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**TO:** Lara Fiscalini (Statutory Planning)  
**FROM:** Amruta Pandhe, Christian Lundh (Urban Designer) and  
Blake Farmar-Bowers (Open Space)  
**DATE:** 18 May 2020  
**SUBJECT:** 1 Latrobe Avenue, Alphington  
**APPLICATION NO:** PLN19/0931  
**DESCRIPTION:** Construction of residential development in Precinct 5 (Workshop Precinct) of the Alphington Paper Mills development comprising dwellings and associated communal facilities, vehicle access, car parking, landscaping and a reduction in visitor car parking.

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## COMMENTS SOUGHT

Urban Design comments have been sought on the above application on built form refer **Part A** and public realm and open space matters refer **Part B**.

Comments are sought on drawings received on 1 April 2020.

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## DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

The proposal incorporates development of south-western section of Precinct 5 (Workshop Precinct) of the Alphington Paper Mills Development Plan. The proposal comprises three sections – Wetlap Apartments, Loft Apartments and Townhouses.

Wetlap Apartments comprises of 52 apartments within a five storey building. This includes the existing Wetlap building which is proposed to be retained and altered to facilitate the construction of apartments and additional two new levels. The apartment building is located on the northern end of the precinct and provides frontages to the proposed Paper Trail to the west, Paper Square Park to the east and Warson Place to the north. It proposes a basement car park that is accessed via Joel Terrace.

Loft Apartments comprises of 12 apartments within a five storey building (including the lower level car park). The apartment building is located on south of Wetlap Apartment and presents frontage to the proposed Paper Trail to the west. It proposes a basement car park that is accessed via Joel Terrace.

Townhouses are located on the southern section of the precinct and presents frontage to Joel Terrace to the south and Paper Square Park to the north. There are total 15 townhouses proposed, each three storeys with ground floor accommodating individual garages.

The development provides the backdrop and interface to Workshop Park and will be an integral part to the podium public realm along The Paper Trail. The built forms are proposed not only to reflect on the industrial heritage through its architecture but is also proposed to have integrated greenery and ground floor landscaped gardens to link in with adjacent park, public realm and streetscapes.

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## URBAN DESIGN FEEDBACK PART A – BUILT FORM

### COMMENTS SUMMARY

Overall the proposal is supported. The following changes are recommended to all the buildings to make them more acceptable from an urban design perspective. The rationale behind these changes is explained in more detail overleaf.

- Wetlap Apartment- Improve the building integration of the proposed contemporary form with the heritage form along Warson Place frontage.
- Wetlap Apartment- Increase the setback of dark render finish (REN02) section at the southern end of Wetlap Apartment
- Wetlap Apartment- Provide more openings in the lobby area along Paper Trail and ramp corridor frontage
- Loft Apartment – The south elevation of the Loft Apartment needs more window openings and articulation
- Loft Apartment – The total fence height along Paper Trail frontage should not exceed beyond 2.6m
- Townhouse – Explore more articulation to east elevation of Townhouse 7 and 15

