

# Brick Lane

Choi Ropiha

Sydney

Australia 2008



Project - About Face 2008

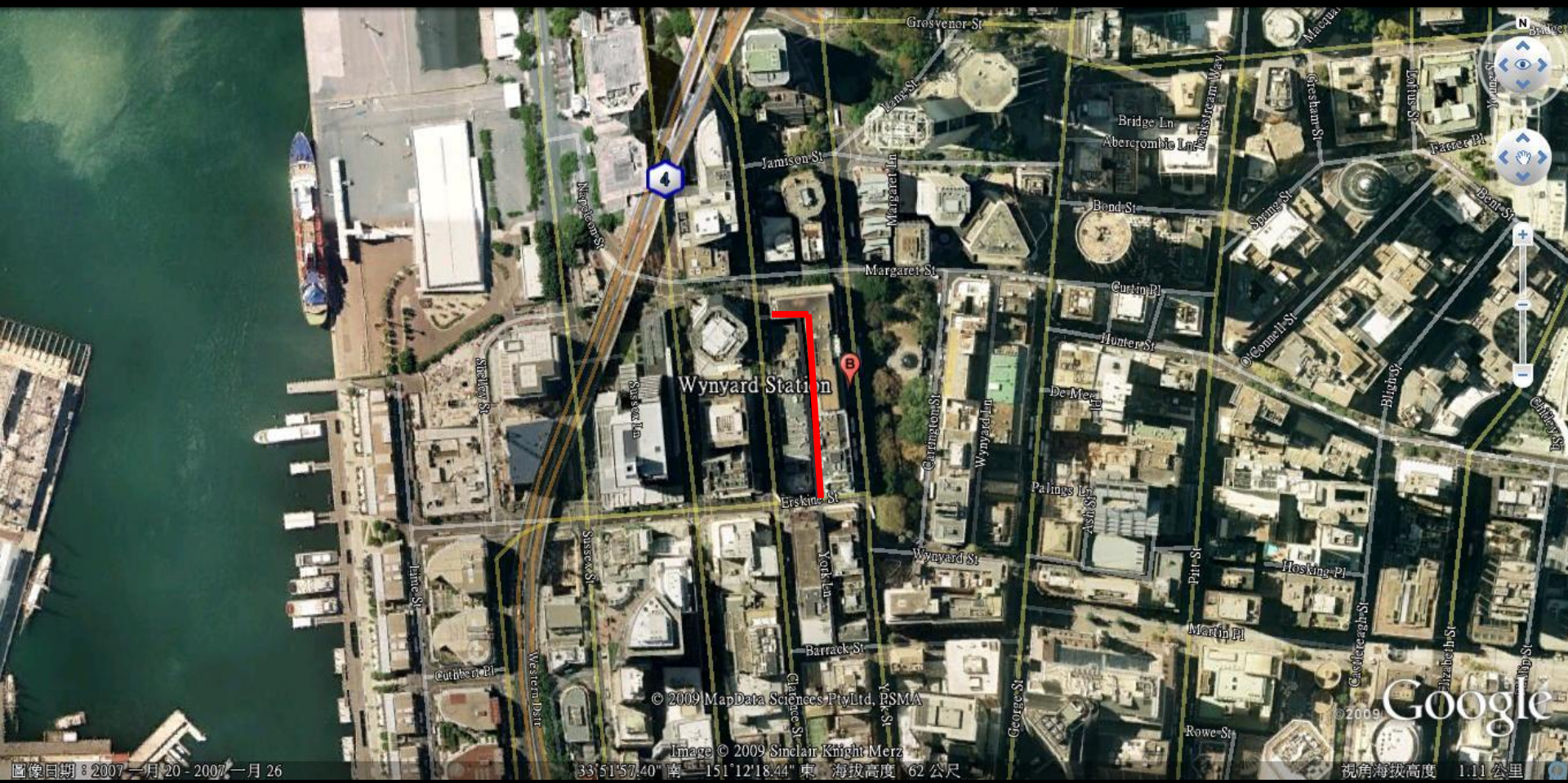
Program - Innovative use of brick in a public building and space

Location - York Lane, Sydney

Client - Think Brick Australia

Service - Competition Design

Status - Highly Commended



LOCATION : York Lane near Wynyard station of Sydney

Choi Ropiha was one of six architects invited to participate in the 2008 About Face Design Research Competition funded by Think Brick Australia. The brief was to investigate innovation in brick with public building and public space as the program.

