

Draft Heritage Strategy



DRAFT HERITAGE STRATEGY 2019-2030



Prepared by: Streets Alive Yarra

www.streets-alive-yarra.org

facebook.com/streetsaliveyarra/

Foreword

Streets Alive Yarra is a non-profit, volunteer, resident and ratepayer action group with a [vision](#) for more trees, wider footpaths and vibrant businesses in thriving [neighbourhoods](#). We see our streets being used by people from [8 to 80 years old](#), irrespective of whether they choose to walk, cycle, use public transport or drive. Residents and shoppers are able to move safely, comfortably, and conveniently around Yarra; and can easily find a park near shops.



Image credit: OCULUS Landscape Architecture and Urban Design

Streets Alive Yarra was founded in 2017 and now has over 2,000 likes on Facebook, increasing by 10-20 per week. A network of local champions develops concepts and proposals for how to improve their local street or precinct. Streets Alive Yarra is also Yarra's Walkability Action Group (WAG) representative for Victoria Walks.

Further information is available at www.streets-alive-yarra.org.

Overview

Streets Alive Yarra welcomes the opportunity to offer feedback on the draft Heritage Strategy. We support the introductory statement that the role of council is to:

'work with the wider community to conserve and enhance this heritage while embracing positive change in the municipality.'

We feel there should be more weight placed on 'positive change' to support a higher population density while also making Yarra a beautiful city to live in.

Definitions

We appear to lack clear definitions for Strategy 4.1 of our Council Plan, which states:

'protect Yarra's heritage and neighbourhood character.'

We would support a definition of heritage as including:

'a great place to live',

We would support a definition of neighbourhood character as including:

'where kids can safely & independently walk or cycle to school, friends or the library.'

In other words, it's not just about heritage buildings.

Apparent contradictions

The draft strategy doesn't appear to address the apparent contradiction between:

'various consultations in the past few years have indicated that heritage is one of the characteristics of Yarra that is most valued by the community' (draft page 7)

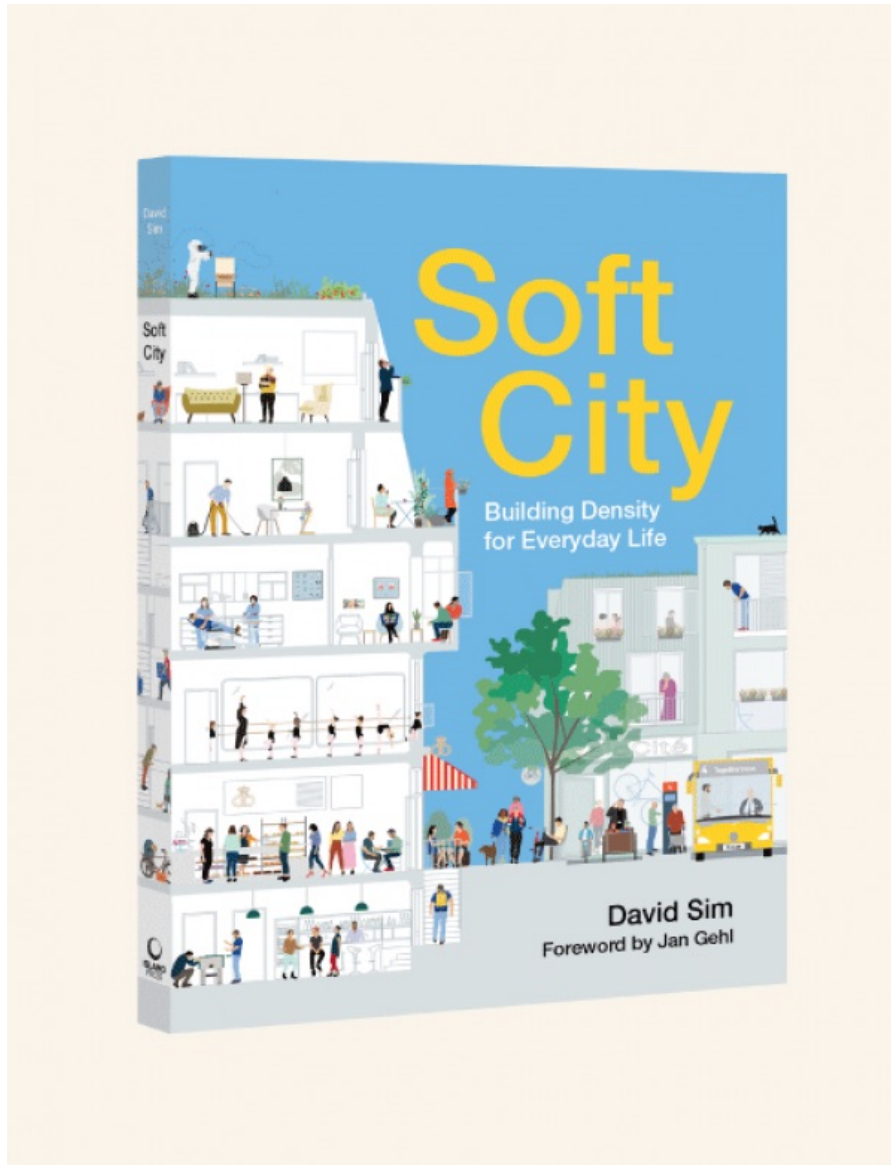
and:

'it is difficult to keep the changing resident population engaged with heritage' (draft page 10).

Perhaps it's more accurate to say that there is strong support for heritage restrictions from certain cohorts of the community who are rightly concerned about development with inappropriate height or built form, or the inability of our public open spaces or public services to support a higher population. Instead of using heritage to limit built form or population, we should encourage appropriate development by using design & development overlays; and support a higher population by investing in 20-minute neighbourhoods, 30 km/h superblocks and public open space.