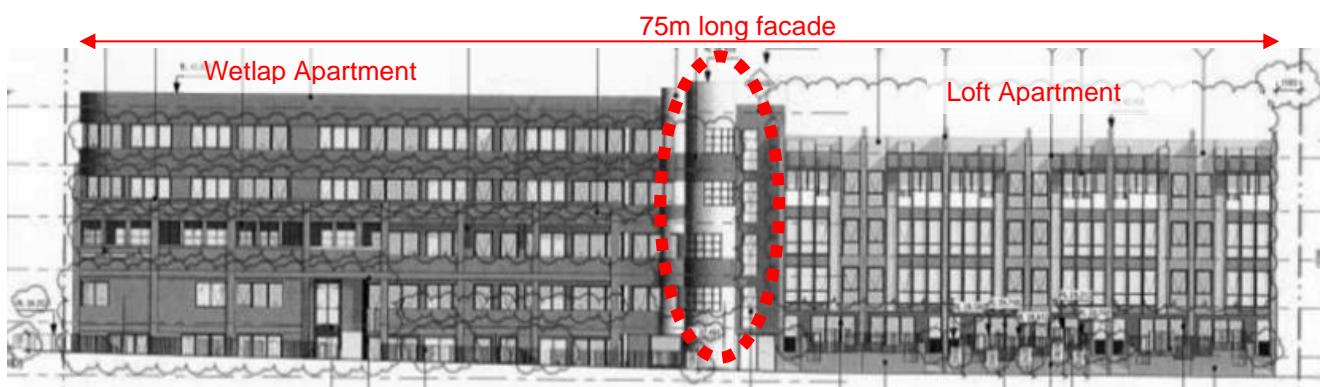
### 1. Wetlap Apartments

#### Built Form and Massing

The vision for Workshop Precinct is to provide medium density neighbourhood that respond strongly to the industrial character of the site. The Wetlap building is one of the few retained heritage buildings within the entire Alphington Paper Mill site. It majorly contributes to the industrial character of the precinct and the proposed development is keeping the facades of the building intact which is highly supported.

Clause 43.04 (DPO11) states development within the Amcor site must not exceed the maximum building heights specified in the Building Heights Plan and Building Heights table. The subject site is located within Precinct B where the maximum building height limit is 5 storeys with a streetwall of 3 storeys. Wetlap Apartment proposes adding two additional new levels plus terrace above the existing Wetlap building making it a five storey building. This complies with Clause 43.04 and hence the overall height is acceptable.

Clause 43.04 states that visually dominant buildings must be avoided through the use of discontinuous forms, well-articulated facades, and natural or recessive materials. The Loft Apartment is located immediately south of the Wetlap Apartment creating a 75m long facade along the Paper Trail frontage. To break this form the proposed design provides a variation in the material by using dark render finish (REN02) for the southern end of Wetlap Apartment. However, this does not avoid in creating a visually dominant continuous 'wall' of buildings. Hence, it is recommended to increase the setback of this section (shown in red below) to create a physical break in the built form. It is acknowledged that there are such long facades in other sections of this development but they are located along Chandler Highway and Heidelberg Road frontage and less along local streets/trails.



