

**SRD761 Designing Urban Environments**  
Project 2 – Design Exercise

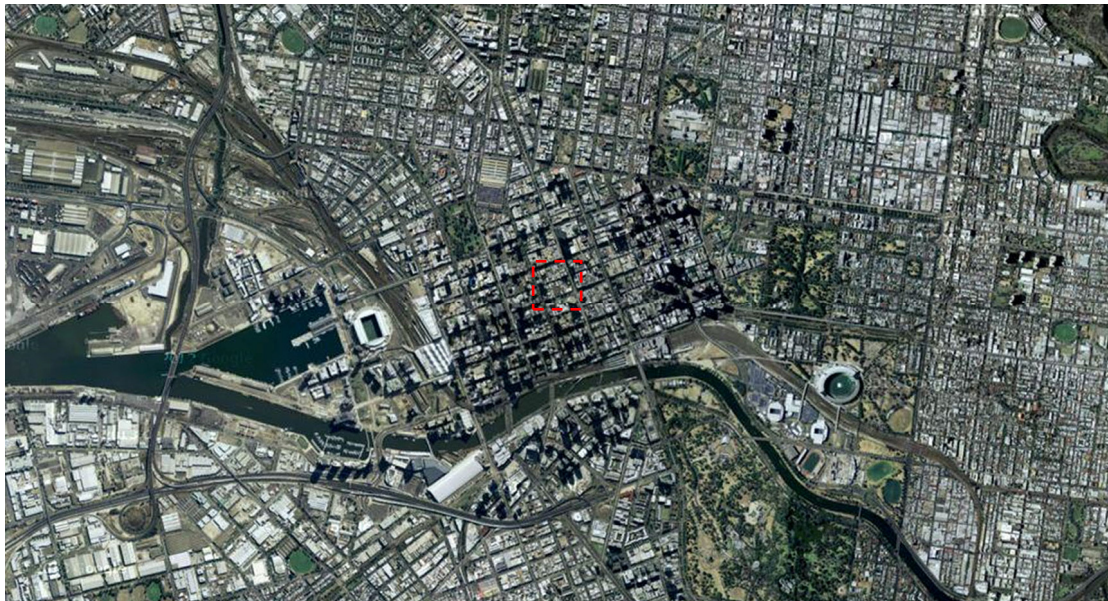
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## Task 1: Analysing the existing Context

The space chosen for this project is Somerset Place in Melbourne's CBD, just off Little Bourke Street, between Elizabeth Street and Queen Street. It was chosen as the study area because it was a small out of the way lane that held a large amount of potential to be as good if not better than Melbourne's more famous lanes.

