



Friday, 8 March 2013

File note: Site Context

01 South Brisbane / West End Story

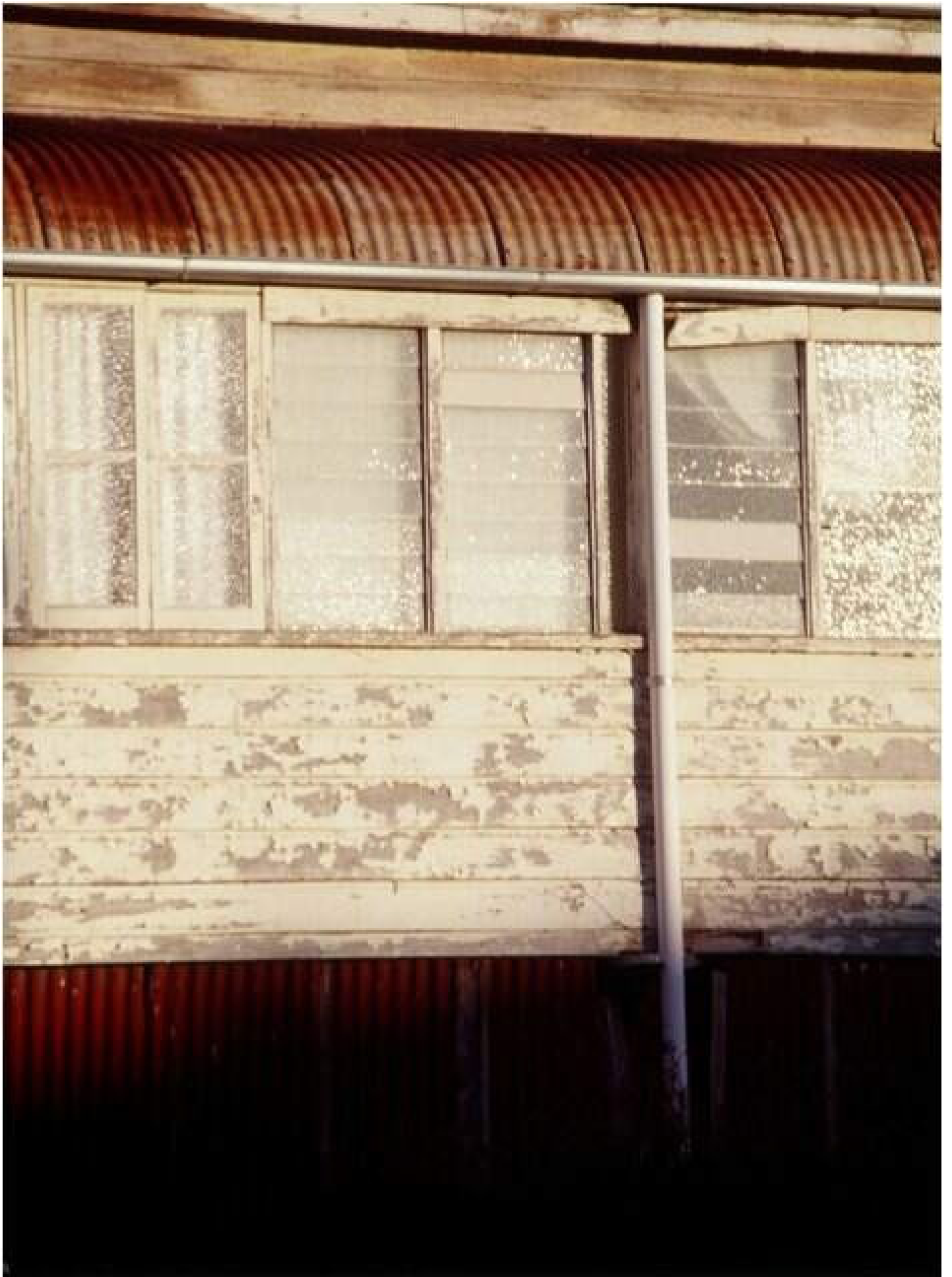
South Brisbane and West is a vibrant, dynamic and diverse part of Brisbane's cultural fabric. Over time its purpose has shifted with the community expectations; but the thread remains.



Attending high school in the area proved quite a change after growing up in what was by comparison a rather gentrified Brisbane suburb. But it was a welcome one and I quickly fell in love with the place, hanging out there off and on ever since.

I took these photos in 1993, while under grad in architecture at QUT. West End as a piece of urbanism has to my memory always a strong sense of identity and community. Threads of industrialism and enterprise are intertwined with some very special and unique community places.

Contextually, there are many strong cues that tie the area together. Bottle glass windows, timber framed and flaking paint, rough and worn corrugated metal, large, overhanging trees and (in the words of David Malouf) '... sudden vistas'.





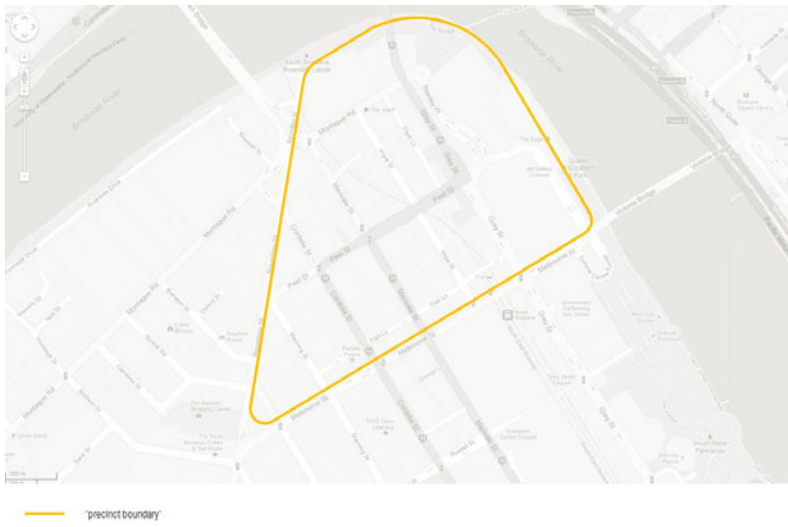
Its urban character has not waned; it has proved robust and malleable. In architecture we would call it 'grain', it's that density of micro enterprise and social energy that come together to form this diverse and engaging environment. It was no accident that this 'grain' encouraged some of the more innovative (and independent) bars and clubs to open.

It's this spirit of constant renewal and interchangeability; of malleability and utility that keeps the area vibrant and entertaining. The 'pods' project embodies this spirit of enterprise and making it as we want it – making change, and renewing these urban spaces.

The 'Pods' project can set the tone for this next wave of renewal. Previously focussed on the West End section, the project zone is effectively 'new ground' for expanding cultural typologies.

A gritty, commercial character can be enriched by careful insertion of carefully conceived and designed urban 'jewels'. Quality craftsmanship and materials can infuse a point of access and connection for its resident workers and potentially, future inhabitants.

MWA support the idea that this 'pods' concept can lever this area into a new stage of enculturation, provide more choices and opportunities for use.



Precinct

The diagram at left defines what we mean in this note as 'precinct'.



Facilities

Already it is surrounded by amazing facilities, the best of Brisbane. All that is required is to improve the level of amenity and choice within the precinct's boundaries. The 'pods' project will do just that.



Vehicles

Many vehicles pass through the area heading north and south. Parking however might be an issue.



- 'pedestrian'
- 'train'
- 'bus'
- 'bikes'

Networks

The site is well served by public transport.

South Brisbane Train and Bus Stations are within close proximity.

Many cyclists utilise the Go Between Bridge, Kurilpa Bridge and South Bank Bikeway to the Goodwill Bridge.

Importantly the main pedestrian route runs either along the river for casual foot traffic, or along Melbourne street if connecting to the City.



- 'pedestrian'
- 'train'
- 'bus'
- 'bikes'
- 'fish lane' network
- 'pods' network
- 'pods' sites

Proposed Networks

The 'Laneways' project in Fish Lane provides an alternative destination and through route for pedestrian traffic connecting from West End (Boundary Street) and the City.