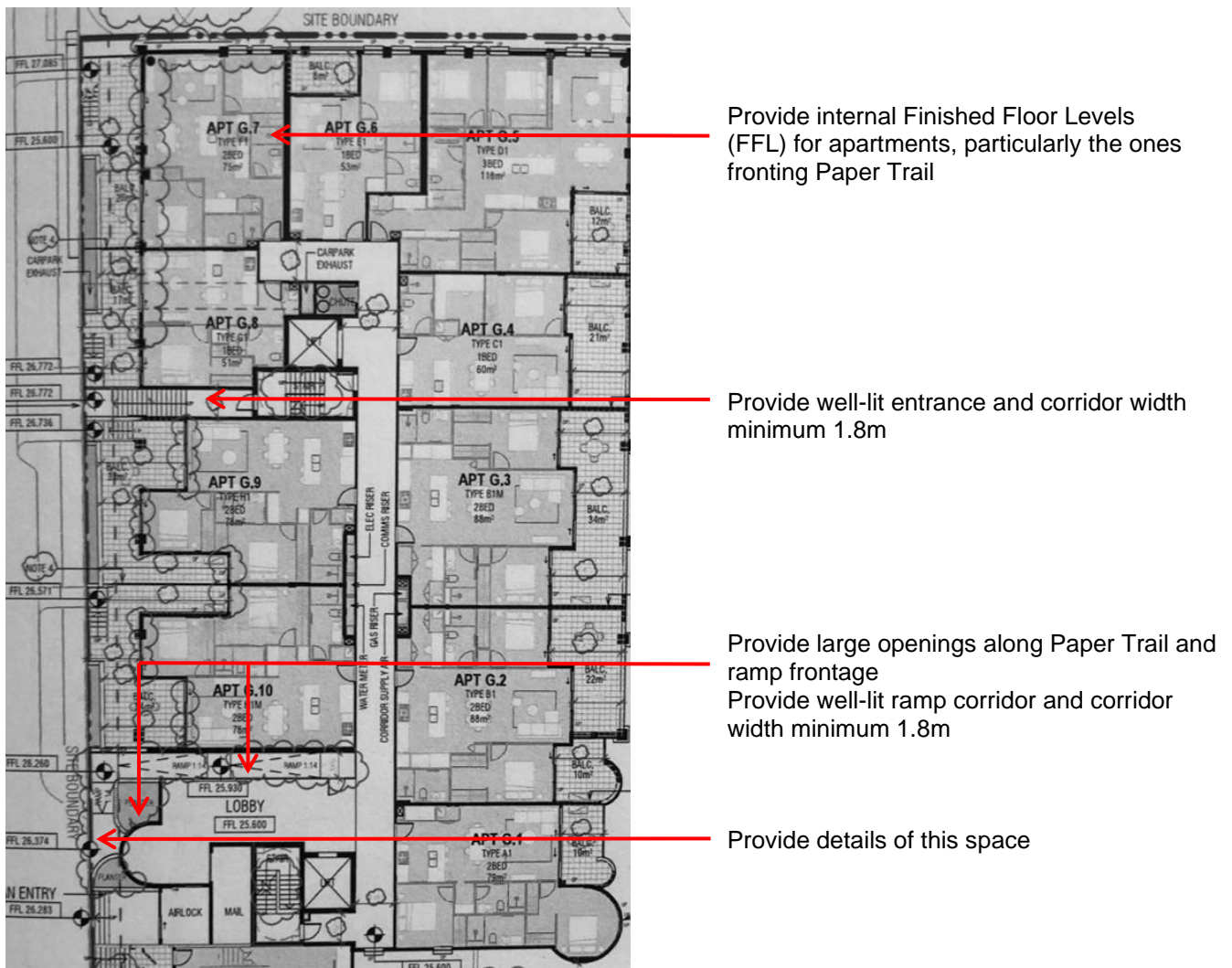
*Proposed West Elevation*

Connectivity and Interaction

Apartments fronting Paper Trail provide direct pedestrian entrance to four apartments, the main lobby and an additional access from the trail directly. This will present an active frontage to the Paper Trail which is highly supported. Given topography of the area and the proposed basement car park the apartments are below the level of the trail. The ground floor plan currently does not provide internal floor levels. It is requested to provide this information so there is a clear understanding of the level difference between the trail and apartments. Provision of balconies and windows on the upper level will provide passive surveillance. The main entrance is wide and legible which is supported. The proposed lobby design does not provide any windows fronting Paper Trail and it is recommended to provide some openings along this frontage.

The secondary entrance to the apartments corridor provides metal frame around it to make it more eligible which is acceptable. The corridor for this secondary entrance is almost 9m deep and the ramp corridor next to main lobby is almost 15m deep. Both these areas must be well-lit all the time to enable safe pedestrian access and avoid creation of areas for hiding. As per Precinct Design Guidelines of the Development Plan the minimum corridor width should be 1.8m. Please provide the details of the wall between the lobby area and ramp. It is highly recommended that there are large openings in this wall to ensure passive surveillance to the ramp.

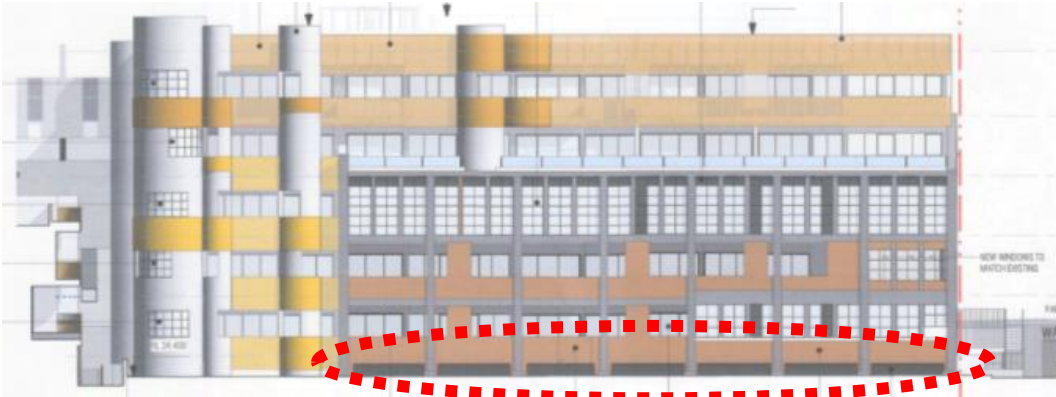
The use of vertical steel blade fencing allows for passive surveillance of the street. The overall height of fence is approximately 1m-1.1m which is supported.



