

COUNCIL DIRECTION ON PLAZA DE LA GUERRA

October 26, 2004

1. Postpone consideration of **General Plan Amendment (GPA 1 – 2002)** regarding Plaza de la Guerra.
2. Direct staff to proceed with the **conceptual design of infrastructure improvements** for the Plaza (including Storke Placita) with the following project components:
 - Replace sidewalks, install new ramps, and provide designated parking spaces to meet ADA standards;
 - Relocate the electrical service structure to a more secure and serviceable location off-site;
 - Upgrade the electric power capacity to serve the needs of the Plaza for special events (e.g. Fiesta, concerts, etc.) without being dependent on temporary grade-level connections to adjacent buildings;
 - Improve the landscaping with a consistent design for Storke Placita, the plantings fronting City Hall and the Parking Lot; and that reduces or removes the agapanthus near De la Guerra Street;
 - Replace or upgrade the park benches, trash/recycling receptacles, bike racks, lighting, news-racks, etc.;
 - Provide an enclosure for trash and recycling bins, with capacity to serve properties and businesses adjacent to the Plaza and Storke Placita;
 - Design the roadway and interior lawn so that they would function in a safe manner both for automobiles and for pedestrians during large community events;
 - If necessary and feasible, improve the storm water drainage system;
 - Improve the signage (vehicle and pedestrian) in, and adjacent to, the Plaza and Storke Placita; and
 - Improve the “connectivity” of the Plaza to Casa de la Guerra with raised crosswalks or distinctive materials.
3. With the intent of eventually reconstructing the **Harmer Adobe**, direct staff to explore the potential interest in a public/private partnership with community groups (e.g. Trust for Historic Preservation, Historical Society, Pearl Chase Society, Old Spanish Days, etc.) and the Santa Barbara News-Press. Such discussions should include, at a minimum:
 - Re-use options for the structure (public restrooms, downtown/historic district visitor information center, etc.);

- Construction financing options; and
 - A parking study for replacement of the City Hall parking spaces that would be displaced if the project were to be pursued.
4. Invite the owners of businesses and properties that front on the Plaza and Storke Placita to consider the potential for structural alterations or operational changes that would reorient or expand their presence or activities toward the Plaza and Storke Placita.
 5. Direct staff to proceed immediately to remove at least a portion of the **parallel parking** area along the inner curb adjacent to the lawn, in order to reduce the existing vehicle circulation conflicts in the roadway. Consideration should also be given to the possible removal of parking areas under the pepper tree for safety reasons. For parking spaces that may be removed, consideration should be given to their replacement within the surrounding neighborhood. Designated parking spaces for motorcycles should be provided.
 6. The **process** for developing the conceptual site-plan and design for the infrastructure improvements, outlined above in Recommendation 2, should include the following:
 - Community Development/Redevelopment Agency staff should be in the lead with support from Parks and Recreation and Public Works Departments;
 - The services of a professional landscape architect should be secured;
 - Worksessions with property owners and businesses adjacent to the Plaza should be held at each step in the design process to provide information and to receive feedback;
 - A seven person sub-committee should be formed with representatives appointed by the Parks and Recreation, Planning and Historic Landmarks Commissions, the Transportation and Circulation Committee, the Downtown Organization, a representative from adjacent businesses, and a Councilmember, to provide feedback to the project design team and to assist with facilitating the review of the conceptual design by their respective Commissions; and
 - Quarterly progress reports should be provided to the City Council.
 7. Following the conclusion of the process as described in #6 above, the conceptual site-plan and design, along with cost estimates and funding options, should be presented to the City Council for further direction. Included in this would be decisions with respect to the scope of the project to be submitted for environmental review as part of the City's discretionary review process and the specific sources and amount of funding available for the improvement project.

**Plaza de la Guerra Infrastructure Sub-committee
September 2006**

City Council - Das Williams

Historic Landmarks Commission - Steve Hausz

Parks and Recreation Commission - Daraka Larimore-Hall

Planning Commission - Bill Mahan

Transportation and Circulation Committee - Dr. Michael Cooper

Local Businesses - Randy Alcorn

Santa Barbara Downtown Organization - Marshall Rose

PLAZA DE LA GUERRA INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS DESIGN INTENT STATEMENT

Purpose: To guide the design of the council-directed infrastructure improvements

History/Style

Plaza de la Guerra was a gift to the people of Santa Barbara from the de la Guerra family. It was designated a public square and promenade in 1853 and was intended to follow the "European" model of a plaza as an urban refuge where the community could gather for events and socializing.