The Pods network provides an alternative route with some 'surprising' discoveries along the way.



- 'cultural'
- 'recreation'
- 'cafes'
- 'music' - extended
- 'pop up' retail - new
- 'laneways' - new

Proposed Zones

The 'Laneways' site will create an active, busy destination in its own right.

The 'Pods' concept will provide an alternative route for foot traffic, as well as enhance the grain within the Precinct.

There is the opportunity to consider a 'music' precinct by enhancing this idea into the zone between The Joint and the Sly Fox.



Music

A nascent live music scene exists courtesy of The Joint and The Sly Fox. These bars remain off the main track enough to maintain a fringe identity and encourage live, innovative acts. The old live music scene made up by Ric's Bar and the Empire has subsided, perhaps there is the opportunity to further grow this zone as a known 'locale'.

Bars and Clubs

A recent shift in the licencing environment for small café owners are new liquor licencing laws that allow for more diverse, smaller venues to hold liquor licenses.

This has the effect of encouraging longer hours of trade and provides night time more choices for café and dining. Encouraging round the clock uses is important to enriching the area as a destination to enjoy.

<http://www.brisbanetimes.com.au/queensland/new-liquor-licence-a-boon-for-small-bars-20130213-2ediz.html>

Night Foot Traffic

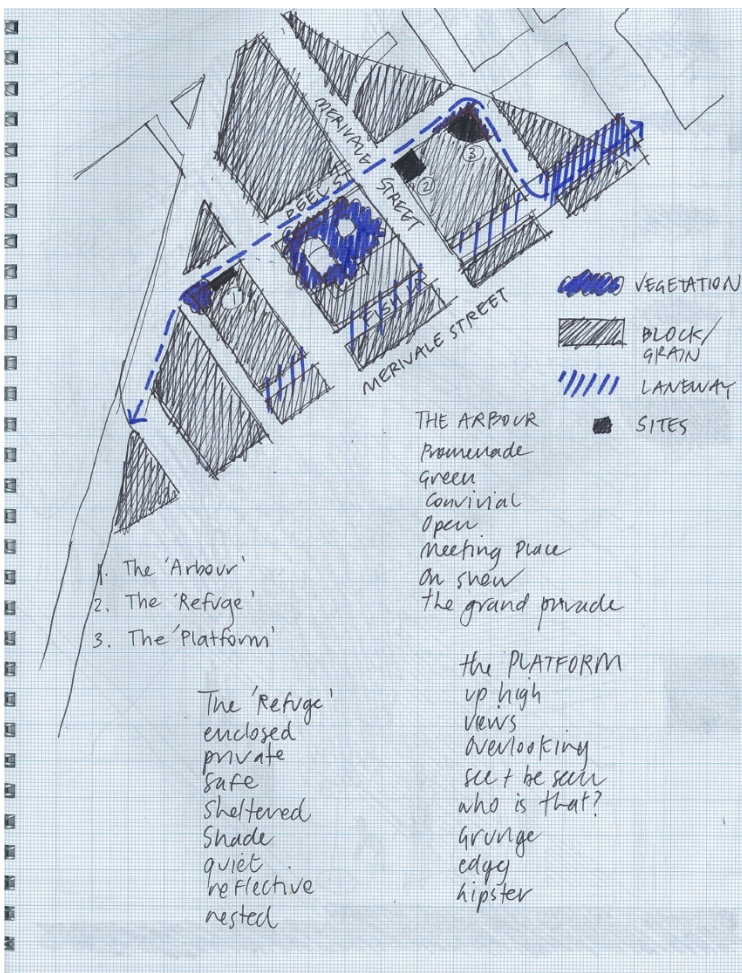
As anyone in Brisbane knows, when out and about, travelling on foot through the variety of pubs and clubs available is quite a good way of doing it. You pick your region, usually based on yours and your friend's mood and intent for the night (Valley – alternative, random, New Farm – sophisticated, West End – hipster, trendy, City – big, mainstream), meet up somewhere and go from there. This also saves on cabs, or at least trying to find one when it gets busy. Brisbane foot traffic at night is a big one. Having a known route to follow, with spots on the way, is a big part of getting people started along the route. Too far, and it's into a cab.



02 Site Cues

This image records my first reaction to the sites, sketched out on the plane on the way back to Sydney.

Each site appeared to have its own intrinsic character; hopefully the design can build on that essence.



Site 1: 'The Arbour'

- Promenade
- Green
- Convivial
- Open
- Meeting Place
- On Show
- The 'Grand Promenade'

Site 2: 'The Refuge'

- Enclosed
- Private
- Safe
- Sheltered
- Shade
- Quiet
- Reflective
- Nested

Site 3: 'The Platform'

- Up High
- Views
- Overlooking
- See and Be Seen
- Who is that?
- Grunge
- Edgy
- Hipster

Each proposed Pod site has its own unique character and identity; this in turn might contribute to the type of tenant that will appreciate the different locations. Each site 'story' is a short, conceptual investigation of the essential nature of each location, and builds on the logic of the site analysis above. This is intended to stimulate discussion about the design cues, and ultimately who might be the occupants and what might be the activities at the various locations.



Pod Site 1

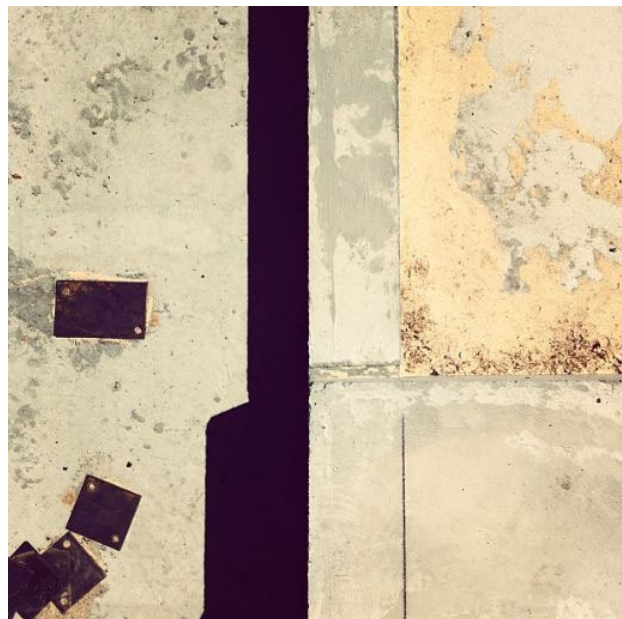
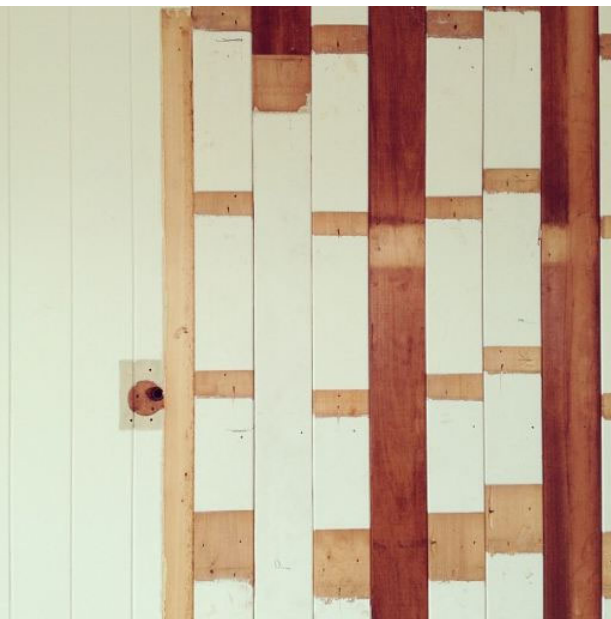
Pod site 1 abuts an existing Noel Robinson designed 2 story commercial building. Noel's design skills are well appreciated; it is a lovely, articulated and proportionate façade. I would think it was constructed during the 1990's. It represents a modernist spirit: commerciality and mercantilism combined with aesthetic pleasure.