Proposed Ground Floor Plan (Wetlap section only)

Apartments fronting Warson Place provide balconies and windows on ground floor and upper levels. It appears like the level difference does not allow for provision of direct pedestrian access which is acceptable. Please note the windows and balconies shown in elevations do not match the renders from Urban Context Report (pg 26 and 27).

Paper Square Park frontage is dominated with large balcony frontages on all levels that will provide an engaging frontage and passive surveillance to the park. This is highly supported. The east elevation shows metal frame closer to the future natural ground level. The purpose of these metal frames is unclear as they are not part of the existing building. The basement / lower ground plan does not show any high level windows to the car park. Further, the render from UCR (pg 26) does not show these metal frames hence it is unclear whether there is an error in the elevation. It is requested to update the drawings to provide the right information.



*Proposed East Elevation (Wetlap Only)*

### Building Design

Section 5.3 Heritage and Interpretation of the Development Plan seeks future site planning and development to maintain the distinctive qualities of the place which distinguish it from the surrounds. It also seeks development to have regard to significant buildings and elements with a view to maintain their visual prominence within and external to the site.

Overall, the building design is supported. The proposed development retains the facades of existing Wetlap building including majority of the openings. This contributes in strongly emphasising the industrial character of the area. The design elements of the new addition like use of circular walls, window design, use of perforated corten steel cladding, banding created by this cladding that aligns with the brickwork all complement positively to the industrial character set by Wetlap building. However, the built form proposed along Warson Place frontage needs further consideration to better integrate the proposed contemporary form with the sloping roof form of Wetlap building. The design of upper two levels need to be more responsive to the heritage form. Suggestions include providing an upper level setback and further articulation.



*View of the proposed Wetlap Building from north-west*

A basement car park is proposed for Wetlap Apartment and Loft Apartment that is accessed via Joel Terrace. The car park entry is also shared with townhouse vehicular entries hence crossovers which is highly supported.

## **2. Loft Apartments**

### Built Form

Clause 43.04 states development within the Amcor site must not exceed the maximum building heights specified in the Building Heights Plan and Building Heights table. Similar to Wetlap Apartment this Loft Apartment building is located within Precinct B where the maximum building height limit is 5 storey with a streetwall of 3 storeys. The proposed Loft Apartment meets this requirement and hence the overall height is supported.

The Design Guideline refers this section of precinct to provide an industrial heritage interface along the Paper Trail. It seeks the design to refer to the industrial heritage of the site through material or form and achieve articulation through indented built form. Given the building is located on corner the design guidelines state that the entrance for corner lots should face the primary street but the façade treatment should address both streets and avoid blank side interfaces. The proposed Paper Trail frontage does meet the above design requirements and presents an interesting built form that responds appropriately to the industrial heritage. The façade is broken up with vertical articulation that responds well to this section of the streetscape. However, the Joel Terrace frontage presents an approximately 18mX10m blank concrete wall. Even though this is a secondary frontage to the apartment building the site is located on a corner and will be visible from the future surrounding streets. Hence, this façade treatment is not acceptable, including the lower ground level. It is highly recommended that Loft 6 and Loft 12 provide more window openings along Joel Terrace frontage and explore different treatments that contribute in breaking up the mass and provide an engaging frontage. The east elevation of the Loft Apartment is acceptable.

The minimum setback required along Paper Trail frontage is 1.5m. The precinct design guidelines seeks built form to generally extend to the property boundary on all sides. The setbacks along all frontages are acceptable. All lofts on Level 3 provide 0.6m balconies fronting Paper Trail, however, the usability and accessibility of these balconies are doubtful.