We envisage a transformation of Sydney CBD laneways with the use of brick. There are 103 under-utilised lane sites in the CBD, all of which could become vibrant public places given the treatment we propose. The design comprises of two elements, pivoting panels and the lane itself. The opened panels will create spaces that can be inexpensively appropriated by young, government sponsored entrepreneurs seeking to establish cultural programs within the city centre; wine bars, eateries, exhibition spaces, markets – all the programs given impetus by the new relaxed NSW liquor licensing legislation.

Sydney's lanes are currently rough and utilitarian. The idea with the new brick insertions is to maintain this character and not to disturb practical lane functions such as the flow of deliveries. By day the new panels lie flush with the lane edges, camouflaged by a rough brick external surface. A transformation will occur every evening when the panels unfurl from the lane walls and ground to reveal luscious interiors lined with glazed bricks and filled with food, wine, coffee, art, reading and talk. The operational lane functions give way to people and life, an unexpected morphosis from industry to culture. Sydney's lanes will be seductive, becoming public rooms hidden in the city fabric, awaiting discovery by curious, hungry and culturally starved inhabitants

We have played with the intrigue and potential for mystery created by transforming a lane into a public place, an effect heightened by executing the design in brick. It is the perceived ordinariness of bricks that give the possibility of achieving a new reality within the material condition of laneways.

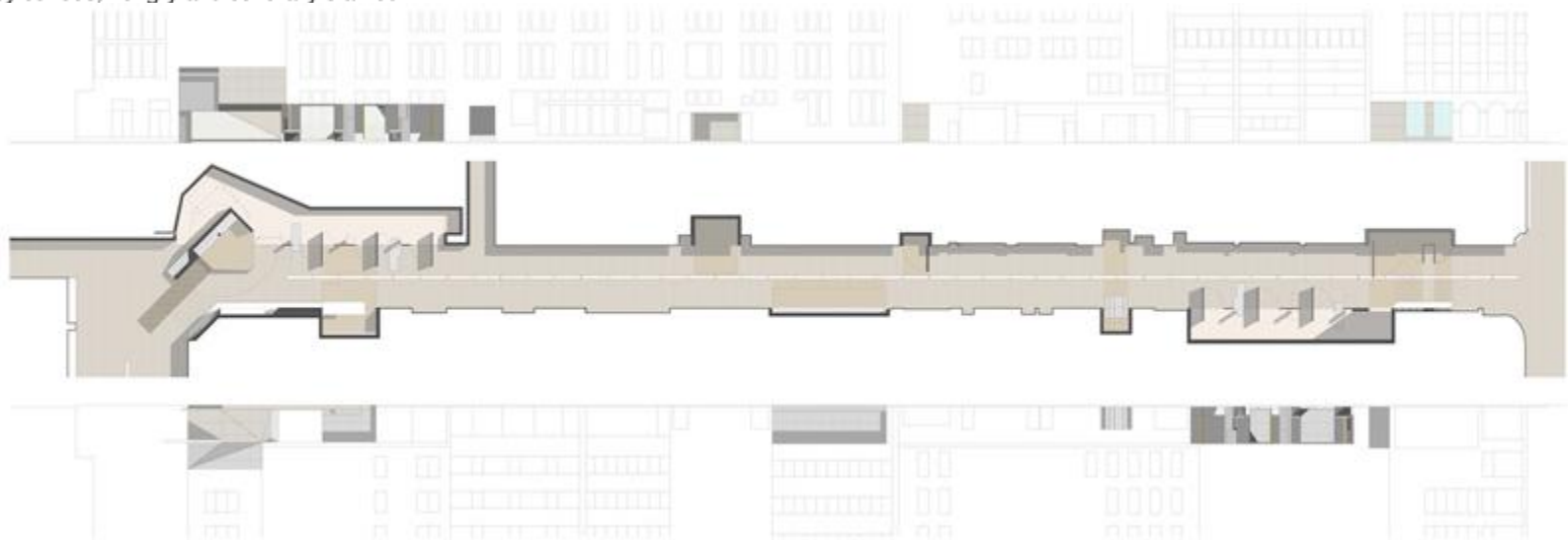
As the architect Adam Caruso said, "To make an extraordinary material special, is banal. To heighten one's awareness of a humble material like brick, is poetic."