It has strong exposure to the northern sun, as well as taking the benefit of early morning sun and late afternoon sun. It a bit like a big verandah, except the verandah is not yet constructed. This can be good and bad, in winter we want the sun, in summer we want shade.

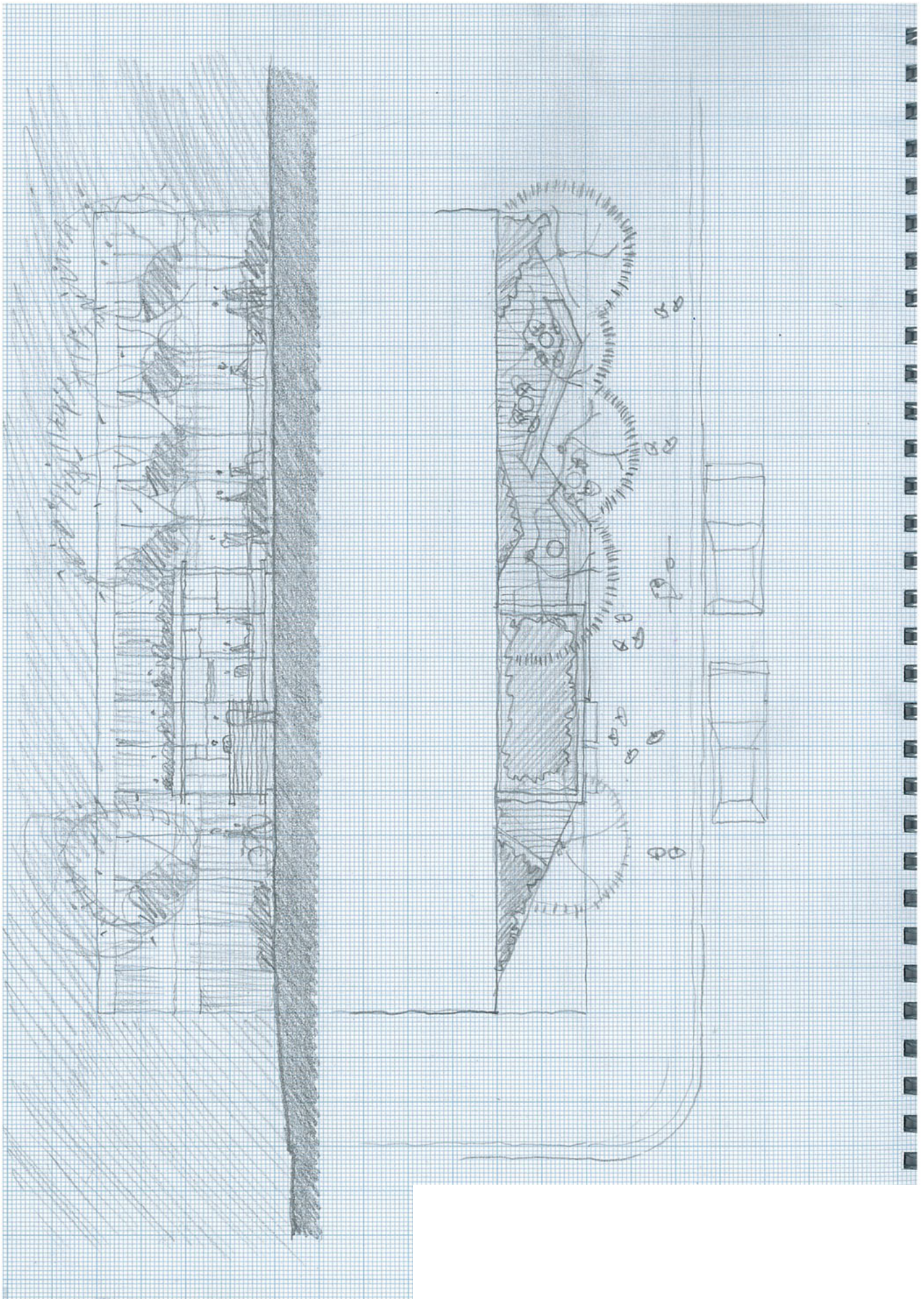
The available land area within the setback runs the entire length of the northern façade. For the pod, while the built up site area might be constrained (10 x 2.4 metres), the potential site area is much longer. There is some substantial vegetation to the south of the site.

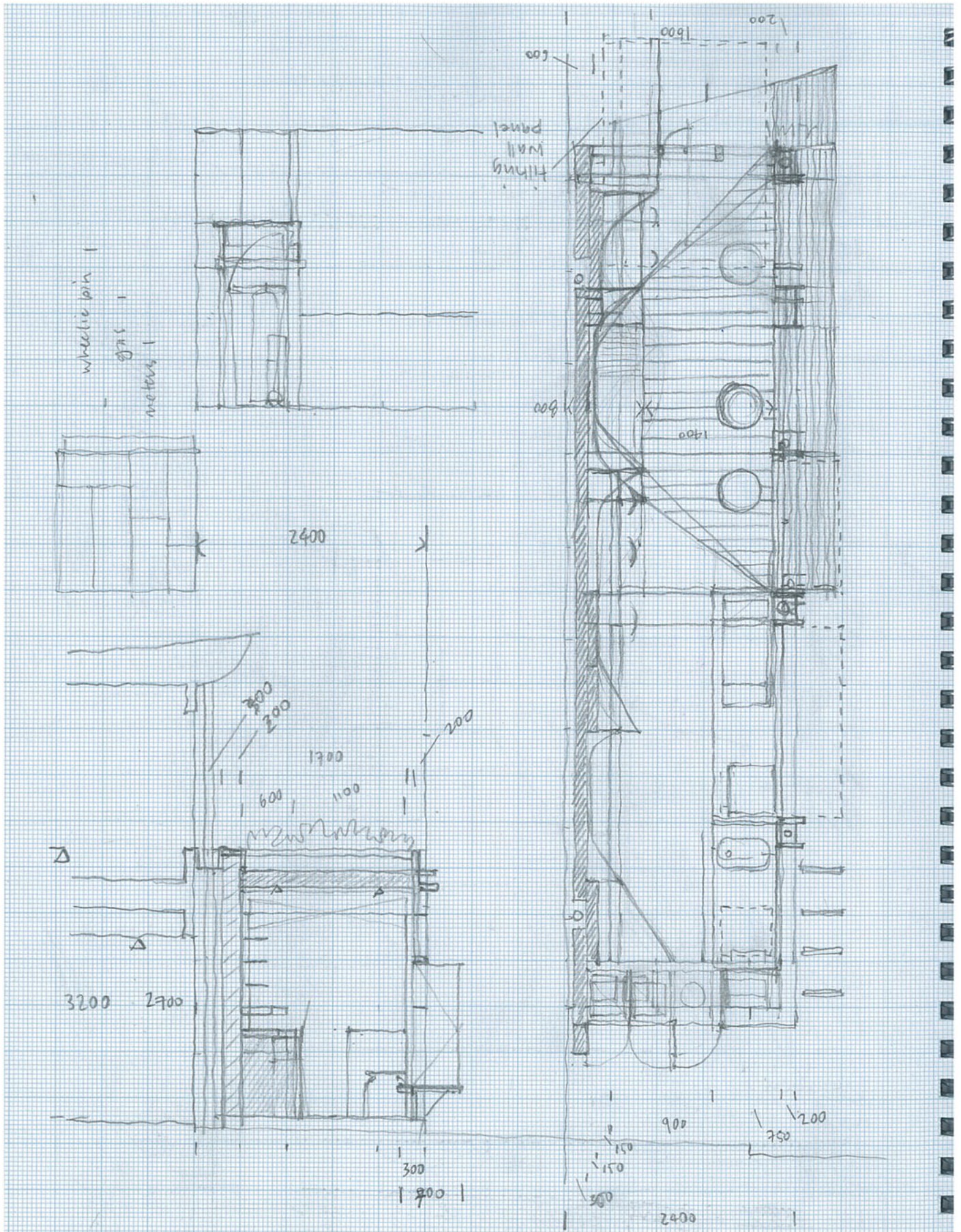
For reasons of sun exposure and site area availability, it might be worth investing in some landscaping here. These trees will reduce the heat load and energy bill for the existing building.