### Connectivity and Interaction

Apartments fronting Paper Trail provide direct pedestrian entrance to six apartments from the trail directly. This will present an active frontage to the Paper Trail which is highly supported. Given topography of the area and the proposed basement car park the apartments are above the level of the trail. Provision of balconies and windows on the upper level will provide passive surveillance. The proposed fence design is acceptable.

### Building Design

Overall, the building design is supported. The proposed material palette presents a subtle colour palette and elements like the formed concrete look and metal frame are sympathetic to the industrial context.

The use of vertical steel blade fencing allows for passive surveillance of the street. The use of recycled brick for fencing is highly supported. The finish floor level for ground level apartments is approximately 1.4m above the trail level. The overall height of fence ranges between 2.4-3m which is not supported. The precinct design guideline suggest maximum height of 1.2m, however, given the level difference it is recommended that the total fence height does not exceed beyond 2.6m.

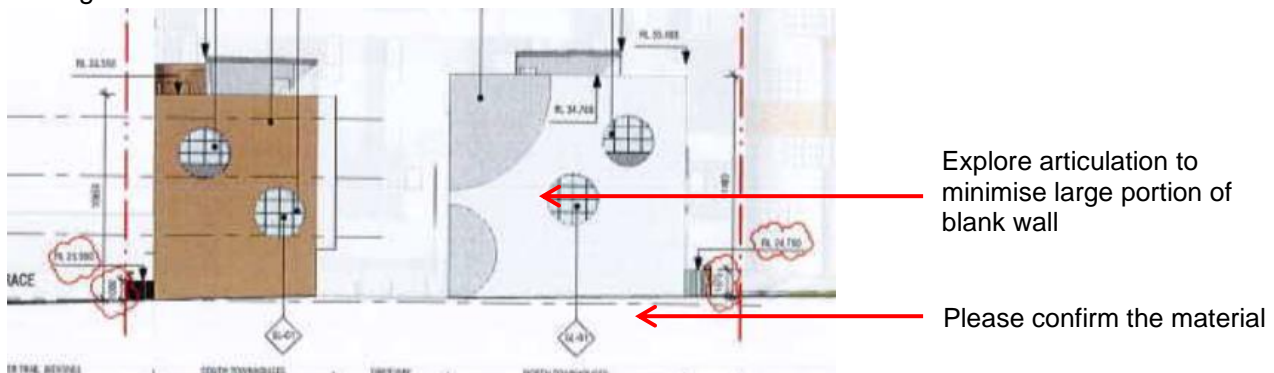
The design relies on the proposed vertical landscaping on the building to provide some relief from the hard edged character. Hence, it is highly recommended that the landscaping is implemented. Refer notes related to balcony and vertical greenery in Part B

### 3. Townhouses

#### Built Form

The development plan precinct guidelines recommend 2-3 storeys (majority 3 storeys) plus terrace. The proposed townhouses are three storey with rooftop terraces which is acceptable. The overall contemporary architecture arranges the elements of both Joel Terrace (south) and Paper Square Park façades in a manner that it creates a very comprehensible composition. They satisfy the requirements of brick end interface and industrial heritage interface. Hence, both these frontages are highly supported.

Townhouse 7 and 15 are on the corner and present street and public space frontages. It is acknowledged that it is challenging to design such dwellings. The proposed design presents some windows and variation in material to the secondary frontages, however, it is recommended to explore more articulation to minimise the large portions of blank side interface and provide an engaging frontage. Please confirm the material used for Townhouse 7 east facade.



*Proposed East Elevation (Townhouses Only)*

#### Connectivity and Interaction

Townhouses fronting Joel Terrace provide individual pedestrian access to eight townhouses from the street. Similarly, townhouses fronting Paper Square Park provide pedestrian access from a ramp adjoining the park. Both north and south townhouses have habitable rooms oriented towards the key public realm. This will present an active frontage to the street and park. Provision of balconies and windows on the upper level will provide passive surveillance.