### 1.1 Measuring the space

*1:50 000*



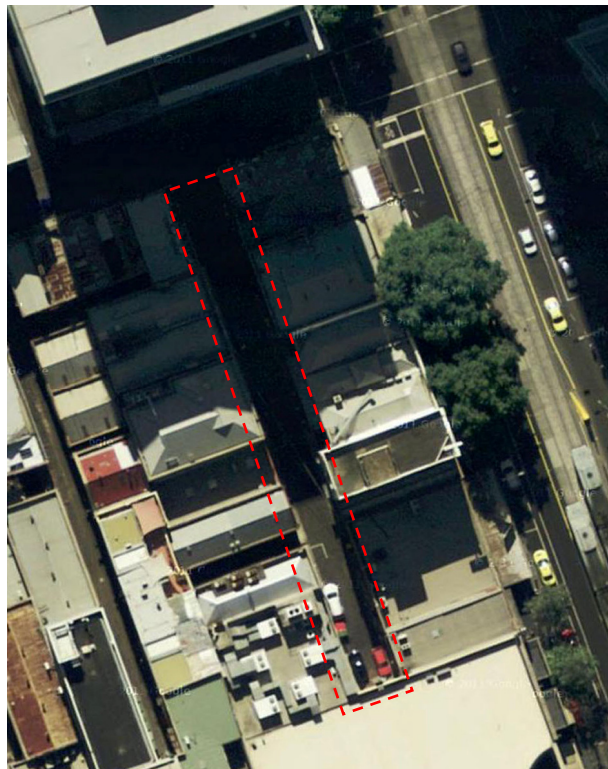
*1:5 000*



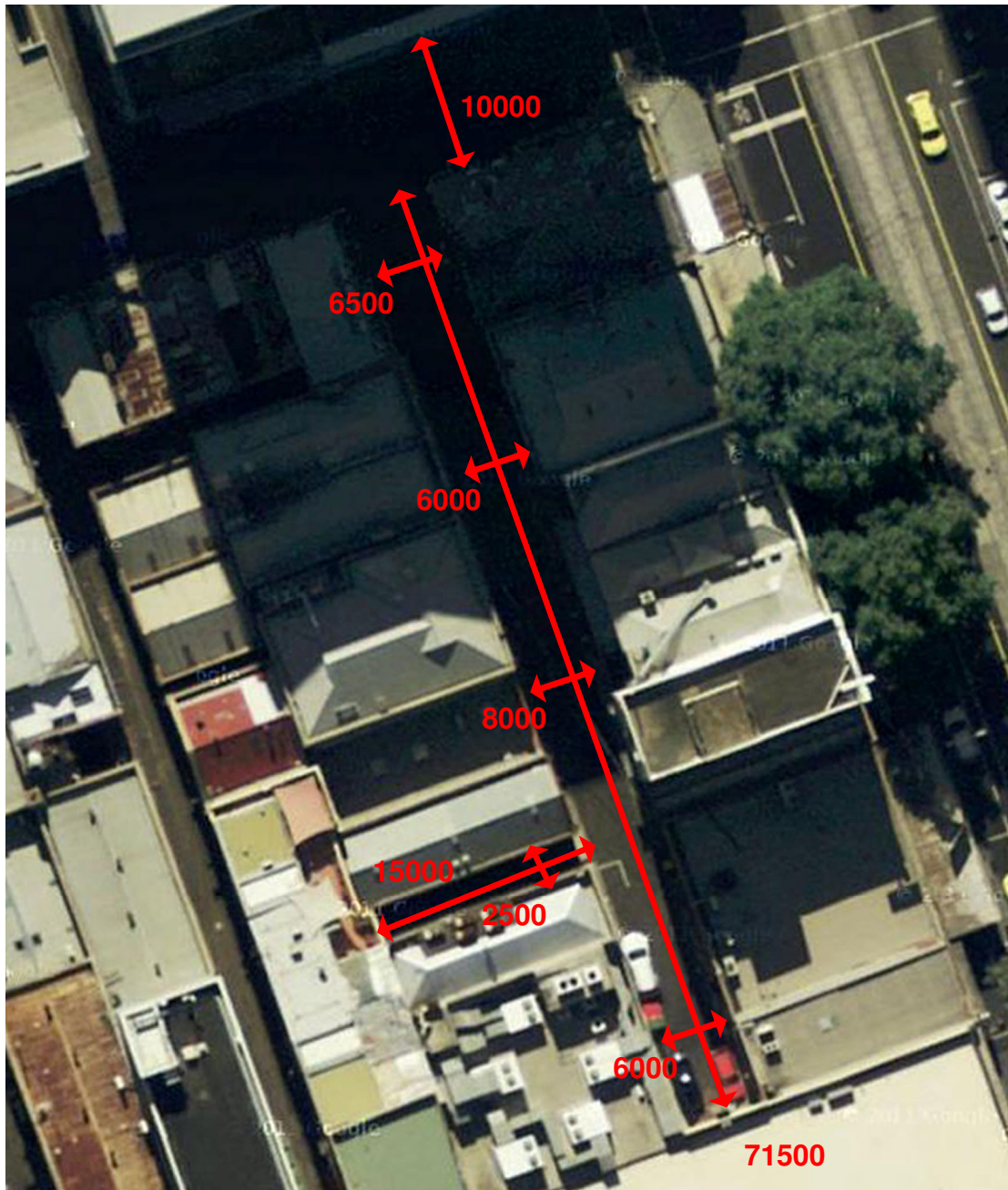
At these scales the space's relationship with Melbourne's inner suburbs, the city block it is located in and the surrounding buildings is very clear.

At 1:5 000 and 1:1 000 the activation and various movements are easily established.

*1:1 000*







The images on this page illustrate the variances of scale within the space.

