

Panel / Advisory Committee Hearing  
**Amendment C104 Yarra Planning Scheme**  
22 Bendigo Street Richmond.

## **LANDSCAPE STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE**

Statement by  
Mark Jacques  
OCULUS Pty Ltd

AUGUST 2011

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**O C U L U S**

2<sup>nd</sup> Floor 33 Guildford Lane

**Melbourne** VIC 3000

t. 9670 0699 f. 9670 1644

[www.ocus.com.au](http://www.ocus.com.au)

## **1.0 Name and address of the expert**

Mark David Jacques  
33 Guildford Lane  
Melbourne VIC 3000

## **2.0 Qualifications and experience**

B.Design CoFA (University of New South Wales)

M.Urban Design (Sydney University)

I have worked in the discipline of Landscape and Urban Design since 1993 including time spent within the following offices:

- Employed at Context Conybeare Morrison, Sydney (Industrial Design) 1993 -1996;
- Employed at OCULUS Pty Ltd, Sydney (Landscape and Urban Design) - 1997-2001;
- Employed at Karres en Brands Landschapsarchitecten, The Netherlands (Landscape and Urban Design) 2001 - 2002;
- Established the Melbourne studio of OCULUS Pty Ltd in 2002, where I am currently employed.

## **2.1 Areas of expertise**

Landscape Architecture and Urban Design dealing with a range of project types, including public realm design, masterplanning, streetscape design, residential estate design, open space design, urban furnishings and landscape on structure.

## **2.2 Expertise to prepare this report**

Over 15 years post-graduate experience working on a wide range of projects of varying scales and levels of complexity, including experience as project leader on a series of significant projects dealing with the design of residential developments within existing urban environments.

I have visited the site and have undertaken a visual assessment of the site, reviewed the plans prepared by Hayball and Kirsten Thompson Architects and have had landscape architectural plans and a supporting report prepared for the site under my supervision.

### **3.0 Instructions that define the scope of the report**

This report has been prepared following verbal instruction from Rhodie Anderson of Rigby Cooke lawyers. We have been engaged to prepare Landscape Plans for the proposed development of the site in accordance with the Development Plan. We have also undertaken preliminary work in preparing a Language Strategy in the event that the Amendment and Development Plan are approved. This strategy has been used to guide the design response and has been considered in preparing this report.

### **3.1 The facts, matters and assumptions on which the report proceeds**

The report assumes that the levels, dimensions and drawings provided by consultants are correct as these have been used as the basis for this report.

### **3.2 Documents viewed in preparing this report**

In the preparation of this report I have viewed and reviewed the following items:

- Tree assessment prepared by Joe Kellett (Adv. Cert. Arb. and Dip. App. Sc. (Arb.)) dated 9 November 2009 and 6 December 2010.
- Yarra Open Space Strategy Prepared for the City of Yarra by Thompson Berrill Landscape Design Pty Ltd in association with Environment and Land Management Pty Ltd
- 22 Bendigo Street, Richmond Draft Development Plan May 2011 prepared by Lend Lease.
- GTV Design and Development Principles. City of Yarra dated 21st October 2008.

## 4.0 Existing Site

The existing site is located within the City of Yarra in section 3121F of the Yarra Open Space Strategy. It is bounded by Bendigo Street to the East, Wertheim and Jago Streets to the North, Stawell Street to the West and is bisected by Khartoum Street to the South.

The Yarra Open Space Strategy identifies the site as belonging in a neighborhood where cash contributions for public open space will be preferred over land contributions. The site is well serviced by regional open space of a passive and active nature, however the development site presents unique opportunities to provide additional local and neighborhood spaces within the existing residential development. Given the lack of spaces of this type, new public open space should be accessible and open to the surrounding neighborhoods.

The sites landscape amenity is currently provided by the continuous canopy of Plane Trees to Bendigo Street and the assorted and eclectic boundary plantings which originally formed a screen and secure edge to the working studios. The current contribution of the subject site to the amenity of the public realm is limited. Metal mesh barriers are presented to existing residential development, with Muehlenbeckia hedge and scattered trees providing a green screen and shade.

