

GEORGE STREET PLAZA &  
COMMUNITY BUILDING

Press Kit | March 2023

Adjaye Associates

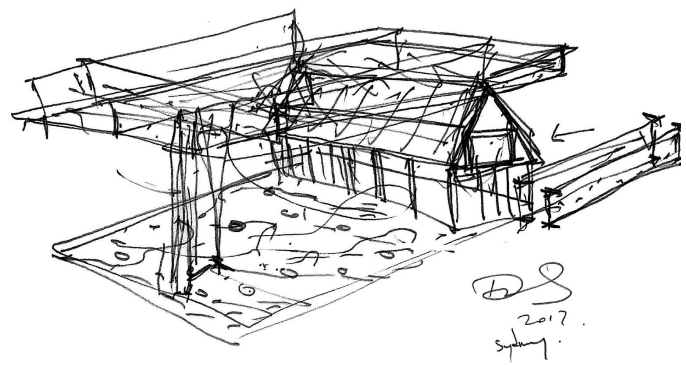






“My hope is that this new community building and George Street public plaza will become a cherished destination in Sydney’s city center, a generative place for people to connect, recharge, reflect and take a pause from the rhythm of a fast-transforming city”

David Adjaye







View from George Street of the perforated canopy which shelters and unites the building and plaza

## GEORGE STREET PLAZA & COMMUNITY BUILDING

Sydney, Australia

Rooted in lost history, the new Sydney Plaza & Community Building is about the meaning of place, heritage, and identity. An attempt to uncover, layer, and celebrate the Eora origins of this part of coastal Sydney, the project is about the reconciliation of cultures and defining identity in an ever-changing world. This acknowledgement of difference lies at the heart of the proposal and aims to create hybrid mutations from the layers of human inhabitation on the land that elucidate the history of encounters between settlers and indigenous communities.

Inspired by simple unitary forms and placemaking in Aboriginal culture, Sydney Plaza's new cultural anchor point is a seed of history based around the notion of shelter—a symbolic room to pause from the rhythm of a fast-transforming city that is discovered and dissolves through light.

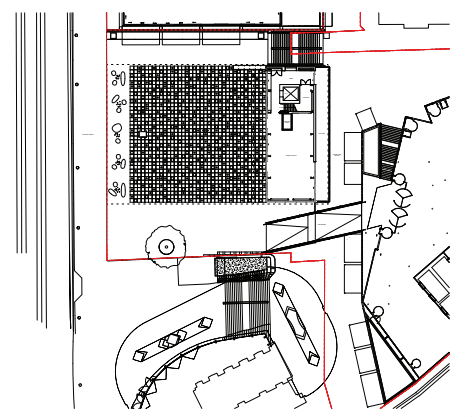
To connect this profound center with the site's heritage and origins, Adjaye collaborated with Daniel Boyd, a renowned contemporary artist of Kudjira / Gangalu Aboriginal descent, on the project's key feature—a 27x34m perforated canopy that shelters and unites the community building and the plaza under a poetic layer of light and dark, solid and void.