In plan the spaces narrowness and length is shown, not only visually but numerically. The perspective illustrates that varying building heights and shows how the scale of building to pedestrian and how they interact.

The absence of light is evident in the left image as well as how the buildings overpower the space. However it is also evident that there is a large amount of diffused light entering the space.





1.

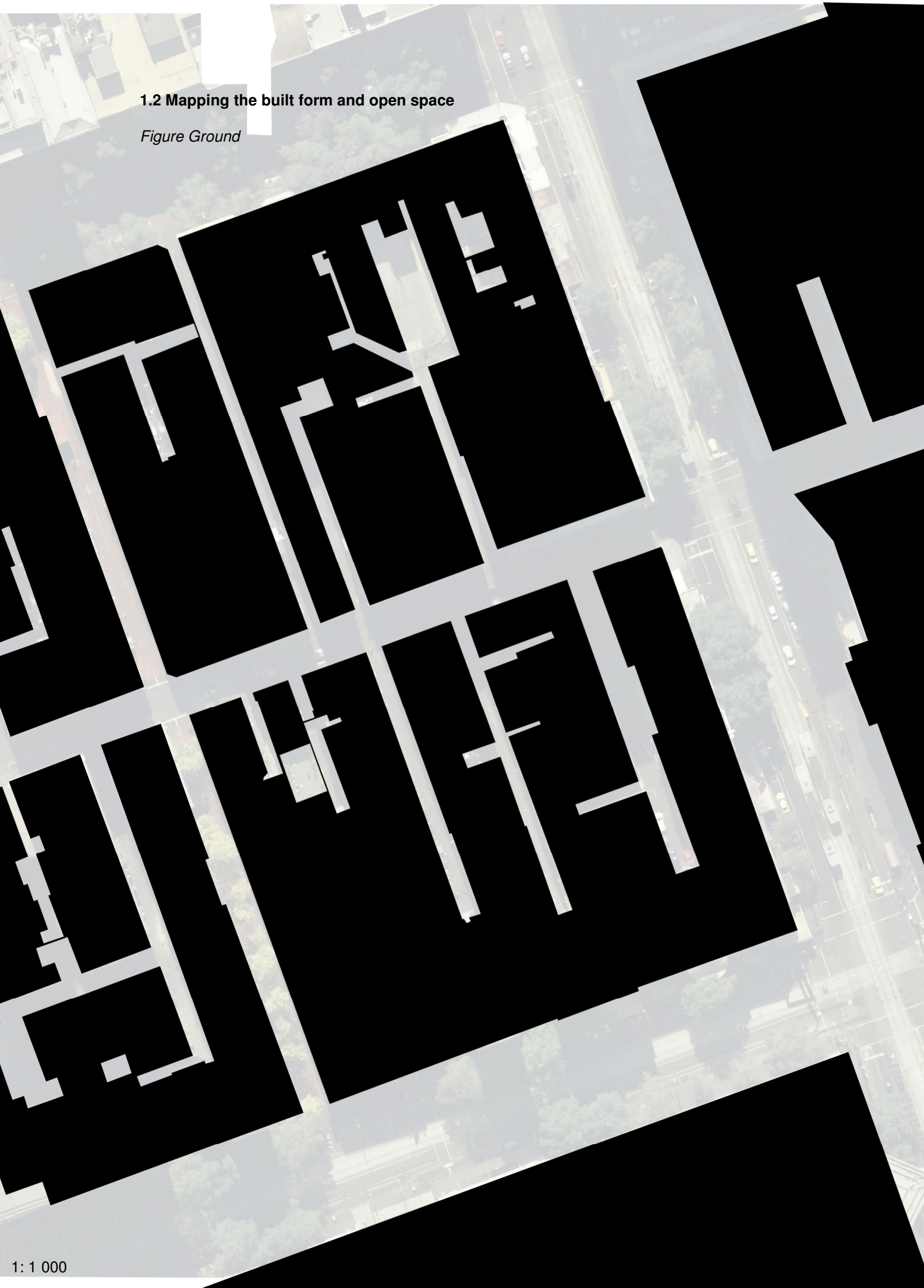


2.



