

## **Acknowledgments**

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## **Study Team**

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# Summary of Findings

## *Principles relating to the Built Form of Yarra* (from Chapter 2)

### Metropolitan Context

1. The outcomes sought by State and metropolitan policies need to be planned for in ways that recognise and respond to the City of Yarra's special built form characteristics.
2. Because the City of Yarra is, on the whole, well-separated from the central city by heritage areas and parkland, it is not possible to extend the high rise core of the central city into the municipality, nor to establish some form of building height 'gradient'.

### Topography

3. In a flat city and generally low-rise City like Yarra, landmarks and tall buildings take on a particular importance because they are visible for long distances.
4. The profile or silhouette of tall buildings and landmarks is important, because they are often seen against the sky.
5. Random siting of tall buildings will detract from the topographical character of the city and obscure views of landmarks valued by the community.
6. While new tall buildings can sometimes be used to emphasise features like hilltops, in the City of Yarra the prime locations have already been occupied by church spires (eg St Ignatius, Richmond Hill; St Johns, Clifton Hill; St Marks, Fitzroy).

### Yarra River

7. The Yarra River is valued and appreciated as much because of the trees and parkland that dominate much of its corridor as for the presence of the body of water itself.
8. The Yarra River has a topographical character that is easily diminished by larger scale development sited too close to its banks.
9. There are a number of distinct types of landscape and built form through which the Yarra River passes, each of which warrants a tailored policy approach.
10. Prescribing of maximum building heights and setbacks is likely to be necessary for sections of the river corridor.
11. The main bridge crossing points of the Yarra River (and of the Darebin and Merri Creeks) are important aspects of the City of Yarra's landscape character, not opportunities to develop major gateway buildings.
12. The already substantial body of policy on development in the Yarra River corridor needs to be reviewed, rationalised and incorporated into the Yarra Planning Scheme in a way that gives them maximum effectiveness.

### Urban Form

13. Built form strategies and policies need to be founded on distinct objectives for each type of urban form found in the City of Yarra.

### Building Height

14. The fundamental identity of the City of Yarra is a low-rise urban form, punctuated mainly in the Inner City and Inner Urban areas, by islands of higher development and highly valued landmarks. The Built Form Review Strategy should build on this basic characteristic, as it helps to differentiate the City of Yarra from the urban form of adjoining cities, thus strengthening its sense of place.
15. An important strategic consequence of this position would be to limit development above three or four storeys to defined locations. Such opportunities could be confined to existing high rise locations, but they could also be considered for a limited number of additional locations, in situations where the land is well-removed from existing low-rise residential environments and existing landmarks.
16. Locations for new 'high-rise islands' should be limited to:
  - Existing high-rise locations.
  - Redevelopment of ex-industrial sites that were previously high-rise.
  - Locations where a specific urban design benefit can be met (eg creating a more attractive, better-scaled frontage to the CityLink freeway along the River Yarra frontage; strengthening the definition and scale of built form at defined Hoddle Street intersections; see specific Objectives and Design Responses below).
  - Sites containing, or immediately adjoining, buildings that rise above the general heights of their surrounds, provided there is minimal visual impact on views from public places, including streets.
17. The Council has exhibited a planning scheme amendment with policies to guide development above three storeys, and these could be enacted within the context of the Built Form Review Strategy.
18. Within the low-rise areas of the city, in areas with a consistent and valued built form character and scale, new development should relate to the scale of existing buildings in the area.

### Lot Size

19. In the small lot, fine-grain areas of the city, the dense network of streets and laneways should be retained and, where possible, enhanced, and they should be retained as spaces in public ownership.
20. In the small lot, fine-grain areas of the city, new building design should continue to express the small lot, fine-grain subdivision pattern in building articulation.
21. In the Garden Suburban area of Fairfield and Alphington, building setbacks (front, side and rear) need to be carefully controlled to maintain the spacious, gardenesque character.
22. In commercial parts of the city with larger lots and a coarser grain of subdivision pattern, there is a choice, if redevelopment occurs, as to whether to re-create a fine grain design character associated with much of inner Melbourne, or to develop a new character.
23. With large land parcels, every effort should be made to integrate a redevelopment with its surrounds. This includes designing streets that connect with, and may even share the same cross-section dimensions as, the existing street pattern around the site. Certain basic principles of integration should be established, to act as a base from which the designers can feel free to generate a distinctive new character for the development.
24. Designation in policy documents of large development sites or significant development opportunities (eg the Residential Development Sites and Major Renewal Areas referred to in the MSS) should make clear that a complete change to the character and scale of the area's built form is not necessarily encouraged.
25. The Strategy should not assume that every industrial site represents a potential for redevelopment to residential. The *Industrial and Business Activity Study* contains recommendations about retaining employment generating activity in industrial areas. The Built Form Review needs to make allowance for this policy context.