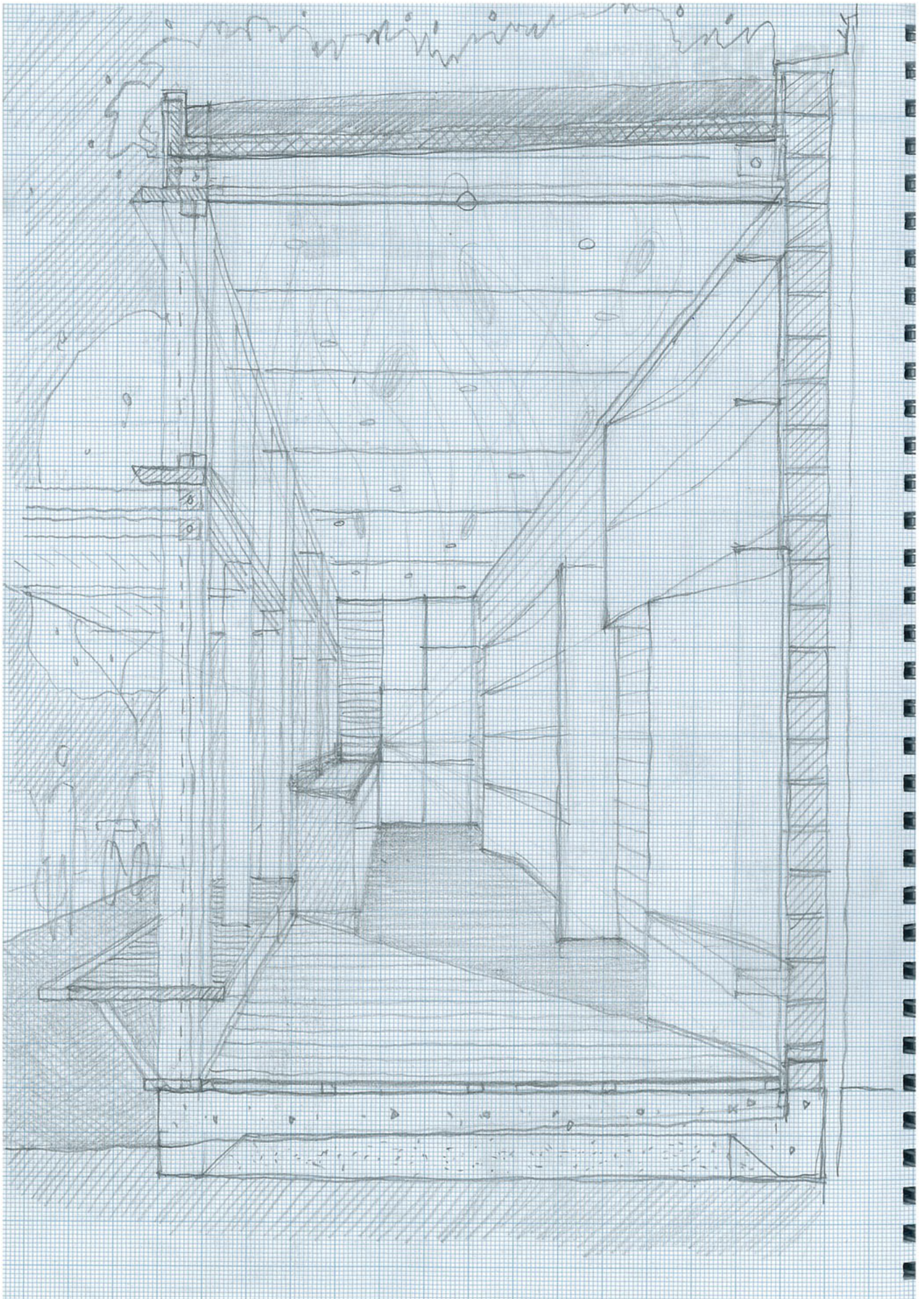
To me the main cue here is to 'contrast' or subtly oppose and differentiate from this modernist, aspirational façade with the textures and materials of our everyday life. It would be fun to casually 'occupy' a space previously designated as business like and purposeful, maybe as a garden space you can sit in. Or a pod that feels like a living room, or a verandah. Maybe the kitchen can even feel like the one we have, or had at home.

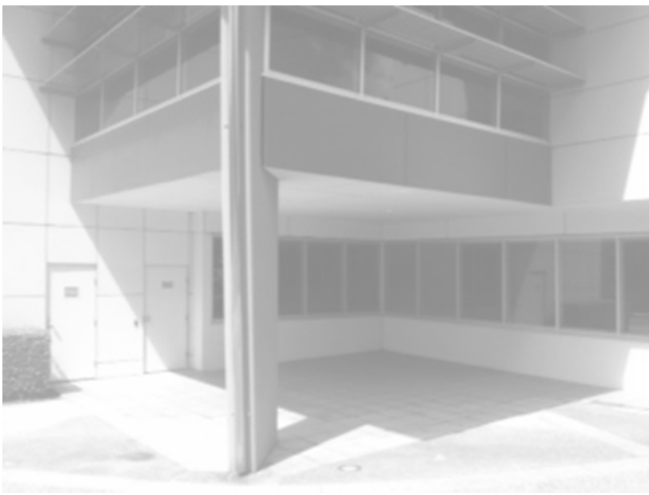












Pod Site 2

Pod site 2 finds itself contained on 2 sides and over the top by the existing commercial building.

This non-descript office building is not so good design wise – no connection with street, the design a bit glib and uncaring, it could be anywhere and it doesn't seem to care. It's impersonal and as such depersonalises the space.

On top of that the site fronts a very busy street corner for vehicular traffic; everyone is in a rush to cross over Grey Street Bridge or the Go Between. It's a little noisy.

So it's not somewhere at the moment you would think of stopping and relaxing for any reason. At the same time, the available site area is quite large and unique; there is the chance to capture an interesting urban moment.

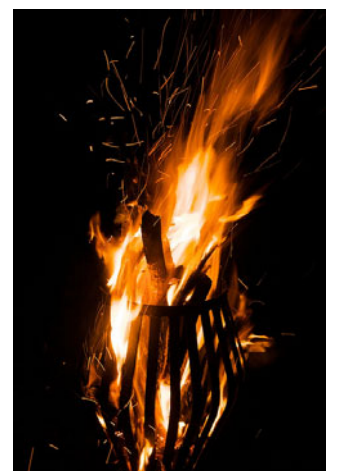
So this site there are two strong cues:

Enclosure & shelter. From the sense of containment, create a sense of refuge, perhaps enhanced by landscape.