"As the city grew, Santa Barbarans began to take an interest in the city's image and the need to create a special identity for it, periodically considering plans for the De la Guerra plot, and proposals to make it a 'proper' plaza."

In the 1920s, civic leaders imagined a comprehensive vision of a "City in Spain." First publicly proposed in February 1922, the idea was centered around the restoration of Plaza de la Guerra as an open public space and the creation of a new commercial quarter (*El Paseo*) behind the historic Casa de la Guerra, located on the north side of De la Guerra Street.

The Spanish Eclectic styled City Hall building was completed in 1924 and anchors the easterly side of the Plaza. The City Hall parking lot overlays the former site of the historic Harmer Adobe. The Harmer Adobe, also known as the Yorba-Abadie Adobe was built in 1826, damaged in the 1925 earthquake and eventually razed in the 1940s to provide more automobile parking.

At the southerly end of the Plaza stands the Santa Barbara News-Press building, designed in 1922 by George Washington Smith in Spanish Colonial Revival style. The tower element on the eastern end of the building was added in 1951.

Prominent on the Plaza's westerly side is the Spanish Colonial Revival styled "La Placita" Building designed in 1925 with distinctive first story arches which complement those of the City Hall. The third floor was added in the 1980s.

Old City Hall, which stood in the center of the parcel, was demolished in 1924 and the resulting plaza has remained open space since. The two palm trees planted in 1910 at the rear of the former city hall remain to mark the location. Renamed from City Hall Plaza to Plaza de la Guerra after the family who originally deeded the space to the citizens of Santa Barbara, the plaza almost immediately became home to Old Spanish Days Fiesta celebrations and other social community events.

Information sourced from:

Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation. Plaza de la Guerra Reconsidered Exhibition and Symposium. 1st ed. Santa Barbara: Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation, 2002.

Objectives

To implement project components as directed by City Council for conceptual design of infrastructure improvements (see separate document).

Accessibility

A safe, functionally improved, and aesthetic connection between Storke Placita, the Plaza and Casa de la Guerra is desired. Pedestrians¹ should experience an inviting and fluid movement through the area. The design should increase accessibility and ease of use for all persons, including those with disabilities. Distinctive materials and special crosswalk treatments may be used to enhance perception of the connection between the Placita, Plaza and Casa de la Guerra.

Pedestrian Amenities

Park benches, trash/recycling receptacles, bike racks, and newspaper cabinets should echo the designs populating State Street. Lighting should be designed in an appropriate functional and aesthetic form, and should reinforce a pedestrian scale.

Utilities

Upgraded electrical service should be relocated and distributed in a manner that is safe, secure, and convenient for use during special events (e.g. Fiesta, concerts, bazaars, etc), and of sufficient capacity for all Plaza uses. Utilities should be treated in a manner that minimizes the visual presence. Trash and recycling dumpsters need to be integrated into the design in a manner that is aesthetically acceptable, yet is functionally appropriate for tenants and collection.

Loop Road and Parking

The interface between the roadway and the lawn and other pedestrian areas should be designed to function in a safe manner both for vehicles and pedestrians during large community events. Eliminating tripping hazards and providing a greater comprehensive area for use in community festivals is important. Roadway vehicle circulation and parking also remain essential considerations and should prevent or reasonably minimize opportunities for errant vehicles to roll onto the Plaza lawn. Removable or retractable bollards should be considered for traffic control at the vehicle entrance and exit to the Plaza. .

Landscaping

A comprehensive and sustainable landscaping plan should extend from Storke Placita through the Plaza - including City Hall and City Hall parking lot frontage. An unobstructed view of the Plaza from De la Guerra Street should be a feature derived from removal of the agapanthus at the northerly end of the park.