### Transport Corridors

26. Built form policy needs to take account of the different types of transport corridor that exist in the City of Yarra, and their importance to the identity, urban form and public space quality of the City.
27. The designations Primary Boulevard and Secondary Boulevard should be removed from the Yarra Planning Scheme.
28. The designation Major Gateway should be removed from the Yarra Planning Scheme, and replaced by policy that encourages subtle emphasis of corners within the generally low-rise character of the City.
29. There are locations in the city where under-utilised railway land could be developed.
30. The appearance of the backs and sides of buildings visible from trains should be improved.

### Building Interfaces

31. In Inner City and Inner Urban areas of the City of Yarra with a mixed character arising from differences in building type and form, the study will define a small number of basic characteristics to keep consistent in future developments.
32. Ensure that there is a gradual transition in scale between buildings of different height.
33. Limitations are needed on the scale of new development close to established low-rise residential areas.
34. Policies are needed to encourage designers to break up large building masses into smaller component parts, and encourage modelling and articulation of surfaces to reduce apparent bulk.
35. The widespread heritage significance of the city means that contextual design (design that places a high priority on respecting the urban qualities of its surroundings) needs to be accepted as the normal response. Only in limited areas and on larger sites can designers feel free to develop a completely new urban character.

### Public Space Quality

36. The City of Yarra's urban form is highly conducive to walking and cycling.
37. The design of buildings makes an essential contribution to the quality of public spaces, including the walkability of streets.
38. It is important to distinguish private from public domain, and to limit the extent to which overlooking of public spaces might be perceived to impinge on enjoyment of the qualities of a public space.
39. Policies are needed to ensure buildings add to the landscape character and attractiveness of open spaces, and maintain public views through to the space where possible.

### Sustainable Design

40. Establish broad objectives for sustainable design.
41. Establish broad objectives for quality of design and finishes.

### Consistency and Variety

42. In mixed character areas, define the small number of basic characteristics that should be kept consistent in future developments.
43. Along main roads (including boulevards), achieving a degree of built form consistency is particularly important.

Strategy and policy objectives that respond to each of these principles form the body of the Built Form Strategy and Policy in [chapter 5](#).

## ***Built Form Situations / Character Types from Chapter 4***

### **Yarra River Corridor Types**

- Leafy Suburban Residential River Edge
- Park Landscape River Edge
- Hard Edge Ex-Industrial River Edge
- Current Industrial River Edge
- Freeway River Edge

### **Built Form Character Types**

#### Residential Areas

- Garden Suburban Residential
- Inner Suburban Residential
- Urban Residential
- Inner Suburban / Urban Residential Mix
- Residential in Grounds (Public Housing Estates)

#### Non-Residential Areas

- Coarse Grain Hard Edge Non-Residential
- Coarse Grain Soft / Hard Edge Non-Residential
- Industrial / Commercial Enclave
- Hard Edge Non-Residential / Dwelling Mix

### **Transport Corridor Types**

- Main Road Strips: Hard Edge, Fine Grain
- Main Road Strips: Hard Edge, Coarse Grain
- Main Road Strips: Other or Mixed Character
- Boulevards
- Hoddle Street / Punt Road
- Rail Corridors

Each of these is described and illustrated in [chapter 4](#), and the precincts used in the Precinct Analysis are categorised by these types. Some policy objectives in [chapter 5](#) are grouped by these types.

## ***Recommendations*** (from Chapter 6)

### **Existing Studies (6.1)**

- Update and adapt the *Urban Character Strategy* to the ResCode context by adopting the precinct structure introduced by the Built Form Review, preparing detailed development guidelines for each precinct, including them in the planning scheme as Local Policy and publishing this information as a Reference Document in the form of precinct brochures.
- Replace the *Yarra River Corridor Urban Design Guidelines* with the Yarra River sections of the proposed Built Form Local Policy, by amending the MSS and DDO1, as recommended in the Built Form Review. Meet the Department of Sustainability and Environment to seek Ministerial support for this course of action, in advance of the Department of Sustainability and Environment's own study.
- Consideration should be given to updating, replacing or abandoning the *Yarra Residential Design Guide*, in view of the advice that it is not used, and relates to the Good Design Guide rather than ResCode.
- Adopt the *Punt Road/Hoddle Street Planning & Design Strategy & Guidelines* and reference them in the Yarra Planning Scheme, after deleting reference to Punt Road/Hoddle Street as a boulevard, revising rear envelopes next to existing

low-rise residential areas, making any other changes arising from the public consultation and Amendment process, and checking them for consistency with the Built Form Review.