### Client

City of Sydney / Lendlease

### Size

1,200 m<sup>2</sup> / 12,917 ft<sup>2</sup>

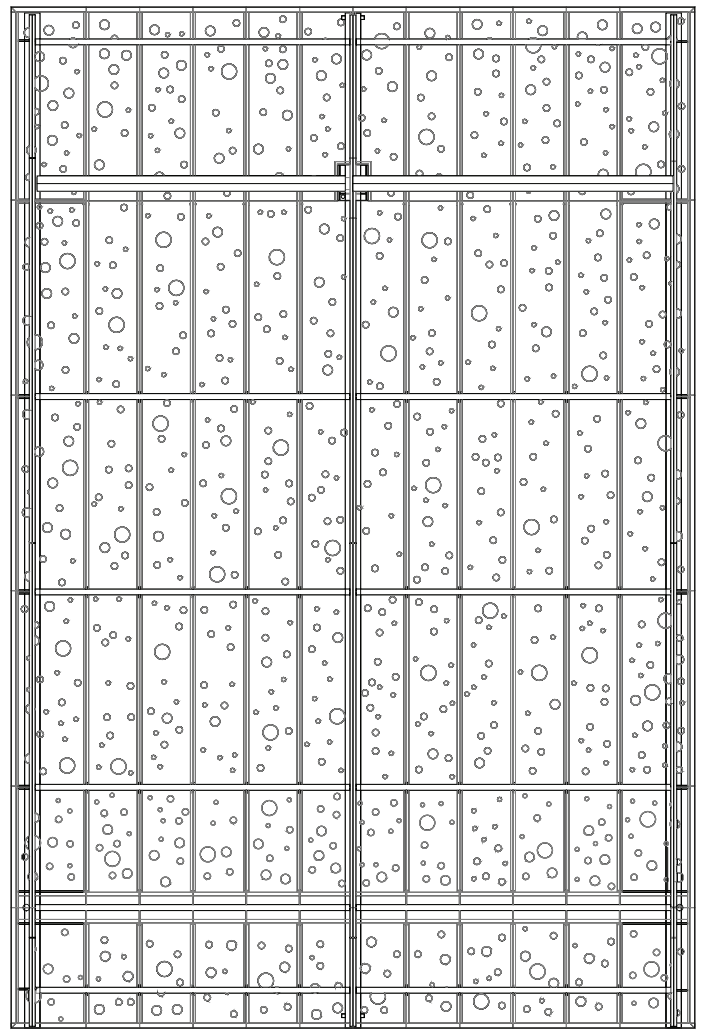


Site Plan





View looking up at perforated canopy which filters dappled light onto the plaza and the facade of the community building



Plan of the canopy artwork comprised of 72 panels with circular, mirror lined openings

