

CITY HALL AXIS

The City Hall Axis is central to any vision for the Cove that expands its role and image as 'home' to an outstanding concentration of cultural activities and community events. Transformed several times through very significant changes in landform, street pattern, buildings, and uses, its history is rich and varied. Today, it again offers opportunity for substantial change. It is along this broad band of space that an exciting new layer may be added that is both embedded in its past yet thoroughly contemporary – and a pointer to the future.

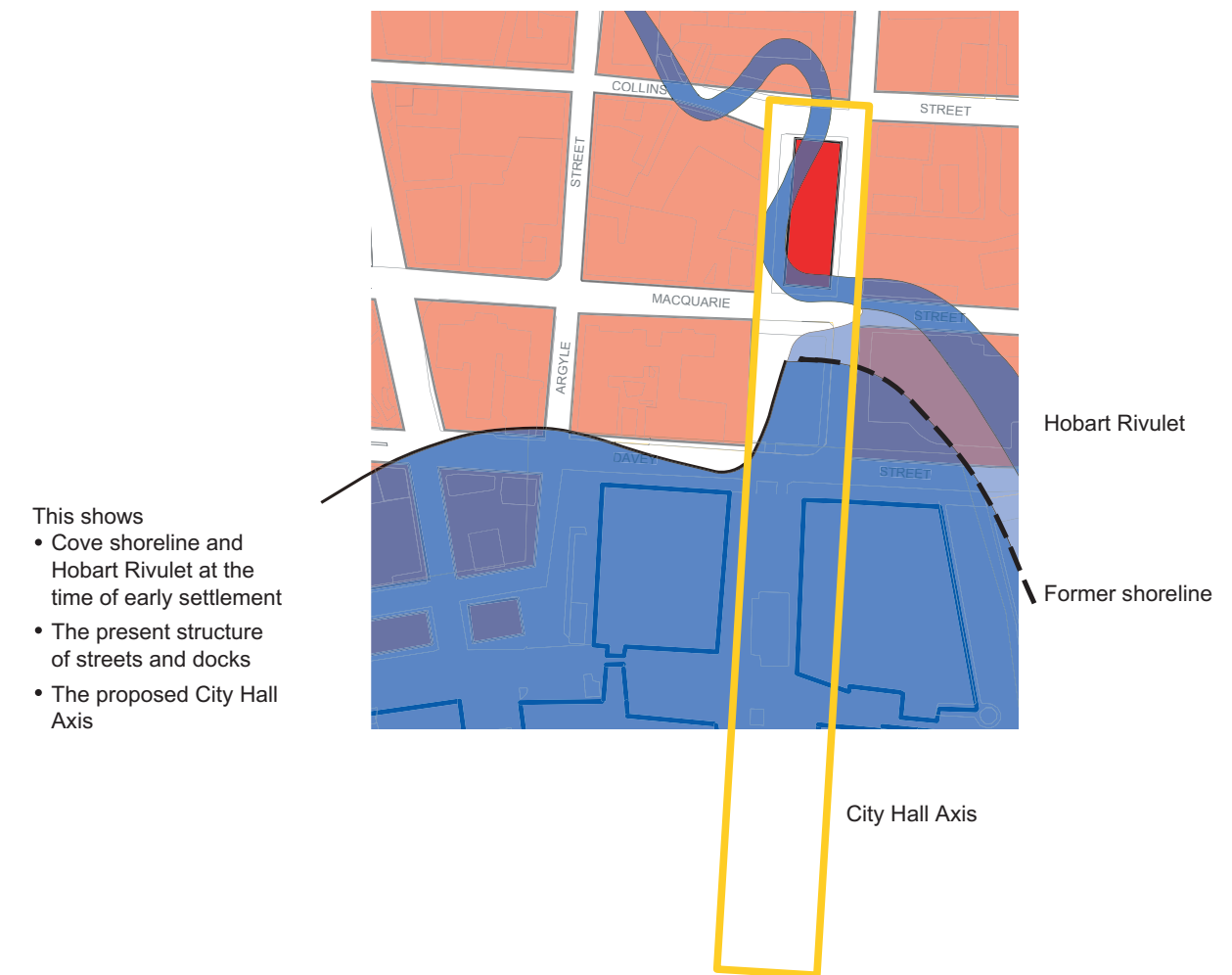
Several features distinguish the axis.