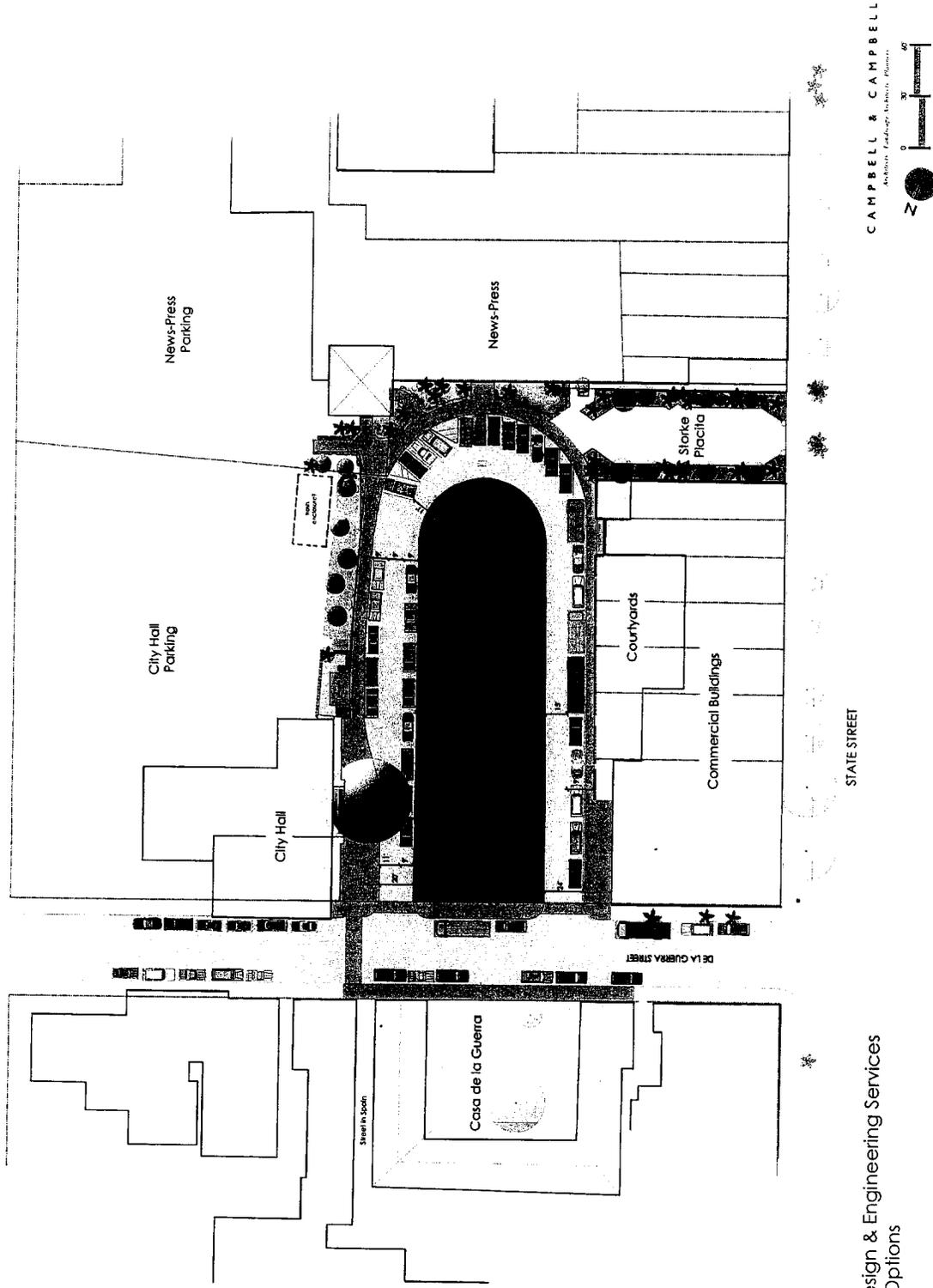
Budget and Implementation

Improvements should be conceived as being implemented in phases over a multi-year period.

¹ The term "pedestrian", where used in this document, should be construed to include all persons with disabilities, and is intended to distinguish these users of the Plaza from vehicles.