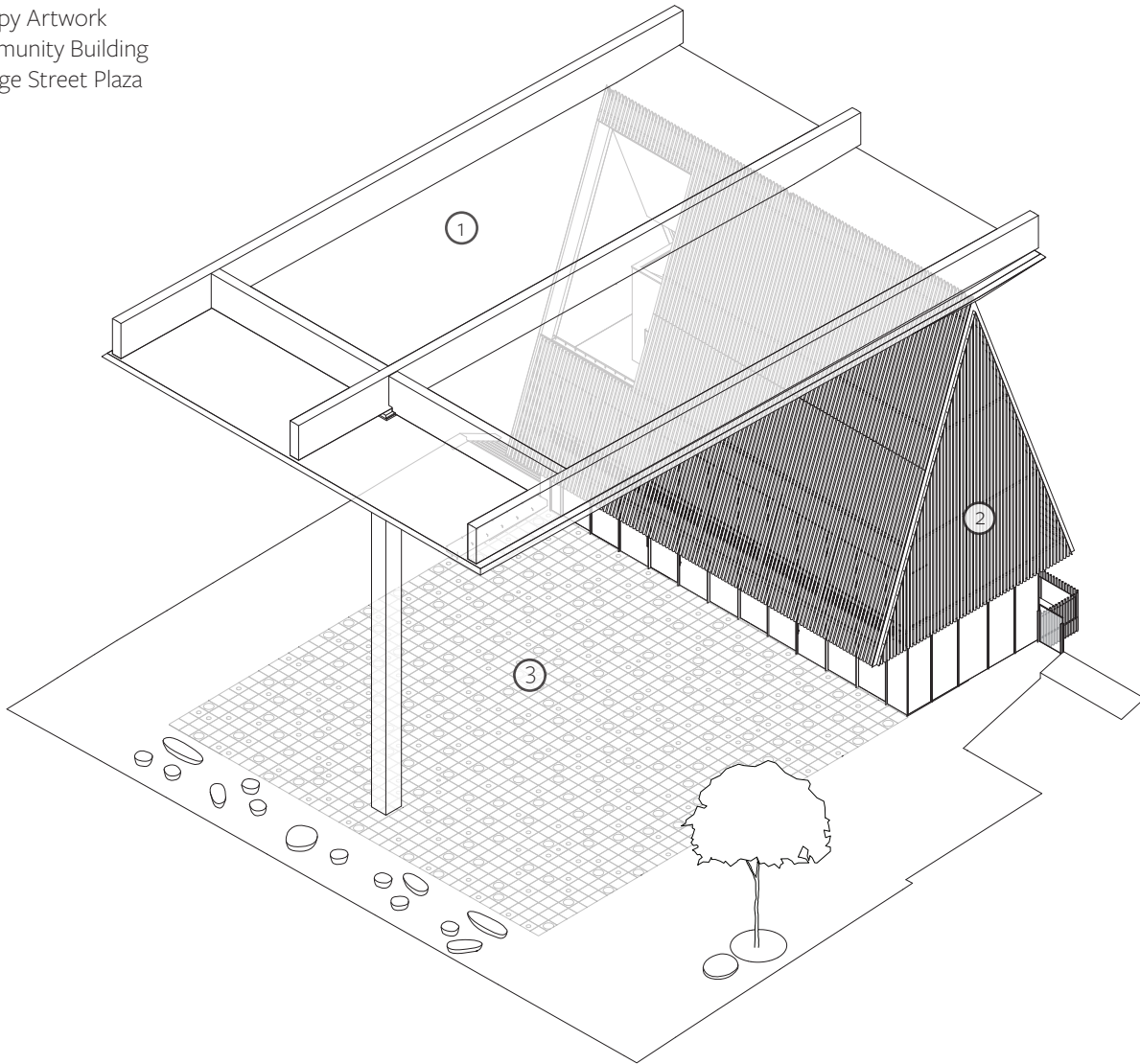


The steel canopy is punctured by mirror-lined openings with views to the sky

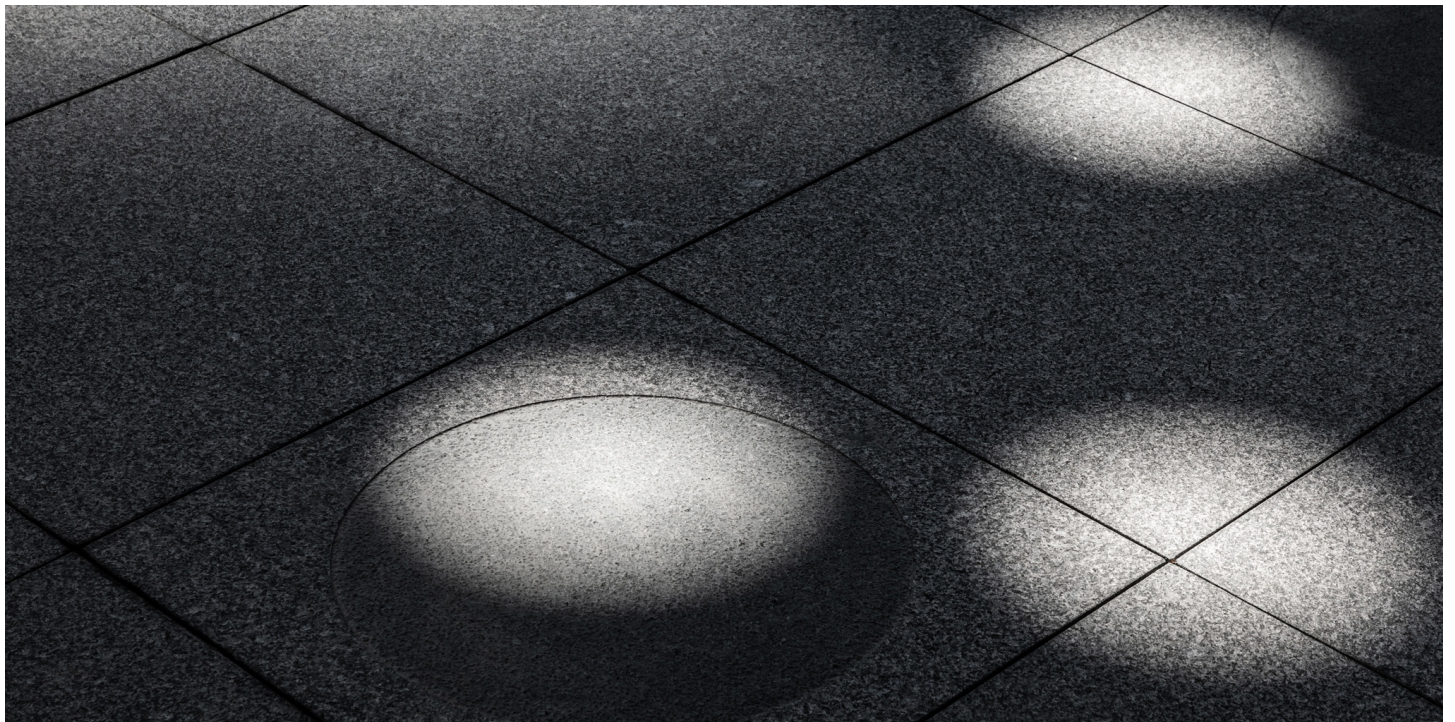
An indirect meditation on Gestalt psychology, Boyd's artwork is experienced as a cosmic journey of light that filters and refracts through multiple, randomly scattered, circular, mirror-lined openings that culminate as a holistic visual field. Suspended from a series of trusses supported by a singular steel column, the canopy defines the rectangular perimeter of the public plaza and helps to dissolve the surrounding architecture to activate a new place of collective encounter.