Having experienced several phases of significant change, the area of the axis is historically important. Before European settlement, it was the place where a stream flowed into the Cove and was of importance in Aboriginal life. Because Sullivans Cove and the Hobart Rivulet together offered safe anchorage and fresh water, the area was subsequently key to European settlement and Hobart's foundation as a colonial capital. Here, in early Hobart Town, the space and waters of the Cove reached back to Macquarie Street to displace a corner from the city grid, which is now occupied by Dunn Place. Dunn Place can now claim to lie ambiguously as part of the space of the Cove and as part of a block within the city's street grid.

The axis remains the low ground of the city and the line of the former Dunn Street and Market Place offers the only opportunity for an almost flat walking connection between the Cove and CBD (it is the 'natural path'). Dunn Street and Market Place also link the recently opened multi-storey Market Place Car Park to the Cove.

Further, Dunn Place sits strategically between the State's premier museum and art gallery (Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery), the largest central city hotel and convention venue (Hotel Grand Chancellor/Federation Concert Hall), City Hall, and an important waterfront nodal point (Mures café restaurant complex and dockside fish sales).

At the same time, some of the city's worst traffic conditions are experienced across the axis (in Macquarie and Davey Streets) and along its eastern edge (on Campbell Street). These streets flank three sides of Dunn Place to its detriment as a potential open space.