Apartments fronting Paper Trail provide direct pedestrian entrance to six apartments from the trail directly. This will present an active frontage to the Paper Trail which is highly supported. Given topography of the area and the proposed basement car park the apartments are above the level of the trail. The proposed fence design is acceptable.

#### Building Design

Overall, the building design for north and south townhouses are supported. The proposed material palette provides reference to the existing industrial character by using materials like exposed brick, concrete and corten steel. This also satisfies the requirements of brick end interface and industrial heritage interface.

Each townhouse provides garage on the lower ground level and the entry to the driveway is accessed via Joel Terrace. As mentioned above the vehicular entry to these townhouses is shared with apartment's car park entry hence minimising crossovers which is highly supported. Townhouses on north and south share a driveway in between making the garage doors not visible from public realm. This satisfies the precinct guideline requirements and is supported.

The use of vertical steel blade fencing allows for passive surveillance of the street and public space. The height of fencing is maximum 1.2m which is supported.

## **URBAN DESIGN AND OPEN SPACE FEEDBACK PART B – PUBLIC REALM AND OPEN SPACE**

### **1. General Comments**

Public Realm and landscape comments are based on review of landscape drawings 1648-LSK01 to LSK04 dated 13 December 2019 prepared by MDG and architectural plans, elevations and renders prepared by Techne Architecture.

In summary, the drawings are not yet acceptable from a Public Realm and Open Space perspective. The initial comments below and overleaf highlights our primary concerns. We require that the applicant provides updated plans and additional sections, elevation and a response to each of the comments to enable us to make a complete review of the proposal.

- Interdisciplinary design coordination:
  - Before Council can undertake a complete review and make an informed decision, discrepancies between landscape plans and architectural plans must be coordinated by the applicant to ensure correlation.
  - Council also request that the applicant uses its best endeavours to ensure that all adjacent development proposals are shown on the plans at the most current status, including but not limited to adjacent buildings and streetscapes.

### **2. Comments Summary**

Key comments relate to the following;

- Coordination as noted under item 1 including, overlay all relevant adjacent landscape plans to allow precinct context and relationships to be assessed accordingly.
- Public realm / landscape interface especially along Workshop Park and Paper Trail requires further details to describe public realm and landscape interfaces and relationships.
- The orientation/configuration of the stair in the north east corner to be clarified, discrepancy noted from Artisan East application.
- Paving and threshold interfaces around the whole proposed development requires further details and explanations such as sections and elevations to allow Council to make an informed decision.
- Show levels and grading to demonstrate that including but not limited to all main entrance thresholds are compliant to ensure that best urban design outcome is achieved.
- Soil volume to be provided for all proposed trees.
- Confirm that width and depth of all planter boxes and demonstrate that appropriate plant species are nominated, to achieve and sustain healthy plant growth to achieve the design vision.
- Landscape Management Plan to be provided.

Further details and design resolutions are required including but not limited to;

#### Workshop Park Interface and Connectivity

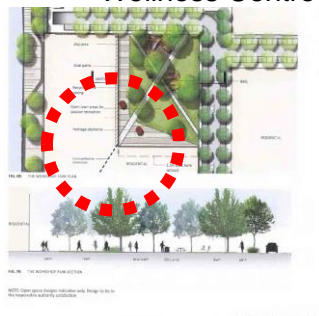
- Architecture and landscape architectural drawings are not aligned. A high quality and well resolved interface with Workshop Park and adjacent residential access and development is of priority.
- Confirm that this package has been co-ordinated with designers of Workshop Park. Ensure the design shown for the park is the most current to enable Council to undertake a complete review.



- Provide further details, sections and elevations showing relationship between the park and the proposed development.
- Outline grading and drainage approach along park interfaces. Annotate levels, falls and number of steps (including rise/run dimensions).
- Clarify what is shown on architectural drawings as highlighted below. This appears to show ramp, stairway and embankment configuration within the extents of Workshop Park. This arrangement is not shown within most recent park design.