1. Canopy Artwork
2. Community Building
3. George Street Plaza



Axonometric view of George Street Plaza, canopy artwork and the community building



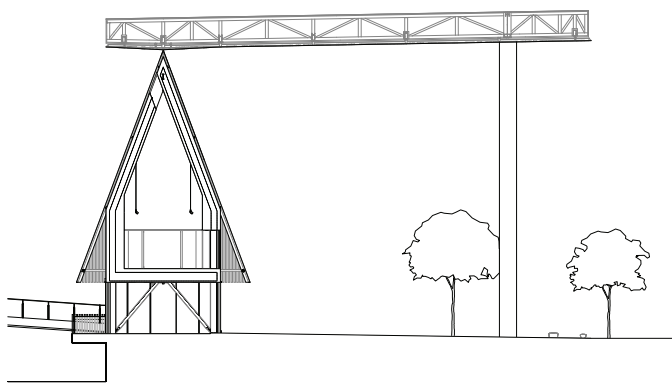
Patterns distilled from canopy artwork create shadows onto the street paving which features circular detailing



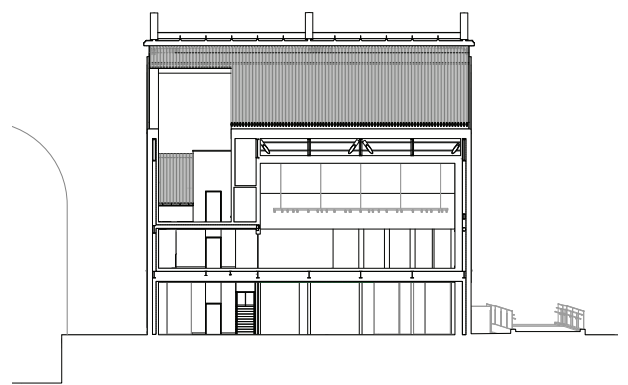


View of the rhythmic utilitarian steel screen that form the pitched roof

Weaving layers that illuminate a sense of place, the distinctive pitched roof of the community building refers to the primary silhouette of early settlers' houses—wrapped in a reduced utilitarian steel form. Underneath, an open plan gallery and indoor-outdoor viewing platform overlooking the plaza offer a flexible free flow space inspired by indigenous ideas of enclosure—defined by a warm, inviting timber material palette. Seamless encounters between art and community are activated by connections to the plaza and adjacent developments; histories and memories are layered into the place as one passes through. The result is a hybrid form that merges the legacy of early settlers and industrial materiality with Aboriginal origins.