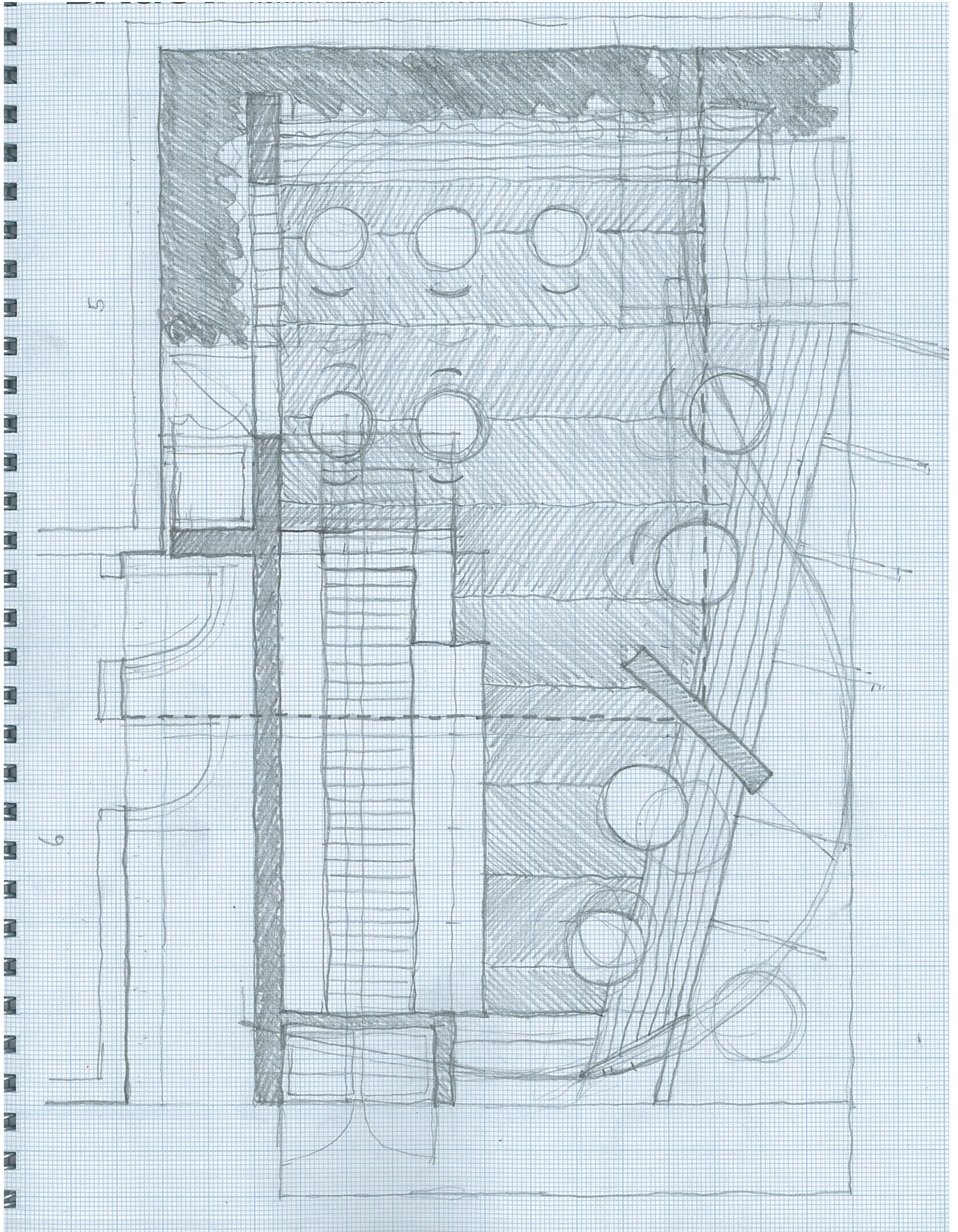
From this sense of refuge, create a place to relax and feel connected.

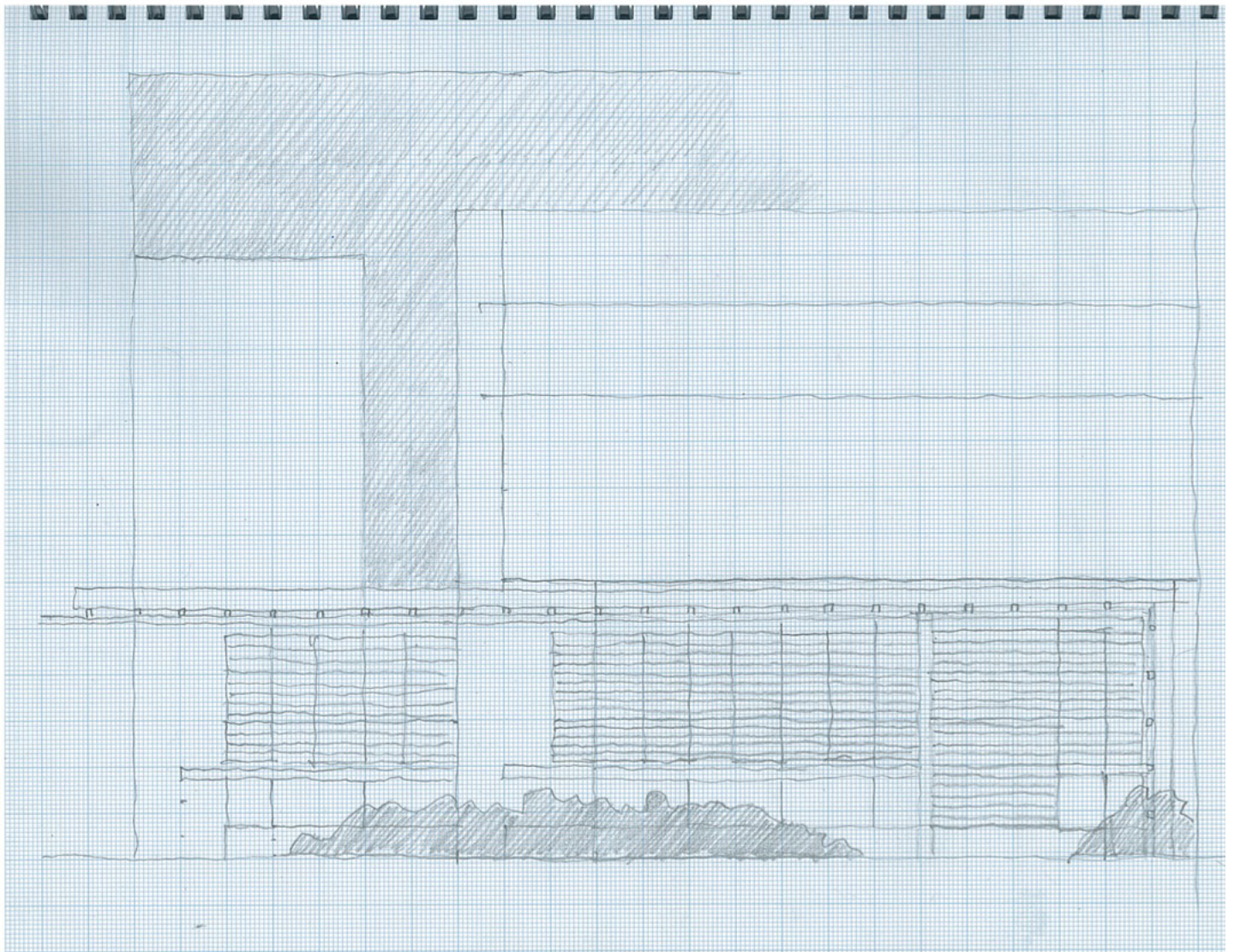
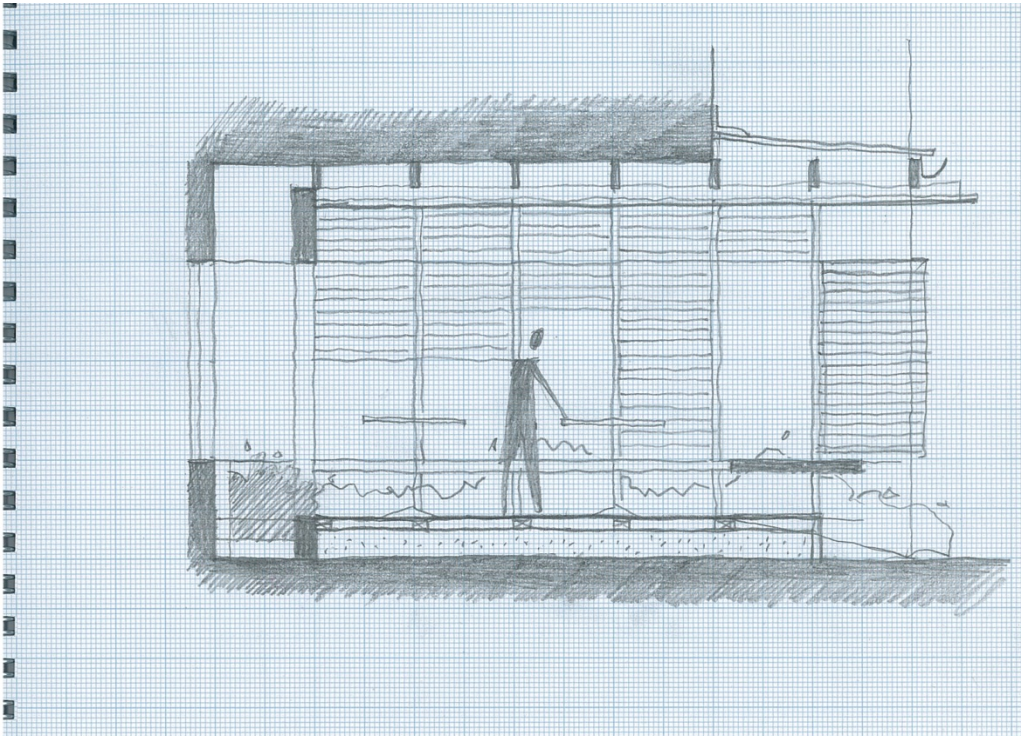
I'm thinking landscape to soften the hard existing building frontage, contrast materials to the office building, provide a sense of seclusion and retreat from the street, a contrast of materials to the existing, evening lighting, warmth and being inviting. Perhaps there is a 'hearth' fire in the winter nights.