Plaza De la Guerra - Concept A

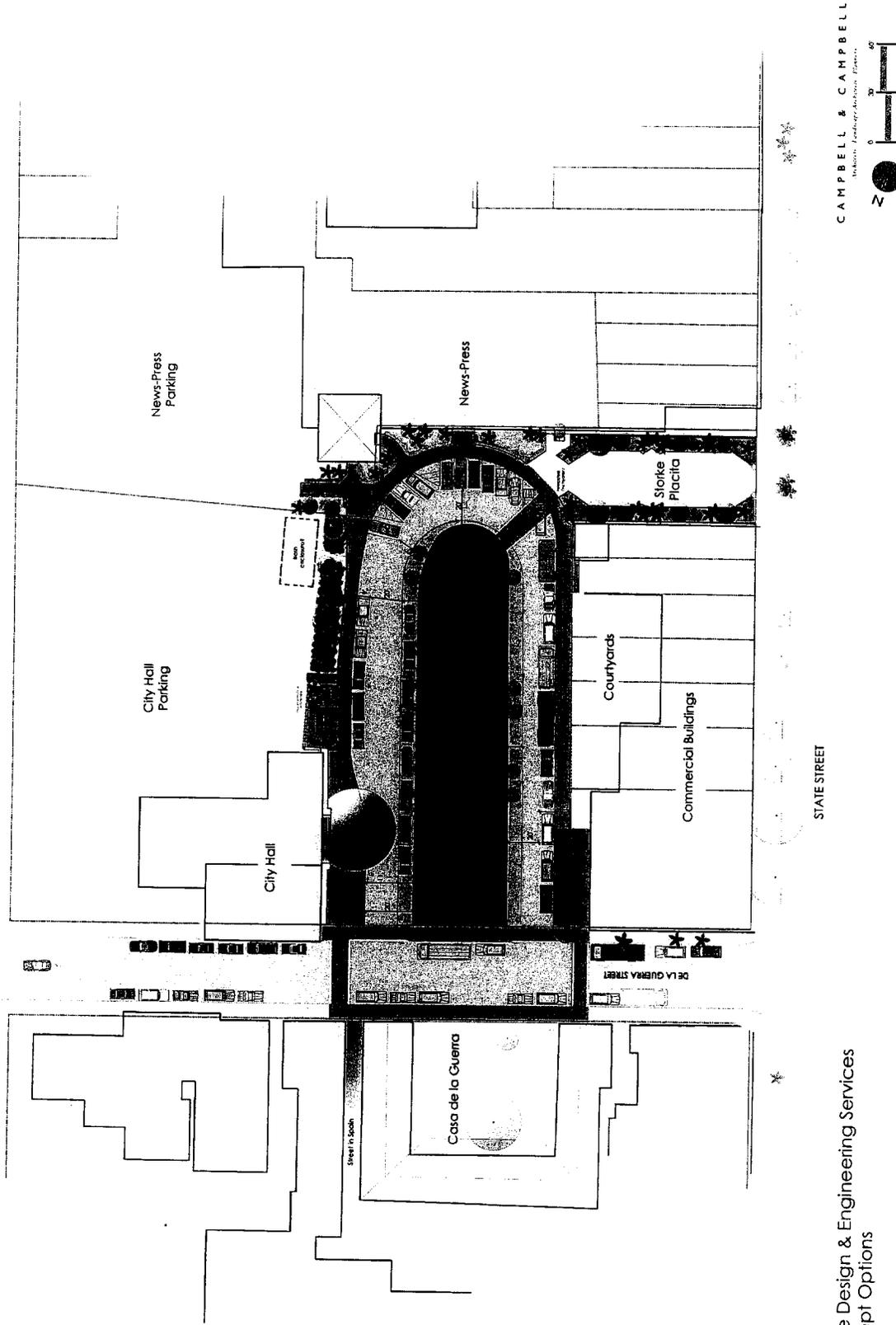
October 3, 2006



Infrastructure Design & Engineering Services
Initial Concept Options

CAMPBELL & CAMPBELL
Architects, Landscape Architects, Planners

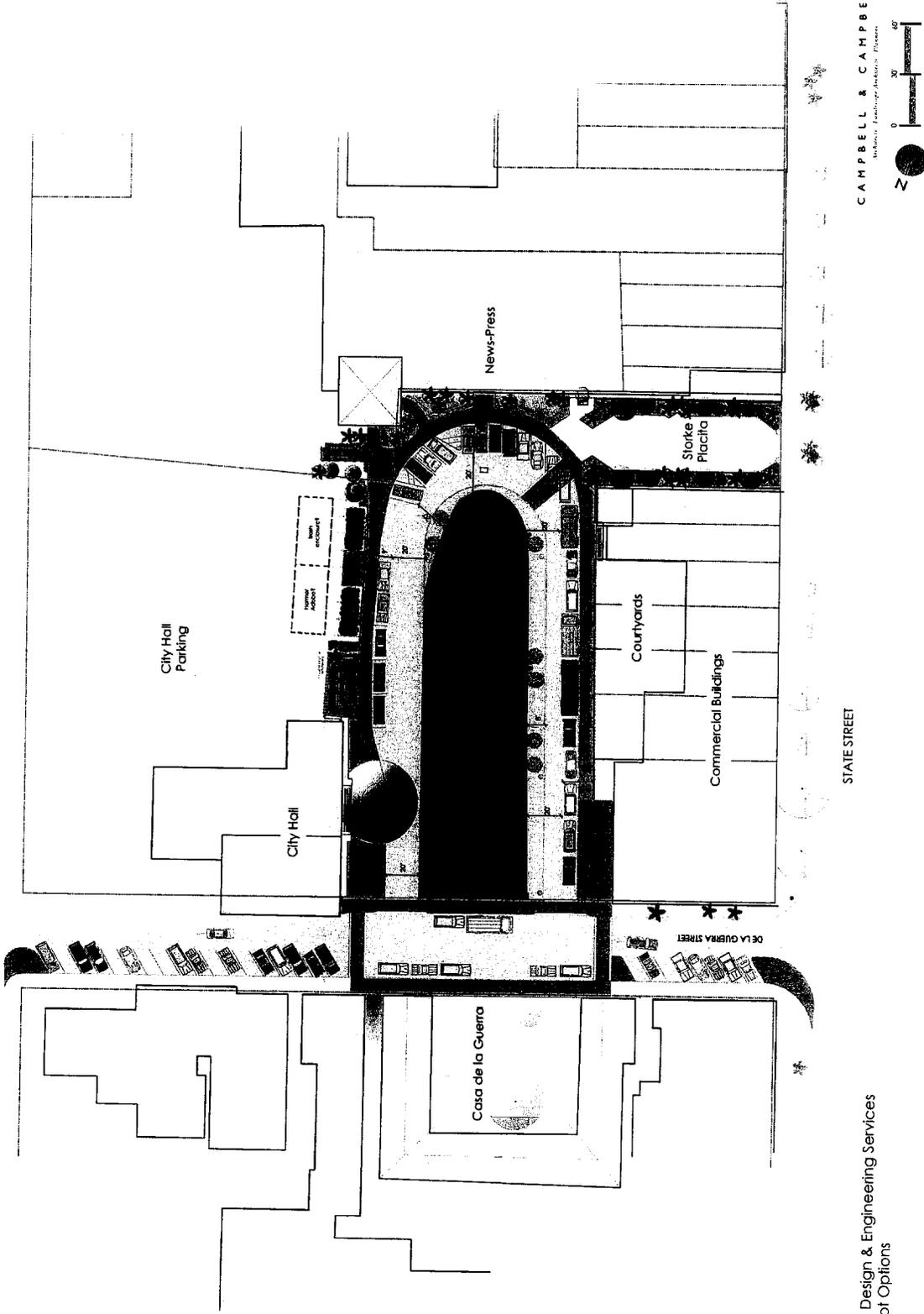
Plaza De la Guerra - Concept B
October 3, 2006



Infrastructure Design & Engineering Services
Initial Concept Options

CAMPBELL & CAMPBELL
Architects, Engineers, Planners

Plaza De la Guerra - Concept C
October 3, 2006



Infrastructure Design & Engineering Services
Initial Concept Options

CAMPBELL & CAMPBELL
Architects, Engineers, Planners, Interiors