## 1.2 Mapping the built form and open space

*Figure Ground*





*Pedestrian & Vehicular Movement*





*Vegetation*



### 1.3 The Shape of the Space

The urban space chosen for this project is quite proportional in respect to weather it is tall and narrow.



The surrounding buildings that make up the space are well above two storeys.

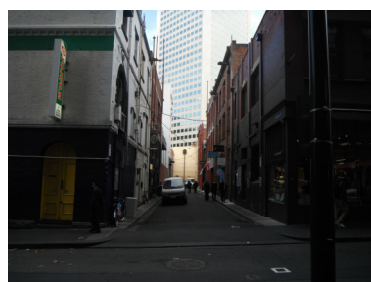


The buildings further from the spaces location are a lot higher and therefore have a presence in the space.

The space is fully open with no shelter. No awnings, verandas or balconies.



The space is one continuous area with no slope to speak of. It is adjacent to Little Bourke street which does however have a slight slope.





## 1.4 The Articulation of the Space

The amount of sheer wall vs. openings is quite even, there is a large amount of windows, a few doors and entrances on either side.



The windows are quite large and about half of them are above normal eye level.



No vegetation, however in terms of public art, the space has some graffiti and street art. The space does have scope for a band stand, or market stall as it is quite wide.



It is predominantly a pedestrian space but there are areas where delivery trucks need to access. Therefore it is technically a shared space.



## 1.5 The Condition of the Space

*What type of space is it?*

It is an alley way with a dead end that has three retail premises.

*Does it get any sun or is it constantly in shade?*

It is constantly in shade. However there is a large amount defused light, which means that it stays quite cool in summer.

*Is it formal or casual?*

It is a casual space.

*Is it passive or active?*

The space is actually quite active.

*Does it promote social interaction of a familiar/private nature or is it immediate and very public?*

The space doesn't promote social interaction. There may be some interaction on the way in and out of the each of the retail spaces. The people within those spaces are quite friendly which may bleed into the alley.

*Does one feel sheltered or exposed?*

This space can do both, it is sheltered from the rest of the city but is exposed to the weather.

*Is it quiet or noisy?*

It is a fairly quiet space.

*Is it comfortable, if so for how long?*

It is quite a comfortable space, the length of time it stays comfortable depends on how long one can stand, as there is no real public furniture.

### *Arrangement and setting of furnishings & details*

There are no outdoor furnishings but there is a large scope for them. Rubbish bins are quite prevalent.