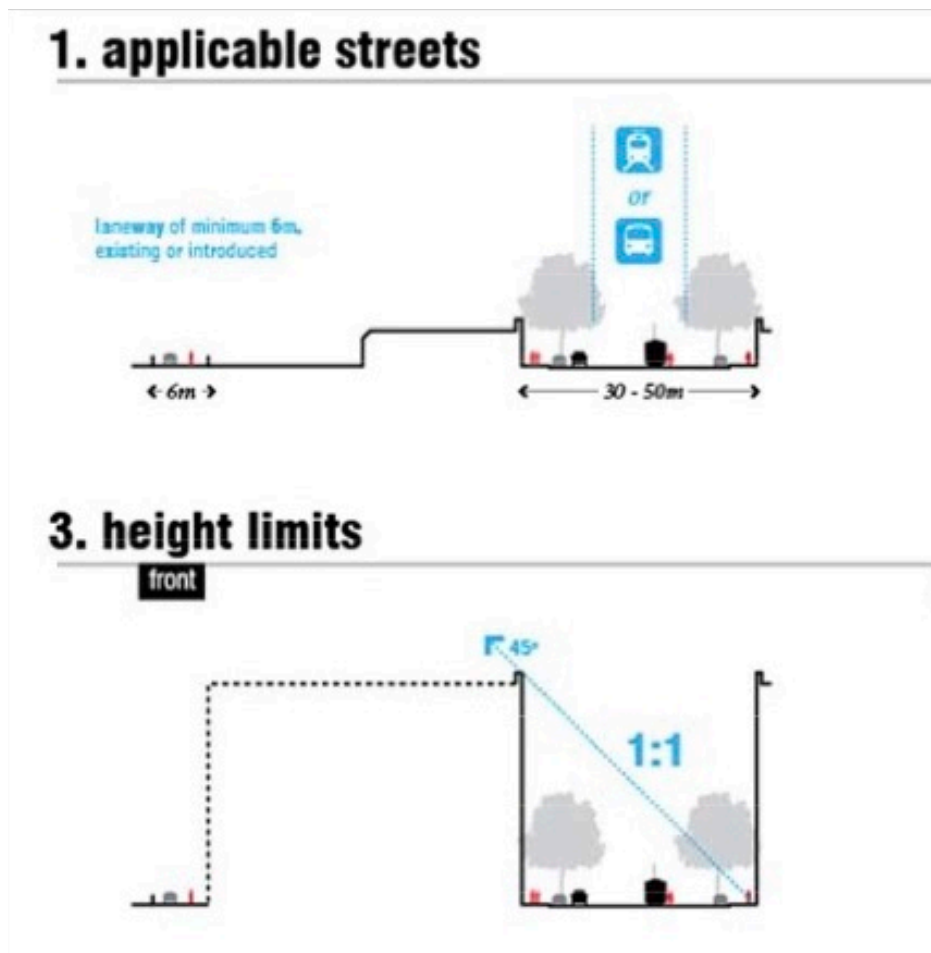
Development pressure

The draft strategy is correct to state that the City of Yarra has experienced development pressure (draft page 6). Yarra should continue to support 'positive change', specifically development and densification along transport corridors, as described in 'Soft City' by David Sim of Gehl Architects, which is subtitled 'Building Density for Everyday Life'.



Soft City by David Sim of Gehl Architects

In particular, council should support 'Linear Barcelona' height limits along our grid of transport corridors (VicRoads arterials), as described in 'Transforming Australian Cities'.



Source: Department of Planning and Community Development, published In Transforming Australian Cities and reproduced in Soft Cities

As our population increases, liveability will be improved if we allow the buildings lining our grid of arterials to grow and interlink to provide a grid of shops that offer services to people. Buildings along our typical 20m wide arterials should be permitted to offer ground floor retail, two floors of offices and two floors of residences. Yarra needs more proactive planning guidelines to support densification and less emphasis of holding back densification because of heritage.

Indeed, many beautiful dense cities in Europe could never have been built if heritage controls had been imposed at two stories. Let's not make that mistake. Instead of holding back development, we should guide development so that street frontages look beautiful and complement our heritage.

On-street parking

The draft strategy mentions ‘solar panels’ five times but fails to mention ‘on-street parking’ even once. This is an egregious mismatch. In our opinion, on-street parking imposes a greater impact upon heritage streetscapes than solar panels do. Solar panels offer a good fit with our heritage of being ‘a great place to live’. If solar panels are to be controlled or restricted, then on-street parking should be controlled or restricted to an even greater extent.

Bluestone

It would be good if the strategy pointed out that it’s acceptable to modify or move bluestone paving or kerbs that have been classed as heritage. As our population density and building density increases, we’ll need to adjust our streetscapes to improve liveability. Heritage should not be used as a justification to prevent place making (such as footpath extensions or bump outs) or the construction of protected bicycle lanes. The heritage we’d most like to protect are the lives of our children, who would benefit from more investment in place making and safe travel infrastructure.

One good way of using bluestone is the ‘half-cut’ approach, which retains bluestone while delivering a smooth surface:



Half-cut bluestone in Yarra. Image credit: Streets Alive Yarra.

Natural heritage

The Heritage Strategy should support the Urban Forest Strategy by clearly stating support for our natural heritage of trees and forests, specifically by replacing space for on-street parking with space for native trees.



Image credit: Adelaide Design Manual

Concluding remarks

Streets Alive Yarra applauds the City of Yarra's focus on updating our Heritage Strategy. We would be delighted to provide further detail or explanation of the themes raised in this document.

streetsaliveyarra@gmail.com

www.streets-alive-yarra.org

facebook.com/streetsaliveyarra/