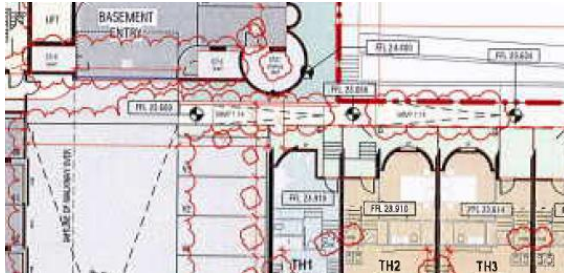


- The Development Plan indicates an ambition to provide a cross axis link through the park and the proposed development, this appears to be lost with the ramp ending at the entrance of the car park.
  - MDG plans notes that the laneway will cater for the primary vehicle entry point to the car parks. Please clarify pedestrian movements and connectivity from the north east corner of the park through the development to Joels Terrace and the proposed Wellness Centre entrance.



- Ramp configuration is not supported, including but not limited to the following;
  - Base of ramp ends at car park entrance, at the base of the laneway crest.
  - Path is required to be made wider than the proposed 1200mm.
  - Yarra's Public Domain Manual notes-  
*A minimum of 1500mm wide for footpaths less than 3500mm where footpath width permits.*
  - Given this is primary pedestrian access to residential properties 1500mm minimum path width is required.
  - All required access to private developments needs to be incorporated within development title boundaries not with extents of Public Open Space.

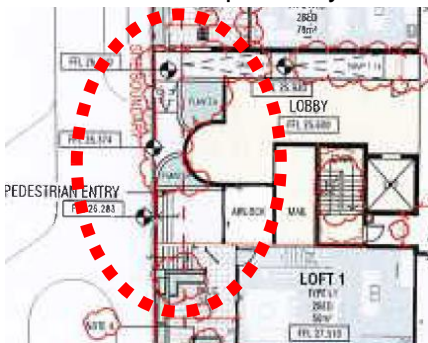




- Confirm coordination between proposed surface material in the park and how this will relate to material along paths to the west and south side of the park.
- Confirm delineation between public and private land. There needs to be a clear distinction between public and private realm.
- Planting
  - Confirm how the private realm garden beds and private front gardens will complement and tie in with planting theme in the park.
  - Confirm the east side interface to Wetlap Apartment, how will these garden beds be maintained.

Paper Trail Interface

- Confirm levels and the relationship to the public realm along Paper Trail.
- Apartments fronting Paper Trail have planter boxes along the trail frontage. Are these at the same level as the Paper Trail or are these at lower level? How will the maintenance work? Also there is car parking underneath. Does that give enough depth?
- Landscape plan for this area is required, showing location and size of planter boxes and plant species and how these will complement the public realm along Paper Trail.
- Provide details of the landscaped area in front of the lobby, including floor level. Confirm purpose of the landing at the base of the ramp, can there be seating and bike parking located in closer proximity to the entrance?



- Can the ramp be better integrated for improve DDA accessibility?
- How will AC units (assumed to be located along terraces/balconies) be 'screened off' as these often bring down the visual appearance? How will planters be protected from AC exhaust that will blow hot/cold air and have detrimental effect on planting and the overall design vision of the development?

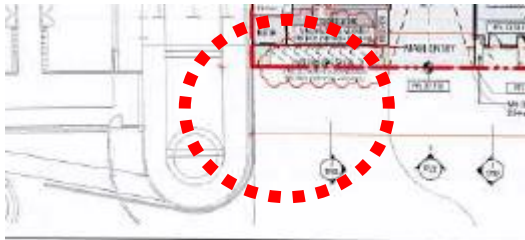
Warson Place Frontage

- Provide further design coordination and resolution of the Warson Place frontage, particularly in regard to proposed stairway to facilitate access to the Paper Trail.

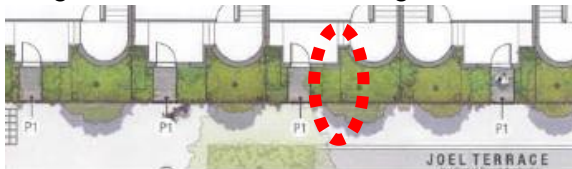


Joel Terrace

- The garden beds on the west façade, can these have additional smaller trees as the key feature and a simplified low cover planting scheme to reduce the maintenance intensity?
- Corner Interface between Joel Terrace and the wall of the Paper Trail on higher level, further details required related to this corner space, is bike hoops the sole means of activation? Can the small garden beds be removed and trees interspersed with the bike hoops?
- Coordinate design and boundaries with entrance to the Wellness Centre in the adjacent development.