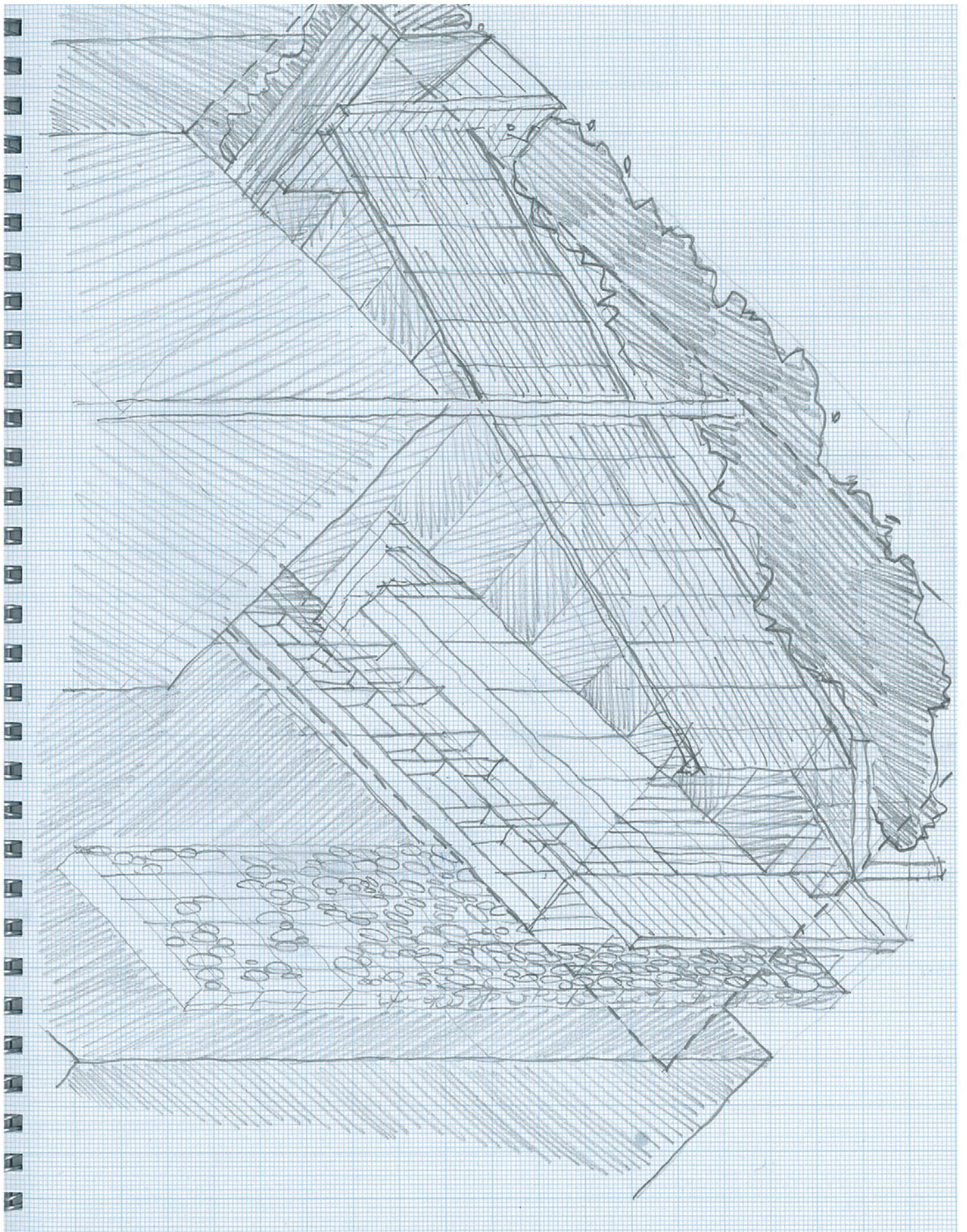
Hearth & Fire, natural, organic unordained materials – wood, stone, metal. Simple, primary, organic.



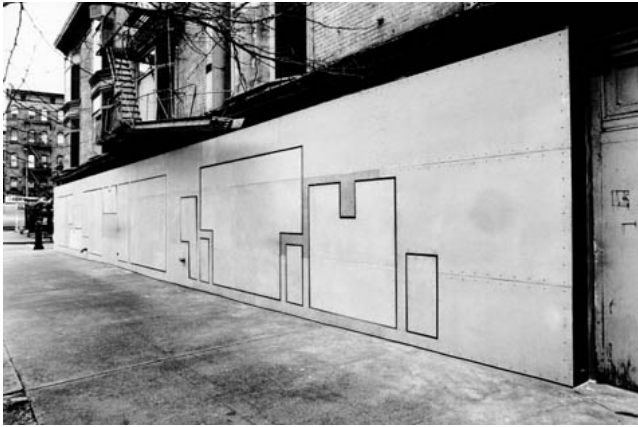








Pod Site 3



This site is actually an incredible site architecturally. It's a real mish mash of urban bits; the large, looming railway bridge, the busy road hurrying past, these kind of hulking, badly designed buildings that jut about and pretend to look good, the clumsy retaining wall; I love it. It's just this place I want to stand back and take it all in, there so much going on around. And it's nice how the site gently raises you up and gives you this slight elevation to overlook and take it all in. Even the hedge provides that slight sense of enclosure to gently separate you from the melee continuing on beyond.

So for me there are two strong cues:

Leave the existing site as it is as much as possible. It is what it is, so to speak.

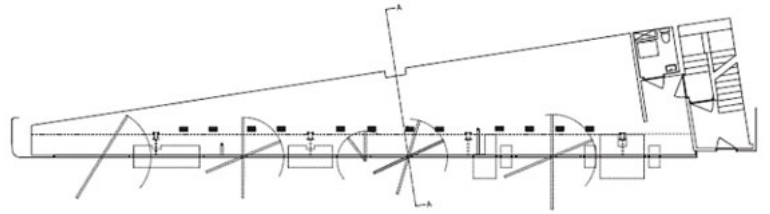
Take in the view. Provide the opportunity to overlook, and reflect.

There's something gritty and real about this site that works. I wouldn't ever design it this way but it's happened and it somehow works. Something that is in, but not really a part of, the site.

Something that opens and shuts, night and day. Maybe even works as a stage for a street event.