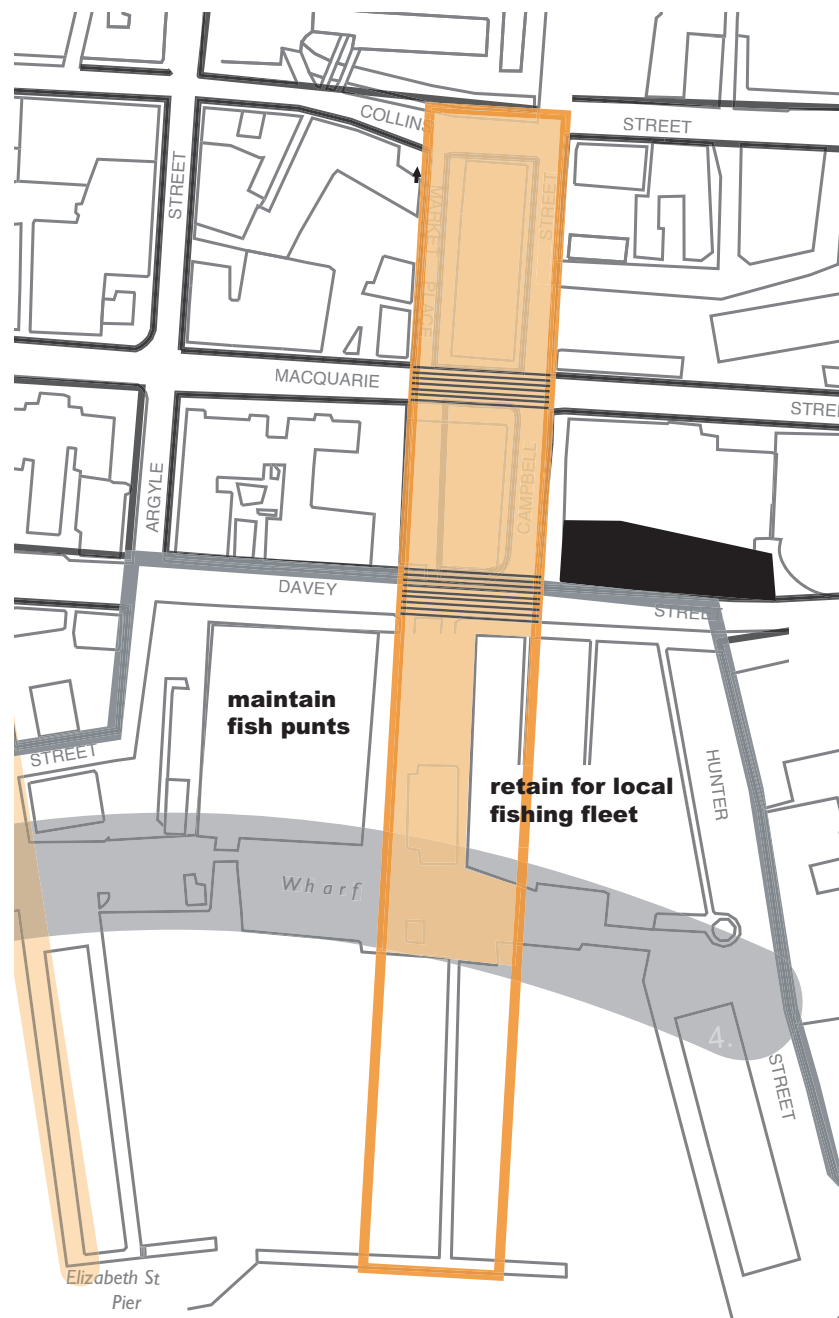


CITY HALL AXIS: PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

Adapted from: Ian Terry in association with Paul Davies, *City Hall Conservation Plan 2002*, p. 5

STRATEGIC AXES – CITY HALL

HOBART WATERFRONT URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK



City Hall is itself problematic. On the one hand it has a memorable form and is a landmark in the area. Its powerful symmetry is suited to a position at the head of the proposed axis. Yet as a hall, it only generates intermittent activity. Its long blank side walls also deter pedestrian movement along Market Place and Campbell Street, where greater pedestrian flow is desirable.

Between the docks, the Mures complex was an early initiative in the Cove's transition to more diverse activity. It occupies a very prominent position on the wharf, one that is strategic for attracting people and generating activity. This area between the docks has great potential.

Beyond this area there is opportunity for a new pier which would complete the City Hall Axis. The advantage of such an extension is that it would intensify activity towards the Hunter Street side of the Cove, and extend greatly the length of publicly accessible waterfront space, with new opportunities for experiencing the water. It would also set up a crossing point and activity node on Franklin Wharf – giving rhythm to a series of more or less equidistant nodes across the wharf. On the other hand, building on the pier may impact on views, vehicle movements and parking.

As such, the City Hall Axis is the most complex and challenging urban design opportunity in Cove. It is a project of importance to the whole city and the State. Therefore, before any development of individual sites can occur, further detailed investigation must take place. This should not result in prescriptive guidelines but could specify the essential principles and suggest possibilities. There must be scope for creative interpretation to ensure the calibre of development required for this Axis.

In summary:

- The City Hall Axis consists of two north – south streets and a string of outstanding land and water sites. There is opportunity for a string of related new spaces and buildings, over a distance of over 500 metres, if a new pier is included.
- It is a broad band of space that cuts through the line of buildings or 'wall' marking the edge of the main Sullivans Cove space. It could be said that that the Cove 'wall' is breached here by the low ground that follows the former path of the Hobart Rivulet.
- It offers an easy and direct connection between the CBD and east end of the Cove – that can inject new vibrancy into both these areas.
- It has a rich, complex and significant history, having experienced fundamental changes in land and built

form on several occasions. It contains or is flanked by heritage buildings and other items, and there are probably hidden archaeological features.

Further investigation should consider:

- The opportunity for a major cultural focus with new arts, community and commercial facilities through the development of buildings and public spaces along the axis.
- The need for City Hall to change, with new activities along its street edges, and preferably cross-links through the building, if Market Place and Campbell Street are to become truly successful as components of the axis.
- Making the crossings at Macquarie and Davey Streets broader and more pedestrian-friendly.
- A thorough understanding and (more important) convincing interpretation of the evolution of the land and built forms on and around the axis as a crucial element to any future design.