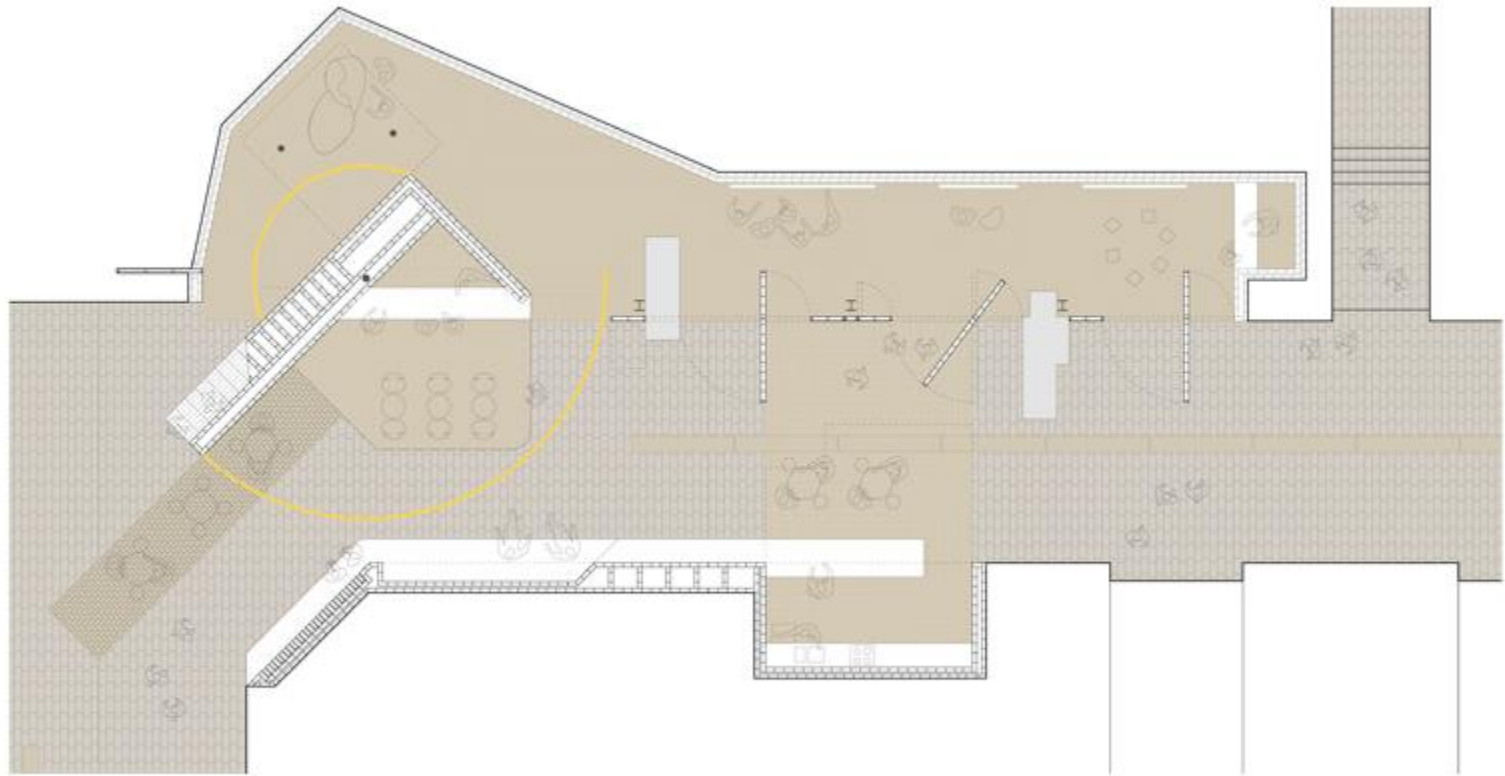
Given each module's potential for infinite variation when assembled on mass, one can imagine a 'secret life' latent within every brick. This was our clue for making brick poetic.

