

3

Implications of the Principles

This chapter takes the Principles developed in [chapter 2](#) and proposes responses to them, mainly in the form of objectives for the Built Form Strategy and Policy. Some Principles foreshadow the need for policy relating specifically to particular situations or types of built form. This forms the subject of [chapter 4](#) Built Form Types and Precincts. The Precincts form the basis for the Built Form Review's 'bottom up' dimension, with Precinct Analysis sheets prepared for each of over sixty Precincts throughout the study area. Other Principles have implications for the Implementation proposals in [chapter 6](#).

An exception is the first Principle, on Metropolitan Context (theme 1), which suggests action by the Council in relation to Melbourne 2030 and the Municipal Strategic Statement review:

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.

This Principle has informed the findings of the Built Form Review, but it also needs to be considered in the Council's response to Melbourne 2030, and its MSS review.

3.1 Topography

Topography, Landmarks and Tall Structures

The Topography discussion in [chapter 2](#) (theme 2) concludes with a set of Principles on the siting and design of landmarks and tall structures:

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'.
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).

To give effect to these Principles, the Built Form Review needs overall Strategy Objectives to:

- Maintain the prominence of culturally valued landmarks and landmark signs.
- Ensure that the profile and silhouette of taller buildings and other structures add to the variety and interest of the city's built form character.

Specific Policy Objectives are also needed to:

- Protect views of culturally valued landmarks, seen from a wide range of viewpoints across the municipality.
- Protect the silhouette and profile of culturally valued landmarks from interruption by developments behind them, as seen from a wide range of viewpoints across the municipality.
- Maintain the prominence of landmark signs.
- Ensure that the profile and silhouette of tall structures add to the interest of the city's urban form and skyline.
- Maintain the singular skyline prominence of hilltop church spires as a distinguishing characteristic of the city.

These objectives are nested in the Landmarks and Tall Structures section of the Built Form Strategy and Policy set out in [chapter 5](#). The Building Height discussion (below) also relates to this topic.

Yarra River Corridor

The Topography discussion in [chapter 2](#) (theme 2) includes Principles relating to the Yarra River corridor:

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.

To give effect to these Principles, the Built Form Review needs overall Strategy Objectives to:

- Ensure development in the Yarra River corridor upstream of the MacRobertson Bridge enhances and improves the naturalistic landscape of the river corridor.
- Create a new, high quality and visually permeable built form edge to the freeway and river downstream of the MacRobertson Bridge.
- Relate the siting, scale, bulk and massing of new development adjacent to the Yarra River to the width and scale of the waterway and the river banks.
- Protect and enhance the landscape qualities of the Yarra River, Merri Creek and Darebin Creek as vegetation-dominated corridors, particularly in views from roads, paths and rail corridors that cross the river.
- Tailor the siting, scale, bulk and massing to the distinctive landscape character of each section of the Yarra River corridor.

In relation to Principle 12, we have produced four Strategy Objectives that attempt to summarise the objectives from a variety of existing policy documents that are relevant at the highest level:

- Provide continuous public access along the river bank.
- Protect and enhance the faunal habitat linkages within the river corridor.
- Minimise environmental impacts on the Yarra from run-off and erosion.
- Minimise overshadowing of the river and Main Yarra Trail at all times of the year.

Principle 10, which foreshadows the need for prescriptive controls along parts of the Yarra River Corridor, is responded to in [chapter 6](#).

The Yarra River Corridor is the subject of numerous studies and policies. The Built Form Review is concerned with ensuring that there is effective policy to control buildings and associated landscaping in the corridor, and that this policy is expressed as clearly and economically as possible in the planning scheme. We have therefore reviewed the existing studies and policies, as well as undertaking our own survey and analysis. As a result of this work, we recommend rationalising the planning scheme references to the Yarra River Corridor into a single body of strategy, under a single list of Strategy Objectives at MSS level. If the Council agrees with this approach, it will need to conduct a similar exercise with Yarra River Corridor policy concerning other topics, such as public land management, access and environmental management.

Yarra River Corridor Types

Specific Policy Objectives are needed in relation to the different types of situation that exist along the Yarra River Corridor. The categories we have arrived at are:

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

Each of these is described and illustrated in [chapter 4](#), and the relevant Precincts are listed. The [Precinct map](#) delineates the boundaries of each of these.

These objectives are nested in the Yarra River Corridor section of the Built Form Strategy and Policy set out in [chapter 5](#).