### *Treatments of and condition of finished surfaces*

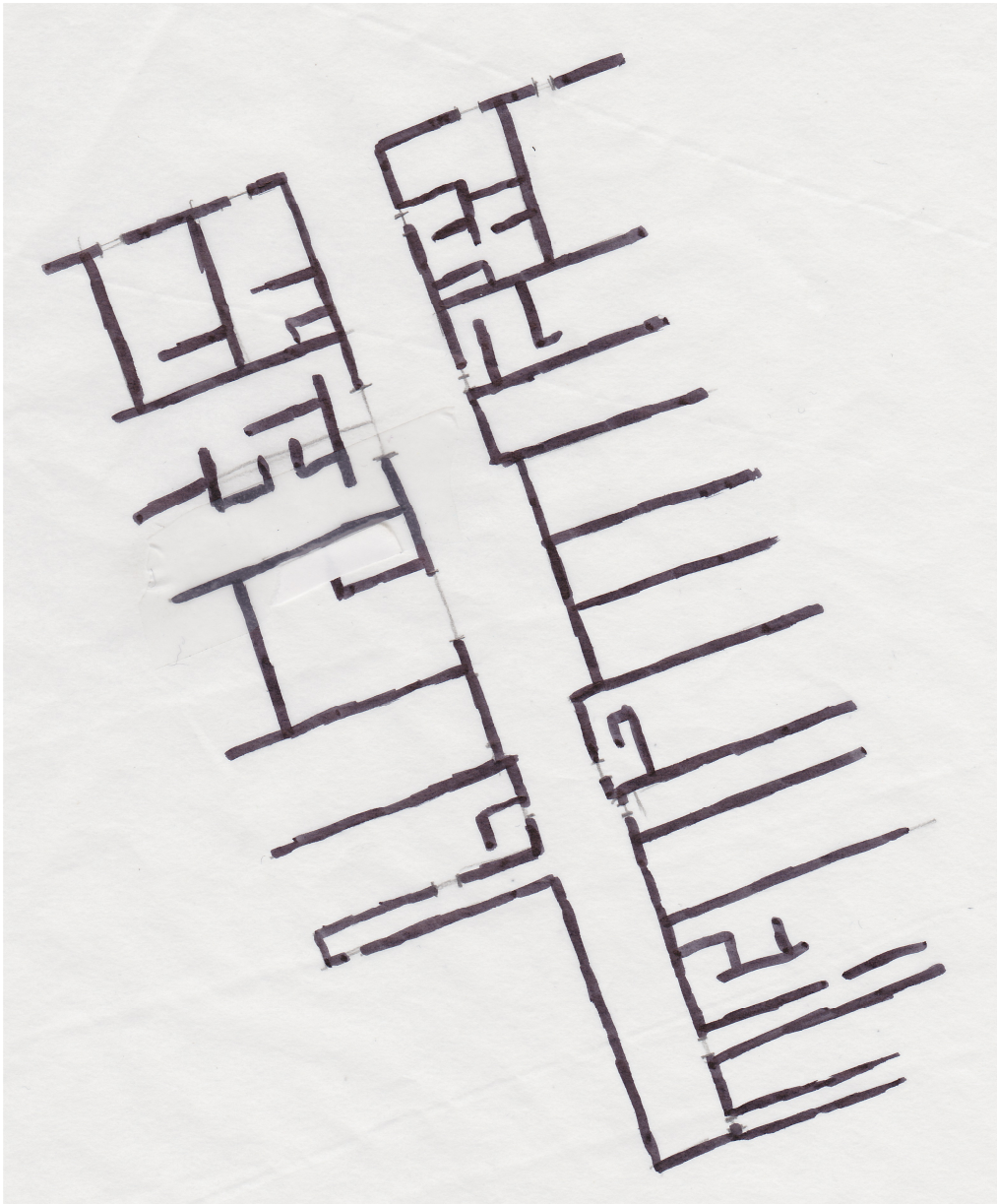
There is a range of different stone and brick types. Some of these are exposed, some are white washed and others are painted.





## 1.6 The Scale of the Place

1:500



The scale of the space can be seen in the above image, here an illustration of the outer and inner walls of the space attempt to demonstrate the relationship between them. As apposed to a figure ground this image shows the structure of the interior spaces allowing for thoughts to be raised on how the space could be used in future.

## 1.7 The Use of the Place

Retail spaces in Somerset place consist of a fitness studio, a 1920-30s barber and tailor, a travel gear store and a café. There is also an entrance to an apartment building. It seems that the space does support a democratic equality, but unfortunately the space is quite desolate.



## 1.8 The activation of the space



At 12:15-12:30 the space is activated by people moving through it for personal reason during their lunch breaks. The café becomes very busy and there are many users entering and exiting the barber and tailor. Additionally, there were quite a few people who seemed to just be looking around. These people were juxtaposed to the others on the street as they were moving slowly and with less emphasis.

At 5:15-5:30 there was a large amount of passers by on Little Bourke Street. There were larger groups moving into the space. There was one user who only entered the space to talk on his mobile phone, seemingly to escape the noise and busyness of the city street. There was also an increase of delivery and local traffic.