- Keep the controls relating to the stretches of main road covered by *Design Guidelines for the City's Main Roads*, but amend them to include terminology and objectives consistent with the Built Form Review, and discontinue further development of the draft Guidelines.
- Review the proposed *Design Guidelines for Development Above Three Storeys Local Policy* following the Panel Hearing, and in the context of the Built Form Review, to eliminate overlaps and check for consistency of approach.
- Note that the findings of the *SE Clifton Hill Local Area Plan (draft)* have no direct impact on the Built Form Review, as they relate mostly to the Heritage Overlay.

### **MSS Review (6.3)**

Use the outputs of the Built Form Review (particularly the Strategy Objectives) in preparing the planning scheme amendment to update the City of Yarra MSS, to recognise and respond to the City of Yarra's special built form characteristics, including:

- Major revisions to Element 1: Urban Design, including new Strategy Objectives, a new urban design framework map, a summary of the [chapter 2](#) themes, reference to the urban form typologies, and proposals to introduce a Built Form / Urban Design Policy and to upgrade development controls.
- Major revisions to Element 2: Residential Land Use and Development, including new Strategy Objectives, and reference to the residential area typologies.
- Major revisions to Element 6: Yarra River Corridor, including new Strategy Objectives, and reference to the river corridor typologies and proposals to upgrade the controls and policies.
- Designation in policy documents of large development sites or significant development opportunities (eg the Residential Development Sites and Major Renewal Areas referred to in the MSS) should make clear that a complete change to the character and scale of the area's built form is not necessarily encouraged.
- The designations Primary Boulevard and Secondary Boulevard should be removed from the Yarra Planning Scheme.
- The designation Major Gateway should be removed from the Yarra Planning Scheme, and replaced by the policy that encourages subtle emphasis of corners within the generally low-rise character of the City.

### **Local Policy (6.4)**

- The Built Form Local Policy should be prepared and include:
  - Policy Objectives and Design Responses for City-wide and the Built Form Types from [chapter 5](#) of this report.
  - Descriptions and visions for each of the individual precincts identified in the Review.
  - Maps to identify the Built Form Types and Precincts.
- The Yarra River Corridor Policy should be replaced by the Built Form Policy.

### **Overlay Controls: DDO1 (6.5)**

- The DDO1 schedule should be amended to include the recommended Policy Objectives (as Design Objectives) and Design Responses (as Preferred Heights and Decision Guidelines) in [section 5.2](#) of this report.
- The boundaries of the DDO1 should be reviewed to align, where possible, with property boundaries to ensure greater effectiveness and simplicity of administration.
- Meet the Department of Sustainability and Environment to seek Ministerial support for his course of action, in advance of the Department of Sustainability and Environment's own study.

### **Overlay Controls: DDO2 and DDO3 (6.5)**

- Modify the Design Objectives and Decision Guidelines in the DDO2 and DDO3 schedules to accommodate the policy directions established in the Built Form Review as contained in chapter 5 of this report. The best method of achieving the integration of the Policy and the DDO schedules should be determined

following consideration of the need to ensure all the relevant matters are covered without excessive repetition in the scheme. It is possible that the DDO schedules should be amalgamated into one, or separated into several dealing with different situations as identified in section 5.

- Remove the designations Primary Boulevard and Secondary Boulevard and replace with:
  - 'Boulevards' for Victoria Parade and Alexandra Parade.
  - 'Main Road Strips' for Swan Street, Victoria Street, Bridge Road, Church Street.
  - 'Yarra River Freeway Edge' for the river frontage area in Cremorne and Barkly Avenue, Burnley.
  - 'Punt Road/Hoddle Street'.
  - 'Other Main Roads' for the remainder.
- Consider adding the following sections of main road not within the Heritage Overlay to a DDO schedule: Queens Parade (Boulevard); the omitted sections of Victoria Street, Swan Street, Smith Street, Church Street, Johnston Street and Nicholson Street North Fitzroy (Main Road Strips); the sites facing the Eastern Freeway between Hoddle St and Merri Creek (Freeway Frontage), having regard to an analysis of the adequacy of existing buildings and works controls provided under the zoning provisions.
- Consider removing from DDO protection the Heritage Overlay designated sections of Lygon Street and Nicholson Street Fitzroy.
- Consider the need for the DDO3 over Wellington Street and Burnley Street having regard to the adequacy of existing permit requirements under the zoning controls.