Section North South



Section West East





“It provides a space of contemplation and diversity, a space to extend knowledge of experience – a multiplicity of experiences and narratives, currently extending back 60,000 years through the connection of the Gadigal people of the Eora nation. Acknowledging that we can never fully comprehend our past or future is the first step in reconciling differences of perception.”

“The idea of a public plaza provided a great opportunity for David and I to work together on the concept of relationships – how we as individuals perceive our relationship to a particular place and how collectively those relationships play out in a space.”

Artist - Daniel Boyd

“This is an incredibly powerful work because it’s so unusual. It’s a public square but it’s also a room within the city. It has that wonderful ambiguity and the potential for an incredible presence in the evening.”

City of Sydney’s Director of City Planning - Graham Jahn

A warm timber material palette defines this open plan, flexible community space overlooking the George Street Plaza



## ABOUT ADJAYE ASSOCIATES

Since establishing Adjaye Associates in 2000, David Adjaye has crafted a global team that is multicultural and stimulated by the broadest possible cultural discourse. The practice has studios in Accra, London and New York with work spanning the globe. The practice's most well-known commission to date, the **Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC)**, opened in 2016 on the National Mall in Washington, DC and was named "Cultural Event of the Year" by The New York Times.

Other notable ongoing and completed projects include: **Newton Enslaved Burial Ground Memorial** in Bridgetown, Barbados; **The Africa Institute** in Sharjah, UAE; **District Hospitals** in multiple locations across Ghana; the **Edo Museum of West African Art (EMOWAA)** in Benin City, Nigeria; the **Thabo Mbeki Presidential Library** in Johannesburg, South Africa; a new home for **The Studio Museum in Harlem**, New York; **130 William**, a high-rise residential tower in New York's financial district; the new **George Street Plaza**, a public plaza community building and artwork in Sydney's Central Business District; **The Abrahamic Family House**, an interfaith complex in Abu Dhabi; a new facility for the **Princeton University Art Museum**; new headquarters for the **International Financial Corporation (IFC)** in Dakar, Senegal; the **National Cathedral of Ghana** in Accra; the **Marine Drive Accra** in Accra, Ghana; the **East County Library** in Oregon; and the **UK Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre**, situated in London next to the Houses of Parliament.

The firm has received widespread recognition for its contributions to architecture. Adjaye was announced the winner of the 2021 RIBA Royal Gold Medal, considered one of the highest honors in British architecture for significant contributions to the field internationally.

In his award citation, the 2021 RIBA Honours Committee explained, "Through his work as an architect Sir David Adjaye speaks confidently across cultures, disciplines, politics, and continents. His body of work is global and local, finely attuned as it reflects and responds to context and community, climate, and culture."

## ABOUT DANIEL BOYD

Daniel Boyd, the first indigenous Australian to win the prestigious Bulgari Art Award, focuses his practice on images of colonial and postcolonial Australian-European history. He reinterprets portraits of prominent figures in his signature black-and-white dotted style, suggesting an alternative truth underlying the representation of these so-called heroes. In *King No Beard* (2007), King George III is adorned with an eye patch and parrot like a pirate. Boyd's practice is research-intensive; during a three-month residency at the Natural History Museum, he studied the relationship between aboriginal people and the British Empire. By presenting in-depth narratives, Boyd resurfaces what has been lost to history. According to the artist, it is important for native peoples in Australia to "continue to create dialogue from their own perspective, to challenge the subjective history that has been created."

In Australia, his work is held in the National Gallery of Australia, the Art Gallery of New South Wales, the National Gallery of Victoria, and the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery. He has also exhibited at the Natural History Museum in London, the Venice Biennale, the Seoul Museum of Art, the Kochi-Muziris Biennale and the Museu Picasso.