## Task 2: Consolidating the analysis Using SWOT

	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<b>Shape</b>	Very large space stretching back, varying levels of distance from street, start (Little Bourke), middle (within the space but still close to Little Bourke), end (at the end of the lane alley very far from Little Bourke)	Could be considered as quite narrow	Its long shape could lend itself to more activation and the creation of another famous Melbourne alley	The is scope for the space to become unsafe or uninviting at night or after hours
<b>Articulation</b>	The areas without windows or doorways could lend themselves to more immersive urban and public arts.	The existing windows and doorways are fixed meaning they are incredibly hard to move, redesign or activate beyond its current use.	There is scope for the existing articulations to be celebrated with vegetation and installations	The serviceable areas in the space and the entrances create barriers to any positive design moves to this space.
<b>Condition</b>	As it is already a well used by different sup-culture groups means that	There is still not enough retail areas within the space to make it worthwhile to passers by.	There is scope for an expansion of more complementary sub-cultures to exist within the space.	Mixing sub-cultures who are juxtaposed could result in a decreased use of the space.
<b>Scale</b>	The scale of the surrounding buildings to users below allows for an intimate space within the urban environment of Melbourne.	The scale of larger building further from the space are a constant reminder of the city the surrounds the space.  It is basically half over shadowed by larger buildings around it.	Scope for the scale of the space to be celebrated articulated viewpoints, framing the surrounding city in someway	If more developments occur around the space then it will lose its charm and become dark and uninviting.
<b>Use</b>	Existing retail outlets give a baseline to future development	There is almost no use of the space at end furthers from Little Bourke	Scope for the space to be used in other more creative ways as apposed to just retail.	The need for light delivery trucks and local traffic to have access to the space limits the amount of activation possible.
<b>Activation</b>	The space is well used and has a fair amount of movement through and around it.  Its proximity to Little Bourke street allows the space to take advantage of a large amount of passers by, which could become interested and enter the space.	Pedestrian and vehicular traffic jostling for priority.  Events may need to be planned well in advance to cater for delivery and local schedules.	There is scope for more movement around the space	The passing traffic of Little Bourke street could drown out the spaces existence, unless it was specifically sort after.

## **Task 3: Synthesising a new Context by Establishing a Set of Objectives and Design Guidelines**

### **Task 3.1 SWOT review**

Objective 1: To provide a generous, purposeful and well defined public space.

#### *Shape*

Keep the shape as existing.

#### *Articulation*

Celebrate the articulation of entrances and materials.

#### *Condition*

Create various retail fronts and allow for more immersive sub-cultures.

#### *Use*

Increase the use of the space by attracting people from Little Bourke Street.

#### *Activation*

Increase the activation of the space.

Objective 2: To provide public space elements that are engaging, convenient and encourage use.

#### *Shape*

Change and manipulate the space to create more engaging areas.

#### *Articulation*

Articulate these changes to the space enhancing the attractiveness of the space.

#### *Condition*

Create areas that are can have various uses.

#### *Use*

Increase the use of the space.

#### *Activation*

Activate the space more clearly and regularly.

Objective 3: To ensure landscaping contributes positively to quality public space.

#### *Shape*

Shape as existing.

#### *Articulation*

Articulate the space with Landscaping and vegetation.

#### *Condition*

Create a vegetative environment.

#### *Use*

Increase the use of the space through inviting vegetation.

#### *Activation*

Allow this vegetation to be interacted with.



Objective 4: To ensure lighting is carefully integrated to further enhance visibility and natural surveillance of parks and open spaces.

*Shape*

Ensure that there are guidelines, in terms of shape, that allow for more sunlight.

*Articulation*

Make sure empty spaces are well used.

*Condition*

Articulate and celebrate view points.

*Use*

Increase lighting creating a more inviting space.

*Activation*

Active lighting will increase the activation of the space.

Objective 5: To design and plan street edges to enhance the pedestrian environment.

*Shape*

Shape as existing.

*Articulation*

Heavily articulate the difference and/or the shared areas of the space.

*Condition*

Help separate vehicular and pedestrian traffic.

*Use*

Allow for both vehicular and pedestrian traffic to interact in a safe manner.

*Activation*

Include areas in the space for pedestrians only.

Objective 6: To ensure the place is well connected and provides direct pedestrian links to surrounding residential neighbourhoods.

*Shape*

Create two entrances and exits to the space.

*Articulation*

Articulate the different openings.

*Condition*

Create a pedestrian connection through the space.

*Use*

Increase the use through pedestrian movement.

*Activation*

Activate the space with this additional entrance.

Objective 7: To encourage a diverse mix of uses.

*Shape*

As existing.

*Articulation*

Create areas where mixed uses are possible.

*Condition*

Condition the space as to allow for a diverse range of uses.

*Use*

Create a space that increases the diversity of sub-cultures interaction in the space.

*Activation*

Increase the activation through addition of areas of mixed use.

**Task 3.2 Design Objective Development**

3.2.1 Existing

3.2.2 Example

Objective 1: To provide a generous, purposeful and well defined public space



Objective 2: To provide public space elements that are engaging, convenient and encourage use.





