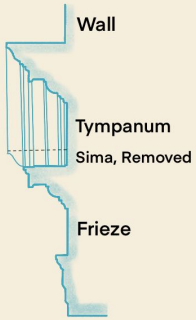
A Pediment interrupts the Entablature to emphasize a special place, usually at the centre of a facade.
The triangular shape reinforces the vertical thrust suggested by the Columns underneath.
Since this dynamic effect is powerful the Pediment should be used in moderation and where it is appropriate.



Graphic demonstrating the method for determining the slope of the pediment using the entablature.

The Slope of the Pediment can be determined using the method to the left.

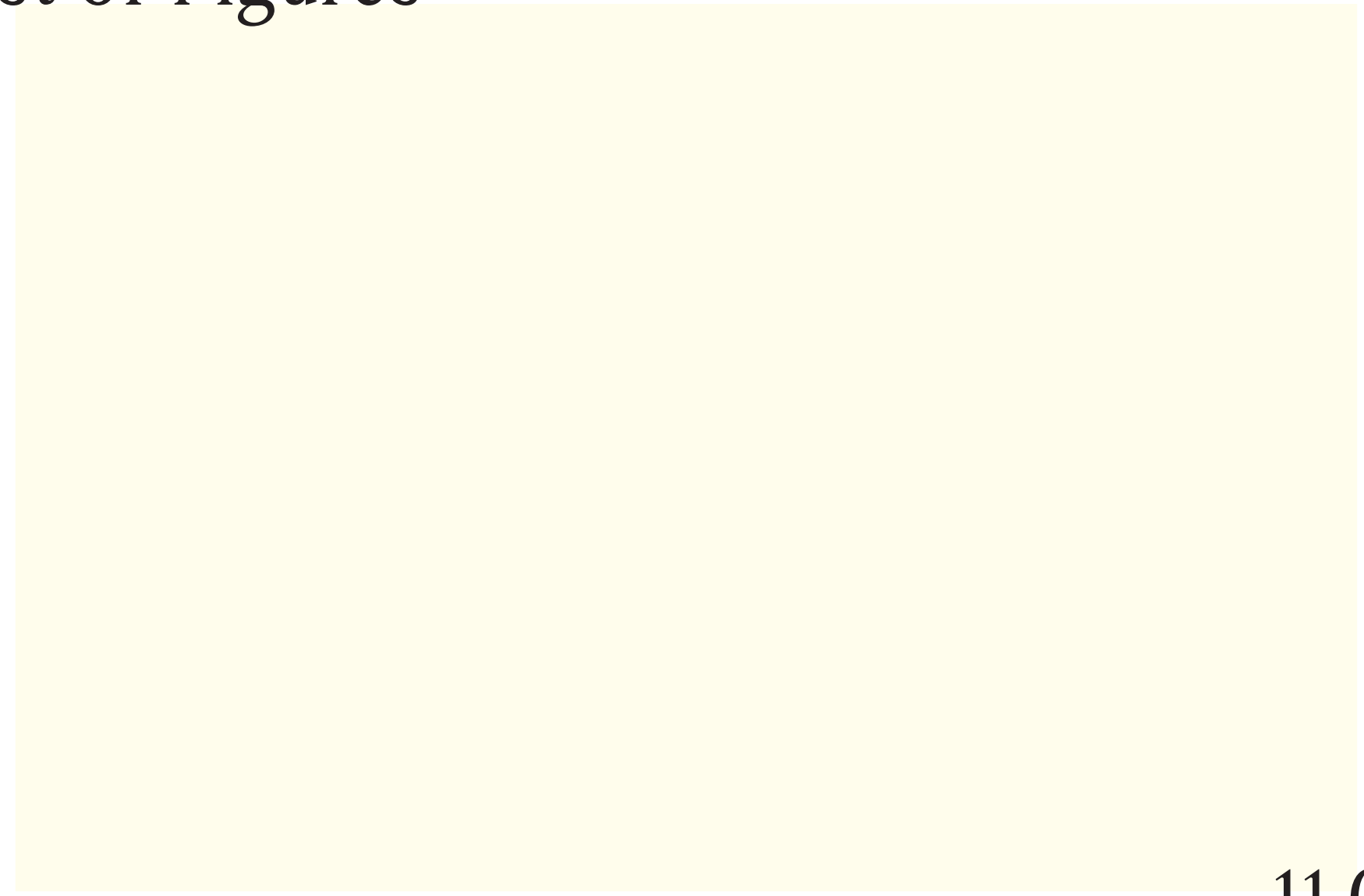
Starting with the Entablature on the left, put the point of a compass at O1 and the tip at A then rotate down to the centerline, this gives you O_2, now putting the point of the compass at O_2 and the tip at A, rotate clockwise to the Centreline to produce point B, finally draw a line connecting point B to A or C to complete the triangle.



Cross section of an entablature carrying a pediment. The Sima has been eliminated to form the cap of the pediment

Along with the Sima and the fillet, the Corona and the bedmold underneath are duplicated so that there are now two cornices. But in the end the Sima belongs with the pediment, not with the horizontal cornice.

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