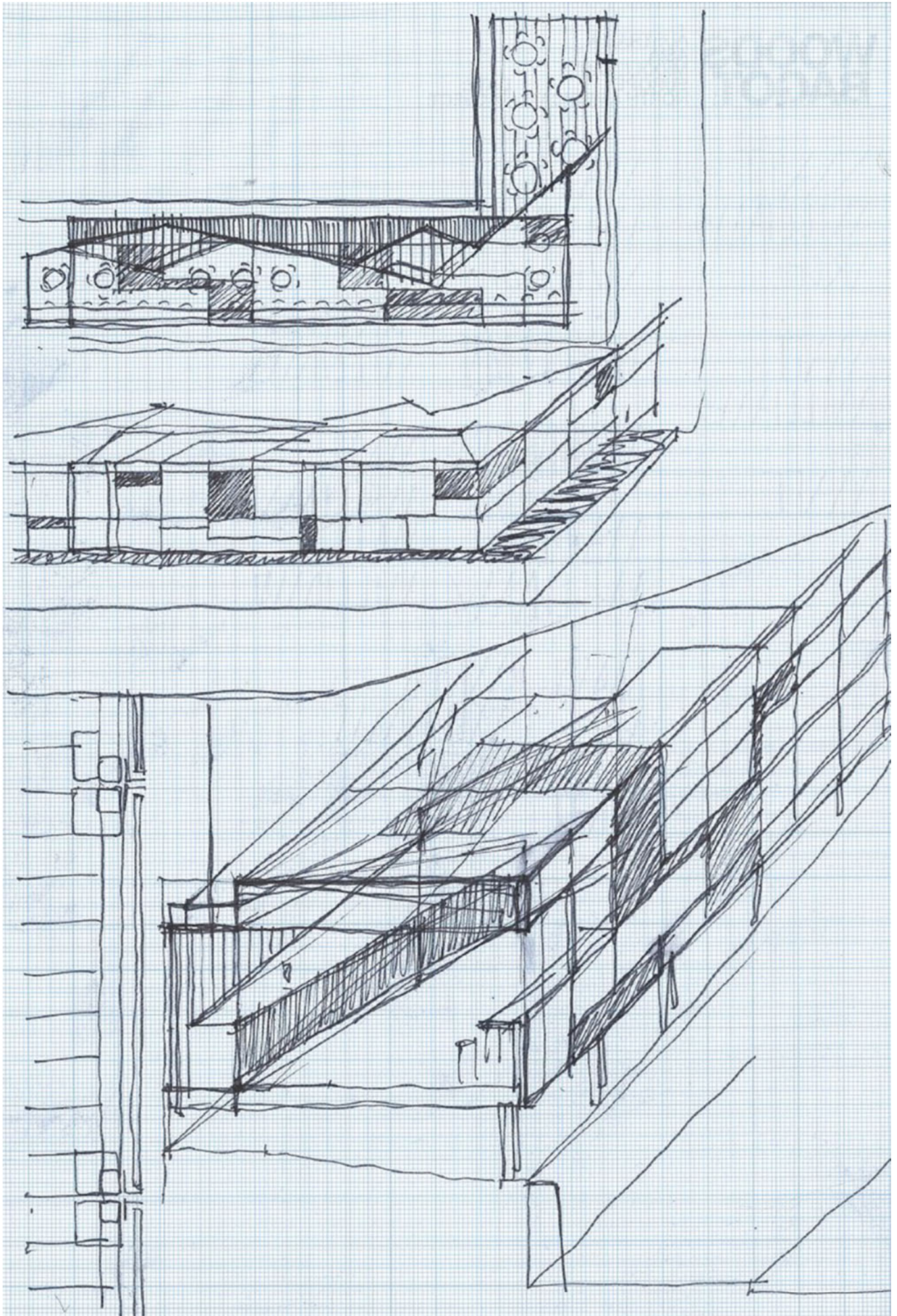
The images shown here are of the Storefront for Art and Architecture by in New York by Stephen Holl. It's just awesome.

(Sketch Following to be updated)









Exemplar Projects

Kuril Dhagun Talking Circle

At the State Library of Queensland. A cultural pop up, an unexpected addition to the State Library Complex but a point of difference for its traditional archiving process.

Defined by the Centre as follows:

Both Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders agreed that the traditional situation in which people were most likely talk, laugh and share knowledge was around the fire. Because both cultures are based on oral and not written traditions, the concept for the Talking Circle adjacent to kuril dhagun has grown to be an important symbol. It is a reminder to us all that some of the most valuable things that we know have been passed on to us by our family and friends, and that this is a tradition that we need to encourage in the future generations.

<http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/resources/atsi/kuril-dhagun>





Three Below Bar, City Square, Melbourne

My old drinking spot while working at DCM over on Exhibition Street, this bar was always full, only small and designed by Six Degrees, a group of architects responsible for many wonderful 'repurposed' crafted bar designs.

This particular bar features 'found' doors and windows with original coloured bottle glass inserts, suspended from the ceiling, low level and feature lighting and an outdoor area to integrate to a very comfortable, intimate and fun night time environment.

I never went there during the day but assume it is also open to the lunchtime crowd. It was a great place to hang out and catch up with friends before heading on.

<http://www.threebelow.com.au/>

(Review Six Degrees Book in Meeting)



'Joost 'Greenhouse' Projects Sydney and Melbourne

The simplicity of the structure is based on a desire to assemble and dismantle, should the need arise – with the minimum of financial and energy expenditure. This is central to Bakker's design philosophy. (Joost) wants the Greenhouse to be harmless and its eco-impact to be positive.

Taking this very seriously, (Joost) shows mind blowing attention to recyclable detail. Each component of the building – from the beer bottles to the use of galvanised steel screws for their ease of recycling – is a testament to years of intricate knowledge, development and the cultivation of the personal micro-networks necessary to support positive impact building.

<http://byjoost.com/greenhouse/>









Cru Bar, New Farm

Designed by Ingrid Richards whilst working at Cox, this bar engages completely with the street and makes the street scene part of it, and its own scene part of the street.

There is a wonderful plinth seat and oversized window that pulls away, straddling the divide between inside and outside. It's a great place to watch the world go by, and everyone who walks past (whether they like to admit it or not!) checks out what is going on inside.

It's a key part of the new 'New Farm' scene and always pulls a crowd.

http://www.crubar.com/CruBar+Cellar/Cru_Bar_+_Cellar.html





Watt Dining, Café, New Farm

The café at Watt dining is focussed more or less on a set of external seating near the 'flood' sign. This simple plan and open air environment, in a lovely position, is a great place to socialise.

At night the site has a wonderful ethereal quality (no doubt added to by the river and its lovely reflections!).

<http://www.trippaswhitegroup.com.au/our-venues/Watt-Restaurant-+-Bar/10>



The End, West End

(Image shown previous page)

'... a small-town bar in West End, tucked nicely off the main drag. We're the hideout and hangout for locals and visitors alike. We're craft beers on tap, some house brews, an extensive rum list and tropical cocktails.

The record player is almost always in full swing to boot. Open 7 nights a week from 3pm till midnight... a small space - 100 person capacity in fact. This does on the odd occasion restrict the types of function we'll play host to, but it's always worth asking'.

<http://www.73vulture.com/>

All One Word, Fortitude Valley

A club and live music venue in the Valley.

'Escape to Alloneword and unwind in its stylish and intimate surrounds in the very hub of Brisbane's nightlife, Fortitude Valley. Situated in the upper end of Brunswick Street in Fortitude Valley (Brisbane), Alloneword offers an unrivalled function venue experience with two areas to choose from.

With its open-air, or indoor booths designed for your privacy and comfort, Alloneword is the perfect destination for you to relax, unwind and appreciate the intimacy of this Brisbane bar'.

<http://www.alloneword.com.au/brisbane-venue/>





Canvas, Woolloongabba

Situated within the north Logan Road pedestrianisation, Canvas at Woolloongabba is '... the bar equivalent of a fine dining restaurant. We serve a selection of boutique wines and craft beer and are passionate about using only the freshest fruit and premium spirits in our range of cocktails'.