**Design Team**

**Design Architect**  
Adjaye Associates

**Architect of Record**  
Architectus

**Artist**  
Daniel Boyd

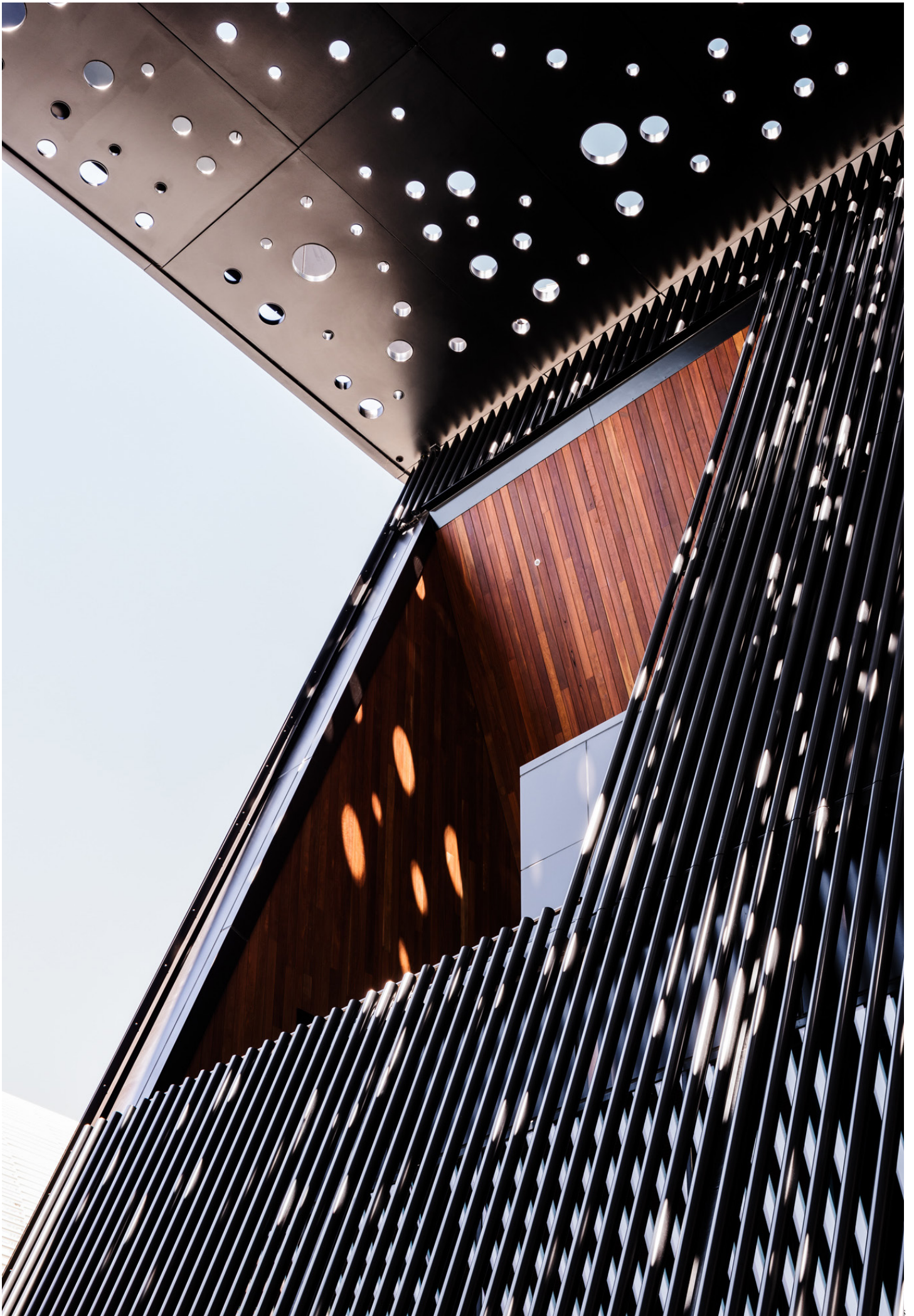
**Mechanical/Plumbing Engineer**  
Lendlease

**Structural Engineer**  
Arup



George Street Plaza & Community Building | Adjaye Associates





Perforated light shining on to timber clad viewing terrace





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