Objective 3: To ensure landscaping contributes positively to quality public space.



Objective 4: To ensure lighting is carefully integrated to further enhance visibility and natural surveillance of parks and open spaces.



Objective 5: To design and plan street edges to enhance the pedestrian environment.



Objective 6: To ensure the place is well connected and provides direct pedestrian links to surrounding residential neighbourhoods.



Objective 7: To encourage a diverse mix of uses.



### Task 3.3 Design Guidelines Development

Objective 1: To provide a generous, purposeful and well defined public space.

Design Suggestion 1.1 - Design public and urban arts by spaces to accommodate exhibitions.



Design Suggestion 1.2 - Hang empty frames for to create open and free flowing exhibitions spaces.

Design Suggestion 1.3 - Design a space that incorporates the outside and inside as well as being protected from harsh weather.

Design Suggestion 1.4 - Redefine each end of the space with a gateway, themed sculpture or urban art.





Objective 2: To provide public space elements that are engaging, convenient and encourage use.

Design Suggestion 2.1 - Incorporate public seating that allows for a user manipulated space.

Design Suggestion 2.2 - Add drinking water fountains & permanent public seating such as park benches.

Design Suggestion 2.3 - Incorporate a hidden or camouflaged PA system to play easy listening music creating a more atmospheric space.

Design Suggestion 2.4 - Use colour to activate that space making it more inviting.



Objective 3: To ensure landscaping contributes positively to quality public space.

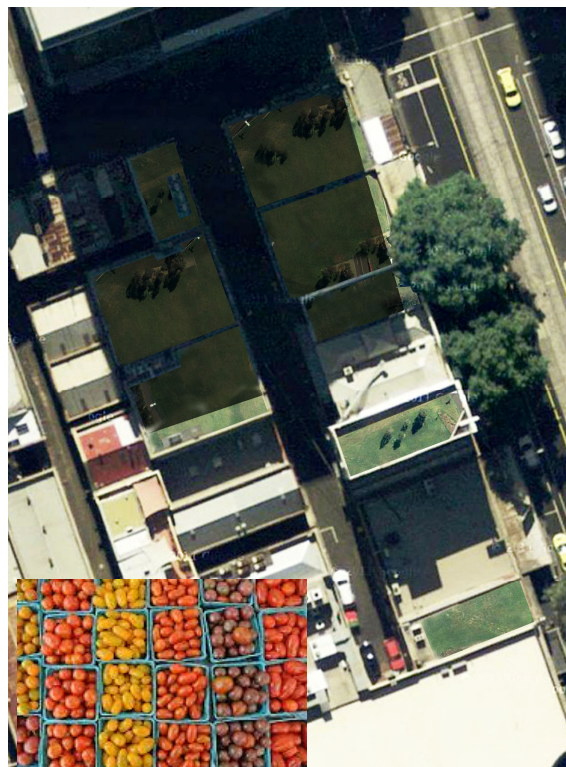
Design Suggestion 3.1 - Add ornamental herb wall containing sensory plants such as parsley, thyme, rosemary, oregano, coriander and sage.

Design Suggestion 3.2 - Incorporate a green wall at the end of the space to create a specific green endpoint

Design Suggestion 3.3 – Add ornamental hanging planter boxes as well as upside down plants such as cherry tomatoes.

*There is scope for these cherry tomatoes plants to be seasonal and to create a rainbow effect using the different varieties with different colours. (red, yellow, green, black, purple)*

Design Suggestion 3.4 - Add green spaces and lawns on the rooftops of buildings directly adjacent to the space.



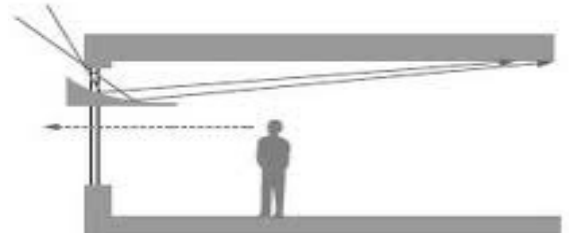
Objective 4: To ensure lighting is carefully integrated to further enhance visibility and natural surveillance of parks and open spaces.