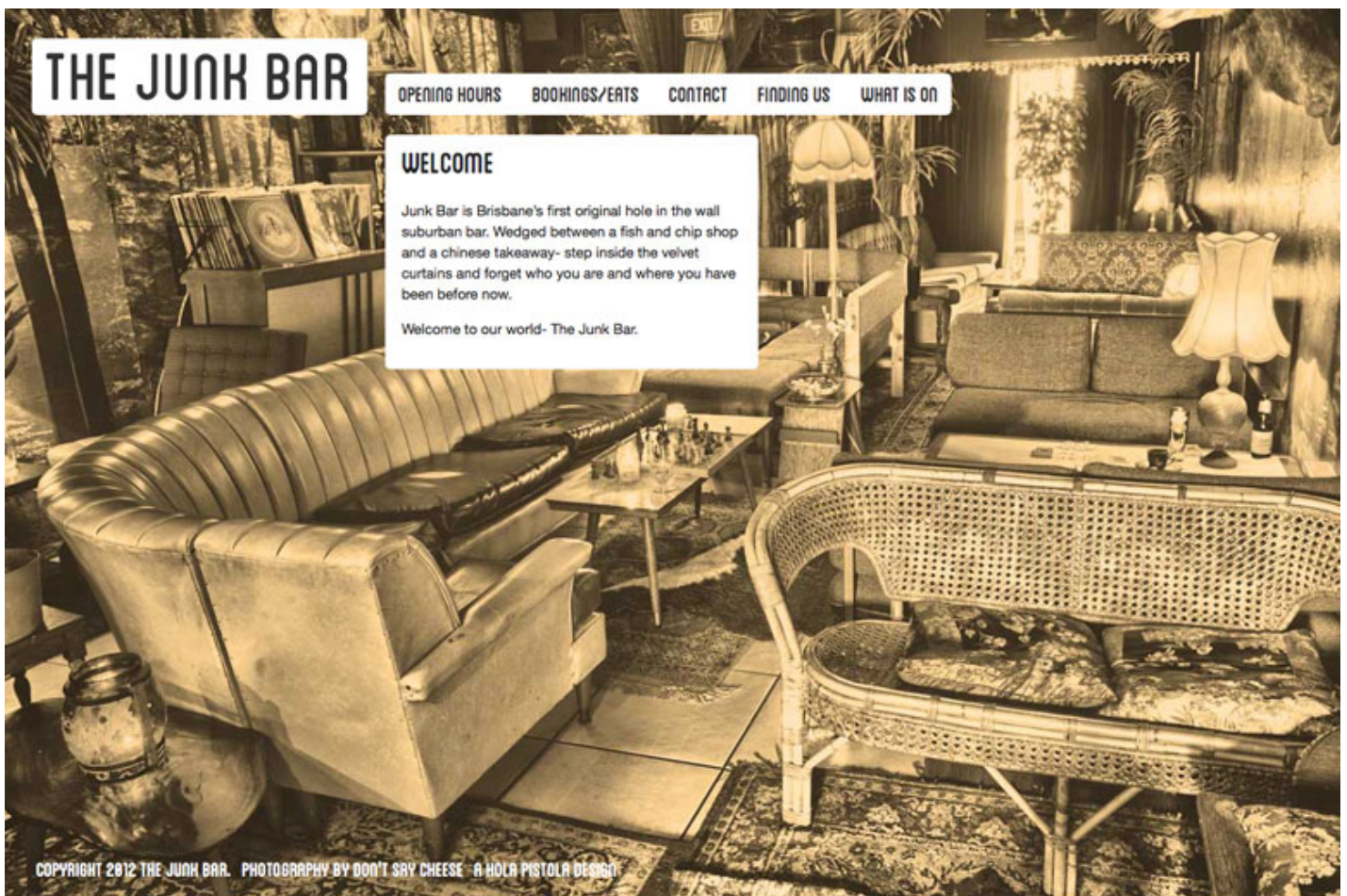
<http://www.canvasclub.com.au/>



Junk Bar, Ashgrove

Junk Bar is Brisbane's first original hole in the wall suburban bar. Wedged between a fish and chip shop and a Chinese takeaway- step inside the velvet curtains and forget who you are and where you have been before now.

<http://www.thejunkbar.com.au/>



COPYRIGHT 2012 THE JUNK BAR. PHOTOGRAPHY BY DON'T SAY CHEESE - A HOLLA PISTOLA DESIGN

The Bowery Bar, City

An award winning and exclusive city cocktails bar. Opulent, art deco styling.

<http://thebowery.com.au/>



The Scratch Bar, Milton

A craft beer house.

<http://www.scratchbar.com/>



The Laneway, City

'... the Laneway occupies an elevated space off Spencer Lane, behind The Euro. It can be accessed either through The Euro or directly via Spencer Lane off Margaret Street (between Edward Street and Felix Street).

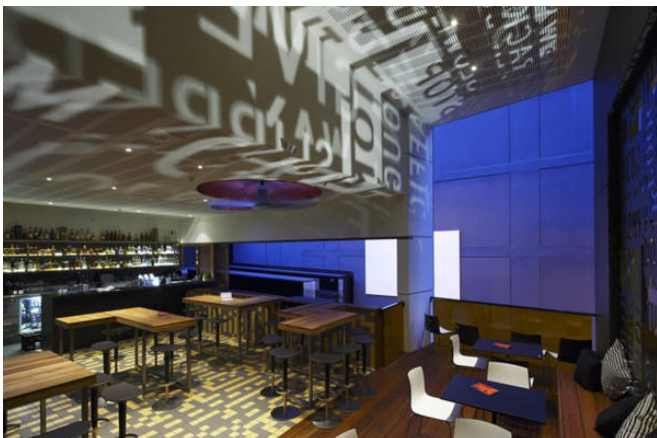
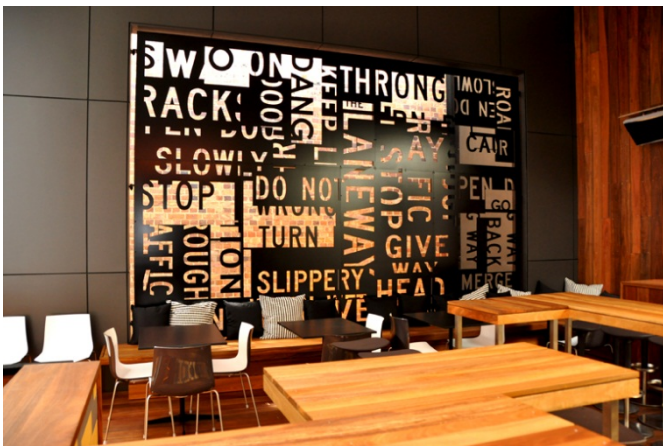
It offers creative cocktails, an eclectic wine list, and a boast-worthy selection of boutique beers and ciders. The Laneway brings cosmopolitan bar culture to the city, with freshly squeezed citrus juices, premium ice and an extensive range of back bar and first pour spirits.

A large screen mounted across the lane enables films and television to be projected over the divide, creating a laneway experience unique to Brisbane.

Featuring a mix of classic and contemporary music and high calibre bar cuisine, The Laneway provides a unique and intimate space where patrons can lose all sense of time'.

(Image on page following)

<http://www.urbanerestaurant.com/the-laneway/>





The Brunswick Social, Fortitude Valley

' . . . after just one year The Brunswick Social has established itself as one of the premier late night hotspots in the Fortitude Valley. The venue is situated underground in Brisbane's once iconic basement boutique 'Lucid Laundry'. The warm, chic decor and soft lighting sets the scene for the educated late night crowd and cocktail aficionados.

Hidden below street level away from the clarion call of Fortitude Valley, descending the stairs of The Brunswick Social is like entering another world. Industrial white-washed concrete walls, white polished cement floors, exposed hanging light bulbs, long rustic wooden tables and flickering candlelight create an acute sense of intimacy. Each aspect is thoughtfully considered from the ordering system (menus are printed on paper and given to diners to tick off their order with a tiny pencil) to the creative cocktail concoctions. This late-night dumpling house is open late on Friday and Saturday nights, serving steamed and lacy fried dumplings. Try the prawn and coriander dumplings or the BBQ pork buns'.

(Image on page following)

<http://www.thebrunswicksocial.com/#>