3.2 Building Height

The Building Height discussion in [chapter 2](#) (theme 4) includes a set of Principles regarding the height of development across the municipality:

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.

To give effect to these Principles, the Built Form Review needs overall Strategy Objectives to:

- Retain the city's identity as a low-rise urban form, punctuated (mainly in Fitzroy, Richmond, Collingwood, Abbotsford and Burnley) by islands of higher development and landmarks valued highly by the local community.

Specific Policy Objectives are also needed to:

- Confine development above the height of the city's low-rise urban form 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.
- Relate new development to the scale of existing buildings in areas with a consistent and valued built form character and scale.

The Precinct Analysis (see [chapter 4](#)) includes information that assists with determining which areas have '... a consistent and valued built form character and scale ...'. These objectives are nested in the Building Height section of the Built Form Strategy and Policy set out in [chapter 5](#). For comments and a recommendation on Principle 17, see [chapter 6](#).

Building Interfaces and Building Height

The Building Interfaces discussion in [chapter 2](#) (theme 7) concluded with a set of Principles that are relevant to building height:

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.

To give effect to these Principles, the Built Form Review needs overall Strategy Objectives to:

- Mass and detail buildings in ways that relate them to the scale of their surroundings.
- Design a positive interface between new buildings and established low-rise residential areas.

Specific Policy Objectives are also needed to:

- Reduce the apparent mass of larger buildings, and provide visual interest, by providing breaks in skylines, and by modelling and articulating walls and surfaces.
- Provide a gradual transition in scale between buildings of different height.

- Ensure that new buildings avoid overlooking and overshadowing existing residences.
- Minimise the visual bulk of buildings located next to established low-rise residential areas.

These objectives are nested in the Building Height section of the Built Form Strategy and Policy set out in [chapter 5](#).

3.3 Lot Size and Urban Form

The Lot Size discussion in [chapter 2](#) (theme 5) includes two Principles relating to the urban form of the City of Yarra:

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.
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.

To give effect to these Principles, the Built Form Review needs overall Strategy Objectives to:

- Ensure that developments contribute positively to the urban fabric and public space system of the City.
- Retain and extend the City's fine grain of street pattern and urban form.
- Improve the transparency and legibility of the city's urban form.

Specific Policy Objectives are also needed to:

- Retain and, where possible, enhance the dense network of streets and laneways that exists in the small lot, fine-grain areas of the city, and keep them in public ownership.
- Within large redevelopment sites, design a new public street system that connects and relates the development to the surrounding urban form, and provides safe and convenient pedestrian and cycle routes.

These objectives are nested in the Urban Form section of the Built Form Strategy and Policy set out in [chapter 5](#).

Lot Size and Development Potential

The Lot Size discussion in [chapter 2](#) (theme 5) concludes includes two Principles that impact on development potential:

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.

The implications of Principle 24 are addressed in the recommendations regarding review of the City of Yarra Municipal Strategic Statement in [chapter 6](#). Principle 25 is also relevant to the MSS review, and formed a consideration in formulating the Vision statements in the Precinct Analysis ([see chapter 4](#)).

3.4 Urban Character

The Urban Form discussion in [chapter 2](#) (theme 3) suggests a Principle relating to the City of Yarra's 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.

In addition, the Lot Size discussion includes the following Principles:

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.

The Building Interfaces discussion in [chapter 2](#) (theme 7) concluded with a set of Principles that are relevant to urban character:

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.
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.

To give effect to these Principles, the Built Form Review needs an overall Strategy Objective to:

- Maintain and strengthen the distinct character of each type of built form within the city.

Specific Policy Objectives are also needed to:

- Ensure that the design respects the existing character of the area, or contributes to a desired future character.
- In areas with a mixed built form character, maintain consistency of some similar characteristics.
- Maintain and enhance the character strengths of areas with a consistent urban form and valued character.
- Express the original subdivision pattern in building design in the small lot, fine-grain areas of the city.
- Within sites removed from the small lot, fine-grain areas of the city, take the opportunity to create a new urban character that adds to the layering of the city's historical evolution.

The Built Form Character Types analysis (see below and [chapter 4](#)) defines the existing character of each area. Together with the Precinct Analysis ([chapter 4](#) and [Appendix A](#)), it provides important pointers to the desired future character of each area, and assists with determining which areas have 'a consistent urban form and valued character' or a mixed character. With Principle 21, the gardenesque character is responded to in the objectives and design responses relating to the Garden Suburban Residential built form type described in [chapter 4](#).