The sites vegetation has been the subject of an Arborist's Report by Assured Tree Care. This report concludes that the site contains no existing vegetation which is either remnant indigenous or botanically significant vegetation and recommend the removal or removal and replacement of perimeter tree planting for reasons of poor health, weed species, over-weighted form or inappropriate size. I accept the conclusion of the Arborist Report and the Landscape proposal for the site has taken this report into account during its development.

Further observations about the site have been built into a Language Strategy. This was developed with the intention to guide the design response to the Public Realm by highlighting the site's existing context and character. The Language Strategy suggests that the existing scale, materiality and grain of Richmond's streets offer opportunities for the new development to understand and respond to.

## 5.0 Landscape Proposal

OCULUS Pty Ltd has prepared Landscape plans and schedules as part of the proposed Development Plan for 22 Bendigo Street. A copy of the Landscape section of this document is contained as an Appendix to this statement.

The Landscape proposal is conceived as an extension of the surrounding built form in function and character. It is founded on a clear structure of communal gardens, publicly accessible spaces and public residential laneways. Design principles guiding the development of the Landscape Masterplan include:

- Establish a strong landscape identity for Public streets, Podium Gardens, the Heritage Square and Public Lanes which is sympathetic to and enhances the existing qualities of the local environs of Richmond;
- Create a sequence of inviting, protected spaces highlighting diversity in scale, texture and use;
- Use specimen trees informally to provide terminus of views, privacy and greening of public laneways;
- Integration of architecture and landscape to create green amenity on the surface of buildings and blurring the lines between building and vegetation;
- Look for opportunities to create activity and public life by way of functional items such as cycle parking, social spaces, stairways and circulation;
- Create a pluralistic landscape with multiple layers and many moments of surprise;
- Explore opportunities to create a productive, communal, and edible landscape;
- Create a strongly defined public and private domain;
- A robust use of materials to enhance sense of public space;
- Enhance the public domain with planting opportunities within the private domain;
- Provide seasonal interest, texture and scent;
- Provide protection from winds and enhance micro climate opportunities;
- Seek sustainable solutions in terms of material choices, ventilation, water use and sun protection.

## **5.1 Open Space**

The proposed Landscape Masterplan provides a total of approximately 2650sq.m of public open space, this figure excludes the new streets/lanes and communal gardens/open space. By way of comparison, a Masterplan developed in accordance with the City of Yarra's Development and Design Principles would provide approximately 2550sq.m of public open space.

The Masterplan allows for a hierarchy of public and semi-public spaces which will complement and extend the public life of the development and wider Richmond. Spaces include;

- small pocket parks for individual or intimate use;
- a large central square as a setting to the heritage building and to host events and markets;
- public laneways where both townhouses and apartments will have an active address;
- communal gardens (for the private use of new residents - with good transparency and permeability to public spaces); and
- new cottage gardens and new canopy tree planting designed for the new town houses on existing streets.

## **5.2 The Public Spine**

The publicly accessible "Spine" will connect the Heritage Square to Stawell Street, providing for the first time a clear public route from west to east across the site, anchoring the existing heritage building and creating new permeability towards the Yarra River.

The Spine will be both an address for internal apartment blocks, and an active neighbourhood facility. Conceived of as a defined series of rooms, the spine will be modulated in dimension and enclosure, to provide a sequence of spaces and range of facilities including seating, bike storage and edible gardens. Podium gardens along the Spine edges will be integrated to create outdoor rooms with social and functional program,

including apartment entrances and lobbies, service provisions (e.g. clothes drying), and private access to apartment gardens.

### **5.3 The Public Square**

The Public Square will provide the public focus to the site and the signature of the development. Developed around the existing former Wertheim piano factory heritage building, it will provide both a setting for the building and a flexible space for the community. The Heritage Square will be an open space with sunlight, edge enclosure and trees. The development of a community facility in the southern wing of the heritage building provides the opportunity for an open and activated edge between built form and the space.

### **5.4 Lanes**

The public laneways are of a dimension and character which gives greater variety to the neighbourhood street grid. They provide an important rear address for the townhouses and enable public permeability through the site.

The lane profile is considered to be from building alignment to building alignment, to emphasise a shared condition as opposed to a highly segregated central vehicle route and footpaths. The function of vehicles and pedestrians is subtly implied through changing the scale of the ground material which will be of one type throughout, and by utilising flush kerbs to imply the functional zones of the lane.