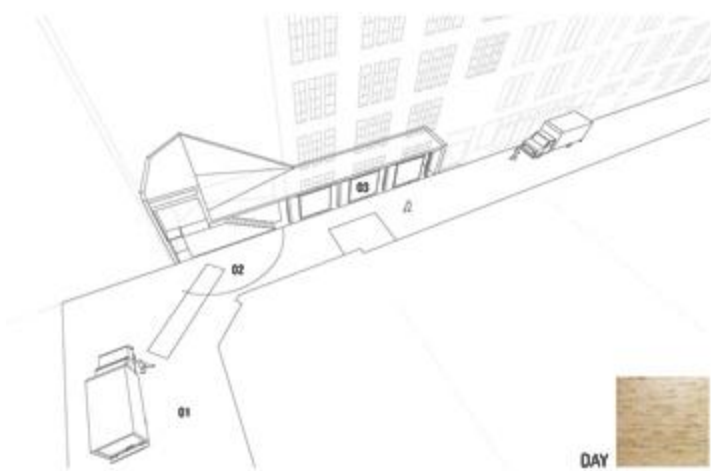
The materiality of brick has been paired with the spatiality of lanes to generate a symbiotic relationship that intensifies the poetic mystery endowed within the space and the material. As a consequence of this approach we have developed a design that suppresses structural and formal expression, allowing the bricks autonomy from technique.

The potency of brick and lane is not derived from flamboyance, but through quiet details that arrange bricks in panels and patterns with only a hint of shiny metal for contrast. The brick lane is a case for a material basis to form.

The design was awarded High Commendation.

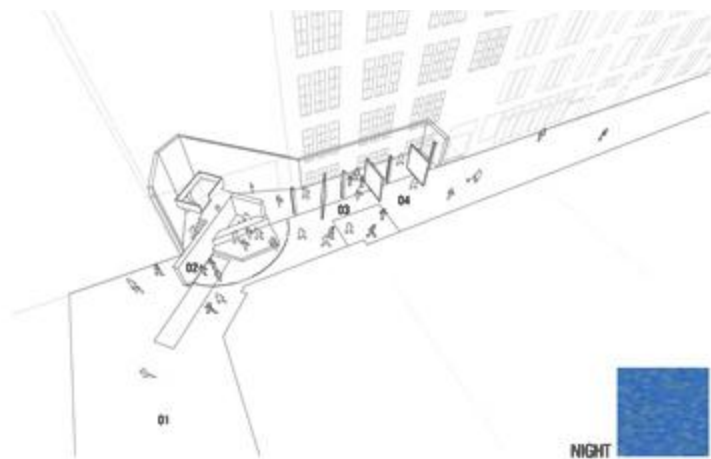






**BRICK LANE FUNCTIONAL DIAGRAM**

- 01 LANE
- 02 LANE KEPT CLEAR FOR UTILITARIAN FUNCTIONS
- 03 BRICK COMPONENTS FOLDED FLUSH WITH LANE CONTEXT



**BRICK LANE FUNCTIONAL DIAGRAM**

- 01 LANE
- 02 UNFURLED PANELS AND BAR
- 03 GALLERY SPACE SPILLING INTO LANE
- 04 CROWDS ENJOYING THE LANE