Design Suggestion 4.1 - Design wired over head lighting, using colour to activate the space as well as warmth.

*This could lend its self to the creation of a light barrier between the users of the space below the lighting and the night sky, acting as a roof.*

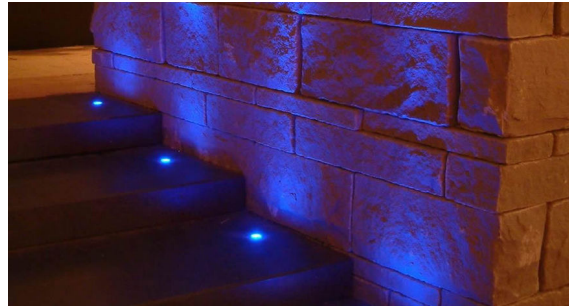


Design Suggestion 4.2 - Design white and/or reflective surfaces to catch the light and force it down into the space during day time.



Design Suggestion 4.3 - Add lamps to define the edges of the space.

Design Suggestion 4.4 - Add coloured lighting pointing upward from the ground.



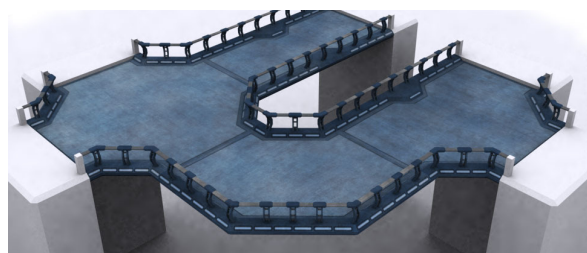
Objective 5: To design and plan street edges to enhance the pedestrian environment.

Design Suggestion 5.1 - Design urban shelters to allow people to stay within the space with protection from inclement weather.



Design Suggestion 5.2 - Design of designated shared, pedestrian and vehicular traffic routes.

Design Suggestion 5.3 - create extended catwalks that allow another level of pedestrian movement.

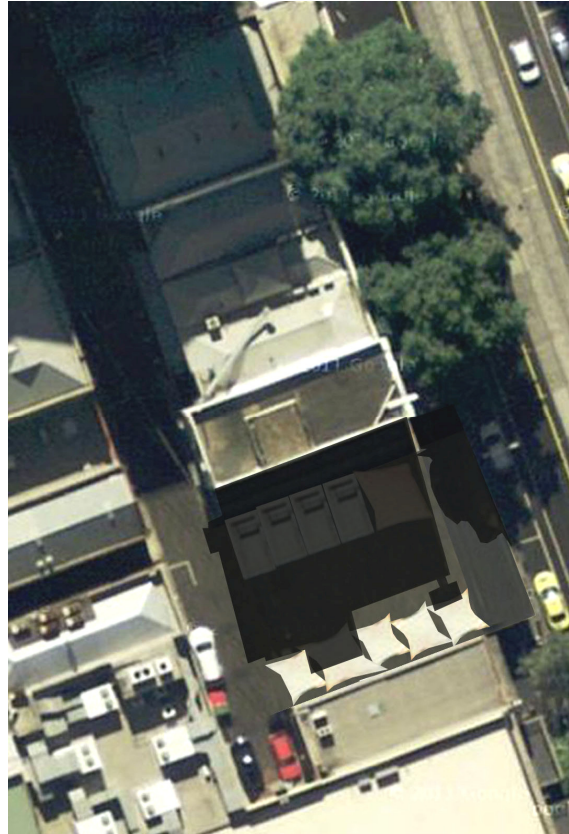




Objective 6: To ensure the place is well connected and provides direct pedestrian links to surrounding residential neighbourhoods.

Design Suggestion 6.1 - Remove an insignificant building towards the end of the space to create a thoroughfare through to Elizabeth street

Design Suggestion 6.2 – Design spaces within this newly acquired area to promote use.



Objective 7: To encourage a diverse mix of uses.

Design Suggestion 7.1 - Redefine the activation and use of the space through a variety of retail spaces

Design Suggestion 7.2 - Add areas for micro markets or vender stalls.

Design Suggestion 7.3 - Design a mezzanine level to help activate the cat walks