Street trees are incorporated into the carriageway and on-street parking arrangement randomly to provide green amenity, avoid monotony, and to slow traffic. They are informally positioned to maintain the informality of the surrounding tree planting. Wider pedestrian zones are implied outside lobbies to avoid people / parked car conflicts at the entries, and to announce an address on the lane.

### **5.5 Cottage Gardens**

New private cottage gardens will be provided within the townhouses addressing the existing streets. The gardens will be a contemporary version of the existing cottage gardens of the row houses on the opposite side of the streets, and create a strong and rich identity for these streets. The gardens will include a diverse planting palette to show the highly personal and eclectic nature of residential landscapes, and to provide animation and

visual interest. New tree planting will be incorporated in these gardens to maintain and strengthen the the idea of a green perimeter.

## **5.6 Communal Gardens**

The three apartment block communal gardens will be similar in scale, function and facilities, but will vary in character and arrangement to afford individual identity to the apartments, and variety across the development.

The gardens will offer residents an opportunity for passive recreation and active gardening. Trees will be provided for shade and amenity, and productive and edible gardens will enable resident gardening and kitchen-use. Edges to the gardens will be as transparent as possible to enable outside views into green, and to enable the communal gardens to visually contribute to the public domain. The apartment gardens will integrate bio-filter gardens which provide a site wide WSUD role.

## **5.7 New Tree Planting**

An Arboricultural assessment of existing trees on the site shows that the site contains no existing vegetation which is either remnant indigenous or botanically significant vegetation and recommend the removal or removal and replacement of perimeter tree planting for reasons of poor health, weed species, over-weighted form or inappropriate size. The Development Plan and its Landscape Masterplan seek to replace the removed perimeter landscape with new tree planting, the design of publically visible front gardens and the provision of new public spaces with deep-soil planting zones. These strategies will transform the site from a private enclave with barrier screening to a more permeable site with street trees and amenity distributed all the way through. The Landscape Masterplan proposes:

- extensive landscaped areas and a minimum of 170 new mature trees will be planted as part of the delivery of public space and streets;
- to maintain the London Plane Tree plantings in Bendigo Street;
- to replace removed boundary trees with specimens of an appropriate height, form and canopy. To use species that provide good canopy and shade while minimising root damage to services, infrastructure and building foundations;

- to establish strong tree planting within the site, associated new streets, public spaces and communal open space; and
- to select clean trunk, high canopy trees to assist with shade, viability and surveillance.

## **5.8 Planting Themes**

The planting strategy throughout the new development will adopt the informality and variety of the plantings in the surrounding neighbourhood and so unite and stitch the new development into its context. This planting treatment directly supports the urban planning moves regarding built form alignments, massing, and typology.

The plantings throughout the private and public gardens should be a combination of Australian native and exotic species. Cottage gardens may have a higher proportion of exotic plants in the Richmond cottage tradition, and public planting may have a higher proportion of Australian native plantings to respond to public levels of maintenance and drought conditions.

A variety of plants with differing form and texture will be used to reflect the highly personal nature of residential living, and create identity through variety. Productive and edible gardens will be integrated for resident use and enjoyment, to foster a sense of community and to reduce dependence on imported food. Planting will be incorporated on above ground podiums, and trailing plants may be located on transparent balustrades to soften building edges and ensure communal gardens contribute to the public domain.

Irrigation is proposed for the plantings by water harvested from site. Bio-filter gardens will consist of Australian native ground covers/grass species.

## **6.0 Provisional opinions**

None.

## **7.0 Conclusion**

The landscape approach described in this report will produce a new public domain with a high level of amenity for the occupants of the site and the residents of the adjacent

neighborhoods. The Landscape Masterplan will also provide a positive contribution to the existing streetscape character of Richmond, turning what was previously a walled enclave into an open, permeable and public part of Richmond.

## **8.0 Declaration**

I declare that I have made all the enquiries that I believe are desirable and appropriate, and no matters of significance which I regard as relevant have to my knowledge been withheld from the Panel.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Jacques', with a period at the end. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mark Jacques

August 2011

# 22 BENDIGO ST RICHMOND

Draft Development Plan  
May 2011