These objectives are nested in the Urban Character, Residential Areas and Non-Residential Areas sections of the Built Form Strategy and Policy set out in [chapter 5](#).

Built Form Character Types

In addition, specific Policy Objectives are needed in relation to the different types of built form that exist across the study area. The built form types we have delineated for the Residential Areas are:

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

The built form types delineated for the Non-Residential Areas are:

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

Each of these is described and illustrated in [chapter 4](#), and the relevant Precincts are listed. The [Precinct map](#) delineates the boundaries of each of these. The objectives

are nested in the Residential Areas and Non-Residential Areas sections of the Built Form Strategy and Policy set out in [chapter 5](#).

These Built Form Character Types are different from the Urban Form types referred to elsewhere in this Review, mainly in [chapter 2](#). These character types provide the basis for policy tailored to specific types of built form (as elaborated on in [chapter 4](#)). The difference is that urban form includes street and subdivision pattern as well as built form, and takes a more generalised approach to built form types. The Built Form Character Types described in [chapter 4](#) cover a wider range of variations in built form character.

3.5 *Transport Corridors*

The Transport Corridors discussion in [chapter 2](#) (theme 6) concluded with the following Principles:

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.

To give effect to these Principles, the Built Form Review needs overall Strategy Objectives to:

- Improve the contribution of built form to the identity, character and public space quality of each main road and boulevard.
- Encourage subtle emphasis of corners on development sites at main road or boulevard intersections.
- Facilitate better quality development alongside rail reservations and more efficient use of under-utilised land in and next to rail corridors.

[Chapter 6](#) includes specific recommendations about changing the City of Yarra Municipal Strategic Statement to bring about the changes referred to in Principles 27 and 28.

Consistency and Variety

The Consistency and Variety discussion in [chapter 2](#) (theme 10) includes the following Principles:

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.

Principle 42 is responded to in the Built Form Types and Precincts analysis in [chapter 4](#). To give effect to Principle 43, the Built Form Review needs an overall Strategy Objective to:

- Strengthen the consistency of built form along each transport corridor, and use built form to help express the urban form differences between the different types of transport corridor.

This objective is expressed only at Strategy level, because its application will vary considerably depending on the local circumstances, as described below in Transport Corridor Types. It is nested in the Transport Corridors section of the Built Form Strategy and Policy set out in [chapter 5](#).

Transport Corridor Types

Specific Policy Objectives are needed in relation to the different types of situation that exist in Transport Corridors. The categories we have delineated for Transport Corridors are:

- 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 relevant Precincts are listed. The [Precinct map](#) delineates the boundaries of each of these. These objectives are nested in the Transport Corridors section of the Built Form Strategy and Policy set out in [chapter 5](#).

3.6 Public Space Quality

The Public Space Quality discussion in [chapter 2](#) (theme 8) includes the following Principles:

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.

To give effect to these Principles, the Built Form Review needs overall Strategy Objectives to:

- Design buildings to increase the safety, convenience, attractiveness and 'walkability' of the city's streets and public spaces.
- Ensure that new development maintains or adds to the valued qualities of public spaces, and does not encroach in any way on public space.
- Maintain a clear distinction between private and public land.
- Improve public access to public spaces, and open up views to public spaces.

Specific Policy Objectives are also needed to:

- Design buildings so that they increase the perception of public safety in streets and lanes, and encourage walking.
- Maintain and, where practical and advantageous, extend the network of public streets and lanes.
- Clearly delineate public spaces as separate from private land, and maintain unimpeded access to them.
- Maintain the sense of retreat from public gaze that attracts people to public open spaces.
- Provide opportunities for access and views to public open spaces where possible.
- Ensure built form adds to, and does not detract from, the landscape character and attractiveness of open spaces.

These objectives are nested in the Street & Public Space Quality section of the Built Form Strategy and Policy set out in [chapter 5](#).

3.7 Sustainable Design

The Sustainable Design discussion in [chapter 2](#) (theme 9) includes the following Principles:

40. Establish broad objectives for sustainable design.

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

To give effect to these Principles, the Built Form Review needs an overall Strategy Objective to:

- Strive for more sustainable and better quality building design.

A specific Policy Objective is also needed to:

- Encourage reduced use of energy and resources in building design.
- Encourage the highest standards in design quality, and use of materials and finishes that will last and complement the urban context.

These objectives are nested in the Sustainable Design section of the Built Form Strategy and Policy set out in chapter 5.