- Please confirm that the lines running through the front gardens including that the squares shown are services and meter boxes. Confirm how these will be accessed and integrated/screened off in the gardens?



Vertical Greenery on the Town Houses and Loft Apartments

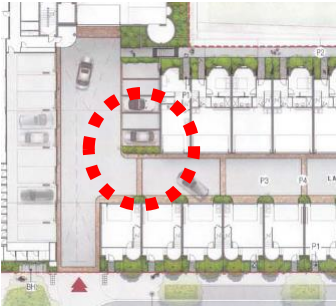
Vertical greenery to soften the built form is generally supported, this element is of concern due to a number of logistics including but not limited to the following;

- Intermediate planter boxes is assumed required to achieve the design vision shown in the renders, climbing plant to reach the full height of the buildings.
- How will this be maintained to achieve a unified outcome as the climbers are planted within private gardens?
- An irrigation system controlled by body corporate or similar is recommended to ensure that the climbers do not rely on individual property owner maintenance.



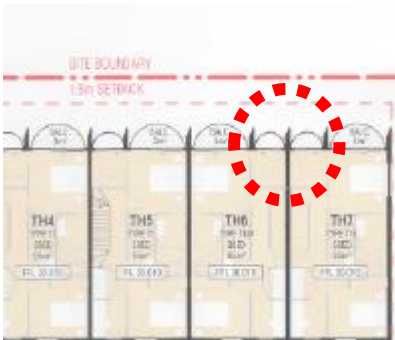
### Internal Laneway

- Pedestrians can be assumed using the ramp from the Workshop Park and the laneway as a shortcut, clarify pedestrian movements in relation to car parks and swept paths.
- The greenery in the laneway is supported, interrogate opportunity to plant a large feature tree using strata cells, structural soils or similar in this space.



### Balcony Planters

- Provide landscape plans showing all proposed balcony planter boxes.
- How will these be maintained to achieve the design vision?
- Add notes on all relevant landscape details to show size, depth, irrigation and nominated species.



### Drainage and WSUD Opportunities

- Have WSUD opportunities been explored within the development including opportunity to passively irrigate planted areas such as the small garden beds along the internal laneway to achieve a best practice design outcome?
- Show drainage infrastructure, such as trench grates.

### Tree and Plant Species

- Confirm that none of the proposed species are on DELWP listing of environmental weed species.

- Where trees and plants will have direct relationship with adjacent developments further details are required that species selected especially trees will complement and create a unified overall public realm outcome.
- Where possible replace exotic trees with native/indigenous to reflect on the location along the Yarra River and for the development to contribute in providing a biodiverse urban environment.
- Provide all proposed pot sizes and install sizes for trees and plants.
- Provide plant species and quantities for each planted area.
- Soil volume available for trees refer ELK calculator.
- Add section in plant schedule for shade tolerant tree and plant species.

### Landscape Details

Further notes including but not limited to;

- Ensure brick paving is compliant with Australian Standards for slip resistance.
- Note for each detail and garden bed referring to irrigation system.
- Note of minimum widths and depths of planter boxes and garden beds including planting media/soil.
- Maintenance, clarification regarding maintenance regime of landscaped areas and establishment of garden beds and climbing plant species.
  - Maintenance tasks and a maintenance schedule, clarification regarding maintenance regime of landscaped areas and establishment of garden beds and climbing plant species including but not limited to key features such as the vertical greenery on the town houses.
  - Assumed a minimum 13 weeks maintenance of all plantings within the development to achieve the desired greenery portrayed in renders and visualizations?
- Mulch on higher levels to be pea gravel or similar at 40mm depth.
- A specification of works to be provided to meet relevant statutory requirements.

END